

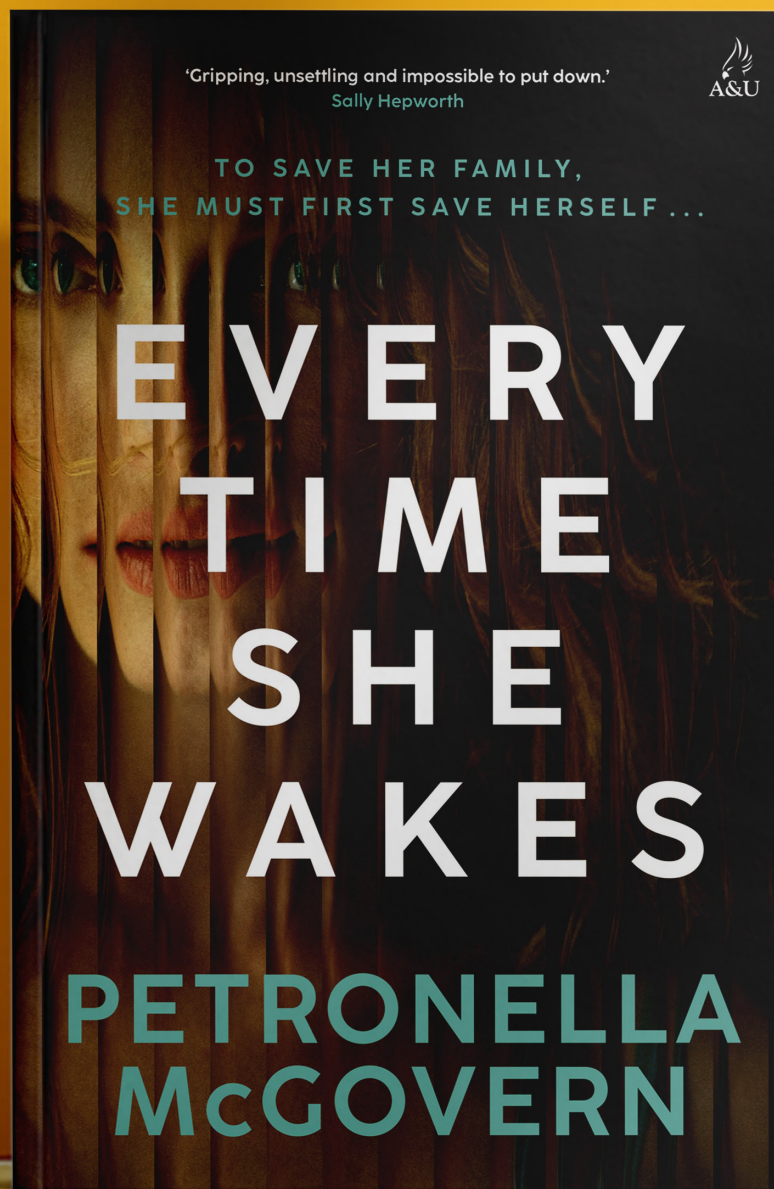


ALLEN & UNWIN

AUSTRALIAN. INDEPENDENT. FOR READERS.

READING GROUP NOTES

EVERY TIME SHE WAKES



ABOUT *EVERY TIME SHE WAKES*

Every Time She Wakes is a taut, time-bending thriller about family, identity and defying fate.

When careers counsellor Suze and her family are kidnapped from their home during a bushfire emergency, she thinks it's the end—until the van crashes and sends her two weeks back in time.

Only Suze remembers the terror that came before. Is it all in her mind?

Then it happens again. And again.

With every loop, her world twists into a new version of itself. Suze must work out why this keeps happening and who is behind the kidnappings. But she's running out of time to save her family and wake up in a world she recognises.

A twisty page-turner about how far we'll go to protect what matters most.

