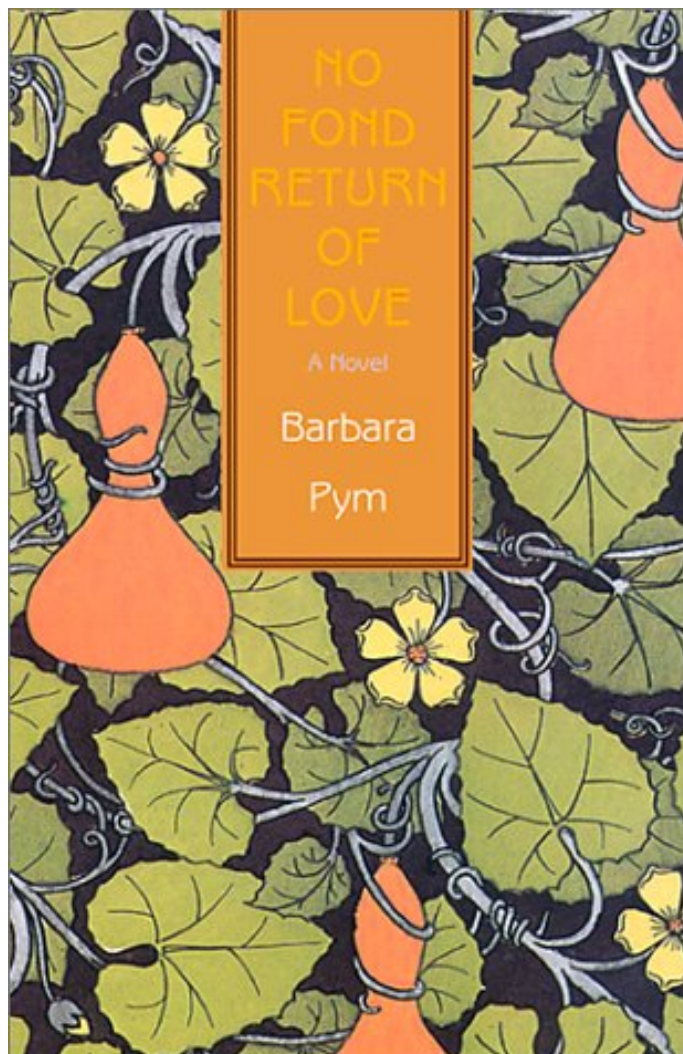

Barbara Pym

No Fond Return Of Love



Title: No Fond Return Of Love

Author: Barbara Pym

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Description

From an early age Barbara Pym knew she would become a writer-even a famous one. As an integral part of her training she kept, from her first days at Oxford until her death from cancer in January 1980, a series of private diaries and notebooks in which she pointedly observed herself and the world around her. It is from this ongoing life journal and from the selection of letters to close personal friends that the editors have formed the autobiography that makes up *A Very Private Eye*. The early life depicted here will be a revelation to many readers of Barbara Pym's novels-for the young student's sojourn at Oxford in the thirties seems far closer in spirit to Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* than to the jumble sales of later Pym novels. Finally, after much lonely suffering, she is able, through the craft she has developed, to distill her hard-won experience into art.

Insightful reviews

Sarah: What a lovely and funny book. So very very british. My favorite lines were:

"The silence in the room was broken only by the sound of water being poured out into glasses -- perhaps the most dismal sound heard on an English holiday."

"Sitting aimlessly in bedrooms- often on the bed itself- is another characteristic feature of the English holidays. The meal was over and it was only twenty five past seven. 'The evening stretches before us,' Viola said gloomily."

Hannah Finch: My mother had been urging me to read Barbara Pym for years and I had resisted. Perhaps I'd picked one up too early and thought its gentle humour dull. How wrong I was.

Comparisons to Jane Austen abound with Barbara Pym and it is hard not to see why. Her humour and observations are very quietly but pointedly made. The characters are beautifully observed and judged.

