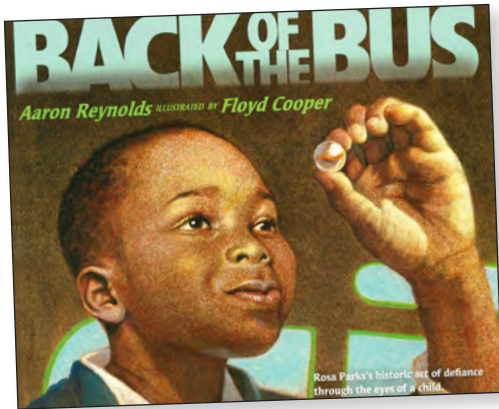




Quotes



December 1, 1955
Montgomery, Alabama

Winter's here in Montgomery,
but I got the window down
and a warm breeze blowin' in
as Mama and me
huff down Cleveland Avenue
on the big ol' bus.

We're sittin' right where we're supposed to—
way in back.

I take out my marble,
all shiny and bright
like a big ol' tiger's eye,
and lay it on the grooves in the aisle.

The bus slows down
and that marble rolls and rolls.

But a dark hand jumps out
from a seat up front
and grabs my marble good!



& Notes

MAKE CONNECTION: I already have some background knowledge on Rosa Parks. I know she refused to move to the back of the bus. And I see that's the title of this text.

QUESTION: But the "through the eyes of a child" reference has me thinking I am not reading the usual biography. This will be a different perspective. I wonder what will be different?

RETELL: The setting is 1955 in Alabama, a southern state of the U.S.

VISUALIZE: I can see the boy sitting on the bus. He's got the window down, enjoying the warm breeze on his face. He hears the loud bus as it moves. I also see him smiling in the illustration. He seems to be enjoying his bus ride— like an adventure or something.

QUESTION: What!? In the back... or that's right. 1955, Rosa Parks, segregation.

RETELL: Oh, he's got a toy in his pocket, a marble.

MAKE CONNECTION: Kids often take a small toy or items with them wherever they go. His must be a marble.

VISUALIZE: Oh, "the grooves" on the floor aisle. He put the marble in the grooves. Then, when the bus driver breaks, it lurches forward, and the marble rolls to the front.

RETELL: OH NO! Someone snatched his marble!?

MAKE CONNECTION: That's so mean!



Quotes

But it's just Mrs. Parks from the tailor shop.
She looks back, smilin', flings a wink at me,

and sets that marble back in its groove.
That bus takes off again
and my marble comes right back to me,
like I got it on a string.

Mama shakes "no" at me,
and I hold it snug in my hand.

She's got them worked-all-day eyes,
but she's got her strong chin on.

The bus slams to a stop,
door slingin' open,
and people pilin' on,
all crammed like lima beans.

That long dark aisle's
all packed in,
jammed up tight,
and I'm glad my marble's
tucked in safe.

"Y'all gotta move, now."
It's Mr. Blake, the driver.
I can't see him
'cuz of the people jam,
but I know that growly ol' voice.



& Notes

RETELL: Oh, she's a nice lady. She smiled and winked; she's just teasing him.

QUESTION: I wonder if she'll give the marble back...? I bet she will.

RETELL: Yes, I was right. She gave it back. When I look at the illustration, I see the lady. She's smiling, looks older, seems nice.

QUESTION: But wait... in the illustration she looks African American. I'm confused.

SETTING: Wait, on the previous page it said "a dark hand jumps out...and grabs my marble." She *is* African American.

BACKGROUND: But African Americans were to sit in the back, like the boy and his mama.

SETTING: It's 1955.

GENRE: Oh wait... the cover said this was the Rosa Parks' story.



SYNTHESIZE: Ooooh, *that's* Rosa Parks! She's the nice lady in the front of the bus who pretended to steal his marble. This is *the* day. I got caught up in the boy and his marble and just thought it was a generic character named "Mrs. Parks." But now I get it.

