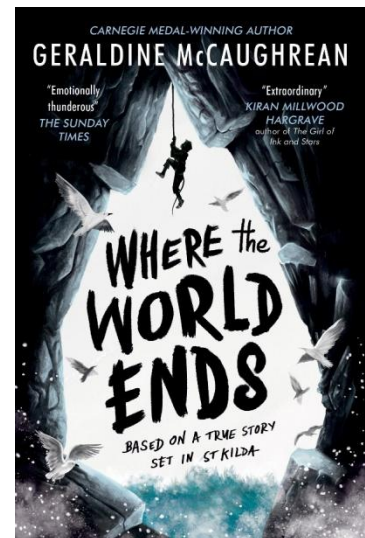


## 2018 Carnegie Medal shortlist Talking Points

Title: **WHERE THE WORLD ENDS**  
Author: **Geraldine McCaughrean**  
Publisher: **Usborne**



### STARTING OUT

This is the book's brilliant opening sentence: "His mother gave him a new pair of socks, a puffin to eat and a kiss on the cheek." What does that lead you to expect from this book?

The book is based – at least loosely – on a true story. Does knowing this change how you as a reader think of it?

### SETTING

It's a real place, and a specific moment in time – how does Geraldine McCaughrean bring to life the setting and the period in which her characters live?

In what ways is their time – its customs, its myths, its beliefs – different from ours?

If you've read Geraldine McCaughrean before, you'll know she writes books that take us all over, in time but also in place. What's the appeal to a reader of a book like this that takes you somewhere quite new?

### CHARACTERS

The characters are very much of their own time, too, rather than modern characters dropped into a historical setting. What struck you as surprising about their attitudes, their reactions to events, their beliefs?

These young men are in theory on a common mission – but do they all have the same motivations for being there?

There are quite a few named characters – mostly comparable backgrounds, mostly youngish, mostly male, etc. – how distinct did you find them? Did McCaughrean manage to make them and their voices different from one another?



The CILIP Carnegie  
& Kate Greenaway  
Children's Book  
Awards

There is one character whose identity is revealed along the way to be not what we'd been told – did it surprise you? Why do you think McCaughrean does this?

Many of the “characters” populating this setting are birds, some of which are important to the story. Do you think they have a symbolic role in the story, do they have some meaning, or are they basically just there for atmosphere?

## REALISM

The story is very extreme in some ways – but does McCaughrean manage to make it feel realistic, too? (And if so, what makes it believable?)

The author doesn't shy away from the darker things here – the violence, the injury, the suffering, the death; do you think these things are handled well? Is it important to deal with them truthfully in a story like this?

The characters are said to live in the present: “They lived in the Present: the Past was past mattering, the Future a shapeless improbability.” What do you think that means, in the context of this story?

## ENDING

The book needs an ending that balances truthfulness with some kind of hope for the future – do you think the author gets this balance right at the end?

There's a saying quoted at the end: “After the world ends, only music and love will survive” – are we supposed to think there's some kind of redemption here?

The characters who survive the events of the book choose not to remember their experiences after it's all over – but have they learned something? And was it good they went, after all?

## AND FINALLY...

Does this Carnegie-shortlisted book deserve to win? Why, or why not?



The CILIP Carnegie  
& Kate Greenaway  
Children's Book  
Awards