

Award-Winning Australian Author Amra Pajalić Explores Corruption, Silence, and Institutional Power in New Thriller

Melbourne author, educator, and podcaster Amra Pajalić returns with *Echoes Among the Wattle Pines*, the fourth novel in the gripping Seka Torlak mystery series — a haunting literary thriller set within the polished halls of an elite private school hiding dangerous secrets.

Blending crime fiction, social commentary, and supernatural unease, *Echoes Among the Wattle Pines* follows Bosnian refugee turned journalist Seka Torlak as she goes undercover at the prestigious St Augustine College while hiding from an underworld hitman. What begins as a temporary refuge quickly unravels into a web of scandal involving academic corruption, institutional cover-ups, missing students, and the quiet machinery of reputation management.

Drawing inspiration from real Australian education scandals — including the Ultranet disaster, private school cheating controversies, and fraudulent teaching credential cases — Pajalić examines how institutions entrusted with shaping young people can become consumed by self-preservation.

“Schools are often treated as inherently moral spaces,” says Pajalić. “But they are human institutions, vulnerable to the same corruption, ego, and silence as governments, corporations, and religious organisations. I wanted to explore what happens when protecting reputation becomes more important than protecting students.”

Echoes Among the Wattle Pines combines the tension of investigative crime fiction with literary reflections on institutional power, making it ideal for readers of atmospheric mysteries, socially conscious thrillers, and contemporary Australian fiction.

About the author

Amra Pajalić is an award-winning author, educator, and researcher. Her debut novel, *The Good Daughter*, won the 2009 Melbourne Prize for Literature’s Civic Choice Award, re-released as *Sabiha’s Dilemma* (Pishukin Press, 2022). The anthology she co-edited, *Growing up Muslim in Australia* (Allen and Unwin, 2014, 2019), was shortlisted for the 2015 Children’s Book Council of Australia Eve Pownall Award for Information Books. Her memoir *Things Nobody Knows But Me* (Transit Lounge, 2019) was shortlisted for the 2020 National Biography Award.

She is the author of the Sassy Saints series and the Seka Torlak historical-mystery series, beginning with *Time Kneels Between Mountains*, and the second book *Ghosts Among the Gumtrees*, and companion essay collection that examine the legacy of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide

As a Bosnian author, Pajalić draws on her heritage to craft an own voices narrative that brings authenticity and sensitivity to this harrowing topic. She is completing a PhD in Creative Writing thesis examining the role of historical fiction in preserving and interpreting memories of the Bosnian Genocide.



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Praise

Ghosts Among the Gumtrees, was longlisted for the Adaptable program, while *Time Kneels Between Mountains* was praised by Kirkus Reviews as “an assiduously researched, clear-eyed depiction of genocide.”

Purchase links

<https://www.amrapajalic.com/echoes.html>

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