



The Clothes They Stood Up In and The Lady in the Van (Today Show Book Club #5)

Alan Bennett

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From Alan Bennett, the author of *The Madness of King George*, come two stories about the strange nature of possessions...or the lack of them. In the nationally bestselling novel **The Clothes They Stood Up In**, the staid Ransomes return from the opera to find their Regent's Park flat stripped bare--right down to the toilet-paper roll. Free of all their earthly belongings, the couple faces a perplexing question: Who are they without the things they've spent a lifetime accumulating? Suddenly a world of unlimited, frightening possibility opens up before them.

In "The Lady in the Van," which *The Village Voice* called "one of the finest bursts of comic writing the twentieth century has produced," Bennett recounts the strange life of Miss Shepherd, a London eccentric who parked her van (overstuffed with decades' worth of old clothes, oozing batteries, and kitchen utensils still in their original packaging) in the author's driveway for more than fifteen years. A mesmerizing portrait of an outsider with an acquisitive taste and an indomitable spirit, this biographical essay is drawn with equal parts fascination and compassion.

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