

GRAPHIC
BIOGRAPHY

Martin Luther

King Jr.





Martin Luther King Jr. loved to listen to his father preach. His father told the people to hold their heads high and always walk with God.

Some day I'm going to have some big words too!

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will be judged by their character—not by the color of their skin.

Martin Luther King Jr. did learn big and powerful words. He spoke before two hundred thousand people in Washington, D.C. Millions saw and heard him on television.



Martin was six when learned about prejudice. His mother comforted him.

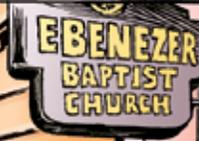
Always remember you are as good as anyone.



His white friend's mother had told Martin that he was no longer welcome because he was an African American.

Martin's mother told him about slavery and how hard life had always been for black people in this country.

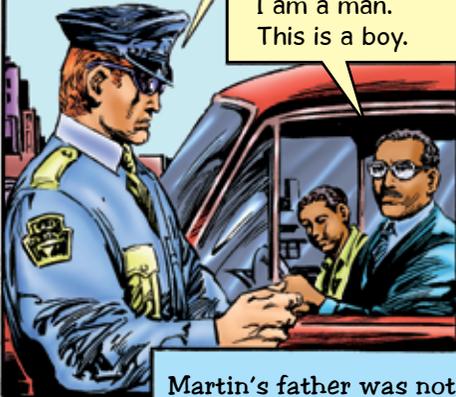
Martin's father had worked in the fields with his family.



At sixteen he went to Atlanta to work in a railroad yard. For years he worked during the day and went to school at night. He finally became a minister.

Let's see your license, boy.

I am a man. This is a boy.



You must sit in the back.

If you cannot wait on us here, we do not want to buy.



Martin's father was not afraid to speak up.

Martin went to a public speaking contest. Because the bus was crowded he was ordered to give up his seat. At first Martin didn't budge.

Move back or I'll call the police.

Martin had to stand for almost two hours. He felt it was unfair.

At fifteen, he entered Morehouse College.

At seventeen, Martin preached his first sermon. At eighteen he was made assistant pastor. At nineteen he graduated from college.

In 1948 Martin went to Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. There were only six African Americans in a class of one hundred.

This is hard to believe—eating in a white restaurant!

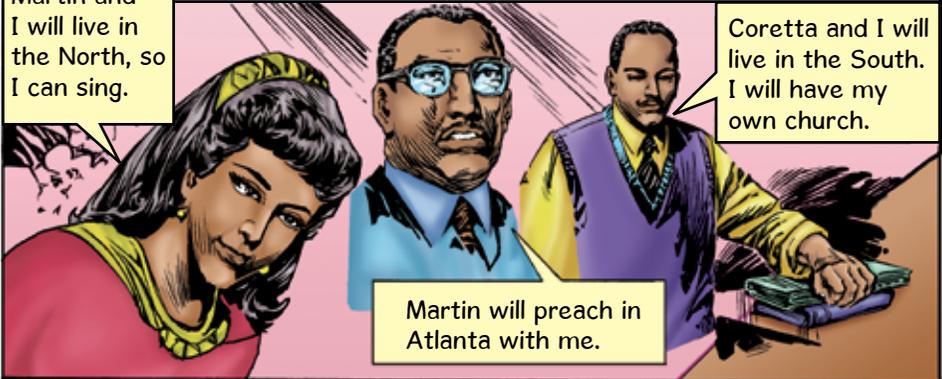
Not all places in the North admit African Americans.

But now ... three people had different dreams of the future.

Martin and I will live in the North, so I can sing.

Coretta and I will live in the South. I will have my own church.

