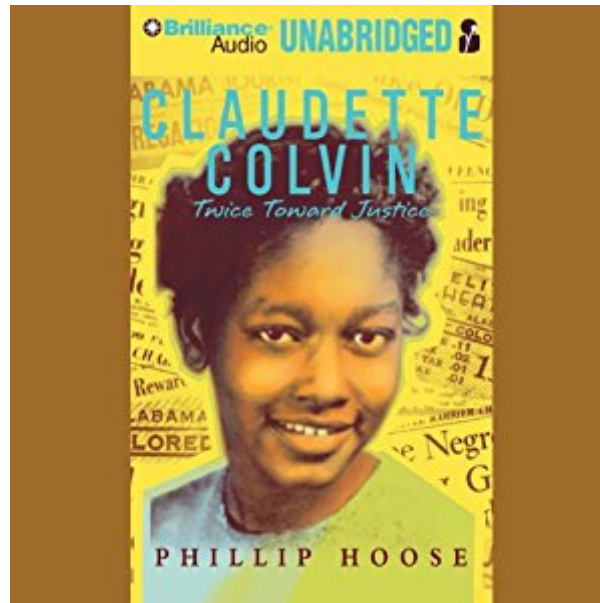


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# Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice



## Synopsis

"When it comes to justice, there is no easy way to get it. You can't sugarcoat it. You have to take a stand and say, 'This is not right.'" - Claudette Colvin On March 2, 1955, an impassioned teenager, fed up with the daily injustices of Jim Crow segregation, refused to give her seat to a white woman on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Instead of being celebrated as Rosa Parks would be just nine months later, fifteen-year-old Claudette Colvin found herself shunned by her classmates and dismissed by community leaders. Undaunted, a year later she dared to challenge segregation again as a key plaintiff in *Browder v. Gayle*, the landmark case that struck down the segregation laws of Montgomery and swept away the legal underpinnings of the Jim Crow South. Based on extensive interviews with Claudette Colvin and many others, Phillip Hoose presents the first in-depth account of an important yet largely unknown civil rights figure, skillfully weaving her dramatic story into the fabric of the historic Montgomery bus boycott and court case that would change the course of American history. Claudette Colvin is the National Book Award Winner for Young People's Literature, a Newbery Honor Book, A YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist, and a Robert F. Sibert Honor Book. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a native of Alabama (Selma) and a graduate of Alabama State University, I had heard about Claudette Colvin but the informational was skeletal at best. To actually read her account of events and know that an ordinary teenager did an extraordinary thing that sparked the movement led by Dr. King is something I will always cherish. Would love to have learned about her life after Montgomery (Claudette moved to New York where she lives today) and her views regarding discrimination in the

north. Great book, great person, historical treasure.

Nine months before Rosa Parks famously and courageously took a stand against the stranglehold of the Jim Crow laws, fifteen-year-old Claudette Colvin also refused to give up her seat to a white person on a crowded Montgomery city bus. Claudette's bold move added fuel to the outrage that African Americans felt toward the oppression, ignorance, and hatred associated with the country's segregation laws. However, local leaders of the African American community perceived Claudette's youth, personality, and class to be unsuitable for holding her up as the key figure to initiate a mass boycott of the city's bus system. Rosa Parks assumed this role nine months later, thus precipitating more than a year of organized protest to end segregated busing in Montgomery. During this process, Claudette engaged in a second courageous action that played a major role in the civil rights movement: she served as one of four plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit *Browder v. Gayle* that abolished segregated bus seating in Alabama. In *Claudette Colvin*, Phillip Hoose shines the spotlight on Claudette's motivation and anguish around two actions that hitherto remained fairly obscure in the historical record. Along the way, readers are given a jarring reminder of the heavy oppression, fear, and humiliation that African Americans experienced on a daily basis as a result of the country's institutionalized discrimination. This book provides a vivid demonstration of the power of organized resistance and the importance of social justice for all people.

This book was very informing. I learned something I did not know. I always wondered why my father drew our feet and took the drawings to the store. I did not know that Blacks could not try on the shoes. It does make sense. The book put a lot of closure to some things I often wondered about.

Most American school children know the story of Rosa Parks, but few know that before Rosa Parks started her protest there was a brave young teen who challenged the segregation laws in Montgomery, Alabama. This is an amazing story - I read it in one sitting, it was so engrossing - of Claudette Colvin and her courage to speak up against the injustices of segregation. It's a great nonfiction for young adults - clear, descriptive background information, and many first-person accounts from interviews with Claudette and others. Fantastic. I think it would be great for kids in 5th grade and up.[...]

In reviewing this type of book, I have to wonder if it's the kind of book that Young Adults want to read, or the kind of book that adults want young adults to read? Claudette Colvin, a teen on her way

home from school, was one of the first to stand up for her right NOT to stand up on the bus, even before the better-known Rosa Parks. That said, it's a great book. The angle of a teen who was active within the Civil Rights movement is perhaps a more relevant take for teens. It's highly readable and interesting, with pictures that add to the story. I enjoyed Russell Freedman's *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott* book more, and it was actually where I first heard of Claudette Colvin's role in the bus boycotts. Content: This book does not gloss over the very real, hard facts of prejudice and does contain some violence towards Claudette and others that a younger teen might find disturbing. The book also addresses rape and Claudette's teen pregnancy. For this reason, I would recommend it for teens, not tweens.

*Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* is an illuminating piece of nonfiction. Phillip Hoose tells the story without condescending, but he also doesn't assume the reader knows anything about his story. As an adult reader, I appreciated the deep background provided in sidebars. From the first pages, which are largely pictures illuminating life in the South in the era of Jim Crow laws, I was wowed. The book reads almost like a documentary; Hoose uses photos, text boxes, background, newspaper text and interviews to paint a vivid picture not only of Colvin's life, but these years in Montgomery, Alabama. Who is Claudette Colvin? She was a high school girl who refused to give up her seat for a white passenger. She did it nine months before Rosa Parks, and she was arrested. Part of what I love about this book is the honesty, which is at times brutal. Rosa Parks is an American hero, and so many of us growing up being wowed by her bravery. This book takes us back to the way it really happened, which isn't as simple. It's not a nice little story, but it's real. As a librarian firmly in the "teach the truth" camp, I loved this book. Some teachers and parents may react adversely to it. She cooperated with Phillip Hoose, who interviewed her numerous times for this book. *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* is an important book. It's a book I found illuminating even as an adult reader.

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