

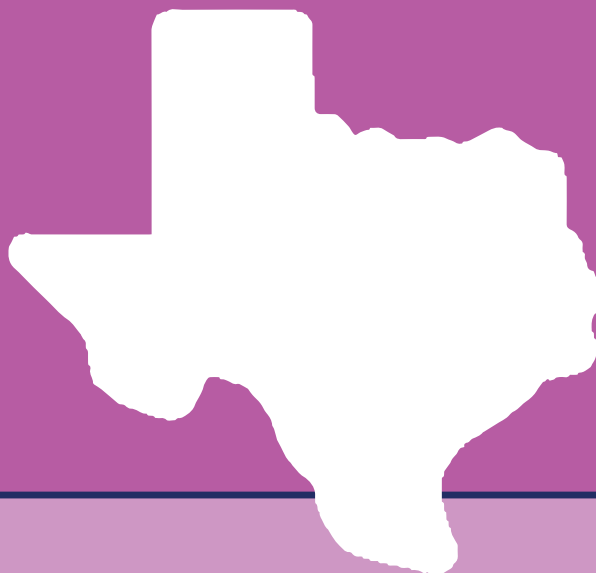


**Bluebonnet
Learning**

K-5 Reading Language Arts

ENGLISH

PERSONAL NARRATIVES



GRADE 5 | ANTHOLOGY

EDITION 1

Grade 5

Personal Narratives

Anthology

Acknowledgement:

Thank you to all the Texas educators and stakeholders who supported the review process and provided feedback. These materials are the result of the work of numerous individuals, and we are deeply grateful for their contributions.

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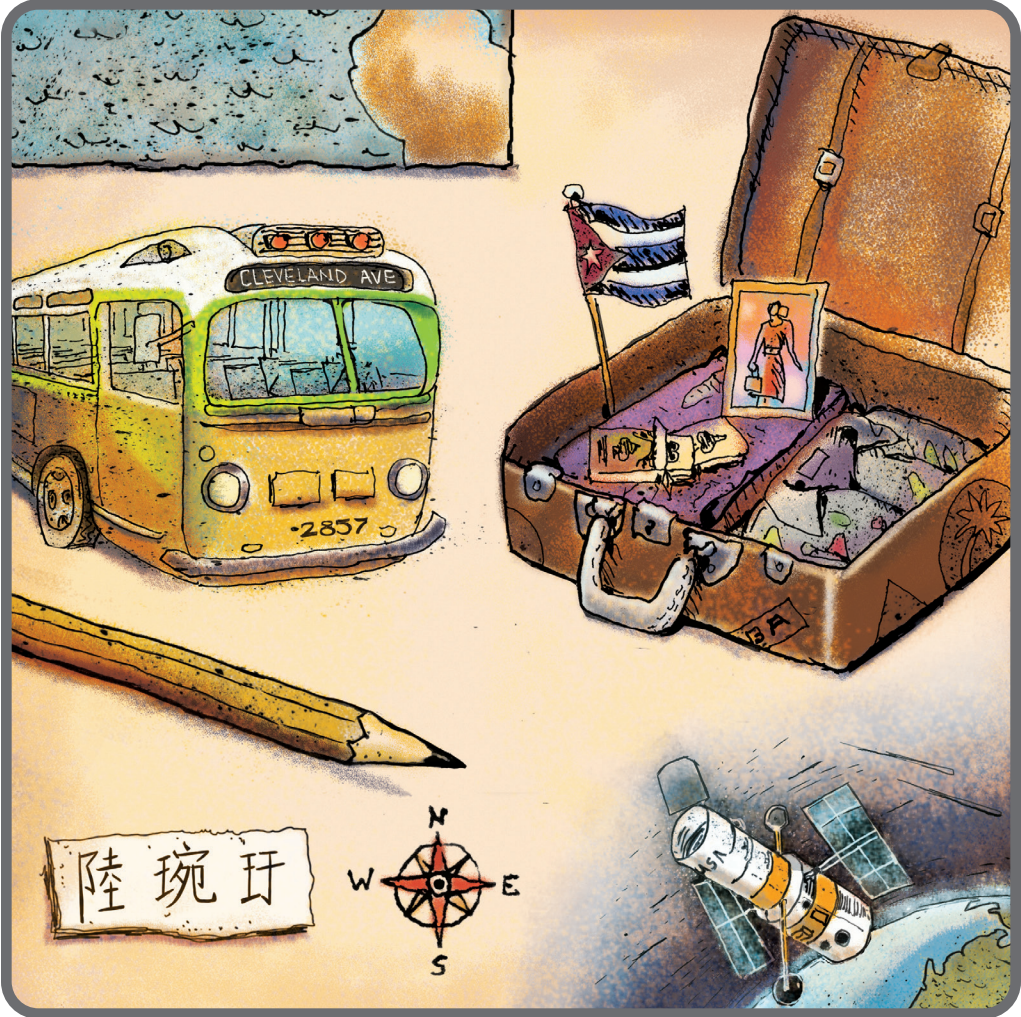
Introduction

Greetings, fifth grader!

The texts you're about to read are like gifts to be unwrapped, personal narratives written from the heart by people from different backgrounds and cultures. By sharing their experiences, these authors inspire us to celebrate our own unique cultural identity. In the *Personal Narratives* unit, we learn how they balanced the need to honor their heritage with the desire to fit into a new culture by blending new and old traditions. You'll meet one person who made a stand for civil rights by sitting down on a bus, and another who persevered through rejection and frustration to follow his dreams out of this world. If you come across some unfamiliar words, there is a glossary at the end to help you out. As you read, you'll discover that the greatest gifts these authors have given us are the chance to see the world from another perspective and to realize how much all people truly have in common!



Personal Narratives



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“A Boy Goes to Washington [Chapter 2]” from STEP BY STEP: A MEMOIR OF HOPE, FRIENDSHIP, PERSEVERANCE, AND LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM by Bertie Bowman, copyright © 2008 by Bertie Bowman. Used by permission of One World, an imprint of Random House, a division of Random House LLC. All rights reserved. Any third party use of this material, outside of this publication, is prohibited. Interested parties must apply directly to Penguin Random House LLC for permission.

Introduction to *Rosa Parks: My Story* and *Step by Step*

In 1954, in the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution does not permit laws requiring the separation of African Americans from whites. Before then, however, such laws were very common, especially in the South, where African Americans often had to use separate bathrooms, ride in separate train cars and attend separate schools. This forced separation of the races was known as segregation.

