

THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

BY EVAN-MOORE CORP



CHARACTERS:

NARRATOR, ROSA PARKS, BUS DRIVER, POLICE OFFICER, MRS. PRATT,
RAYMOND PARKS, E.D. NIXON, MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., CROWD

Narrator: It is Thursday December 1, 1955. A black woman named Rosa Parks is waiting at a bus stop on Cleveland Avenue in Montgomery, Alabama. When the bus stops for her, she boards the bus and takes a seat in the back, where black people are required to sit. After several other stops, the front seats are all filled up with white people, and one white man is standing in the aisle.

Bus Driver: You back there, get up! I need those seats... Did you hear me lady? I said get up... Are you going to move or not?

Rosa: No, I'm not.

Bus Driver: You must not be hearing right, lady. Everybody knows those seats go to white folks when they're needed. You know I'm not going to be able to let you get away with this... what would all my passengers think? There's a law about this, you know?

Rosa: Maybe it's time we had a law that treated people fairly.

Bus Driver: I'll let someone else worry about whether the laws are fair or not. Lady I'm calling the police to have you arrested.

Rosa: You do that.

Bus Driver: (stopping bus, opening door, and shouting) Excuse me officer. Could you please step on the bus and help us out?

Police Officer: (boarding bus) What's the problem?

Bus Driver: This lady won't get up and give her seat to the other passenger. I told her to move, but she won't budge.

Police Officer: Do you speak English, lady?

Rosa: Yes, I do.





Police Officer: Did you understand what the bus driver said?

Rosa: Yes, I did.

Police Officer: Then why didn't you get up?

Rosa: I didn't think I should have to. Why do you push us around?

Police Officer: I don't know. But the law is the law and you're breaking it. I'm putting you under arrest.

Narrator: The police officer put Rosa into a patrol car and took her to jail. She was fingerprinted and photographed, and then she was put into a cell. A friend of Rosa's, Mrs. Pratt, had been on the bus when Rosa was arrested. She ran to Rosa's house to tell her husband what had happened.

Mrs. Pratt: Rosa didn't move. The bus driver had to pull the bus over and called the police. The next thing I knew, Rosa was on her way to jail!

Raymond: I'm going to need some help. Go get my friend E.D. Nixon. Tell him to meet me at the jail, and quick!

Mrs. Pratt: Whatever you say, Raymond!

Narrator: Raymond and E.D. paid Rosa's bail and got her out of jail. When they got home, they all discussed Rosa's arrest over a cup of coffee.

Raymond: They didn't hurt you, did they?

Rosa: No, but I almost got another fine! I was so thirsty that I just drank out of the water fountain at the jailhouse without paying any attention. The officer told me the fountain was for white people only. Imagine that - even in jail!

E.D.: It's time for a change. We've been living with this injustice for too long. I think that your arrest might be a blessing in disguise, Rosa.

Rosa: Why do you say that?

E.D.: Word about your arrest is going around town like wildfire. The people are up in arms about it. This is our chance to organize the community.

Raymond: How?

E.D.: We can boycott the buses! If we have to give up our seats to white people, we shouldn't ride the buses at all.

Rosa: How long will the boycott last?

E.D.: Until they desegregate the buses.

Raymond: E.D., we can't change the whole world in one day.

E.D.: But we've got to start somewhere. Are you with me?

Rosa: Yes, E.D. It's time, like you said.

Raymond: Rosa, I'm worried about your safety. You know a lot of white people are going to be mighty mad when they hear about this.

Rosa: If we all unite, we can be strong and help each other get through this.

Narrator: Later that night, E.D. planned the boycott with a new minister at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. The new pastor's name was Martin Luther King, Jr.

E.D.: This boycott is going to need a lot of organization. We'll need a place to come together and coordinate our efforts. I'm suggesting we use the church as a meeting place. I was hoping you could provide some leadership, Reverend King.

King: I'm not sure that's such a good idea. I've only been here for a year. The people may not accept me as their leader.

E.D.: The situation is never going to be perfect. We all just have to rise to the occasion and do the best we can.

King: I can see the urgency of the situation. Yes, let's use the church as our headquarters. How do you think we should handle the boycott?

E.D.: Volunteers have already made leaflets telling people not to ride the buses on Monday. We've also set up some carpools so that people can still get to work, and black cab drivers have agreed to give people rides for ten cents.

Narrator: On Monday December 5th, there were hardly any black people on the buses. Instead, they gathered on street corners and waited for rides from friends and cab drivers. Rosa went to court and was fined ten dollars for breaking the law. She refused to pay the fine. That night, there was a mass meeting to decide on a future course of action. At the meeting, Reverend King was elected leader of the movement. He gave a speech that electrified his audience.

King: We are here because we are American citizens, and we are determined to apply our citizenship to the fullest.



Crowd: That's right!

King: There comes a time when people get tired of being trampled. There comes a time, my friends, when people get tired of being subjected to humiliation and despair.

Crowd: Tell it!

King: We have a long road ahead of us, brothers and sisters. Our enemies will try to bring us down into the pit of hatred. You cannot have hatred in your heart and seek justice at the same time. We must meet violence with nonviolence.

Crowd: Show us the way!

King: Right here in Montgomery when the history books are written in the future, somebody will say, "there lived a race of people, of black people, who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights."

Crowd: It's true!

King: In the meantime, we must stick together and work together if we are to win our rights as Americans. The boycott will continue, for what we are doing is right. What we are doing is just.

Crowd: God bless you, Brother King.

Narrator: The black people of Montgomery were determined to stand up for their rights and to challenge white power. They continued the boycott in spite of threats and attacks by racists. On December 20th, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court finally ordered the City of Montgomery to desegregate its buses. The boycott had lasted over a year, but it had achieved its goal. Black people no longer had to give up their seats to white passengers. Reverend King continued to fight for justice, and growing numbers of people joined him in his struggle. Rosa Parks' simple act of defiance one year earlier had marked the beginning of what is now called the Civil Rights Movement.

