

SONYA WILSON

AUTHOR/JOURNALIST/DIRECTOR OF KIWI CHRISTMAS BOOKS

*Sonya's most recent work was **Spark Hunter**, a novel for readers aged 10+ set in the wilds of Fiordland National Park.*

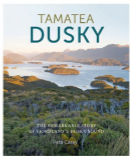
My books of the year include: *The Animals in That Country* by Laura Jean McKay. The premise is remarkably prescient, but also completely mad in the best possible way. The writing and the characters are wild and captivating and utterly convincing. I was astounded by this book.

Isobar Precinct by Angelique Kasmaria is a unique, mind and time-bending book set around Auckland's K'Road. *Crazy Love* by Rosetta Allan is based on the author's real life; I was fascinated by Rosetta's experience and couldn't put it down. *Violet Black* by Eileen Merriman is a fantastic read for teens and the first in a trilogy that kids will love.

A Clear Dawn voices from Aotearoa New Zealand edited by Paula Morris and Alison Wong is a beautiful objet d'art and wonderful to read - it's packed with talented Kiwi poets, essayists and fiction writers. And *Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow* by Jessica Townsend. I was late discovering this series but I absolutely love it. It's funny and smart and magical, and I'm looking forward to reading more.

I finally got around to reading the Booker Prize-winning *Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart which was excellent, but upon reflection, possibly not the best choice to cheer myself up during an extended lockdown!

My shopping list for friends and whānau this Christmas includes Steph Matuku's *Falling into Rarohenga*, Kirsten McDougall's *She's a Killer*,



Endless Sea by Frances Walsh and Jane Ussher, Tracey Slaughter's new short story collection *Devil's Trumpet* and Brannavan Gnanalingam's *Sprigs*.

I want to receive so many books! Every week there's another excellent Kiwi book published that I want to read; I suppose what I really need is the gift of time to read them. There are two big, beautiful, heavy-to-hold books on my Christmas list right now though: Peta Carey's *Tamatea Dusky* and Geoff Norman's *Birdstories*. Hint hint, Santa.



T OF READING