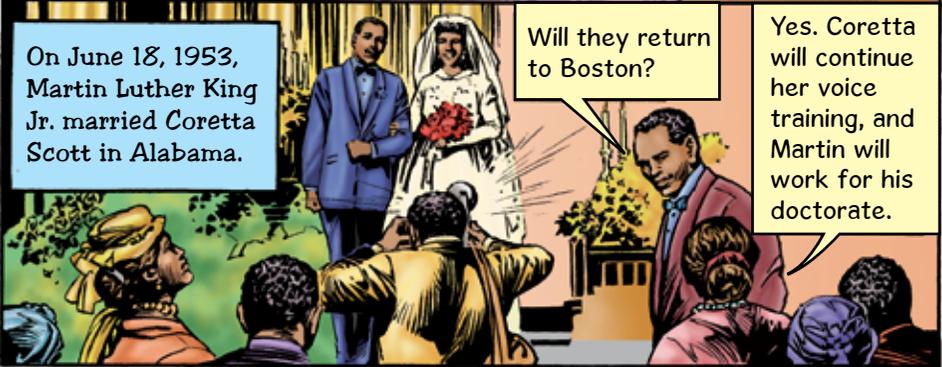
Martin will preach in Atlanta with me.



On June 18, 1953, Martin Luther King Jr. married Coretta Scott in Alabama.

Will they return to Boston?

Yes. Coretta will continue her voice training, and Martin will work for his doctorate.



When he was twenty-five, Martin became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

In Montgomery, Martin met the Reverend Ralph Abernathy.

We are so different. You love to study.

You are full of fun. I need your friendship.

I'm proud that you have your own church.

I'll be proud when you sing solos here.



Chapter II The Bus Boycott

To segregate means to separate, like keeping white sheep away from black sheep in a flock. When Dr. King went to Alabama, there were rules about segregating.

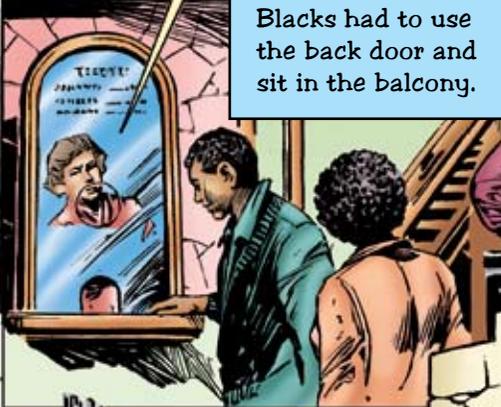


No blacks allowed here.



Black children can't go to parks for whites.

No blacks allowed through the front entrance.



Blacks had to use the back door and sit in the balcony.

This school is for whites only.



We only serve white people. Servants traveling with white customers are fed in the kitchen.

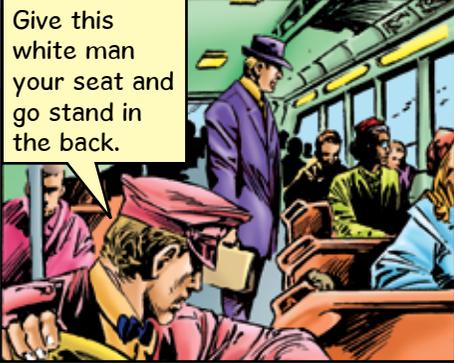


Some white people called black people "Jim Crows." The Jim Crow Laws covered drinking fountains, bathrooms, buses, etc. It was the way segregation and discrimination* was kept alive.

* prejudiced outlook, action, or treatment

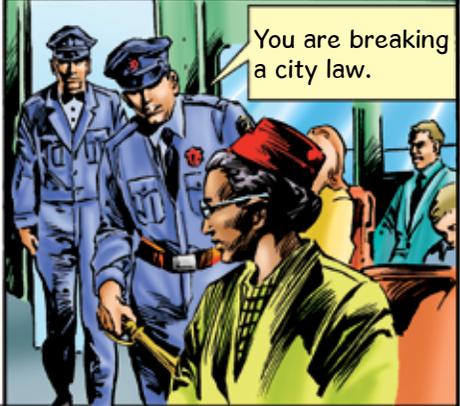
African Americans could sit from the back up through the fifth row, if there weren't any whites who needed seats.

Give this white man your seat and go stand in the back.