In theory, the separate African American facilities were supposed to be equal to those provided to whites, but this was hardly ever so. In the case of education, the results of segregation were especially harsh. Many state governments provided no support to African American schools, leading to many African American children receiving very poor educations.

The next two personal narratives are by African Americans who grew up during the era of segregation. Rosa Parks's memoir, *Rosa Parks: My Story*, written with Jim Haskins, describes her childhood in rural Alabama, where African American children attended a run-down one-room school house, while the whites in the area went to a very modern

school that Alabama paid for. Parks also writes about her efforts to fight segregation, including a very famous act of protest on a public bus.

Bertie Bowman, the author of *Step by Step*, also grew up in the South during segregation. At the age of thirteen, he moved to Washington D.C., and despite widespread prejudice against African Americans, he achieved great success as a business owner and working for the United States Senate.



Rosa Parks: My Story

How It All Started

by Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins

One of my earliest memories of childhood is hearing my family talk about the remarkable time that a white man treated me like a regular little girl, not a little black girl. It was right after World War I, around 1919. I was five or six years old. Moses Hudson, the owner of the **plantation** next to our land in Pine Level, Alabama, came out from the city of Montgomery to visit and stopped by the house. Moses Hudson had his son-in-law with him, a soldier from the North. They stopped in to visit my family. We southerners called all northerners Yankees in those days. The Yankee soldier patted me on the head and said I was such a cute little girl. Later that evening my family talked about how the Yankee soldier had treated me like I was just another little girl, not a little black girl. In those days in the South white people didn't treat little black children the same way as little white children. And old Mose Hudson was very uncomfortable about the way the Yankee soldier treated me. Grandfather said he saw old Mose Hudson's face turn red as a coal of fire. Grandfather laughed and laughed.

Rosa Parks: My Story

Not Just Another Little Girl

by Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins

I was about six when I started school. Sylvester started a year later, when he was around five. We went to the one-teacher black school in Pine Level, in a little frame schoolhouse that was just a short distance from where we lived. It was near our church, the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church, right in the churchyard. In many places the church was used as the school, but in Pine Level we had a separate schoolhouse on the church grounds. We had first grade to sixth grade, and there were about fifty to sixty children in the one room. We sat in separate rows by age, and at certain times the larger students would go up to read or recite and then at other times it was the smaller ones' turn.

My first teacher was Miss Sally Hill, and she was very nice. I remember she was a light-brown-skinned lady and she had really large eyes. When the children would tease me or say something to me about how small I was, I would start crying, and I would go up and sit with her. And sometimes she would call me up and talk with me.

I was already reading when I started school. My mother taught me at home. She was really my first teacher. I don't remember when I first started reading, but I must have been three or four. I was very fond of books, and I liked to read and I liked to count. I thought it was something great to be able to take a book and sit down and read, or what I thought was reading. Any books I found where I couldn't read the words, I made up a story about it and talked about the pictures.

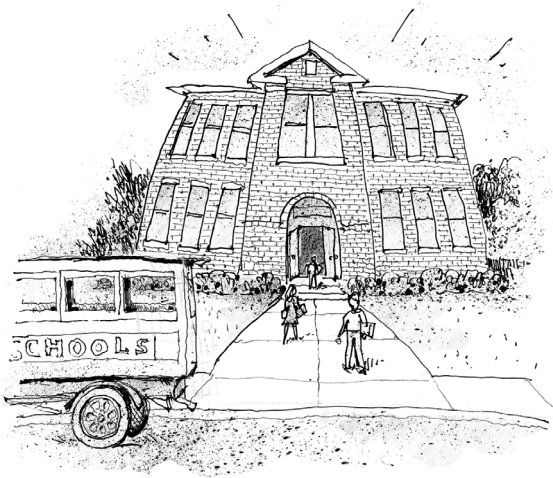
At school I liked fairy tales and Mother Goose rhymes. I remember trying to find *Little Red Riding Hood* because someone had said it was a nice book to read. No matter what Miss Hill gave me to read, I would sit down and read the whole book, not just a page or two. And then I would tell her, “I finished this book.” Then I started learning to write, making my letters.

I had Miss Hill for only a year. After that Mrs. Beulah McMillan was our teacher. We called her Miss Beulah. She had been a teacher for a long time and had taught my mother when she was a girl. My mother had a picture of this same little school with the students in front of the schoolhouse on the steps—in rows on the steps and down on the ground. The shorter ones and the boys were on their knees on the ground. My mother never wanted me to show it to anybody because it was a real battered-up old picture. But I liked it. I used to take my magnifying glass and look at the faces, which were very small.



I liked Miss Beulah, and I liked school. We had fun there. At recess, the girls would play what we called “ring games” like Little Sally Walker Sitting in the Saucer, Rise Sally Rise, and Ring Around the Roses. The boys would play ball. I don’t think the girls played much ball at school. We used to play at home a little bit. My mother would buy us a ball, and we’d have to be very careful because pretty soon a rubber ball would be lost. It didn’t last too long. We called what we played baseball. I wasn’t too active in it, because if I tried to be active I’d fall down and get hurt. I wasn’t very good when it came to running sports.

Some of the older boys at school were very good at running sports and playing ball. They were also the ones who were responsible for wood



at the school. The larger boys would go out and cut the wood and bring it in. Sometimes a parent would load a wagon up with some wood and bring it to the school, and the boys would unload the wagon and bring the wood inside.

They didn't have to do this at the white school. The town or county took care of heating at the white school. I remember that when I was very young they built a new school for the white children not very far from where we lived, and of course we had to pass by it. It was a nice brick building, and it still stands there today. I found out later that it was built with **public money**, including taxes paid by both whites and blacks. Black people had to build and heat their own schools without the help of the town or county or state.

Another difference between our school and the white school was that we went for only five months while they went for nine months. Many of the black children were needed by their families to plow and plant in the spring and harvest in the fall. Their families were sharecroppers, like my grandparents' neighbors. Sharecroppers worked land owned by plantation owners, and they got to keep a portion of the crop they grew. The rest they had to give to the owner of the plantation. So they needed their children to help. At the time I started school, we went only from late fall to early spring.

