



pregnant daughter, to high-stakes drama.

FILTHY ANIMALS by Brandon Taylor (*Daunt Books*) The follow-up to his Booker-shortlisted novel, *Real Life*, is a subtle and assured series of short stories, some linked, exploring aggression, thwarted ambition, sexuality, race and loneliness.

A GOOD WINTER by Gigi Fenster (*Text Publishing*) A gripping portrait of obsession and jealousy by the author of *Feverish*, in which a woman in an apartment block in an unnamed city develops an unhealthy fixation on another woman and her grieving daughter and grandchild.

GREAT CIRCLE by Maggie Shipstead (*Doubleday*) This ambitious, expansive, Booker-shortlisted novel is a brilliant example of

the art of storytelling, with a bold and fearless female protagonist at its centre.

GRETA & VALDIN by Rebecca K Reilly (*VUP*) A smart and funny novel in which two siblings, among a large cast of smart, funny, weird Auckland people, navigate life, love, politics and society.

THE HUMMINGBIRD by Sandro Veronesi (*We&N*) A clever, comedic and highly entertaining family saga set over decades, from one of Italy's leading writers, concerning Dr Marco Carrera, who, like the titular bird, is small and agile, dealing with everything life throws at him.

ISOBAR PRECINCT by Angelique Kasmar (*Cuba Press*) If we were able to rewrite our lives, what would be the cost? Original and

stylish speculative debut, with a diverse cast, some of whom witness a grisly murder among the gravestones of Auckland's Symonds St cemetery. But where is the body?

KLARA AND THE SUN by Kazuo Ishiguro (*Faber*) In a near-future, Klara is an Artificial Friend displayed in the window of a shop waiting to be taken home. The Nobel Prize-winning author, leaning again into speculative fiction, puts us into her point of view, allowing the reader to gain clarity of the world's wider circumstance, with which comes our increasing dread.

LIGHT PERPETUAL by Francis Spufford (*Faber*) This justly Booker-longlisted tour de force starts with a German bomb wiping out a class of children in the invented London

suburb of Bexford in 1944. The lovingly detailed futures Spufford creates for five survivors over the decades are deeply moving.

LOOP TRACKS by Sue Orr (*VUP*) A compassionate, unflinching story that opens with a young woman in the 1970s intending to flee to Sydney for an abortion but who changes her mind. It then opens up into a complex and remarkable novel that grapples with intergenerational trauma and a freight train of political and social issues.

THE MAGICIAN by Colm Tóibín (*Viking*) A big, meaty novel that is illuminating, sometimes funny and often disturbing, in which the great Irish novelist explores the peculiar life and family of the great German novelist Thomas Mann.

MATRIX by Lauren Groff (*William Heinemann*) Cast out of the 12th-century royal court by Eleanor of Aquitaine, the orphaned teen Marie de France is sent to England to be the new prioress of a poor abbey in this imaginative novel by the author of *Fates and Furies*.

NO ONE IS TALKING ABOUT THIS by Patricia Lockwood (*Bloomsbury*) A staggeringly assured debut about how the boundless creativity of the internet has a terrible, deadening effect on our lives and individuality. Online had "been the place where you sounded like yourself. Gradually it had become the place where we sounded like each other."

OH WILLIAM! by Elizabeth Strout (*Viking*) The Pulitzer Prize-winner's

