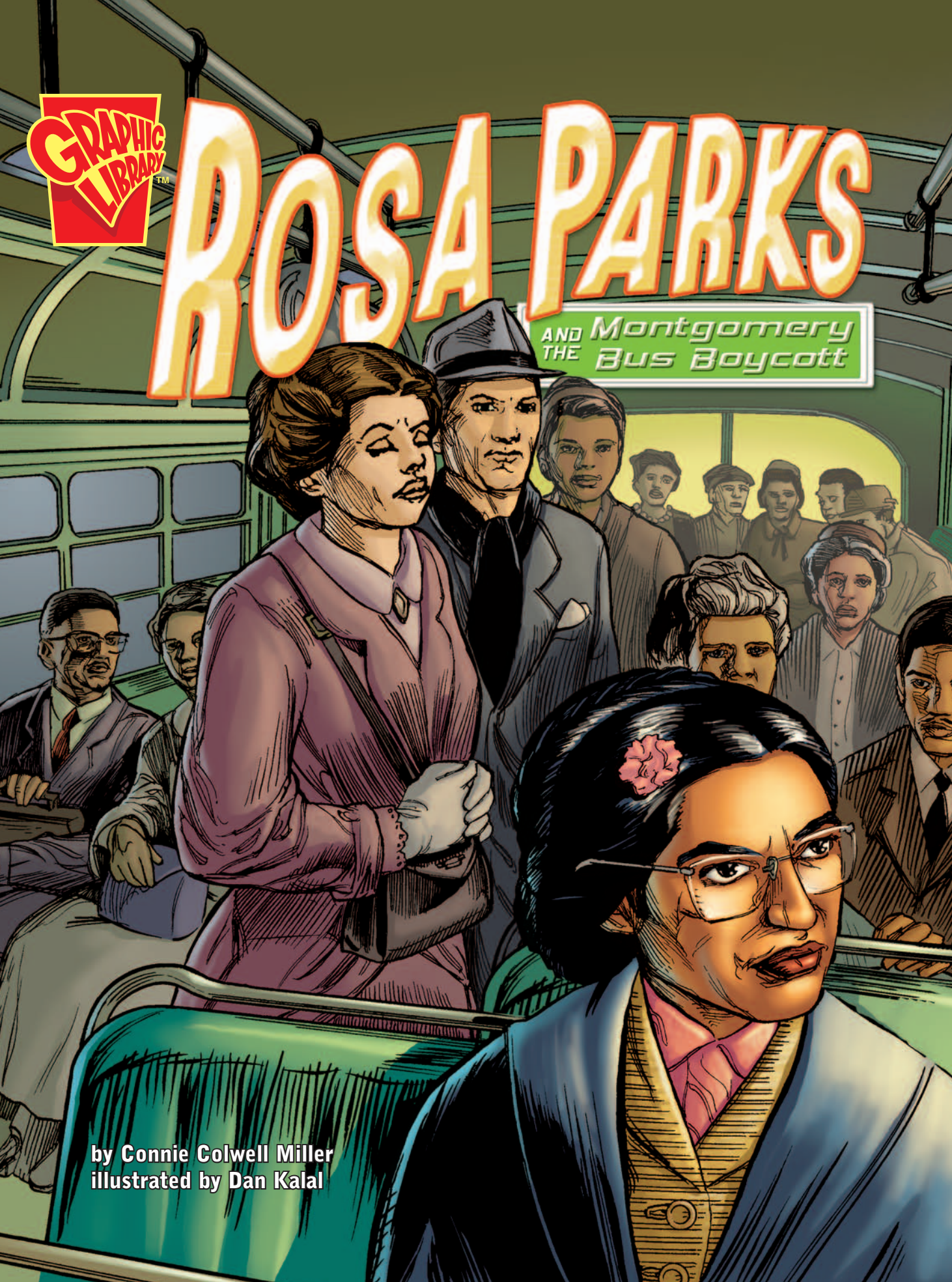




# ROSA PARKS

AND Montgomery  
THE Bus Boycott



by Connie Colwell Miller  
illustrated by Dan Kalal



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Summary: In graphic novel format, tells the story of Rosa Park's arrest for not giving up her bus seat on December 1, 1955, and the boycott it sparked.

*Designer*

Alison Thiele

*Colorist*

Michael Kelleher

*Editor*

Erika L. Shores

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Direct quotations appear on the following pages:

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Page 11 (bottom), from *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It: The Memoir of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson* by Jo Ann Gibson Robinson (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987).

