

A gem of a debut novel by award-winning playwright George Kemp, about small-town lives and the search for genuine sustenance in a fast-food world.

'Full of spark and love, *Soft Serve* is fiercely tender and moving.' Favel Parrett

Stuck in a regional McDonald's, as bushfires close in, three twenty-somethings and their dead friend's mum all face a reckoning. Fern longs for Ethan, Ethan longs for Jacob, and Jacob struggles to long for anything. Meanwhile, Pat just wants her grief to ease up.

Soft Serve proves that small-town lives are huge, and that anyone can get stuck in limbo between their past and their hoped-for future. From celebrated playwright and actor George Kemp comes this charming and poignant novel: it's drive-thru Chekhov ... full of wit and heart.

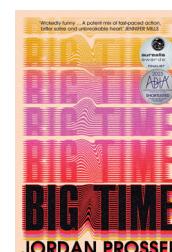
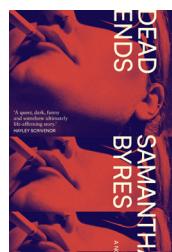
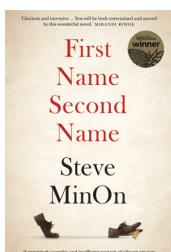


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

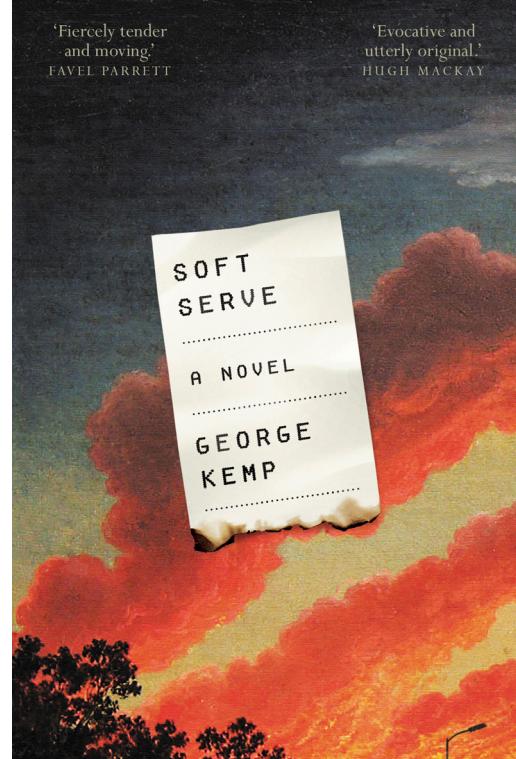
George Kemp is a writer for stage, page and screen, based on Gadigal land. He was selected to be part of the Faber Academy in 2023–24, during which he completed the first draft of *Soft Serve*. His award-winning play *Shack* has been performed frequently around the country and internationally, and is included on the new NSW Drama Curriculum.

George has had a successful career as an actor across Australia and England, in productions such as *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Sydney Theatre Company) and national and international tours of *The Play That Goes Wrong* and *Peter Pan Goes Wrong*. He is also a passionate educator and mentor of actors and writers and is currently Producer, New Writing & Artist Development at Australian Theatre for Young People. *Soft Serve* is his debut novel.

FURTHER READING



Soft Serve George Kemp



'Fiercely tender and moving.'
FAVEL PARRETT

'Evocative and utterly original.'
HUGH MACKAY

BOOK DETAILS

B-format paperback | 978 0 7022 6913 4
\$29.99

'A scorching novel about small-town grief, queer yearning and the rituals that keep us connected. George Kemp's debut is full of complicated humanity, dark laughs and endless compassion – and makes him one to watch.'

Benjamin Law

'This exquisite book grabbed my heart and held it long after it ended. Every character is drawn with the greatest affection, exploring the beauty and fragility of loss and love.'

Heather Mitchell

QUESTIONS OVER PAGE

Questions

1. What are some similarities and differences in the way Pat, Fern, Ethan and Jacob are navigating their grief?
2. What did Taz offer to Fern, Jacob and Ethan individually while he was alive? What did his death mean to each of them?
3. If you had to pick one image from the book that has stayed with you, what would it be and why?
4. The book is billed as 'drive-thru Chekhov'. Why do you think this is? Are there any motifs, themes or resonances that you recognised from the work of Anton Chekhov?
5. Is there anything in the book that spoke to you in relation to any grief that you have experienced in your life?
6. What is the role of Lotte in the book? What does she offer the reader?
7. How does the book's setting – a small Australian town – illuminate the characters' struggles, specifically in terms of queerness?
8. Which character do you think changes the most across the course of the book?
9. Are there multiple ways in which the book's title could be interpreted? What could they be?
10. There is tension between Pat's Generation X sensibilities and those of the younger Generation Z characters. How do you see these tensions?
11. What does the book consider to be some of the obstacles facing Generation Z today? Do you agree?
12. Where do you see these characters in five years' time? Have they found a sense of purpose? Are they happy?