MEET PETRONELLA McGOVERN

Petronella McGovern is fascinated by what makes us tick, the lies we tell, and the secrets we keep. She is the best-selling author of *Every Time She Wakes*, *The Last Trace*, *The Liars*, *The Good Teacher* and *Six Minutes*. Her gripping storylines keep readers turning the pages late into the night. Her books have been nominated for a number of awards. Petronella grew up on a farm in central west NSW and lives on the northern beaches in Sydney.

You can follow Petronella on:

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Credit: Giles Park Photography, 2020

Q&A WITH PETRONELLA McGOVERN

What was the main inspiration behind *Every Time She Wakes*?

Have you ever wondered about how a decision you made years ago still shapes your life now? And what if you'd made a different choice back then ...

When a pivotal moment came for me on 1 November 1997, I didn't even realise how my life was about to change. I was invited to two weddings on the same day on opposite sides of the country. Unable to afford a flight to Perth, I apologised to my friend and caught a bus to the wedding in Canberra ... where I met my future husband. I wonder what would have happened if I'd gone to Perth instead? Would I ever have met Jamie? Would our children exist?

And even further back than that ... if my parents hadn't migrated to Australia, who and where would I be now?

These are some of the thoughts which led me to write *Every Time She Wakes*. But as it's a psychological thriller, I've set up many more twists and turns!

In the book, Suze talks to her students about their childhood dreams. Did you have a dream career when you were young?

From when I was little, I loved reading books and writing stories but I didn't think that could be a real career. In high school, I was trying to choose between working in communications, becoming a vet or an early childhood educator. Such different careers with different skillsets! I did work experience in all three and enjoyed each of them but decided I liked writing best. So I studied a communications degree and found a job in the marketing department of a business publisher. (At one point, I actually wanted to become a journalist but I was too shy about interviewing people.)

In my mid-twenties, I helped my veterinarian brother-in-law deliver chihuahua pups and I was so amazed by the experience that I considered changing careers. Instead I took a gap year and travelled overseas where I worked as a camp counsellor in America and a legal secretary in England. When I returned, I moved into a publications role in a university and began interviewing people for articles, despite my shyness. These days, I've overcome my nerves and I love interviewing other writers on stage ... and I'm finally living my dream career as an author.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. Suze is at a transition point in her life, about to resign from her career, going through perimenopause, and with her eldest child becoming an adult. Why do you think she feels that she has lost herself? Could she have done things differently?
2. The story occurs during a bushfire crisis and Rowdy Mac tells everyone to stay and defend their properties. Do you feel as strongly as Suze about this dangerous advice? Would people follow his instructions?
3. When Suze first listens to the situation between Client A and Client B, she believes Client A. Specific stalking laws were introduced in NSW in 2007, with the legal definition expanded in 2024. How has the public's understanding of stalking changed over the past two decades?
4. In a careers counselling session, Suze talks about childhood dreams and how they can be narrow because children don't see many jobs. Did you have a dream job when you were little?
5. 'While some parents encourage their kids to follow their passion, others use them to fulfil their own dreams. And some can't see past their own self-limiting beliefs.' How are parent-child relationships explored in this story?
6. Clio's parents have posted videos of her on social media since she was a baby. She says she didn't give her consent. Do you think it's fair for parents to show off their children in this way?
7. Suze is confused by her sense of déjà vu while Johanna is fascinated by the unknown capacities of the brain and her twins swear they're telepathic. As the physicist Emerson M. Pugh noted: *If the human brain were so simple that we could understand it, we would be so simple that we couldn't.* Have you ever experienced something you can't rationally explain?
8. Who did you think was responsible for kidnapping the Vitale family? Was the answer a surprise or were you expecting that scenario?
9. The story ends with one last twist. What do you think will happen next?
10. Is there a moment in your life to which you look back and wonder what if you'd made a different decision?
11. *The best way to predict your future is to create it.* Suze sees this quote over and over in different places. Do you agree with it?
12. 'From up here, it's clear how everything we do has a ripple effect. Each person's joy, pain, success and suffering is entwined with another's. As are the stories we pass down, the beliefs we instil in each other and in ourselves.' Think about your relationships and the ripple effect we all have on each other now and across generations.