Page 21, from *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.* edited by Clayborne Carson (New York: Intellectual Properties Management in association with Warner Books, 1998).

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# ROSA TAKES A STAND

Rosa Parks was a young African American woman living in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1943. At the time, segregation laws kept blacks and whites apart in most places. Daily, African Americans like Rosa faced unfair treatment because of these laws.



You, get off my bus and board through the back door, where the blacks belong.

I'm already on the bus, and I've paid my fare. I see no need to reboard through the back door. People are waiting behind me.

If you can't board through the back, then you can't ride my bus.

Rosa refused to enter the bus through the back door. She got off and vowed never again to ride a bus driven by that man.

Twelve years later on December 1, 1955, Rosa headed home to eat dinner with her husband, Raymond Parks, and her mother. She had just finished a hard day of work and holiday shopping. Rosa always called her husband Parks.



I hope Parks had a good day. I wonder what Mother will cook for dinner tonight?

Oh, good. An open seat. I'm lucky to be able to sit down for my ride home.

After a few stops, the front section of the bus was filled with white people. One white man was left standing. Rosa knew what would happen next.

I'm going to be asked to give up my seat to this man, when the only difference between us is the color of our skin.





The bus driver turned around. Rosa had been too lost in her thoughts to notice him before.

And now she was staring right at the same bus driver who ordered her off his bus 12 years earlier.

Move ya'll, I want those two seats!

Ya'll better make it light on yourselves and let me have those seats.



The other three passengers obeyed the driver.

But Rosa stayed put.



Rosa knew it was risky to disobey the segregation laws. She could be beaten, arrested, or even killed.

Are you going to stand up?

No.

Well, I'm going to have you arrested.

You may do that.



Rosa didn't want to be arrested. But she felt strongly that it was time to stop accepting the unfair treatment.

I'm a good person, and I always do what's right. It's not me who's wrong; it's this law.

You look like a nice lady. Why did you refuse to stand?

Why do you all push us around?

I don't know, but the law is the law, and you're under arrest.

Rosa was taken to jail.

May I please have a drink of water?

No! It's for whites only!

I'm in jail, Mother. See if Parks will come down here and get me out.

Finally, Rosa was allowed to call home.

Word of Rosa's arrest spread quickly. Rosa's friends E. D. Nixon and lawyer Clifford Durr arrived at the jail and paid Rosa's bail. As she was leaving the jail, Parks arrived to take her home. Rosa was due in court a few days later.



# THE BUS BOYCOTT

For more than 12 years, Rosa had been a member of the NAACP. This organization wanted fair treatment for African Americans. Nixon was a former president of Montgomery's NAACP. As a secretary for the NAACP, Rosa had worked with Nixon. The night of Rosa's arrest, Nixon met with her and her family.



We need to do something about the way blacks are treated in this community, and we need to do something now!



Rosa, we have to take your case public. We'll use it to spark a protest against segregation. If this law requires the arrest of a woman like you, it's proof that the law needs to change.



Rosa, the white folks will kill you.

I know I may be putting myself in danger, but these laws have to change.

Nixon and other leaders called for a boycott in protest of Rosa's arrest. They told all African Americans to stay off Montgomery buses on Monday, December 5, the day of Rosa's trial.



A Negro woman has been arrested because she refused to get up out of her seat on the bus. We are, therefore, asking every Negro to stay off the buses Monday in protest of the arrest and trial.

Boycott leaders knew the bus company would lose money if no African Americans rode their buses. A boycott might force the city to end the segregation law. But if the boycott was going to work, everyone had to take part.



When Monday came, an amazing thing happened.



Well, most of Montgomery's bus passengers have been black. How will they fill their buses without us?

Will you look at that? The buses are almost empty!

Boycott leaders met that day to discuss the next step in the boycott.



We need to keep this boycott going until bus segregation is stopped.

But people will lose their jobs if they can't get to work! And our protests might get us beaten by angry whites.

We must face the risks this boycott will bring. We've been afraid all our lives. It's time to stop being cowards!

Meanwhile, Rosa's case was heard in court.