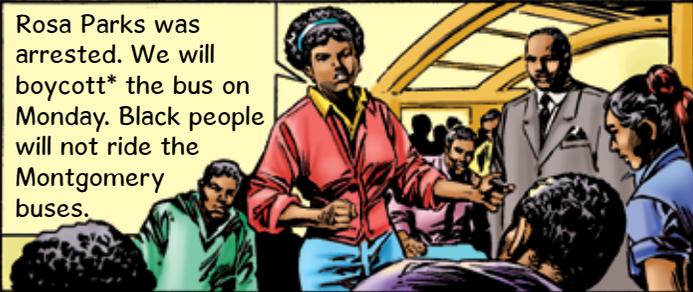
Because Rosa Parks quietly refused to move, the driver called the police.

You are breaking a city law.



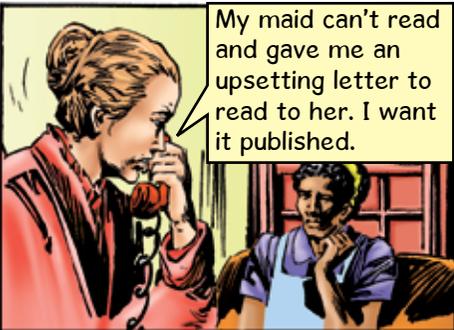
On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, tired after a hard day's work, rode home on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus.

Rosa Parks was arrested. We will boycott* the bus on Monday. Black people will not ride the Montgomery buses.



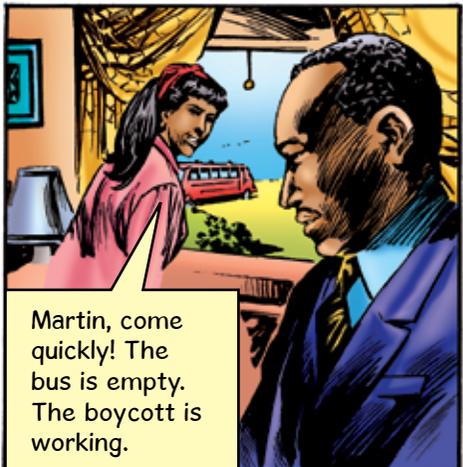
Dr. King and others agreed to help by writing letters telling black people about the boycott. Students delivered them.

My maid can't read and gave me an upsetting letter to read to her. I want it published.



The newspaper published the letter and more people learned about the boycott.

Martin, come quickly! The bus is empty. The boycott is working.



* to act together in refusal to have dealings with (as a person, store, or organization)

No blacks rode the buses on Monday, December 5.

Share a ride?

No thanks.



That day, Rosa Parks was fined for disobeying a local ordinance or rule.

I will appeal. The ordinance is unfair.



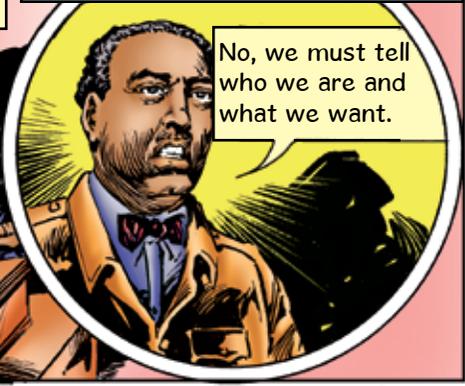
The same day a new organization was formed.

We'll call ourselves the Montgomery Improvement Association or MIA.

Dr. King was elected president. A member of the group suggested their names be kept secret.

