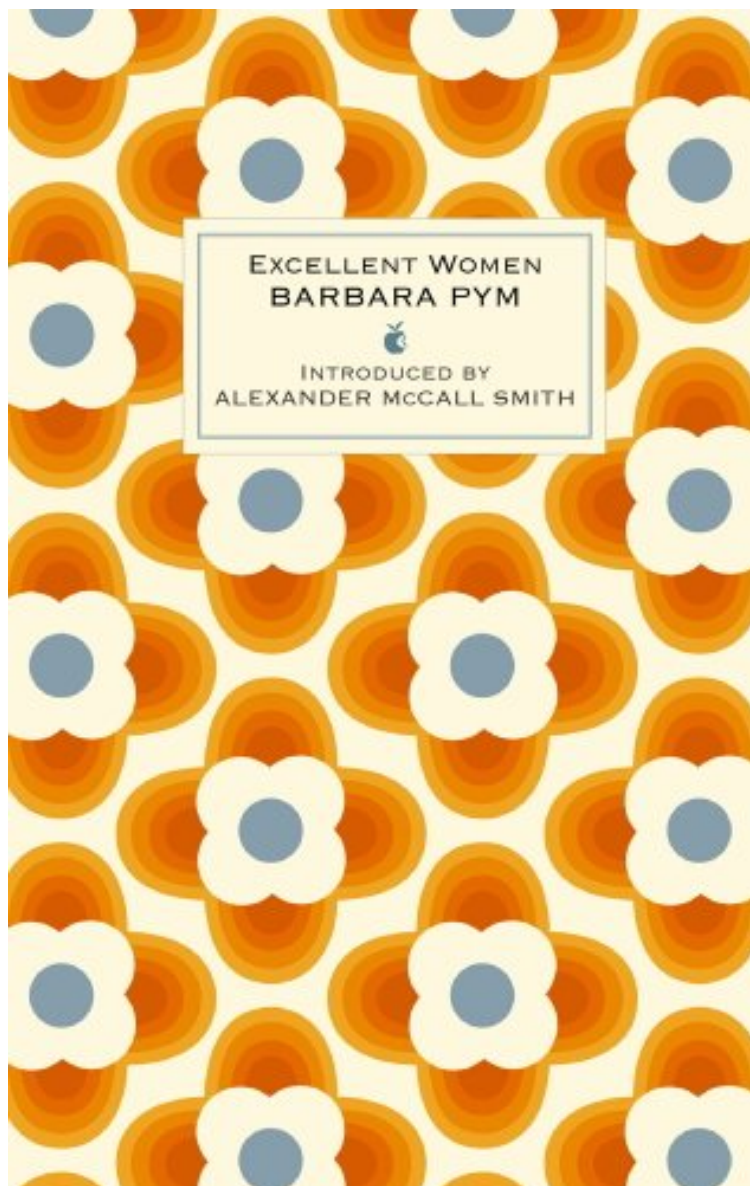


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on the edge of spinsterhood, has a soft spot for dashing young Rockingham Napier. This is Barbara Pym's world at its funniest and most touching. Revue de presse [One of] the finest examples of high comedy to have appeared in England during the past seventy-five years. (Lord David Cecil) A startling reminder that solitude may be chosen and that a lively, full novel can be constructed entirely within the precincts of that regressive virtue, feminine patience. (John Updike, *The New Yorker*) Reading Barbara Pym is . . . a wonderful experience, full of unduplicable perceptions, sensations, and soul-stirrings. (Newsweek) Presentation de l'auteur Mildred Lathbury is one of those 'excellent women' who is often taken for granted. She is a godsend, 'capable of dealing with most of the stock situations of life - birth, marriage, death, the successful jumble sales, the garden fete spoiled by bad weather'. As such, she often gets herself embroiled in other people's lives - especially those of her glamorous new neighbours, the Napiers, whose marriage seems to be on the rocks. One cannot take sides in these matters, though it is tricky, especially as Mildred, teetering on the edge of spinsterhood, has a soft spot for dashing young Rockingham Napier. This is Barbara Pym's world at its funniest and most touching.