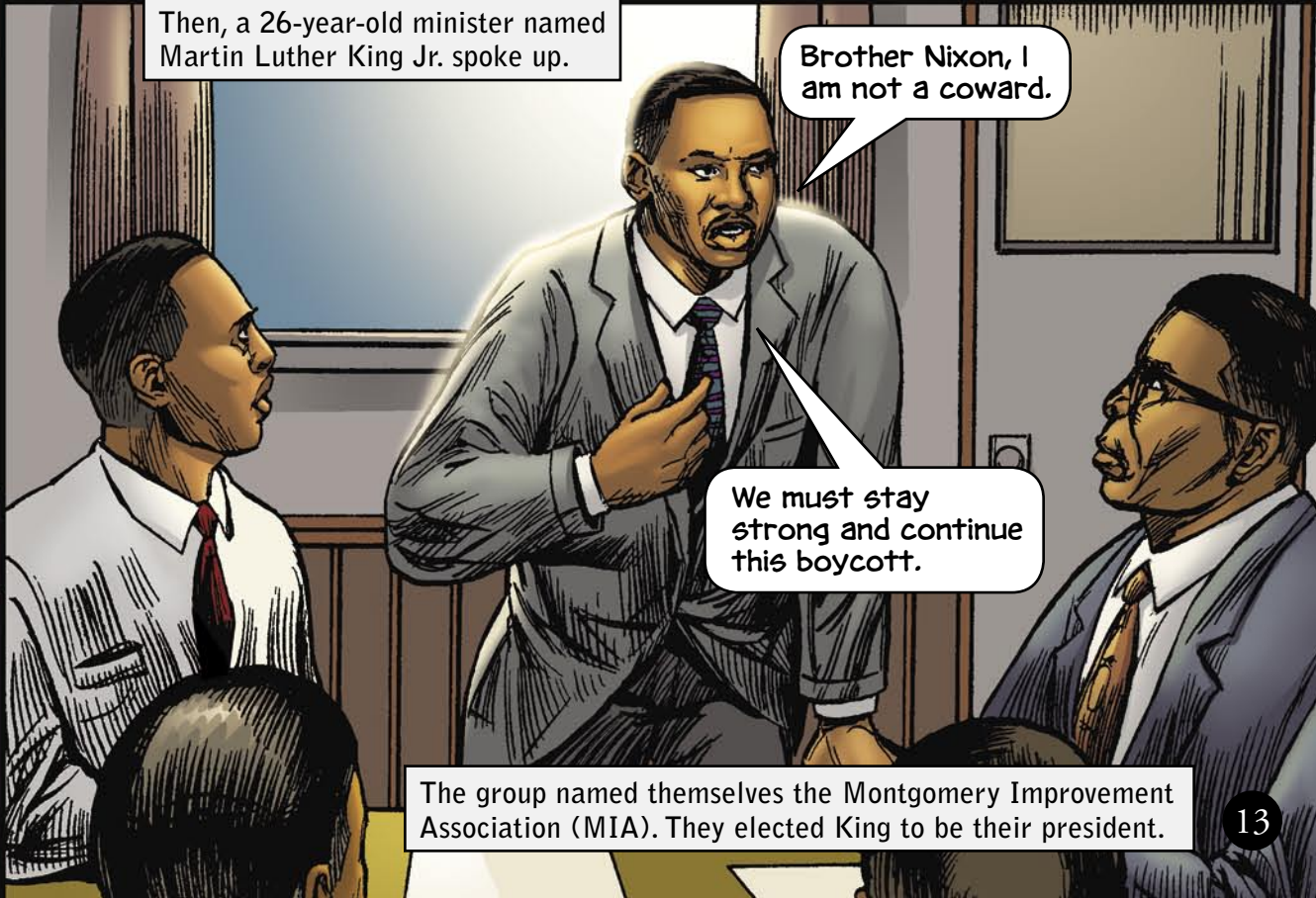
I find the defendant, Rosa Parks, guilty of breaking the bus segregation law.



I expected this verdict. We'll appeal this case all the way to the Supreme Court if we have to.

Our appeals will draw the country's attention to Montgomery's segregation laws.

Then, a 26-year-old minister named Martin Luther King Jr. spoke up.



Brother Nixon, I am not a coward.

We must stay strong and continue this boycott.

The group named themselves the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA). They elected King to be their president.



## GLOSSARY

**appeal** (uh-PEEL)—to ask for a decision made by a court of law to be changed

**bail** (BAYL)—a sum of money paid to a court to allow someone accused of a crime to be set free until his or her trial

**boycott** (BOI-kot)—to refuse to take part in something as a way of making a protest

**integration** (in-tuh-GRAY-shuhn)—the act or practice of making facilities open to people of all races and ethnic groups

**segregation** (seg-ruh-GAY-shuhn)—the act or practice of keeping people or groups apart because of race

**verdict** (VUR-dikt)—the decision of a jury on whether an accused person is guilty or not guilty

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