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The Uncommon Reader

By Alan Bennett



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The Uncommon Reader By Alan Bennett

From one of England's most celebrated writers, a funny and superbly observed novella about the Queen of England and the subversive power of reading

When her corgis stray into a mobile library parked near Buckingham Palace, the Queen feels duty-bound to borrow a book. Discovering the joy of reading widely (from J. R. Ackerley, Jean Genet, and Ivy Compton-Burnett to the classics) and intelligently, she finds that her view of the world changes dramatically. Abetted in her newfound obsession by Norman, a young man from the royal kitchens, the Queen comes to question the prescribed order of the world and loses patience with the routines of her role as monarch. Her new passion for reading initially alarms the palace staff and soon leads to surprising and very funny consequences for the country at large.

With the poignant and mischievous wit of *The History Boys*, England's best loved author revels in the power of literature to change even the most uncommon reader's life.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Briskly original and subversively funny, this novella from popular British writer Bennett (*Untold Stories*; Tony-winning play *The History Boys*) sends Queen Elizabeth II into a mobile library van in pursuit of her runaway corgis and into the reflective, observant life of an avid reader. Guided by Norman, a former kitchen boy and enthusiast of gay authors, the queen gradually loses interest in her endless succession of official duties and learns the pleasure of such a common activity. With the dawn of her sensibility... mistaken for the onset of senility, plots are hatched by the prime minister and the queen's staff to dispatch Norman and discourage the queen's preoccupation with books. Ultimately, it is her own growing self-awareness that leads her away from reading and toward writing, with astonishing results. Bennett has fun with the proper behavior and protocol at the palace, and the few instances of mild coarseness seem almost scandalous. There are lessons packed in here, but Bennett doesn't wallop readers with them. It's a fun little book. (Sept.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Any common reader will enjoy a good laugh from British playwright Alan Bennett's *The Uncommon Reader*, which can be consumed in a few spare hours. But readers expecting a work as brilliant and scathing as Bennett's plays *The History Boys* (2004) and *The Madness of King George* (1991), or even his other short stories, should expect something completely different. A political and literary satire, it pokes fun at the British monarchy while revealing the lasting power of literature. Reviews suggest that *The Uncommon Reader* should be enjoyed like the sort of reading it espouses: casually, but with a sensitivity to serious things as well.

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From [Booklist](#)

Who would guess that reading books could prompt a constitutional crisis? In Britain this strange and unusual scenario does indeed play out, at least in this delightful political-social comedy by a celebrated British writer. One day the queen takes inadvertent advantage of a bookmobile that happens to arrive at a Buckingham Palace back door; she rather accidentally borrows a book. She'd never taken much interest in reading. She read, of course, as one did, but liking books was something she left to other people. As surprising to herself as to those who know her, the queen develops into a dedicated, avid reader of serious literature, and the court and her government are sent reeling by this new royal practice—as well as by her newfound knowledge about all kinds of things. When she turns from the joy of reading to a desire to write, the consequences are jolting. In the wake of the popularity of the movie *The Queen*, this crafty work of satire should find an appreciative American audience. Hooper, Brad

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Gabriel:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important act, like looking for your favorite publication and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your trouble; you can add your knowledge by the book entitled *The Uncommon Reader*. Try to stumble through book *The Uncommon Reader* as your buddy. It means that it can for being your friend when you really feel alone and beside

associated with course make you smarter than ever. Yeah, it is very fortunate for yourself. The book makes you far more confident because you can know anything by the book. So, let's make new experience and knowledge with this book.

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Patricia French:

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Gladys Jackson:

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