I was aware of the big difference between blacks and whites by the time I started school. I had heard my grandfather's stories about how badly he was treated by the white **overseer** when he was a boy. My mother told me stories the old people had told her about slavery times. I remember she told me that the slaves had to fool the white people into thinking that they were happy. The white people would get angry if the slaves acted unhappy. They would also treat the slaves better if

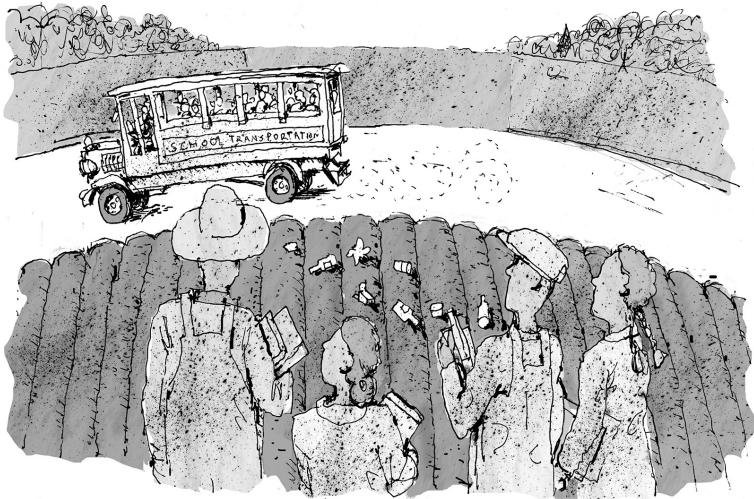
they thought the slaves liked white people.

When white people died, their slaves would have to pretend to be very sorry. The slaves would spit on their fingers and use it to wet their cheeks like it was tears. They'd do this right in front of the little slave children, and then the children would do the same thing in the presence of the grieving white people.

I was glad that I did not live in slavery times. But I knew that conditions of life for my family and me were in some ways not much better than during slavery.

I realized that we went to a different school than the white children and that the school we went to was not as good as theirs. Ours didn't have any glass windows, but instead we had little wooden shutters. Their windows had glass panes.

Some of the white children rode a bus to school. There were no school buses for black children. I remember when we walked to school, sometimes the bus carrying the white children would come by and the white children would throw trash out the windows at us. After a while when we would see the white school bus coming, we would just get off the road and walk in the fields a little bit distant from the road. We didn't have any of what they call "**civil rights**" back then, so there was no way to protest and nobody to protest to. It was just a matter of survival—like getting off the road—so we could exist day to day.



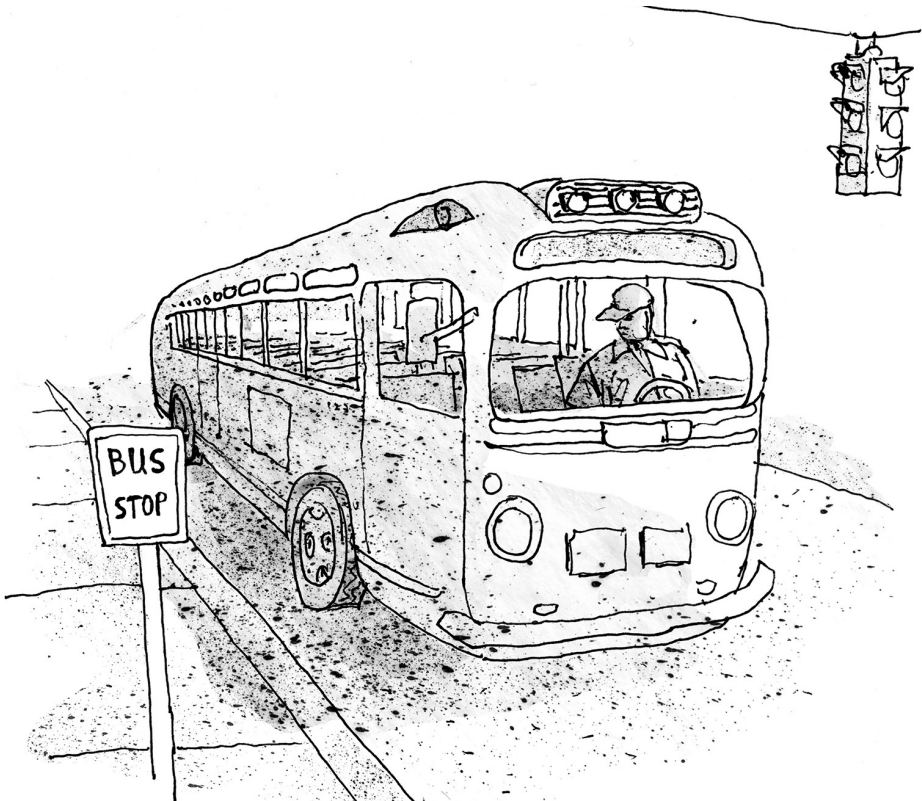
Rosa Parks: My Story

We Fight for the Right to Vote

by Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins

The second time I tried to register to vote, I was put off a Montgomery city bus for the first time. I didn't follow the rules.

