



Where the World Ends is an extraordinary story of eight boys stranded on a rock in the middle of the sea. Every summer a group of boys are put ashore on a remote stac to hunt for wild seabirds (fowling). But this year no-one arrives to take them home. They are left cold, starving and clinging to life in the grip of a murderous ocean. This is an incredible tale of endurance and fortitude set on a backdrop of extraordinary beauty.



Geographical context

St Kilda is an isolated archipelago off the west coast of Scotland. The island of Hirta is the largest in this group measuring 3.4 km from east to west and 3.3 km from north to south. The island had approximately 180 residents in the 17th Century, but the last 30 were evacuated to the mainland.



Geraldine McCaughrean is an award winning novelist. She has written over 170 books which have been sold in 61 countries and translated into many languages. She has won the Carnegie Medal twice; an award for young fiction. She says, “I have a very clever older brother called Neil. When I was young, everything he did, I wanted to do. So when, at 14, he had a book published, that became a great ambition of mine.”



Stac an Amin

A protruding rock in the middle of a large body of water. Stac an Amin is the largest sea stack in the St Kilda archipelago and the tallest in the British Isles measuring 196m tall. Climbing the rock was once done to collect eggs but is now a sport.

Key Term	Definition
fowling	The hunting of birds for sport, food or any other commercial value. In the Western Isles of Scotland seabirds were taken from their nests on the edge of cliffs.
Archipelago	A sea or body of water having many islands spread out across an area. The St Kilda archipelago is the home of Hirta, the setting of the story.
Epidemic	A widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time.
Gannett	A gannet is a type of seabird that typically lays one blue egg. The name derives from Latin meaning foolish. The United Kingdom is home to two thirds of the world’s population. They have large webbed feet which they use for warming their eggs.
Scottish Gaelic	An indigenous language native to Scotland. IN 2011 57,300 people reported being able to speak Gaelic (1.1% of the population. There has recently been a language revival.