

War Criminals Walk Free in Australia: New Novel Exposes Genocide Denial and the Fight for Justice

Award-winning author Amra Pajalić tears open one of the most uncomfortable truths of Australia's post-war migrant story in her new novel, *Ghosts Among the Gumtrees*—a gripping tale of survival, justice, and reckoning.

Set in Melbourne in 1997, *Ghosts Among the Gumtrees* follows Seka Torlak, a young Bosnian refugee rebuilding her life after surviving the genocide in Srebrenica. Her fragile new beginning shatters the moment she recognises a familiar face on a suburban street: the man responsible for her father's death—now living freely in Australia, blending into the quiet façade of everyday life.

Through Seka's eyes, readers are confronted with the devastating reality that justice doesn't always follow trauma—that some perpetrators live comfortably in new countries, untroubled by the horrors they inflicted. Pajalić draws directly on the historical record of war criminals who entered Western countries under false pretences, as well as the persistent machinery of genocide denial that continues to operate today.

Pajalic states "I wanted to explore the reality of the aftermath of the Srebrenica genocide where survivors were not only grappling with all they lost, but also with the fact that perpetrators were living normal lives, untouched by the law.

This is the second novel in Pajalić's Seka Torlak series, following *Time Kneels Between Mountains*, and continues her mission to illuminate untold histories through rigorous research and lived experience. It is an unflinching, necessary narrative for readers of historical, literary, and crime 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, Pajalic 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

Shortlisted for the 2026 *Adaptable – Turning the Page to Screen Award* by Queensland Writers Centre and received an opportunity to pitch work to screenwriters, producers and industry professionals at Market Day

Purchase links

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

Categories

Mystery, Crime, Thriller, Suspense, Historical

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