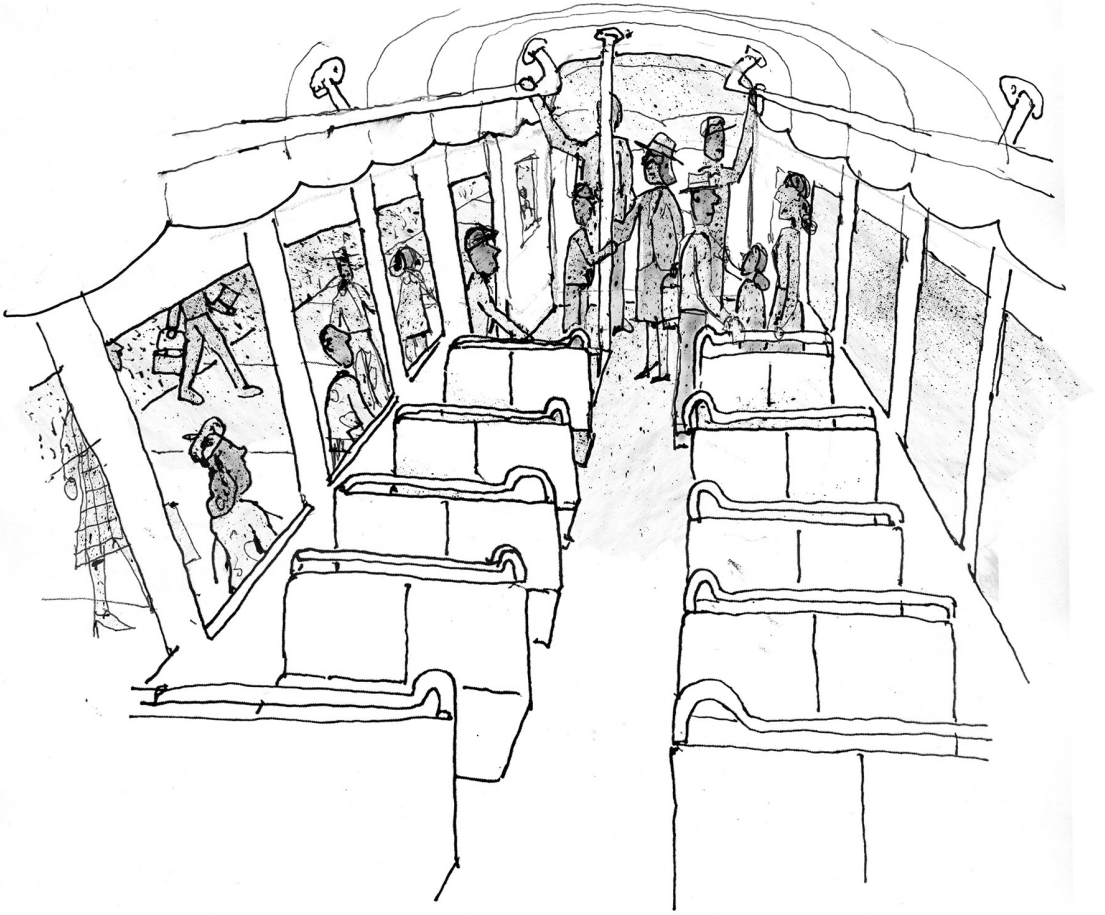
Black people had special rules to follow. Some drivers made black passengers step in the front door and pay their fare, and then we had to get off and go around to the back door and get on. Often, before the black passengers got around to the back door, the bus would take



off without them. There were thirty-six seats on a Montgomery bus. The first ten were reserved for whites, even if there were no white passengers on the bus. There was no law about the ten seats in the back of the bus, but it was sort of understood that they were for black people. Blacks were required to sit in the back of the bus, and even if there were empty seats in the front, we couldn't sit in them. Once the seats in the back were filled, then all the other black passengers had to stand. If whites filled up the front section, some drivers would demand that blacks give up their seats in the back section.

It was up to the bus drivers, if they chose, to adjust the seating in the middle sixteen seats. They carried guns and had what they called police power to rearrange the seating and enforce all the other rules of segregation on the buses. Some bus drivers were meaner than others. Not all of them were hateful, but segregation itself is vicious, and to my mind there was no way you could make segregation decent or nice or acceptable.

The driver who put me off was a mean one. He was tall and **thickset** with an **intimidating** posture. His skin was rough-looking, and he had a mole near his mouth. He just treated everybody black badly. I had been on his bus as a passenger before, and I remember when a young woman got on the bus at the front and started to the back and he made her get off the bus and go around to the back door. One day in the winter of 1943 the bus came along, and the back was crowded with black people. They were even standing on the steps leading up from the back door. But up front there were vacant seats right up to the very front seats. So I got on at the front and went through this little bunch of folks standing in the back, and I looked toward the front and saw the driver standing there and looking at me. He told me to get off the bus and go to the back door and get on. I told him I was already on the bus and didn't see the need of getting off



and getting back on when people were standing in the **stepwell**, and how was I going to squeeze on anyway? So he told me if I couldn't go through the back door that I would have to get off the bus—"my bus," he called it. I stood where I was. He came back and he took my coat sleeve; not my arm, just my coat sleeve.

He didn't take his gun out. I was hardly worth the effort because I wasn't resisting. I just didn't get off and go around like he told me. So after he took my coat sleeve, I went up to the front, and I dropped my purse. Rather than stoop or bend over to get it, I sat right down in the front seat and from a sitting position I picked up my purse.

He was standing over me and he said, “Get off my bus.” I said, “I will get off.” He looked like he was ready to hit me. I said, “I know one thing. You better not hit me.” He didn’t strike me. I got off, and I heard someone mumble from the back, “How come she don’t go around and get in the back?”

I guess the black people were getting tired because they wanted to get home and they were standing in the back and were tired of standing up. I do know they were mumbling and grumbling as I went up there to get myself off the bus. “She ought to go around the back and get on.” They always wondered why you didn’t want to be like the rest of the black people. That was the 1940s, when people took a lot without fighting back.

I did not get back on the bus through the rear door. I was coming from work, and so I had already gotten a transfer slip to give the next driver. I never wanted to be on that man’s bus again. After that, I made a point of looking at who was driving the bus before I got on. I didn’t want any more run-ins with that mean one.

Rosa Parks: My Story

“You’re Under Arrest”