VISUALIZE: Mama is mad. I see her shaking her head "no," telling him to stop. I can feel his grip tighten on the marble.

VISUALIZE: Mama is tired.

QUESTION: I'm thinking she snapped at him because she's tired after working all day.

VISUALIZE: I can see it. I can even feel it. The bus stops and starts and stops and starts. I feel the bouncing as people get on and off. I can feel the bumping and jostling of people as they lean against each other because it's so crowded.

RETELL: There's no room for him to play with his marble, so he put it in his pocket.

RETELL: So the bus driver is telling people to move.

QUESTION: Maybe since it's so crowded he wants people to squish more toward the back to make room for other passengers.



Quotes

Some folks get up, new ones sit down,

but still that bus is sittin' there stopped.

"Why ain't we goin', Mama?" I say all soft.

"Hush, child," she says.

And I do.

Somebody's talkin' back,
but I can't hear the words.

Just Mr. Blake sayin', "I'm gonna call the police, now."

We sit and sit,
not goin' no place.

Nothin' to do but sweat,
so I roll my marble on that sticky ol' seat
and catch it before it does down the crack.

But Mama says, "Put it away, child."
I hear Mama's crinkled-up somethin'-wrong voice,
and I hunker that brown tiger's eye down deep into my pocket,
like it's hidin'.



& Notes

VISUALIZE: People are getting up and down. They must be getting on and off the bus at different stops.

QUESTION: Huh? How are new people getting on if the bus isn't moving?

RETELL: I see I'm not the only one confused. The little boy wonders why the bus isn't moving either.

RETELL: Someone's talking back, and so the bus driver is threatening to call the police.

BACKGROUND: Oh, it's Rosa Parks. She won't move to the back of the bus, that's why the bus isn't moving.

EMOTION: Wow! There's a lot going on. This is an intense moment.

SETTING: I didn't realize there was so much happening at the same time. People up and down moving, people arguing, people getting impatient, and the threat of the police.

GENRE: I remember this event from reading it in a textbook. But in a story, the setting is described much more powerfully.

QUESTION: I wonder what it felt like to sense something was wrong, but not be able to clearly hear the problem. And then, cutting through everything was the threat of "I'm going to call the police."



SYNTHESIZE: Oh, maybe that's why his mom hushes him. She's thinking, don't add fuel to this fire. She's trying to protect him from the chaos.

RETELL: They are still waiting.

QUESTION: How long did this go on?

VISUALIZE: The boy is hot, and he's bored.

QUESTION: What were the other African American passengers thinking during this time? As I look at the illustrations I see the other characters in the scene. He's playing with his marble; this guy is reading the paper; that guy is staring off in space; the two ladies behind him look like they're talking. Were they intentionally acting like they didn't see what was going on?

RETELL: His mom tells him again to put his marble away. So he shoves it into his pocket. She knows something is wrong. She hears the commotion. (I'll assume the others around her did, too.)



Quotes

Some folks look back,
givin' us angry eyes.

"We do somethin' wrong, Mama?" I say all soft.
"No, we ain't," she says.
But I ain't sure,
'cuz I'm gettin' shaky legs.

Same folks are doin' mean scratchy whispers
at somebody sittin' up front.
And then I see who it is
from way in back.
Mrs. Parks, that's who.

She don't belong up front like that,
and them folks all know it.

But she's sittin' right there,
her eyes all fierce like a lightnin' storm,
like maybe she does belong up there.
And I start thinkin' maybe she does too.

Fifteen whole minutes we sit,
but it feels like a big bunch more.
That breeze is long gone,
and I want me a drink real bad.
But then the policeman comes.

He walks right on my bus.
I'm all shaky inside now.
Them lima bean people spread aside,
and he stops at that way-up-front seat.



& Notes

QUESTION: Some white people look back with angry eyes? Or is it African Americans who give them the look because the boy is making noise and drawing attention?

VISUALIZATION: The boy senses the tension and mood. He wonders what he did wrong. He feels anxious.

