



**Andrea Bennett** was born in Livingston, Scotland in 1969. She grew up in the Midlands, and graduated from Sheffield University in Russian and History in the early 1990s. She then spent a good part of that decade – the “Yeltsin Era” – working in Moscow as a translator, and having adventures. She returned to the UK to continue her adventures and has worked in a variety of jobs, including as a civil servant, a local government officer and a charity manager. “Galina Petrovna’s Three-Legged Dog Story” was Andrea’s first attempt at a novel, and she was thrilled when it was accepted for publication by Borough Press via their “Open Submission” competition of spring 2014, when any un-agented and un-published writer could submit a manuscript direct to the publishers for consideration.

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**Look at the book cover, the author’s photograph and short biography :**

- Describe the book cover (and the author). Be as precise as you can.
- Select one or two interesting pieces of information about the author.
- Draw conclusions :
  - o What do you expect the book to be about ?
  - o Imagine who the main character or narrator could be.
  - o In your opinion, where could the book be set ? When ?
  - o Think of a plot. (use your vivid imagination)
- Get ready to report to the class. (speak for two minutes minimum)

## Now read about the book:

Were you right ? About the main character, the setting (time and place), the plot ?

Select information that you think is important.

From what you have learnt so far, would you like to read the book ? Why ? Why not ?

Get ready to report to the class.

## **Synopsis and Reviews**

### Synopsis 1 (from : <http://www.harpercollins.com.au> )

A joyful and hilarious tale of some very spirited septuagenarians as they overcome innumerable obstacles to save their beloved mutt from a heartless exterminator in a land where bureaucracy reigns above all else. Picaresque at its very best. Perhaps you're not a member of the Azov House of Culture Elderly Club? Perhaps you missed the talk on the Cabbage Root Fly last week? Galina Petrovna hasn't missed one since she joined the Club, when she officially became old. But she would much rather be at home with her three-legged dog Boroda. Boroda isn't 'hers' exactly, they belong to each other really, and that's why she doesn't wear a collar. And that's how Mitya The Exterminator got her. And that's why Vasily Semyonovich was arrested. And Galina had to call on Zoya who had to call on Grigory Mikhailovich. And go to Moscow. Filled to the brim with pickle, misadventure and tears, Galina Petrovna's Three-Legged Dog Story will leave you smiling at every page.

### Synopsis 2 (from : <https://www.edbookfest.co.uk>)

Andrea Bennett's debut novel is a story of a three legged dog and some spirited septuagenarians. Andrea Bennett lived and worked in Russia for a good part of the 'Yeltsin years', providing inspiration for the setting of her debut novel *Galina Petrovna's Three-Legged Dog Story*. The novel isn't really the story of Galina Petrova, but of Boroda, her three legged dog. When Boroda is captured by Mitya The Exterminator, some very spirited septuagenarians must overcome innumerable obstacles to save their beloved mutt in a land where bureaucracy reigns. This is an extremely clever, powerful work of fiction which wraps the uncomfortable and unspoken truths of Russia's recent history in a warm, comic layer. Andrea and her novel were discovered by Borough Press through their inaugural Open Submission competition. Over 300 budding authors entered but the publishers said that Bennet's novel stood out 'like a three legged dog'.

## Reviews

The 'bonkers' book that 'it is impossible not to be moved by... It takes a very clever writer to make you both laugh and cry' - [Daily Mail](#)

'A terrific and original debut' - [The Times](#)

‘..what unfolds is a shaggy dog story that is a window on Russian history. A terrific and original debut.’ – [The Times](#)

**Reader's comments (From : rahvaraamat.ee )**

By **Tim** · ★★★★★ · February 25, 2015

Playful, charming, heart-warming, funny and ultimately life-affirming book. A great first novel

By **Becky** · ★★★★★☆ · June 21, 2015

Not as much of a giggle as I was expecting, but still well worth reading. It reminded me of both Everything is Illuminated and Short History of Tractors, both for the central characters and for the general style. Possible shades of 100 Year Old Man also. There are a few moments that made me chuckle, but I think my expectations for humour were too high; mainly I thought this was a rather sweet and somewhat poignant little story.

By **Michael** · ★☆☆☆☆ · March 05, 2015

This was one of the most unpleasant books I have had the misfortune to have read.

If the subject of the story had been any of the ethnic minorities who live in the UK then the book would have been considered a racist tract but because it is about the Russians then anything goes.

According to Bennet there is no saving grace in all the Russian nation. The men are vicious, incompetent drunks who spend all day either getting drunk or recovering from a hangover. Russian women come out of it slightly better, but only just.

As the majority of women are older they are depicted as doddering grandmothers who are barely hanging on to reality, if not suffering from dementia then at least suffering from short term memory loss and forgetting what they were supposed to be doing. Even the only young female to appear for any length of time is not quite right, there are flaws in her looks and her character even though her heart's in the right place.

As for the environment it seems that Bennett has gone though her dictionary in an attempt to use every negative adjective possible. Everything is dirty, everything is decrepit, and everything is in a greater or lesser state of decay. All the people the two old women meet during their trip to Moscow are surly, incompetent and lazy. Corruption is the driving force and without the greasing of palms nothing will get done.

That is, unless they are able to call upon the good offices of a senile old ex-KGB officer – whose role in the Soviet period is never specified.

Although the novel is set in the 1990s, the early years after the dismantling of the Soviet structure, this is nothing other than a Cold War attack upon the Russian people in the guise of 'humour'. I didn't notice any of this 'humour' as the bitterness of Bennett's writing overwhelms any Svejk like situations she seeks to create.

Bennett lived and worked in the country during the period she writes about and it must have been a traumatic experience for her if this novel is the result. It is her first, it is to be hoped it is her last.

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**NOW, PRESENT THE BOOK (PLOT, CHARACTERS AND SETTING), ITS AUTHOR, YOUR EXPECTATIONS AND TELL THE CLASS WHY YOU WOULD OR WOULDN'T LIKE TO READ IT (AND MEET ANDREA BENNETT). (SPEAK FOR 4 MINUTES MINIMUM)**

**NEW VOCABULARY YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE CLASS:**