



Half-Blood Blues by Esi Edugyan

About the author:

Esi Edugyan's most recent novel, *Half Blood Blues*, won the 2011 Scotiabank Giller Prize for Fiction. It was a finalist for the Man Booker Prize, the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction, the Rogers Writers Trust Fiction Prize, and was longlisted for the 2012 Orange Prize for Fiction.

Edugyan has held fellowships in the US, Scotland, Iceland, Germany, Hungary, Finland, Spain, and Belgium. She lives in Victoria, British Columbia, with her husband and daughter.

Source: Author's website (<http://www.esiedugyan.com>)

About this book:

Berlin, 1939. A young, brilliant trumpet-player, Hieronymus, is arrested in a Paris cafe. The star musician was never heard from again. He was twenty years old. He was a German citizen. And he was black.

Fifty years later, Sidney Griffiths, the only witness that day, still refuses to speak of what he saw. When Chip Jones, his friend and fellow band member, comes to visit, recounting the discovery of a strange letter, Sid begins a slow journey towards redemption.

From the smoky bars of pre-war Berlin to the salons of Paris, Sid leads the reader through a fascinating, little-known world, and into the heart of his own guilty conscience.

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Half-Blood Blues is an electric, heart-breaking story about music, race, love and loyalty, and the sacrifices we ask of ourselves, and demand of others, in the name of art.

Source: Author's website (<http://www.esiedugyan.com>)

Discussion Questions:

1. To what end does the novel take the reader back and forth in time and place, from Berlin to Paris in the 1930s and 40s and Europe in the 1990s? How does this affect the reader?
2. Delilah is a major female character in an otherwise largely male populated novel. How does she push against the gender relations in the novel, and how does her romantic involvement with the other characters affect the reader's sense of her character? Would you describe her as an early feminist?
3. Do you think that Sid, the narrator, is at the heart of *Half Blood Blues*? Whose novel is this?
4. *Half-Blood Blues* explores, among other things, the jazz era of the 1930s. In what ways does jazz affect the novel's structure, the voice of its characters, the tone of the book?
5. One reviewer criticized the novel on the grounds that the Afro-German experience has been sidelined. How does telling Hiero's story from the point-of-view of a different character affect it? What are the moral implications of doing so?

Source: *The Man Booker Prize* (<http://www.themanbookerprize.com>)

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- eBook

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