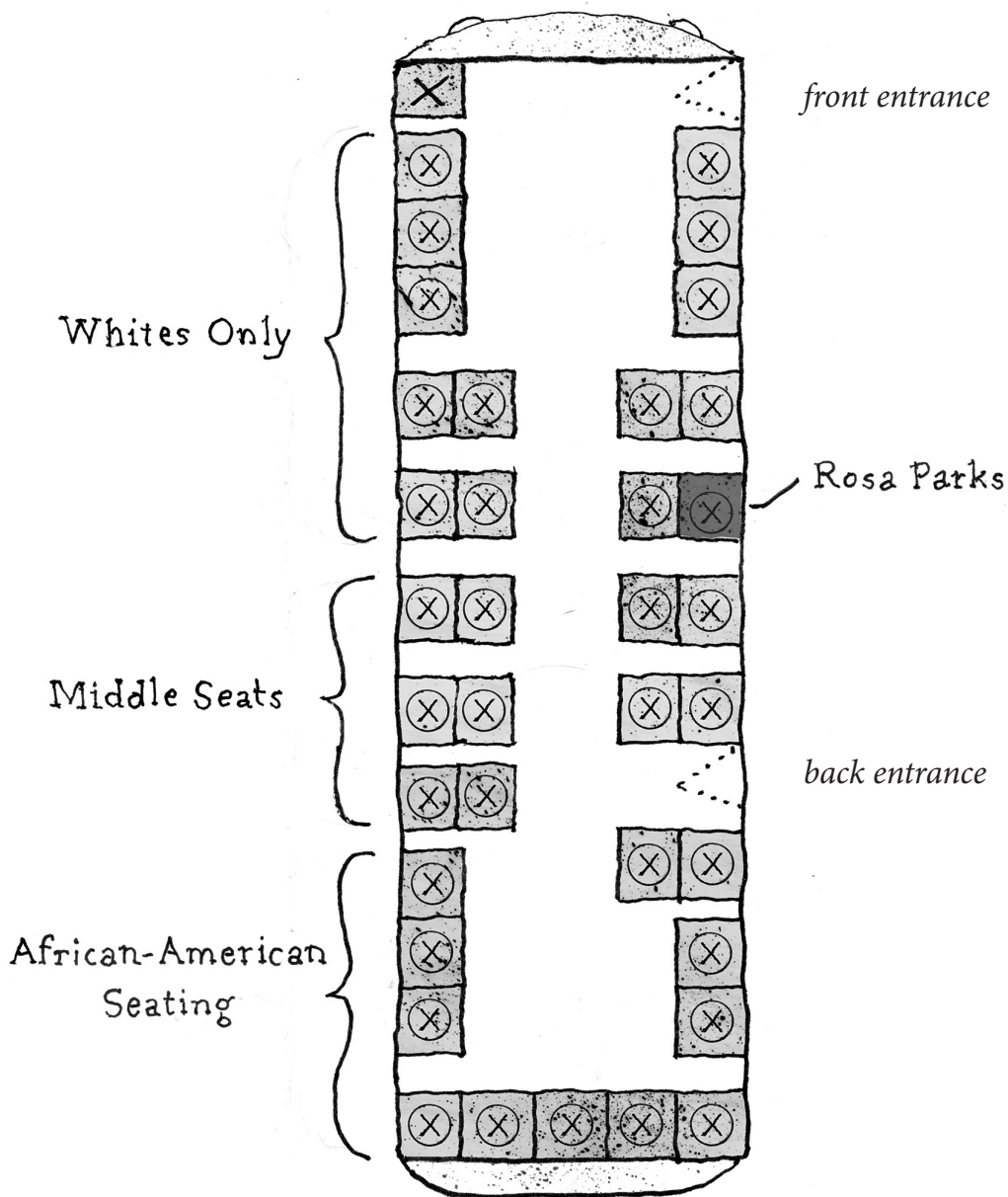
by Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins

When I got off from work that evening of December 1, I went to Court Square as usual to catch the Cleveland Avenue bus home. I didn’t look to see who was driving when I got on, and by the time I recognized him, I had already paid my **fare**. It was the same driver who had put me off the bus back in 1943, twelve years earlier. He was still tall and heavy, with red, rough-looking skin. And he was still mean-looking. I didn’t know if he had been on that route before—they switched the drivers around sometimes. I do know that most of the time if I saw him on a bus, I wouldn’t get on it.

I saw a **vacant** seat in the middle section of the bus and took it. I didn’t even question why there was a vacant seat even though there were quite a few people standing in the back. If I had thought about it at all, I would probably have figured maybe someone saw me get on and did not take the seat but left it vacant for me. There was a man sitting next to the window and two women across the aisle.

The next stop was the Empire Theater, and some whites got on. They filled up the white seats, and one man was left standing. The driver looked back and noticed the man standing. Then he looked back at us. He said, “Let me have those front seats,” because they were the

SEGREGATED SEATING ON A MONTGOMERY,
ALABAMA BUS (1955)



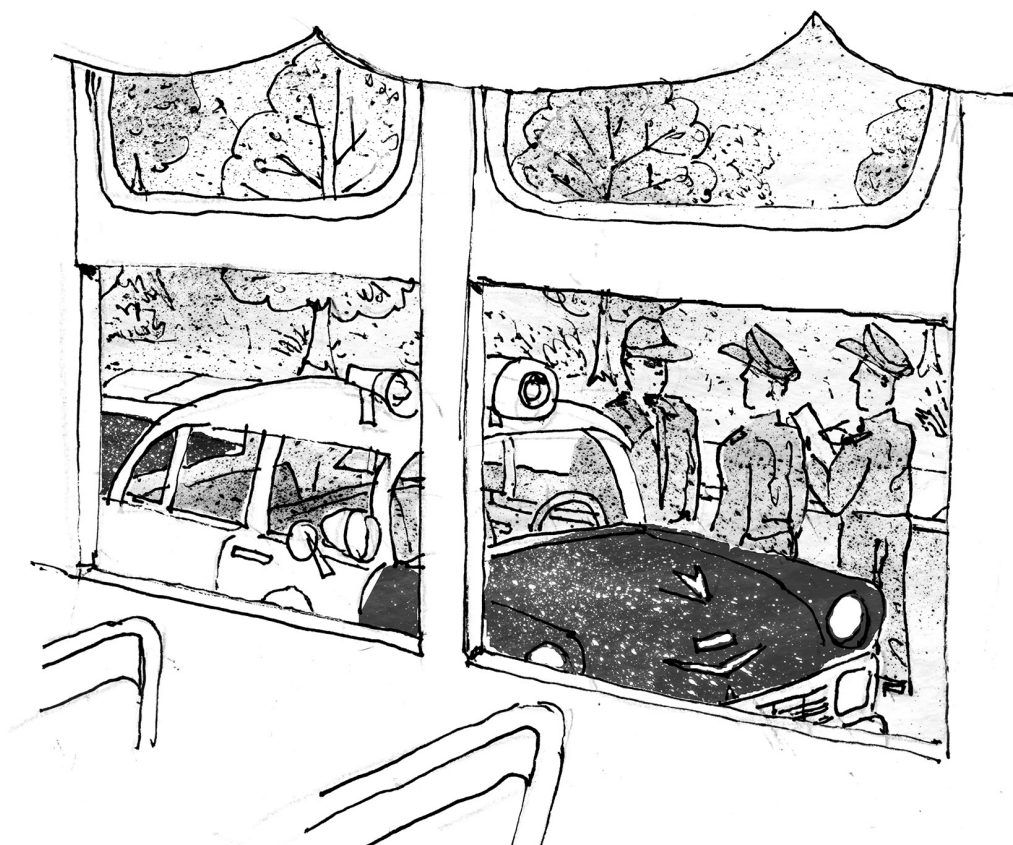
front seats of the black section. Didn't anybody move. We just sat right where we were, the four of us. Then he spoke a second time: "Y'all better make it light on yourselves and let me have those seats."

