



## Olga and the Smelly Thing from Nowhere

*Elise Gravel*

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Meet Olga, the amazing child scientist who LOVES animals (because they are super-cute)! Brightly.com put this amusing don't-miss book on their "Ultimate Summer Reading List for 9- to 12-Year-Olds"

*Olga and the Smelly Thing from Nowhere* is jam-packed with fun: vibrant illustrations, word bubbles, quirky humor, *olgamus* facts, and plenty of excitement for readers who love making discoveries and meeting new friends. Olga is a charming combination of independent, curious, and smart—making her the coolest girl scientist around—perfect for fans of Dork Diaries and Captain Underpants.

When Olga crosses paths with a weird creature and becomes the first kid to discover the species *olgamus ridiculus*, she is ecstatic! What does an *olgamus* eat? How does it poop? Why does its burp sound like the word *rubber*? With her trusty observation notebook and the help of a librarian, a shopkeeper, and some friends, Olga sets out to do science—learning the facts about her smelly, almost-furry pal and searching for him when he goes missing. The scientific method is the best way to discover anything!

## Olga and the Smelly Thing from Nowhere Details

Date : Published March 14th 2017 by HarperCollins

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Author : Elise Gravel

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## **From Reader Review Olga and the Smelly Thing from Nowhere for online ebook**

### **Mrs. Shaffer says**

Olga, an animal lover, finds an unidentifiable strange and smelly pink creature and sets out to figure out what it is using the scientific method. She chronicles her adventures in her notebook as often-gross hilarity ensues. A diverse cast of characters including wackily portrayed helpful adults, teenybopper mean girls from the neighborhood, and a new friend (plus his endlessly peeing dog) are all giggle-worthy, as is Olga herself.

This was SO WEIRD! And I absolutely loved it! AND, kids will too! I think this has true appeal from 4th grade all the way through 7th, definitely works as a high interest for reluctant readers, or those who won't consider reading anything except Diary of a Wimpy Kid and/or Origami Yoda. Especially perfect for those (ugh, I hate to even type it, but yes) girls who loved Dork Diaries or Amelia's Notebooks but with a fun science angle. Those "can't get enough animal books" kids will love this, too.

Also, it's gross enough and funny enough and weird enough that I'm pretty sure the spunky female protagonist won't be a turnoff to MG guy readers, especially if they're Captain Underpants fans. (And really, who isn't.)

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

ARC from the publisher at ALA

Olga loves animals of all kinds, so when she finds one that looks like a cross between a potato and a hamster, she takes it home and hides it in her room, even though it smells really bad. She tries to find out what it is, even trying to take it into the library past the suspicious eyes of Ms. Swoop, the tattooed punk librarian. With the help of a local store owner, Mr. Hoopah, she does discover that Meh (as she names it) loves to eat olives. When Meh goes missing, she enlists the aid of Chuck, who has a small dog with an overactive bladder. They find the Olgamus in an unlikely place, but are just glad to have the strange animal back and to have made some friends along the way.

**Strengths:** This is a notebook novel, which means that it could be about anything and some of my reluctant readers would check it out.

**Weaknesses:** This was super weird, and mentioned farts and pee more than it needed to. Also, it bothered me that Olga had Captain Crunch eyes-- they are drawn over top of her hair in the same way that Captain Crunch's eyes are drawn on his hat.

**What I really think:** I will probably buy a copy, and students will check it out, but it certainly was not anything that I liked. It feels like letting children eat weird, off brand Pop Tarts from China or Israel for breakfast. You know, the kind you can get at Odd Lots that come in flavors like persimmon or loquat.

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### **Scott Robins says**

So many great things in here - a female protagonist with a science hobby and an obsession with the scientific method, a odd adorable animal creature that she discovers, great messaging about being yourself and not giving into peer pressure, charming and delightful text and illustrations with tons of visual humour. I'm such a huge fan of anything that Gravel does.

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### **Vernon Area Public Library KIDS says**

If you discovered an animal of unknown origin, what would you call it? Perhaps you would name the species after yourself? That's what young animal scientist Olga did when she found an odd-smelling animal that had rainbow-colored poop. She declared the animal "Olgamus Ridiculus" and called it "Meh" after the sound it made. Great for kids who like graphic novels, because there are lots of silly looking pictures. I'm off to read book #2!