The story is about love and is again similar to Austen in that it depicts women who have limited social choices. The protagonist is in her early thirties and is consigned to the social dustbin - her only hope of amusement is doing "good works" for the church. However, she is a curious woman who is looking for more from her constrained social circle. She takes risks to further her infatuation with Ailwyn Forbes, a minor academic she meets at a conference on the art of indexing. Along the way, she befriends Viola Dace (real name Violet) who is unworthy of the kindness shown to her.

This is a gentle, charming book which makes points about its cast of varied characters in a subtle way. The only complaint I had was its plot relied on coincidence a little too heavily but then I suppose life is like that.

I can't recommend this highly enough and I will be seeking out more of Ms Pym's work soon.

Though probably not all at once so as to prolong the pleasure.

Kate: This is a quiet English novel about a single woman working a quiet job. Her fiancé broke off their engagement and she now lives alone in her deceased parents' house. By all descriptions in the story, she is dowdy and boring, but she slowly insinuates herself into other people's lives and in doing so, creates a new more interesting life for herself. I almost gave up halfway through as it is not a page turner, but the ending was worth the reading. While I usually like more action in my reading, there is a place for quieter stories and I will give Barbara Pym another try. Thanks to Thomas of The Readers for the recommendation.

Katherine: *3.5 stars."What a pity we won't make a cup of Ovaltine, was once her final unsleeping thought. Life's difficulties are frequently eased via scorching milky drinks" (23). "Probably as a result of her reference to haberdashery she had a keenness for small contraptions and 'daintiness', as she positioned it, which was once inspired by means of the ads on advertisement tv with their emphasis in this element of life. She didn't take care of men, with their roughness and shortage of daintiness, even though the clergy have been excepted, until they smoked pipes" (33). "Yet, even supposing she used to be laughing, there has been a small soreness in her center as she remembered him. might be it's sadder to have enjoyed anyone 'unworthy', and the top of it's the loss of life of any such little or no thing, like a child's coffin, she idea confusedly" (54). "She had given them merely the shabbiest of her mother's clothes, the easiest having long past to the Distressed Gentlewomen" (59). *I like that phrase: "Distressed Gentlewomen." "What is using noticing such details? Dulcie requested herself. It isn't as though I have been a novelist or a personal detective. most likely the sort of school may be stated so as to add to one's delight in life, yet so usually what one saw was once neither fun nor interesting, yet simply upsetting" (60). "An nameless name of a scurrilous nature? have been calls of this sort made by way of those who had a strange ten mins to fill in sooner than arriving somewhere?" (60-61). "No doubt, like every males attached with the Church--his personal brother Neville included--the organist will be comfortable with ladies. He may see the phrase--At Ease with Ladies--as the identify of a unique or perhaps a biography" (83). "What should still he write? anything non-committal--the type of factor one wrote to a girl who was once project the laborious activity of constructing an index to a book" (84). "...or would it not look silly and affected in the dead of night suburban hall, with the macintoshes and outdated footwear huddled jointly within the primarily unaesthetic hat stand?" (84-85). "Life used to be at its methods again, yet this was once sharper cruelty than omit Lord's discomfiture over the baked beans" (88). *I love this sentence. " 'Shall we begin first and foremost and cross stolidly round?' Viola asked" (89). "...turning clear of Viola, who was once looking at at one of many photos with the dutiful, a little bit glazed expression of a lady who has been proven what to appear for by way of a distractingly good-looking man" (91). "Bereavement was once in many ways the main cozy form of misery, for there might constantly be anyone to urge; the disappointment of affection was once frequently extra lonely simply because so usually hid from others" (101). "It was once sad, she thought, how ladies longed to be wanted and worthwhile and the way seldom so much them fairly were" (103). "...she attempted to photo him, younger and eager, maybe using a scooter" (104). "What does it mean, being 'only human after all'? she requested herself. It used to be more often than not acknowledged of an individual who had devoted a few indiscretion or perhaps sin" (106). "At Christmas, Dulcie thought, humans looked as if it would lose their prestige as contributors of their personal correct and became, because it

