



# Rus Like Everyone Else: A Novel

*Bette Adriaanse*

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## **Rus Like Everyone Else: A Novel** Bette Adriaanse

Rus is a creature of habit. His mother abandoned him years earlier, leaving him with a shabby, un-permitted apartment and a debit card, from which he withdraws money everyday to purchase his Starbucks drink. When Rus is told by a government agency that his apartment is illegal and not fit for a human occupation, his simple life is turned upside down. For the first time, the unemployed, child-man Rus learns about something truly awful: taxes. Realizing that the debit account is almost empty, Rus panics, and what is left is stolen by a smooth talking Russian submarine captain.

As Rus capitulates to the demands of society and gets a job with the help of a controlling new girlfriend, a local postal worker surveys the other residents of the neighborhood from her apartment window. It is through her omniscient voice that we learn about "everyone else." A secretary struggles to make human connections, or even conversations, while her affair with her lawyer boss isn't helping matters. A delivery man wants to make a name for himself, but his ambitions don't seem to match his immigrant status. A lonely bachelor struggles to overcome his paranoia, and may finally triumph at a rally for the Queen. An old woman named Mrs. Blue compulsively steals hand creams to compensate for the cancellation of her favorite program. And there, inside Mrs. Blue's TV, the star of the soap opera begins to question her existence, as something clearly has gone awry. And at the center of it all is Rus - a sweet and inexperienced soul whose journey captures the daily isolation and confusion most of us are desperately pretending not to notice.

Debut novelist Adriaanse weaves together the intersecting lives of neighbors struggling to live in the modern condition, in a world of corporate sameness and forced interactions, perfectly capturing the struggle for individuality in the post-recession zeitgeist.

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