

Penguin



Readers

THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF

ROSA PARKS



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CHAPTER ONE

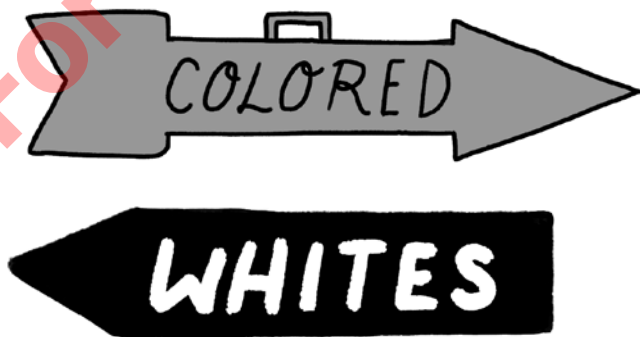
Who was Rosa Parks?

Rosa Louise McCauley was **born** on 4th February 1913 in Alabama in the United States of America. All her **life** she fought for the **rights** of black people in the USA. Because of this, the American **president** Bill Clinton gave her two of the most important **medals** in the country.

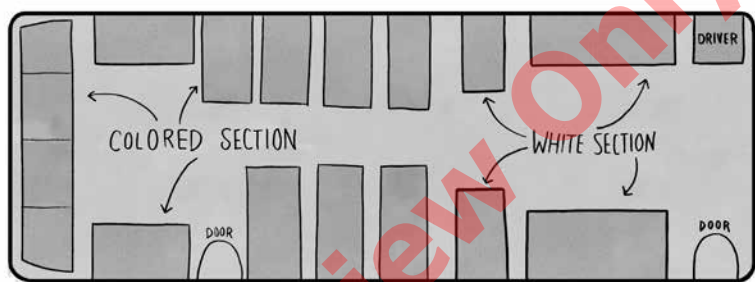


But people do not know about Rosa because she got these medals. People know the name Rosa Parks because she helped to start the **civil rights movement** in the USA. How did she do that? She said “no” on a bus.

One of the biggest problems for Rosa and other black people in the USA was **racism**. Many white people thought, “We are better than black people.” Some of these white people **attacked** black people. They often said bad things to black people, and they did very bad things to them. In the years before 1970, **racial segregation** was part of the **law**. White people and black people did not work or eat together.



On buses, black and white people had to sit in different **sections**. Only white people could sit in the front section and black people always sat at the back. Sometimes there were no more seats in the white section of the bus and black people had to give their seats to white people.



Rosa knew these **unfair** laws very well. She got on the bus on 1st December 1955 after a long day at work. She paid the driver and sat in the black section of the bus. After many stops, there were no more seats in the white section, and a white man had to stand. "Move! I want those seats," the bus driver shouted to Rosa and three other black people. The three others stood up, but Rosa did not. The bus driver walked over to Rosa and shouted, "I'm going to call the police. Move!"

"No," she said, quietly.

This made the bus driver very angry. He called the police, and they **arrested** Rosa.

On that cold evening in December, Rosa did not move. She stayed in her seat. Why did she do this? She was not old, and she was not tired from her work. On that day, she was angry because she did not have the same rights as white people.



CHAPTER TWO

Young Rosa

Rosa McCauley was born in 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama. Her father, James, built houses for people across Alabama, and her mother, Leona, was a teacher.



Leona learned to teach at the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church because black women could not easily go to college at that time.

Leona often said, “Going to school is important for everyone.” She was very happy to live with her family in Tuskegee. It was the best place in Alabama for African Americans to go to school. But Leona and James stopped living together, and Leona moved to Pine Level, Alabama with young Rosa and her little brother Sylvester. Rosa did not often see her father after that. In Pine Level, they lived with Leona’s parents on their farm. Rosa liked living on the farm with her grandparents. She and her brother were often with their grandparents because Leona worked a lot.



**Rosa and Sylvester often read books
with their grandparents.**