RETELL: So the "angry eyes" were the white people in the front. They are also the ones whispering harshly at Rosa Parks sitting at the front of the bus.

MAKE CONNECTION: The little boy is aware of the culture and expectations of the time period.

VISUALIZE: I see her sitting like a statue with her eyes straight ahead. She's got a committed look in her eyes; she's not giving in.

MAKE CONNECTION: I've had to wait on something before. That waiting on other people can make you impatient. I sense the hot, southern day. Since the bus isn't moving, the breeze is gone. The boy is hot and thirsty.

VISUALIZE: Then the policeman enters the bus.

RETELL: The bus driver threatened to call the police, and now he's here.

BACKGROUND: In 1955, African Americans were forced to live by a different set of standards.

SETTING: It created a mood of hostility.

EMOTION: The policeman entered the bus. The white people stand aside and the boy is scared.

GENRE: This is an intense part, and yet the author throws in the detail about the boy being thirsty two lines earlier. I didn't expect that. That detail seems out of place for such a serious moment.

QUESTION: Why would the author include that detail?

PERSPECTIVE: Well, it is an event told from a child's perspective. So him not being aware of the momentous situation is very possible. He's so young.

QUESTION: I wonder if anyone on the bus with Rosa Parks that day had any inkling of what this event would mean 70-plus years later.



SYNTHESIZE: I'm realizing one person really can make a difference.



Quotes

"Why won't you move and give this man your seat?"
he says to Mrs. Parks.
But she don't move.

She's just sittin' in that seat
like a turnip pile.

"I don't think I should have to stand up," she says.
"Why do you push us folks around?"
Her voice is all soft,
but she's got on her strong chin too, just like Mama's.

That policeman clicks them metal things on her hands,
quick and loud like the screen door slammin',
and off the bus they go.



& Notes

QUESTION: I wonder why *that* day? What was it that caused her not to give up her seat on this day? She was playful a couple of pages earlier when she grabbed the marble. What changed?

VISUALIZE: I can see her not moving, "just sittin' in that seat."

RETELL: Rosa Parks quietly but firmly says she doesn't think it's fair that she has to move.

EMOTION: What I remember reading about racial segregation was more informative about what happened, when, and where. But this is a powerful quote showing feeling and reaction. I'm thinking *You, go girl!*

BACKGROUND: From previous learning, I know that African Americans were prohibited from doing some things (e.g., drinking from certain water fountains, using certain restrooms, sitting at the front of the bus, etc.).

QUESTION: I wonder how she keeps from yelling and screaming. How can she stay so calm?

EMOTION: I can see her sitting still, facing forward. I can hear her quietly and in a controlled voice being defiant. I can feel the power she exudes with that "strong chin."

GENRE: This tension is at its breaking point. I know that stories build to a climax. I'm anticipating on the remaining pages to learn of the reactions and responses to her defiance (falling action) and then the ending (resolution).

QUESTION: I keep going back to— why today? Why did she pick today to be defiant?



SYNTHESIZE: She's had enough. That's why today. She's just had enough. She hit her breaking point on this day.

RETELL: So the policeman arrests her and takes her off the bus.

QUESTION: That's it? That's all the author gives us? After all the detail leading up to this moment and the tension and the mood— then it's just over? *Did the policeman pull her up? Did the white people cheer when she got off?* I wonder why the author did not detail this part as thoroughly as the other facets of this event.



Quotes

More people sit,
and the air ain't warm no more.

She's gettin' hauled off to jail or worse,
and I'm watchin' out the window.
Mama too, with them long tired eyes.

"There you go, Rosa Parks, stirrin' up a nest of hornets,"
Mama's sayin' in her to-herself voice.
But I hear.
I see somethin' too— she's got Mrs. Parks' lightnin'-
storm eyes now.



& Notes

RETELL: The bus is moving again, so there is a breeze again.

VISUALIZE: The illustration shows people staring out the window— whites and African Americans.