The man in the window seat next to me stood up, and I moved to let him pass by me, and then I looked across the aisle and saw that the two women were also standing. I moved over to the window seat. I could not see how standing up was going to "make it light" for me. The more we gave in and complied, the worse they treated us.

I thought back to the time when I used to sit up all night and didn't sleep, and my grandfather would have his gun right by the fireplace, or if he had his one-horse wagon going anywhere, he always had his gun in the back of the wagon. People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was forty-two. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.

The driver of the bus saw me still sitting there, and he asked was I going to stand up. I said, "No." He said, "Well, I'm going to have you arrested." Then I said, "You may do that." These were the only words we said to each other. I didn't even know his name, which was James Blake, until we were in court together. He got out of the bus and stayed outside for a few minutes, waiting for the police.

As I sat there, I tried not to think about what might happen. I knew that anything was possible. I could be **manhandled** or beaten. I could be arrested. People have asked me if it occurred to me then that I could be the test case the NAACP had been looking for. I did not think about that at all. In fact if I had let myself think too deeply about what might happen to me, I might have gotten off the bus.



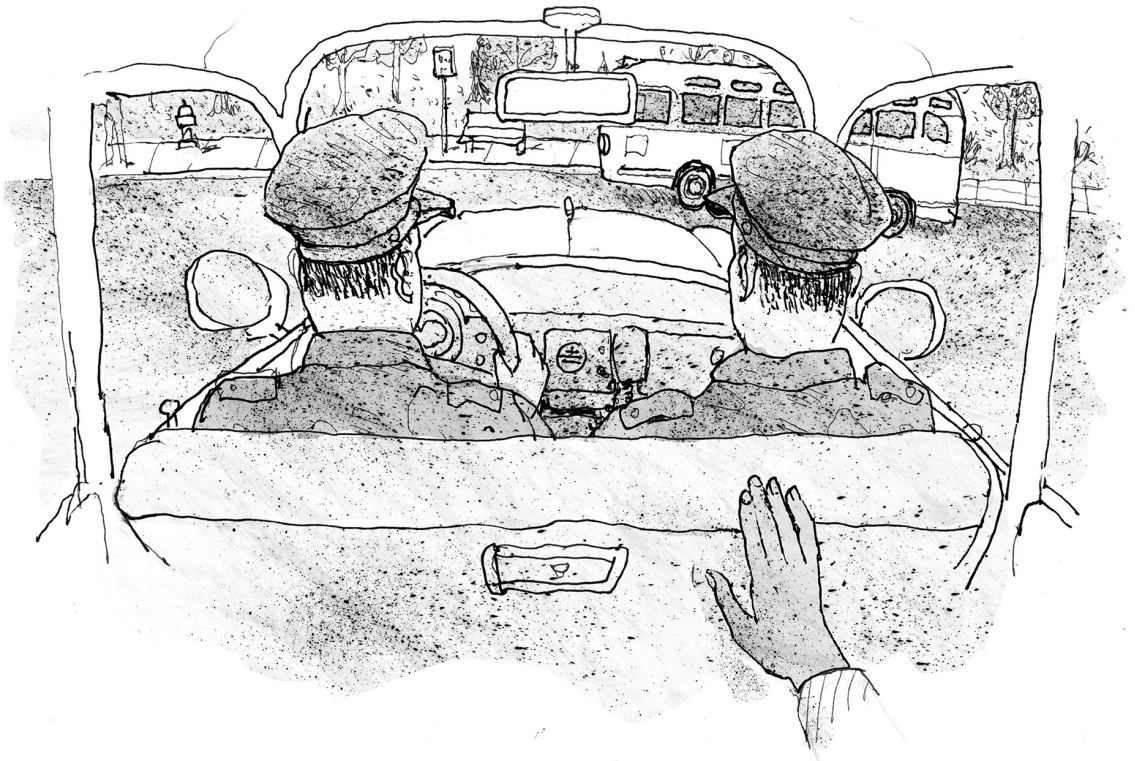
But I chose to remain.

Meanwhile there were people getting off the bus and asking for transfers, so that began to loosen up the crowd, especially in the back of the bus. Not everyone got off, but everybody was very quiet. What conversation there was, was in low tones; no one was talking out loud. It would have been quite interesting to have seen the whole bus empty out. Or if the other three had stayed where they were, because if they'd had to arrest four of us instead of one, then that would have given me a little support. But it didn't matter. I never thought hard of them at all and never even bothered to criticize them.

Eventually two policemen came. They got on the bus, and one of them asked me why I didn't stand up. I asked him, "Why do you

all push us around?” He said to me, and I quote him exactly, “I don’t know, but the law is the law and you’re under arrest.” One policeman picked up my purse, and the second one picked up my shopping bag and escorted me to the squad car. In the squad car they returned my personal belongings to me. They did not put their hands on me or force me into the car. After I was seated in the car, they went back to the driver and asked him if he wanted to swear out a warrant. He answered that he would finish his route and then come straight back to swear out the warrant. I was only in custody, not legally arrested, until the warrant was signed.

As they were driving me to the city desk, at City Hall, near Court Street, one of them asked me again, “Why didn’t you stand up when the driver spoke to you?” I did not answer. I remained silent all the way to City Hall.



Rosa Parks was born in Tuskegee, Alabama, on February 4, 1913. Known as “the first lady of civil rights,” Parks was a lifelong civil rights activist and a member of the NAACP, where she worked as a youth leader and then as secretary to the NAACP president.

On December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Parks refused to give up her seat on a public bus for a white passenger after the whites-only section of the bus filled up. She was arrested, and the legal case that followed became the starting platform for the citywide Montgomery Bus Boycott, which would then launch a nationwide effort to end the segregation of public facilities. Parks died in 2005 and is remembered as an icon of the civil rights movement.

