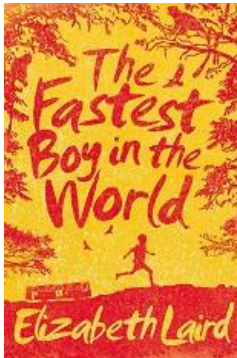


TALKING POINTS CILIP Carnegie Medal Shortlist 2015



THE FASTEST BOY IN THE WORLD By Elizabeth Laird



The setting

Before reading, did you know anything about the country where this book is set? Did reading the book make you want to learn more?

Solomon describes his own home, and Kidame, and Addis Ababa, and feels quite differently about each one. Does this make you think differently about your own home?

Solomon observes that people behave differently towards one another in a big city. Can you think of some examples?

Grandfather

Grandfather is important to Solomon, but do you think he's a sympathetic character?

How does Solomon's view of him change over the course of the book?

Grandfather never shared the story of his past. Why did he keep his secret all this time?

Were there any clues to allow you to guess what might happen to grandfather at the end of the book?

Running

Why is running important to Solomon? Why does he want to be a runner?

After the thrill of seeing the Olympic runners pass by, Solomon says that suddenly his vision had exploded in his head. What do you think it was?

That moment of watching history happening before him makes Solomon proud, he says. What is he proud of?

Running isn't all about your legs and arms, says Solomon. What really matters is what's going on inside your head. What do you think he means by that?





Friendship

In Addis Ababa, Solomon is distrustful of everyone . even of Kebede, the friend he makes there; why do you think that might be?

Solomon and Kebede have very different lives. What are the things each envies of the other?

One of the things Solomon learns about Grandfather is that he, too, used to have a best friend when he was young. Do you think this changes how he feels towards him?

Elizabeth Laird ends the book with the image of another boy, watching Solomon at the airport . why do you think she chose this image to end on?

How the story is told

Solomon tells us his story directly in the first person . as the story progresses, do you feel like you get to know him like a real person?

What do the illustrations add to your reading of the story?

