



As Flies to Whatless Boys

Robert Antoni

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Finalist for the 2014 OCM Bocas Prize!

One of Edwidge Danticat's Best Books of 2013, the *New Yorker*

A Favorite Novel of 2013, *Tin House*

"William's account of young love attests to Antoni's fluency in the poetry of nostalgia. In words as vibrant as the personalities he creates, Antoni deftly captures unconquered territories and the risks we're willing to take exploring them."

--*Publishers Weekly*

"A rollicking 19th-century colonial tale blends history with imagination."

--*Library Journal*

"The emotional influence of Willy's narrative—his loving descriptions of the people who surround him—is profoundly effective...Strikes strong emotional chords."

--*Kirkus Reviews*

"Antoni...has written a novel epic in scope that...is driven by outbursts of fine writing."

--*Booklist*

"This tragic historical novel, accented with West Indian cadence and captivating humour, provides an unforgettable glimpse into 19th-century T&T. The book's narrator, Willy, falls headover-heels for the enthralling and wise Marguerite Whitechurch. Coming from the gentry, Marguerite is a world away from Willy's labouring class."

--*The Trinidad Guardian*, one of the Best Caribbean Books of the Year

"A bittersweet coming-of-age tale of tragedy, chicanery, high ideals, harsh realities, and the hard choice between love and family duty, *As Flies to Whatless Boys* is highly recommended."

--*Midwest Book Review*

"*As Flies to Whatless Boys* is a kind of complex word game, a historical narrative in a lilting Caribbean accent, wrapped around with an oddball love story in a wild form of English that seems to create itself as it goes along. In between, snippets of contemporary records provide foils for both these linguistic inventions."

--*Historical Novel Society*

"Antoni has a fine ear for cultural tensions and a wicked sense of humor."

--*Ocean Drive Magazine*

"*As Flies to Whatless Boys* by Trinidadian Robert Antoni is a tragic historical novel, accented with West Indian cadence and captivating humour, and provides an unforgettable glimpse into 19th-century T&T."

--*Trinidad Express Newspapers*

"*As Flies to Whatless Boys* is an inventive, witty, comic romance that is as much about history and adventure as it is about language. With virtuosic attention to language, Robert Antoni delightfully explores the written word in all its forms--as letters, as e-mails, as reportage, as narration, as archives--to tell stories, to paint characters, to demonstrate the range and integrity of English and its dialects, and to edge us closer to ourselves as equally human beings."

--Earl Lovelace, author of *Is Just a Movie*

In 1845 London, an engineer, philosopher, philanthropist, and bold-faced charlatan, John Adolphus Etzler, has invented machines that he thinks will transform the division of labor and free all men. He forms a collective called the Tropical Emigration Society (TES), and recruits a variety of London citizens to take his machines and his misguided ideas to form a proto-socialist, utopian community in the British colony of Trinidad.

Among his recruits is a young boy (and the book's narrator) named Willy, who falls head-over-heels for the enthralling and wise Marguerite Whitechurch. Coming from the gentry, Marguerite is a world away from Willy's laboring class. As the voyage continues, and their love for one another strengthens, Willy and Marguerite prove themselves to be true socialists, their actions and adventures standing in stark contrast to Etzler's disconnected theories.

Robert Antoni's tragic historical novel, accented with West Indian cadence and captivating humor, provides an unforgettable glimpse into nineteenth-century Trinidad & Tobago.

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From reader reviews:

Ruth Irizarry:

The reason? Because this As Flies to Whatless Boys is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap the idea but latter it will distress you with the secret that inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who else write the book in such amazing way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book get such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking means. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

Gregory Throop:

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