Step by Step

A Boy Goes to Washington

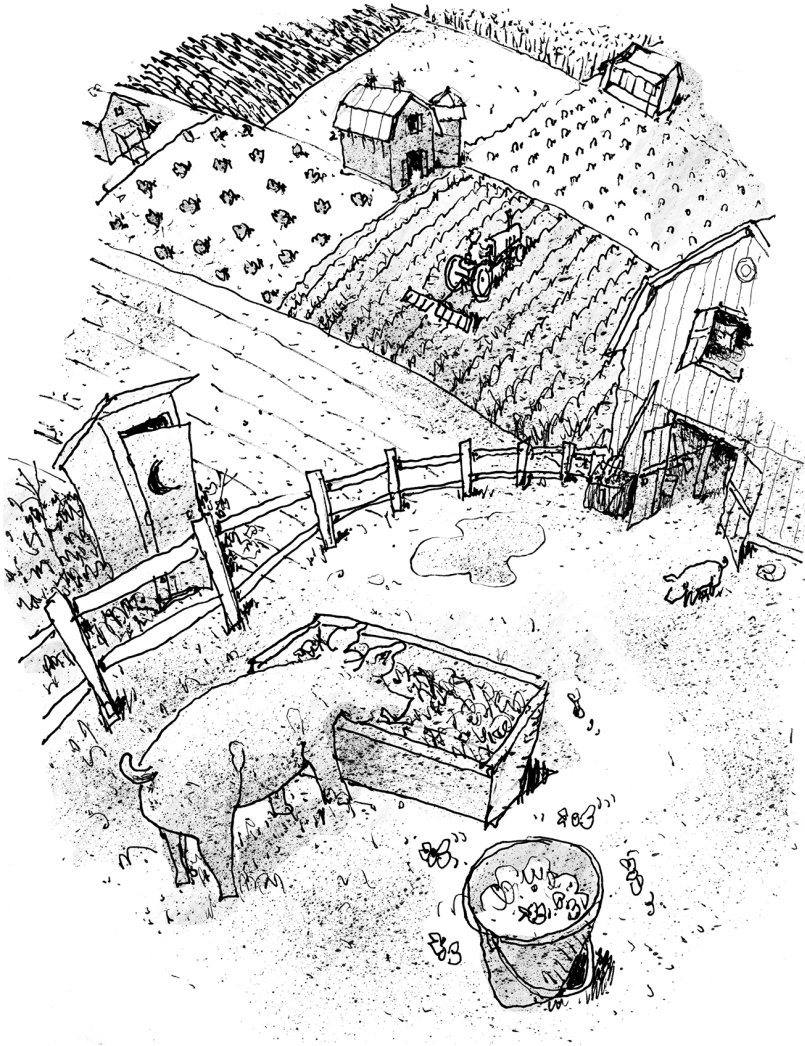
by Bertie Bowman

BERTIE BOWMAN, you are only thirteen years old and here you are, on your way to the big city, I thought, feeling the seat under me. I watched the scenery from the windows, the flat landscape, and the farmers walking around in their fields in the distance.

My mind was closed to all things past. I was not going to look back on my farm days, hog slopping, or the long hours of toil. I didn't give a thought to things back at home. That train rolled on all day long, to the song of the metal against the tracks, the blur of the towns and villages moving past my eyes. I wasn't going to get to Washington until around eight o'clock that night, and I told the porter that I would be glad to work if he needed anyone to help him.

"We'll see," the porter said, very aware of the white conductor, who could make trouble for him if he wanted. "There's always something to do around here. But be careful of the conductor. He's in charge of the porters and attendants."

The conductor walked back and forth through the aisle, checking on the porters and attendants, all colored, making sure that everything was up to standard. I watched the porter, who kept



out of his way but did his work. His job was to help with the bags, to meet the requests of the riders, and put out the steps when the train stopped. All the attendants worked in the kitchen, cooking meals and serving the commuters. I learned much on that train. Everything was so new and different in this environment outside of Summerton. It was my first experience in a much bigger world. For example, the train featured a flush toilet and I was only familiar with outhouses in my rural town.

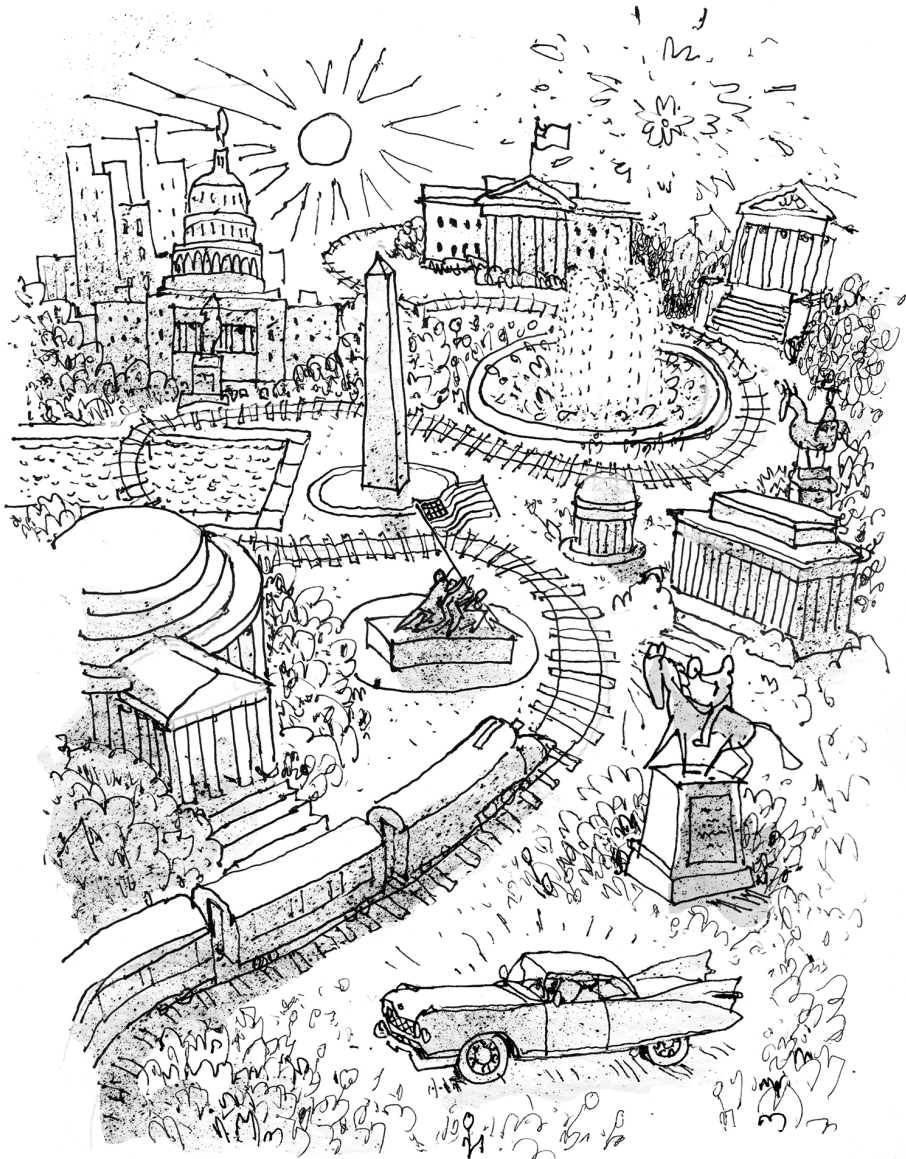
As soon as the train made its first stop, I learned how to put down the steps, gracefully without much fanfare, and then I watched the porter assist the white ladies in all their finery off to the platform. We loaded their baggage onto carts. The colored passengers traveled in separate cars from the white people, cramped from inferior passage, and did not get the porters' assistance. They got off the best way they could. According to the rules, the colored riders could not put their bags on a cart; they had to carry them.

