



# To the Edge of the World

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Reviewer:

[Jane Churchill](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

Set on a remote island off the West coast of Scotland this is an atmospheric and vivid adventure. Jamie and his family have moved from the mainland to be nearer his grandparents and to escape the relentless bullying at his previous school. He misses his father who only returns from the mainland one weekend in two as his work is still in Glasgow. Jamie is largely left to his own devices in the holidays helping in his grandfather's boatshed, playing football with friends or walking on the beach. He is terrified of the sea though and keeps well away from the water's edge. One day he is surprised to see pawprints in the sand and a boat tacking along the shore sailed by a girl he has never seen before. He envies her confidence and ability to handle the boat.

When Jamie asks about the girl his grandfather tells him she lives with her mother but no-one knows much about them as they keep to themselves. Jamie is intrigued and gradually he and the girl Mara develop a tentative friendship. Jamie adores her dog Django and little by little he conquers his fear of the sea as Mara teaches him to sail and even to swim. But Mara has an odd obsession with the uninhabited islands further out to sea especially St Kilda and talks about them constantly.

One day Jamie spots Mara readying the boat for a journey and he realises what she is about to do. He surprises her and although he cannot convince her to stay he cannot let her go alone so finds himself a semi-willing accomplice in her journey to the remote and desolate island of St Kilda. Their epic journey is both gripping and perilous. Jamie comes to understand that Mara's life is not that easy and she may be neglected. And Mara has her own demons to deal with as she has never been to formal school and does not want to go to the secondary school off the island. Both children face extreme peril and danger dealing with storms, strong tides yet eventually landing on St Kilda. It is Jamie who finally persuades Mara they must then return home as their supplies begin to run out.

Julia Green's connection with nature is very strong and the depiction of the wild beauty and power of the wind, waves and how life or death can hang on a knife edge is portrayed extremely well. It is beautifully written although I did feel it stretched credulity in a few places and Mara's mother's difficulties were perhaps glossed over a little. The story gives a powerful message about facing up to your fears and being true to yourself.

**Julia Green** [writes about island stories](#) [4] for **Books for Keeps**.

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