RETELL: The mom whispers to herself that Rosa Parks has caused trouble.

BACKGROUND: I'm thinking about how Rosa Parks' actions would definitely have caused trouble or conflict, especially during this time. Mama is mad at Rosa for causing trouble. She even said she was "stirrin' up a nest of hornets."


EMOTION: The air of hostility is getting strong. All that anger would cause this moment to get more intense, even scary.

SETTING: Now I'm thinking about all those angry people looking out the bus window. I see Mama staring out the window with the same intense and angry eyes as Rosa did.

QUESTION: *Wait!* She has the same lightnin'-storm eyes as Mrs. Parks...? And it says "now." Huh? I'm wondering what caused her eyes to become stormin' now?

PERSPECTIVE: Oh wait! Mama is African American and so is Mrs. Parks. They're on the same side. If Mrs. Parks is angry and doesn't want to be treated like this anymore, I'm starting to think maybe Mama is, too.

GENRE: This has got me thinking about what I know about stories, and there is always a high point of action or emotion. The climax or breaking point usually causes a major shift in mood and tone. Oh, it's Mama! She's experiencing a change. She's feeling like Rosa Parks *now*. She has the same eyes.

 **SYNTHESIZE:** I'm realizing Mama's fed up, too. She admits Rosa has started something here, but the hornet's nest *had* to be stirred. Mama agrees it was time to stand up and do something.



Quotes

"We in trouble, Mama?" I say all soft.
"No, we ain't," she says. "Don't you worry none.
Tomorrow all this'll be forgot."

But I got somethin' in me,
all pale and punchy,
sayin' it won't be.

Don't know why.
But instead of feelin' all shaky,
I feel a little strong.
Like Mama's chin.

I take out my marble
and start to hide it in my squeezey-tight fist.

But instead, I hold it up to the light,
right out in the open.
That thing shines all brown and golden in the sunlight,
like it's smilin', I think.
'Cuz it ain't gotta hide no more.



& Notes

VISUALIZE: The little boy is scared. He thinks they are in trouble.
CONNECTION: Like most mothers, she's trying to soothe and comfort him.

RETELL: Even though Mama said it will be okay, he senses there is more to it.

RETELL: The little boy knows he should feel scared, but he doesn't.

PERSPECTIVE: The boy was "feel(ing) a little strong." He (and African Americans in general) were gaining confidence and strength to fight for their rights.

BACKGROUND: I know this event was at the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement.

GENRE: And I know we are beyond the climax and this is the falling action.

EMOTION: I look at the illustration, and Mama looks confident and secure— especially just after the intense scene.

QUESTION: Did Mama know it wasn't over? She just said "this'll be forgot" to soothe her son, but did she really feel that this was the beginning of change, too?



SYNTHESIZE: I think Mama and the boy are feeling a "good scared" on this page. Like a "good cry" or a "good tired." They know that Rosa Parks is in trouble, but it was necessary. It was time.

RETELL: As the bus resumes its route, the boy remembers his marble. He wants to play with it, but is scared.

RETELL: He decides to take it out of his pocket and study it. It catches the light, and he notices the colors ("all brown and golden").

GENRE: I expect stories to conclude and tie everything up. So the marble reappearing at the end makes sense.

EMOTION: Because he "feels a little strong" (previous page), he is not as afraid anymore. He has more confidence and decides he will hold it "right out in the open."

QUESTION: I wonder what changed between "I... start to hide it in my squeezey-tight fist" and the next line "But instead, I hold it up..."

GENRE: I know stories have lessons and authors want us to learn something from character choices. So I'm thinking— what are we to learn from this little boy?

BACKGROUND: I know this is the beginning of change, the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement.

SETTING: There is definitely a shift in mood from negative (scared, hostile) to positive ("shines... sunlight... smilin").

PERSPECTIVE: This story is told through a child's eyes, and children play with toys, then the marble might represent something...



SYNTHESIZE: Oh! The marble represents African Americans! He is the marble. He "ain't gotta hide no more."