

## Six books at the local library to read this Black History Month

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Shelburne Library is celebrating Black History Month by honouring the works of black authors.

Here are six books Shelburne's Librarians suggest checking out this month.

### **Adults: Washington Black by Esi Edugyan**

Winner of the 2018 Scotiabank Giller Prize, *Washington Black* follows the story of an eleven-year-old field slave in Barbados, who finds himself chosen to live in the quarters of a new master ? Christopher Wilde. Following the death of a man one night, George Washington ?Wash? Black's life is endangered and what follows is a flight around the coast of America.

?A triumphant story that takes a man from the depths, cruelty and turmoil of slavery to a life of dignity and meaning,? said Shelburne Library CEO, Rose Dotten. ?Beautifully written and deeply moving in the way that leads us to question, what really is freedom.?

### **Shame on Me by Tessa McWatt**

Published in 2019, Tessa McWatt's memoir *Shame on Me: An Anatomy of Race and Belonging* became a Bocas Prize winner for Non-Fiction in 2020, and a finalist for the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize.

?The exploration of her multiracial background brings the author from a child singled out at school, to her questioning the images of power and privilege, of denial and shade of skin and shapes of faces,? said Dotten. ?Her investigation takes her part by part through the markers of racial identity. Sensitive and insightful it is a must read about the stereotypes of race.

### **Young Adult: This Book Is Anti-Racist by Tiffany Jewell**

A guided journal with more than 50 activities, *This Book Is Anti-Racist*, allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of their anti-racist self. Through each chapter the reader is guided through topics such as the history of racism, how one can disrupt racism, and how you can use your anti-racist lens and voice to move towards equity.

?This book is a concise tool one can use to assess the world and our own prejudices. This book is very visually appealing, and eloquently details the histories we weren't taught in school and allows readers to really internalize the messages in each chapter,? said Jade Wyse, YA Librarian. ?Tiffany Jackson is also the author of many thrilling YA fiction books.?

### **Charming As A Verb by Ben Philippe**

From the award-winning author of *The Field to North American Teenager* comes the 2020 romantic comedy novel *Charming as a Verb*. Dubbed a perfect novel for fans of Jenny Han and Nicola Yoon, *Charming as a Verb* centres around first-generation Haitian, Halti, and his ?intense? classmate and neighbour Corinne Troy.

?This book is laugh-out-loud funny, featuring a first-generation Haitian, Halti, who can charm just about anyone using one of his situation-appropriate smiles; a skill that comes in hand for his (sort of) shady dog walking business. Halti makes a decision that will not only impact his future plans, but also has consequences for his love-interest and her family,? explains Wyse.

### **Children: Thank you, Omu! by Oge Mora**

Published in 2018, Thank you, Omu! is a debut work for author and illustrator Oge Mora. The picture book takes children through the story of Omu's delicious stew, which everyone in the neighbourhood dreams of tasting, and brings to life the topics of sharing and community through its colourful illustration. An author's note shares the deeper meaning and significance of the name 'Omu' to author Mora.

'The art is beautiful and full of texture,' said Children's Librarian, Brittany Hooker. 'It makes you feel part of something big—a real sense of community.'

### **Shhh! The Baby's Asleep by JaNay Brown-Wood**

Shhh! The Baby's Asleep, you'd guess it means the baby is finally asleep. Focused on the noises that family members make from Mom to Dad, Grammy to Pop Pop and even the dog, Shhh! The Baby's Asleep, introduces a narrator who knows how to get his baby sister asleep.

'This book shows the quirky and funny side of family life,' said Hooker. 'Lovely cadences of rhythm in her language.'

As part of their Black History Month Celebration, the Shelburne Public Library has created a digital challenge on the Beanstack platform. The activities encourage participants to learn about the ways Black Canadians have shaped Canada's history and identity through activism, storytelling, and art.

The Shelburne Public Library has many more books by Black authors that can be found on the Beanstack platform, which is downloadable from the app store or through the local library's website.