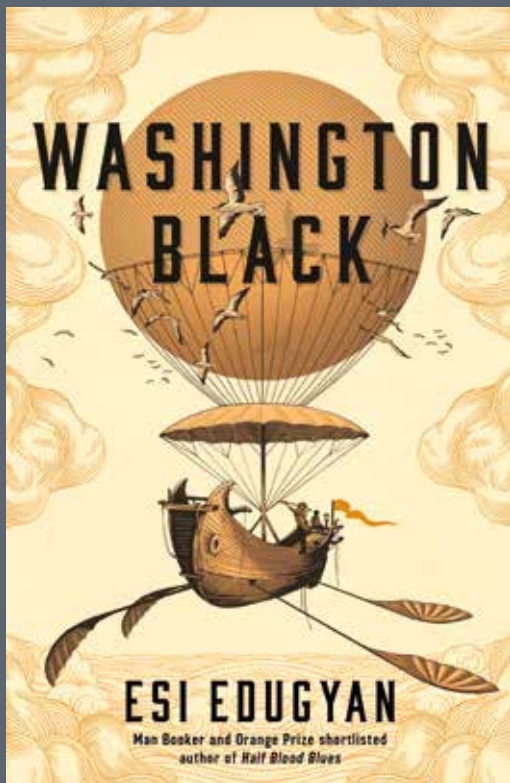




Readers' Guide



Other novels by Esi Edugyan
Half Blood Blues (2011)
The Second Life of Samuel Tyne (2004)
Dreaming of Elsewhere: Observations on Home (1993)

Washington Black Esi Edugyan

Serpent's Tail

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About the author	<p>Esi Edugyan was born in Calgary, Canada, in 1977. Her novel <i>Half Blood Blues</i> won the Scotiabank Giller Prize, was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, and was a finalist for the Governor-General's Literary Award, the Rogers Writers' Trust Prize and the Orange Prize. She lives in Victoria, British Columbia.</p>
About the book	<p>Escape is only the beginning. From the brutal cane plantations of Barbados to the icy wastes of the Canadian Arctic, from the mud-filled streets of London to the eerie deserts of Morocco, <i>Washington Black</i> is the tale – inspired by a true story – of a world destroyed and the search to make it whole again.</p> <p>When two English brothers take the helm of a Barbados sugar plantation, <i>Washington Black</i> – an eleven year-old field slave – finds himself selected as personal servant to one of these men. The eccentric Christopher 'Titch' Wilde is a naturalist, explorer, scientist, inventor and abolitionist, whose single-minded pursuit of the perfect aerial machine mystifies all around him.</p> <p>Titch's idealistic plans are soon shattered and Washington finds himself in mortal danger. They escape the island together, but then Titch disappears and Washington must make his way alone, following the promise of freedom further than he ever dreamed possible.</p>
What the judges thought	<p>"A dazzling exploration of race in the Atlantic world, which also manages to be a yarn and a chase story. A book of extraordinary political and racial scope, <i>Washington Black</i> is wonderfully written, extremely imaginative, profoundly engaging and filled with an empathetic understanding of characters who are uprooted from places they knew and required to make adjustments in worlds they could barely have dreamt of. It manages to keep you on the edge of your seat, while making you, as a reader, want to savour every moment."</p>
Discussion points	<p>Washington is only 11 when he becomes a personal servant. What impact do you think his age has throughout the book?</p> <p>Do you think that his name is relevant in any way?</p> <p>How does the relationship between Christopher and Washington develop?</p> <p>Why is travel so important within the novel?</p>
Themed reading	<p>Colson Whitehead <i>The Underground Railroad</i> James McBride <i>The Good Lord Bird</i> Mat Johnson <i>Pym</i> Jane Harris <i>Sugar Money</i> David McCullough <i>The Wright Brothers</i></p>
Useful links	<p>https://www.cbc.ca/books/esi-edugyan-on-making-history-and-inspiring-a-new-generation-of-black-writers-1.4544905</p> <p>https://www.publishersweekly.com/9780525521426?permaore</p> <p>https://quillandquire.com/authors/writing-the-blues/</p>