Reviewed by Lisa Coleman, Youth and School Services, Vernon Area Public Library

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### **Nick says**

This is a delightfully strange book about a little girl who wants to be a zoologist when she grows up. She finds a mysterious animal who has been eating from her garbage can, and this leads to a very funny, very weird story. Her version of the scientific method was worth the time spent reading the book, all by itself, but her observations and the creature itself were a real treat. Also, I want there to be an outlet of "Stuff 'n' Things 'n' More" in my neighborhood. It's a cross between Archie McPhee's and one of those import shops where you can buy sour-cream-and-onion crickets. The store owner and the librarian character are both delightful. My only problem with the book was the lack of an actual ending. I mean, yes, there were a finite number of pages, and I've finished reading them, but the only satisfying thing about the ending was the recipe for olive and feta cheese muffins. At least, I'd be satisfied if I liked olives with feta cheese, but that's another story. There are just SOOOOO many things left unanswered by the end of this book, including the question of whether there will be a second book to answer the many things left over from this book.

If there is a second book, and if it contains those answers, I will find myself handing both books to everyone I know and saying "Here, read this!"

If there is no second book, I may not be able to forgive the author, because you can't just end a story at that point. It's really not at all fair.

The book is still a lot of fun, though, in a wildly chaotic way.

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### **Angela Tuson says**

For a book featuring a curmudgeonly outcast and an unidentified furry mammal this was extremely enjoyable. This book also has a nice goth librarian, a spider who probably does not speak French, a child-friendly retailer, a realistic small dog, and a boy with scribbled hair. I agree with her (the author/the protagonist)'s sentiment that animals who are non-human ARE way nicer than animals who happen to be human. Speaking from the happy experience of a tenant who's house is invaded by landlords fat furry little pet, the plot of the book was relatable. My little loan pet wombeast and I give it 4 1/2 out of 5. Half a point off for ending too soon.

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### **Trin says**

Funny and weird. Some scatological humor to appeal to those youngins, but it's not excessive. Gravel's art is amusing and expressive, and I like the fact that this is a book about a young girl who's obsessed with SCIENCE!

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### **Yaritza says**

Olga wants to be a animal scientist, who finds an animal who she can't identify. The book has funny illustrations that go through her observation lab. It was such a fun book for young children especially if they love science and animals. Olga is hilarious and very smart. Author did a great job to bring a book that will teach kids about science and the love of animals. If you need a laugh you will want to read this quirky book.

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### **Jordan says**

From Willa:

"It's really funny and it has poop things in it. I like when the animals do farts."

From Lily:

"It is really funny, I agree with Willa. I like the illustrations. My favourite part is when Olga calls a random guy 'Walter' and his shirt says 'I love potatoes.'"

From Jordan:

"This is one of the most enjoyable books to read and laugh with any age. The three of us had a hoot. FIVE STARS!"

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### **Andrea says**

March 15, 2017. A cute little book about a curious girl who finds an unknown animal and has adventures with it. I thought the art was simple, but sweet, the characters were memorable, and the story - engaging. There were all sorts of quirky tidbits here and there and made me laugh out loud. Bonus points for a brief mention of Chris Hatfield! I have no doubt that actual kids will find Olga and Meh impossible to resist.

My only gripe is not even about the book itself, but where these types of stories are taking their messages in general. You know you want to cheer for the underdog, that awkward girl, who might not be popular, but has an amazing personality, right? Empowering kids that do not belong to the clique elite is important, but why do these types of books have to always divide kids into "us" and "them". The quiet smart girl is a hero, but the pretty ones are evil bitches - always! Why is it not okay to be both smart and care for how you look? I found that Olga dismissed and downright judged the Lalas just because they liked to read fashion magazines and idolized a Korean pretty boy. Shouldn't smart girls be above that? Shouldn't we all accept who we are, and that not everyone is into the same things? In the end it was even revealed that the Lalas had some knock

for scientific observation too, which Olga grudgingly accepted. Hopefully there is a lesson to be learned there for the young readers - judging is never smart. I dream of the day when children's books will not lean on old stereotypes of nerds vs. jocks, and just accept that all walks of life are allowed to exist. This rant turned out needlessly long, but I needed to put it out there. Don't let it stop you from checking Elise Gravel's latest book out - it's a great treat.

Oh, and thank you, author, for making me aware that olive and feta cheese muffins are a thing! I'm definitely making those soon. Yum!

