

FREMDSPRACHENTEXTE

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Alan Bennett

# The Uncommon Reader

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At Windsor it was the evening of the state banquet and as the president of France took his place beside Her Majesty, the royal family formed up behind and the procession slowly moved off and  
5 through into the Waterloo Chamber.

“Now that I have you to myself,” said the Queen, smiling to left and right as they glided through the glittering throng, “I’ve been longing to ask you about the writer Jean Genet.”

10 “Ah,” said the president. “Oui.”

The “Marseillaise” and the national anthem

[Titel] **“The Uncommon Reader”**: vermutl. Anspielung auf den Essayband *The Common Reader* (2 Bde., 1925–32) der englischen Schriftstellerin und Literaturkritikerin Virginia Woolf (1882–1941).

1 **Windsor**: *Windsor Castle*; zusammen mit dem Buckingham Palace und Holyrood Castle in Edinburgh eine der offiziellen Residenzen der britischen Monarchie.

**banquet**: Bankett, Empfang mit Festessen.

5 **Waterloo Chamber**: großer hallenartiger, 1840 fertiggestellter Festsaal in Windsor Castle, dessen Gemälde an den Sieg der Alliierten (1815) über Napoleon erinnern.

7 **to glide**: gleiten, gemessenen Schrittes gehen.

8 **glittering**: glitzernd.

**throng**: (Menschen-)Menge.

9 **Jean Genet**: französischer Romanautor, Dramatiker und Poet (1910–86).

11 **Marseillaise** (Fr.): französische Nationalhymne.

**national anthem**: Nationalhymne; gemeint ist die britische Nationalhymne »God save the Queen«.

made for a pause in the proceedings, but when they had taken their seats Her Majesty turned to the president and resumed.

“Homosexual and jailbird, was he nevertheless  
5 as bad as he was painted? Or, more to the point” –  
and she took up her soup spoon – “was he as  
good?”

Unbriefed on the subject of the glabrous play-  
wright and novelist, the president looked wildly  
10 about for his minister of culture. But she was being  
addressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

“Jean Genet,” said the Queen again, helpfully.  
“Vous le connaissez?”

“Bien sûr,” said the president.

15 “Il m’intéresse,” said the Queen.

1 **proceedings** (pl.): Veranstaltung.

3 **to resume**: zu sprechen fortfahren, den Gesprächsfaden wieder aufnehmen.

4 **jailbird** (coll.): Knastbruder, Knacki; Genet hatte eine Reihe von Gefängnisstrafen zu verbüßen und wurde schließlich zu lebenslanger Haft verurteilt.

**nevertheless**: dennoch, trotz allem.

5 **more to the point**: richtiger, zutreffender, besser gesagt (*to the point*: auf den Punkt gebracht).

8 **unbriefed**: nicht informiert, nicht unterrichtet.

**glabrous**: haarlos, kahlköpfig.

8f. **playwright**: Dramatiker.

11 **Archbishop of Canterbury**: Oberhaupt der Church of England mit Bischofssitz in Canterbury (*archbishop*: Erzbischof).

13 **Vous le connaissez?** (Fr.): Kennen Sie ihn?

14 **Bien sûr** (Fr.): Sicher; natürlich.

15 **Il m’intéresse** (Fr.): Er interessiert mich.

“Vraiment?” The president put down his spoon. It was going to be a long evening.

It was the dogs’ fault. They were snobs and ordinarily, having been in the garden, would have gone up  
5 the front steps, where a footman generally opened them the door. Today, though, for some reason they careered along the terrace, barking their heads off, and scampered down the steps again and round the end along the side of the house, where she could  
10 hear them yapping at something in one of the yards.

It was the City of Westminster travelling library, a large removal-like van parked next to the bins outside one of the kitchen doors. This wasn’t a part of the palace she saw much of, and she had certainly  
15 ly never seen the library there before, nor presumably had the dogs, hence the din, so having failed in

1 **Vraiment?** (Fr.): Wirklich?

5 **footman:** Lakai.

7 **to career:** rasen.

**to bark one’s head off:** wie verrückt bellen.

8 **to scamper:** flitzen, trippeln.

10 **to yap at s.th.:** etwas ankläffen.

11 **City of Westminster:** zentraler Bezirk in London, nördlich der Themse und westlich der City of London gelegen und den größten Teil des Londoner West End umfassend.

12 **removal-like van:** einem Möbelwagen ähnlicher Lieferwagen.

**bin:** Mülltonne, Müllcontainer.

14 **palace:** *Buckingham Palace*.

15f. **presumably:** vermutlich.

16 **hence:** daher, deshalb.

**din:** Lärm; hier: lautes Gekläffe.

her attempt to calm them down she went up the little steps of the van in order to apologise.

The driver was sitting with his back to her, sticking a label on a book, the only seeming borrower a thin ginger-haired boy in white overalls crouched in the aisle reading. Neither of them took any notice of the new arrival, so she coughed and said, “I’m sorry about this awful racket,” whereupon the driver got up so suddenly he banged his head on the Reference section and the boy in the aisle scrambled to his feet and upset Photography & Fashion.

She put her head out of the door. “Shut up this minute, you silly creatures” – which, as had been the move’s intention, gave the driver/librarian time to compose himself and the boy to pick up the books.

“One has never seen you here before, Mr ...”

“Hutchings, Your Majesty. Every Wednesday, ma’am.”

5 **ginger-haired:** rotblond (*ginger:* Ingwer).

**to crouch:** hocken, kauern.

6 **aisle:** Mittelgang.

8 **racket:** Krach, Lärm.

9 **to bang one’s head on s.th.:** sich den Kopf an etwas anschlagen, mit dem Kopf gegen etwas stoßen.

10 **Reference section:** Regal mit den Nachschlagewerken.

11 **to scramble to one’s feet:** sich aufrappeln.

**to upset:** umwerfen, umstoßen, durcheinanderbringen.

15 **move:** Maßnahme, Schritt.

16 **to compose o.s.:** seine Fassung zurückgewinnen.