

# From Russia with love - and much more

SIX years after the release of her last novel, literary powerhouse Andrea Goldsmith explodes back on to the scene with *Invented Lives*.

The work centres on Galina Kogan, a Soviet Jew who emigrates from Russia in the mid-1980s, settling in Australia. In so doing, she leaves behind her country, her memories and a great portion of herself in the search for the next chapter of her life.

Galina is drawn into the lives of Sylvie and Leonard Morrow, and their adult son Andrew — a seemingly picture-perfect family. But as Andrew is irresistibly drawn toward Galina, Sylvie and Leonard's marriage starts to

unravel and bend as 30-year-old secrets bubble up.

*Invented Lives* is seamless historical fiction with attention to detail. It is a heartfelt and human story of exile, love and self-expression, all hypnotically captured by Goldsmith's flare as a wordsmith.

Her depiction of historic settings is utterly immersive. The bitter cold of the USSR contrasts with the seemingly

happy-go-lucky streets and cafes of Melbourne as the reader is transported to another era.

However the work's greatest feature, what truly sets it apart, is its evocative and emotive character construction.

Each character is achingly three-dimensional, palpably true-to-life, and so clearly a product of their environment.

The differences between

Russian and Australian characters, for example — at times subtle, at times seismic — effortlessly work to showcase how human behaviour is shaped as a direct consequence of lived experience.

As if the comparisons and reflections between Leningrad and Melbourne were not already a delight to read, Goldsmith has developed the characters from both cities with such empathy that their emotions are tangible to the reader.

All these features combined, *Invented Lives* is historical fiction meets a slice of life.

Goldsmith's work is unforgettable, literary and beautiful, and profoundly resonates into modern life. **MEL O'CONNOR**



Andrea Goldsmith (pictured) will be appearing at the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre on Monday, April 29, from 6.30pm. Tickets are free for library members. Bookings at [grlc.vic.gov.au/whats-on](http://grlc.vic.gov.au/whats-on)

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