Later, after I had eaten my lunch of ham and bacon sandwiched between biscuits, I helped out in the kitchen cleaning off the tables, and they rewarded me by giving me a free dinner. I took the dinner back to my seat in the segregated car where all the colored passengers ate food that they had brought with them. In that time, we could not go on the train without taking along our own food and drink, because we could not buy any in the dining car. That was only for white people.

The train trip and helping those guys out were very positive experiences, ones that convinced me that I'd made the right decision. I could survive away from home. I knew I could survive in the big city. If I could help those men do their work, after all, I could certainly hold down a job when I got to the city. Unlike some of the young guys, I was not too serious about myself. I could get along with anybody. The porter and the attendant seemed to like me, kidding me constantly, joking that I acted as though I was just hired on.

"Are you trying to take over our jobs?" they asked me. As it turned out, it wasn't just a joke, because later, when the train got close to Washington, they asked if I would really like a job on the train. They also said the white conductor said he would hire me because of the excellent work I had done that day.

But I had a mission. One mission alone: to be a success in the city. I told them no. The main reason I did not take that job was that it interfered with the game plan I'd had in my head for so long. I was going to go to the city, where I could get a job wearing a uniform, wearing a hat, and driving a shiny car. Who wanted to go back down South? I knew I would like it here, with its opportunities. I knew I could do a lot of growing up here and mature into quite a man. Also, the porter informed



me a lot about his work schedule, and how he would work without any time off all the way from the South to New York City and back again. It sounded almost as exhausting as farm work.

When the train pulled into Washington, I had never seen so many lights. It was like the world was on fire. As I gathered my stuff, the porter asked me again if I wanted the train job.

“No,” I said. “I am finally in the city. This is what I have been waiting for all my life.”

Bertie Bowman was born in Summerton, South Carolina, in 1932. The fifth of twelve children on a poor farm, Bowman dreamed of leaving for Washington, D.C. In 1944, Bowman met campaigning senator Burnet Maybank, who declared that if anybody in the crowd that day came to Washington, D.C. they should stop by and see him. At thirteen years old, Bowman ran away from his home and the farm and took Maybank up on his offer.

Maybank helped young Bowman get a job sweeping the steps of the Capitol Hill building. From there, Bowman made a place for himself. Over the next sixty years, Bowman would rise through the ranks to become a staffer for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He kept a diary of his experiences through those remarkable years, which became the basis for his autobiography.

Glossary

A

arduous, adj. Exhausting

atmosphere, n. outer layer consisting of air and gases

B

biomedical readings, n. medical data consisting of measurements taken from the body of a living thing

C

calloused, adj. dry and hardened from work

Caucasian, adj. white

civil rights, n. protections from discrimination and other unjust treatment

cockpit, n. the part of an aircraft that contains the flying controls, instrument panels, and seats for the pilot and copilot or crew

colleagues, n. people with whom someone works in a profession or business; coworkers

combustion, n. the process of burning

commemorate, v. to honor an important event

computer-generated simulations, n. the use of a computer to represent a real-world outcome using mathematical models

counterparts, n. people who hold equivalent positions

curvature, n. bend

customized, adj. built according to individual requirements

D

disembark, v. to exit a train, ship, aircraft, or other vehicle

E

engineering, n. the work or designing done skillfully

entrepreneur, n. an independent business owner

export, v. to send goods to another place for sale

exposition, n. public display

exquisite, adj. stunningly beautiful

F

fare, n. payment for public transportation

formulated, v. created or made

G

glee, n. great delight

grueling, adj. extremely difficult and tiring

H

harvested, v. gathered; brought in

I

iconic, adj. very famous; popular

illuminated, v. made visible; brought to light

ingenuity, n. creativity; inventiveness

intimidating, adj. threatening

J

jaunty, adj. cheery; joyful

jetpack, n. a device worn on a person's back that pushes them through the air

L

liberated, adj. freed

M

malfunctioning, adj. not operating normally

maneuvering, v. moving skillfully

manhandled, v. physically mistreated

menial, adj. uninteresting and repetitive; usually describing labor

“moment” narrative, n. a detailed story about a small moment in someone's life

N

Newton's Third Law of Motion, n. for every action (force) in nature, there is an equal and opposite reaction

O

orbit, v. to move in a circular path around an object

overseer, n. supervisor

P

perish, v. to become ruined or die out

persevere, v. persist; continue

personification, n. a literary device in which a nonhuman object or creature has human characteristics

plantation, n. large farm on which the laborers usually are not the owners

poised, adj. relaxed and confident

pressure suit, n. a self-sufficient protective suit that enables the wearer to sustain basic physical functions as though they were on Earth

propelled, v. forced forward

prosperous, adj. successful

public money, n. government funds

Q

quarreling, v. arguing

R

radio waves, n. electromagnetic waves that have a radio frequency

realization, n. a clear understanding

relative, adj. in proportion to something else; respective

riddled, v. spread throughout

S

sound waves, n. pressure waves carried longitudinally through a medium

spacewalk, n. time spent in space outside of a spacecraft

spunk, n. spirit; liveliness

stepwell, n. stairway

T

tether, n. a line or cord that connects two objects or people

tethered, v. fastened or tied together

theme, n. a universal idea or lesson of a text

thickset, adj. having a broad body

thrust, v. to push forward with force

V

vacant, adj. empty

velocity, n. the speed of something

vestibule, n. a passageway that allows passengers to enter and exit the train

viewfinder, n. a device on a camera that shows the lens' view

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