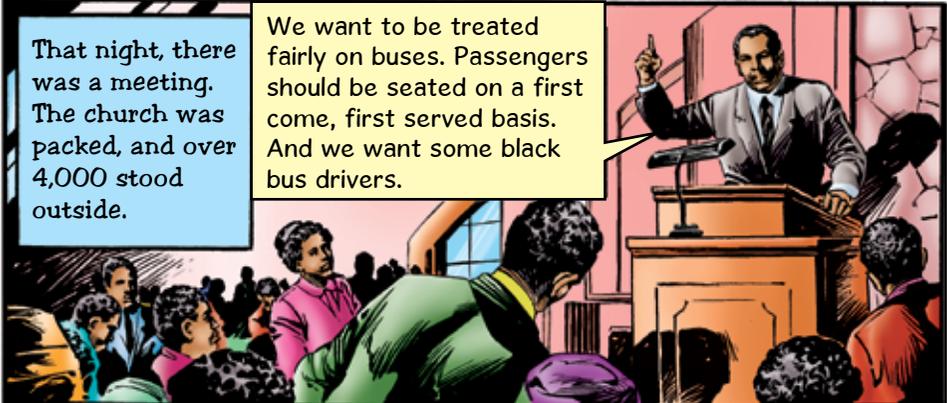


No, we must tell who we are and what we want.



That night, there was a meeting. The church was packed, and over 4,000 stood outside.

We want to be treated fairly on buses. Passengers should be seated on a first come, first served basis. And we want some black bus drivers.



The city of Montgomery tried to say that carpools used by blacks were not lawful. There was a court hearing in November 1956.

Because he was a boycott leader, Dr. King had to go to court. While there, he heard great news.

The United States Supreme Court declared segregation on public transportation to be illegal.



In Montgomery, blacks waited for the Supreme Court order to be sent officially to the city. In churches and schools, they practiced how to ride buses peacefully.

The people with arm bands are white.

Be polite. Always say, "May I?" or "Pardon me." as you sit.



Don't sit here!

No! No! Don't hit back! Move away from trouble.

On December 12, 1956, the boycott was over. It had lasted over a year.

Good morning, and welcome, Dr. King.



Chapter III Sit-Ins and Freedom Rides

Dr. and Mrs. King visited the Gold Coast of Africa when Ghana gained its independence from Great Britain.

Blacks now own and govern their own land!

And African Americans can lend their technical assistance to a growing new nation.



You know of the bus boycott in Montgomery?

You are known and respected the world over.

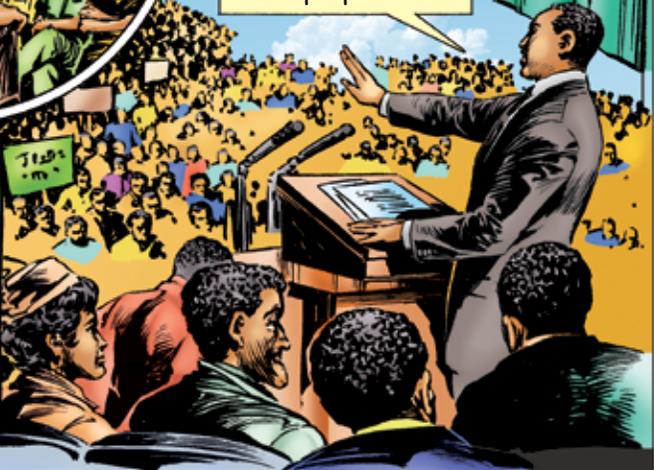
A group of ministers formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) organized a prayer pilgrimage* to Washington. Over 30,000 people joined. Dr. King spoke last.

But we must also remember blacks in the North and West.

Give us the right to vote and we will write proper laws.

The crowd cheered Dr. King. They wanted him to keep talking. He was their leader, following in the footsteps of Jesus and Gandhi.



* any long journey to a shrine or sacred place

A new drive started in February 1960.

In North Carolina, we do not serve African Americans.

You want us to buy things from you but won't let us eat here?



Four days later, white students joined them.

We cannot serve black people.

Then we'll sit with them without ordering.



A reporter wrote of the sit-ins. Soon black and white college students all over the South were having sit-ins at local restaurants.

I admire your peaceful ways. The SCLC will help.

We call ourselves the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, SNCC for short.



I've been good to blacks.

You let us buy here but your store is segregated. We can't eat here.

The SNCC students became role models for an entire generation of young activists from across the United States.