were, reduced in stature, mere unit sin families, whilst for the remainder of the yr they have been daring and unique and infrequently the type of humans it truly is very unlikely to visualize having such traditional daily issues as parents. Christmas placed humans of their places, despatched them again to the nursery or cradle, almost" (109)."So it used to be alright to grasp approximately Neville and relatively pointless to bare that she had made a unique trip to the general public library to appear him up in Crockford" (128)."Dulcie, whereas showing to listen, used to be going over in her brain a number of the ways that a priest son will be 'rather troublesome' "(129)."...one or as but unidentified younger males who wore bowler hats and seemed fairly alike, in order that Laurel concept there could be any variety of them or in simple terms one" (131)."Marian's little pointed feet and stiletto heels, so precariously helping the fluffy orange package deal of her body..." (133-134)."Dark oil paintings, sinister as the matters weren't simply discernible, decorated the walls" (134)." 'People continuously recognize the place they're with me,' she might say fairly smugly; it by no means happened to the following that individuals would possibly not consistently need to know such things" (136)."What will possibly not have occurred had she no longer selected to reach at that moment! And in a library, too, surrounded through nice literature!" (138)."Dulcie felt, avoiding her eyes as one of many servers started to eliminate his cassock and wear a really secular-looking leather-based jacket. One aren't maybe ever witness the swap from the sacred to the profane, and the way very profane it appeared while she spotted that one other server was once donning jeans" (147)."The window was once jam-packed with daffodils and irises, with a number of early tulips and most likely overdue chrysanthemums" (165)."In a sense, Dulcie felt as though she had created her and that she had no longer arise to expectations, like a personality in a ebook who had did not come alive, and the way many of us in life, if one transferred them to fiction simply as they were, might fail to do that!" (167-168)."There will be particular vintages instructed for consuming within the bedrooms of unlicensed hotels" (173)."She wouldn't be content material with the quiet existence he cherished to lead, and she or he could mock on the approach he beloved to take a seat donning his kilt within the evenings" (204-205)." 'It used to be one of many first issues my spouse obtained rid of. She cannot undergo stone animals of any kind'" (207)." 'She's a lecturer on the London college of Economics,' the younger guy went on, hardly ever explaining her abhorrence of stone animals, Aylwin thought" (207)."He ordered a Guinness, feeling that he had desire of the features it used to be acknowledged to give" (208)."Here each development used to be repellent; there has been not anything upon which the attention might reside with pleasure" (211-212)."And then there has been that china donkey, Dulcie remembered. may she particularly have any form of bond with a person who had notion it sweet?" (220)." 'Yes, after breakfast is an ungainly time in a hotel,' Dulcie said. 'One has no correct to exist among the hours of part previous 9 and twelve. a lot paintings is happening that it makes one think guilty'" (221).

kat: Wow, this was once so tough in a few diverse ways. The POVs shifted virtually paragraph to paragraph in the beginning of the book, and it was once tough to get into the rhythm of the prose. yet as soon as I did, oof, those characters. There are part a dozen of what i would think about the "main" characters, and each one in all them used to be so awkward, so tricky to love (purely for his or her awkwardness; they were not sociopaths or anything), yet finally so nuanced and multifaceted. and so they have been younger and middle-aged and older--it was once rather a feat of writing. i would supply this 4 stars if i did not flinch in empathy any other page. (I mean, I learn it in days, and it wasn't that short.)

Stephanie: i have been a tremendous fan of Barbara Pym for decades; I most likely learn this publication fifteen or two decades ago, yet simply had a hazy recollection of the plot while I picked it up. So I take the wry humor and cruel remark for granted. This time around, I had much much less endurance with the British Empire. the lads are all hapless and the ladies are pathetic, or even it is the opposite direction around. the most character, who should be aware of better, has not anything higher to do than to stalk a man--and his complete prolonged family--because he occurs to be better-looking than nearly all of British men. You get the influence that the English are so inbred and underemployed that the infrequent beautiful guy explanations seismic waves of lunatic female frenzy anyplace he goes. I am extraordinarily afraid that my convenience novels are comforting no longer. contemporary re-readings of P.D. James and Dorothy L. Sayers have produced a similar emotions of inflammation and unease--at the portrayal of a society so sexist, classist, economically unsustainable and psychologically bonkers that you just commence rooting for the murderers.

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