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### **Aaron says**

Maybe not everyone will find this one funny, but I found the quirky characters enjoyable, and the toilet humour worked for me. Silly, enjoyable fun for kids that like Diary of a Wimpy Kid (aren't teachers, librarians, and Jeff Kinney tired of reading that! Can't believe I just tapped the words). Second reading was with, mostly by my seven year old. It was a great book to read with her.

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### **Marie Soleil says**

Dans le monde, selon Olga, rien n'est jamais aussi fascinant que l'improbable... Et si, au fond, il suffisait d'y croire pour que ça devienne possible?...

Pour lire le billet que j'ai écrit au sujet de ce livre, sur [lililesmerveilles.com](http://lililesmerveilles.com), c'est par ici!  
<http://www.lililesmerveilles.com/2017...>

[To read my [lililesmerveilles.com](http://lililesmerveilles.com)'s blog post about this book, follow the above link - post is in french]

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### **Pop Bop says**

#### Smarter and Edgier Than You Might Expect

This book is being blurbied as a funsy-sciencey book about a dorky science girl. That's generally true, but it seems to me that there's a lot more, (and more interesting), stuff going on than just that. Olga is more prickly, the adults are more slyly needled, and throwaway lines are edgier than I expected. All of that is fine by me because I think kid readers are a lot quicker on the uptake than some purely poop/fart books give them credit for.

Here, we open with Olga going on at length about how annoying humans are compared to animals. It becomes clear that Olga doesn't have any friends and has minimal social skills. She isn't all adorable charm and spunk. She's sort of grumpy and judgmental. When you consider that the mystery creature's only comment on things is "meh" you can see what I mean about an odd and quirky vibe. If the book had stayed on this grumpy key I might have tired of it. But, once the olgamus shows up Olga has to go out into the world, and with that both she and the book open up.

Olga's research leads her to the library and then a neighborhood store, (for Olgamus food). Both the librarian

and the shopkeeper are unusual adults for a kids book. The tattooed librarian is sort of a whack job and the pink-shirted cowboy-booted free spirit shopkeeper is pretty unique and quirky himself; there are a number of sly little observations about both that might be lost on younger readers but add a little zip to the story.

Throughout we get a lot of sight gags and funny little bits drawn around the margins. (Things like a list of the weird products in the shop, or drawings of real weird creatures, and so on.) We also get a mean girl revelation. Olga doesn't like the sisters who live next door, who feel like mean self-obsessed cliches. But they take on a larger role as the book progresses, and offer up a few good surprises by the end. Indeed, by the end of the book everyone seems to have moved up a bit on the charm and appeal scale, and Olga seems to have grown more than any of them. We end up with a much more appealing, interesting and flexible Olga than we started with.

So, it's funny, it's sciencey, it is as advertised. But there's also some larger message being teased out in the background, which adds a level of interest and appeal beyond just a cute-goofy animal tale. That made this overall an especially interesting and satisfying find.

(Please note that I received a free advance will-self-destruct-in-x-days Adobe Digital copy of this book without a review requirement, or any influence regarding review content should I choose to post a review. Apart from that I have no connection at all to either the author or the publisher of this book.)

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### **Dorine White says**

Olga is a budding scientist. She loves animals and likes to record things in her journal. One day she finds a new species of animal, a smelly, oval, hairy thing that she calls Meh. Using her journal she writes down all of her observations and Meh facts. One day though, Meh disappears and Olga goes out of her mind trying to get him back. Could he have been taken back to his alien planet or be hanging out in the grocery store eating olives?

#### **My Thoughts-**

This is a truly weird story and my eight year old LOVED it. Olga is kooky and loves to categorize things like animal poop and fart sounds. I can not even tell you how weird this book is. Meh is a smelly creature that eats olives and burps. Olga and he/she go on crazy trips around town and meet interesting people. There are images of her journal pages with fun animal facts and also illustrations, all done in black, white and red.

You can't help but laugh at the story and the zany drawings and insights. I kept reading with the hope of finding out what Meh was, but spoiler, turns out you never find out, which would have bugged me, except the whole book had been so strange, that by the end I just shook my head.

Middle graders will love this book. It reminds me of Captain Underpants and other illustrated/story combos. It is a simple read, but all the potty humor and strange scientific revelations keep it fun. It is really hard to give this a score, because the story is short, but I'm just going to give it a 5 for being weirdly odd.

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### **Franki Sibberson says**

Pretty fun book for fans of Wimpy Kid, Captain Underpants, etc. It is nice to have a humorous hybrid book with a female main character took.

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