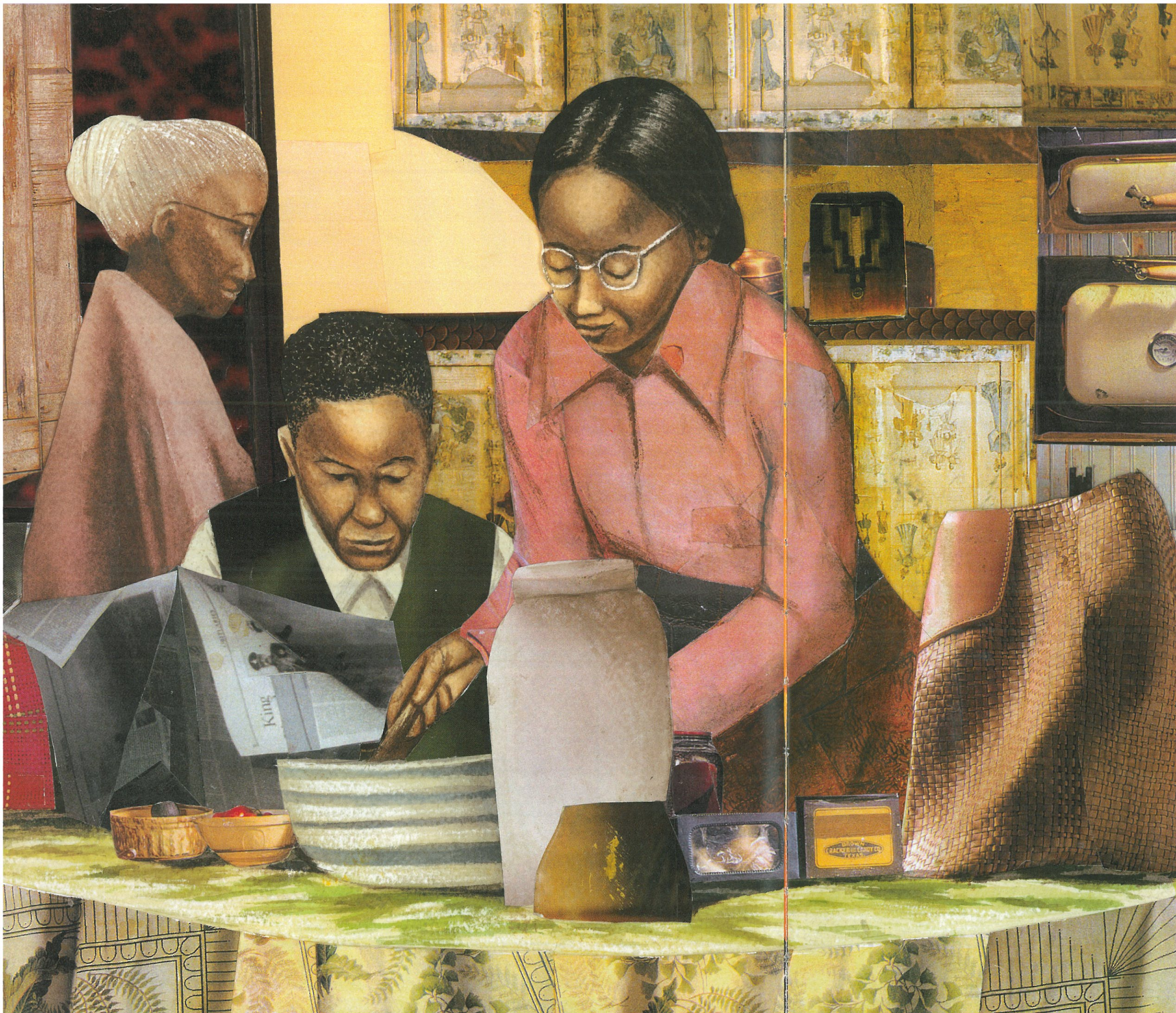


Franklin

Interest Level: 3-5  
GLE: 5.1 DRA: 44  
Genre: Non Fiction  
Topic: African American





Mrs. Parks was having a good day. Mother was getting over that touch of flu and was up this morning for breakfast at the table. Her husband, Raymond Parks, one of the best barbers in the county, had been asked to take on extra work at the air force base. And the first day of December was always special because you could just feel Christmas in the air.



Everybody knew the alterations department would soon be very, very busy. Mrs. Parks would laugh each year with the other seamstresses and say that “those elves in the North Pole have nothing on us!”

The women of Montgomery, both young and older, would come in with their fancy holiday dresses that needed adjustments or their Sunday suits and blouses that needed just a touch—a flower or some velvet trimming or something to make the ladies look festive.

Rosa Parks was the best seamstress. The needle and thread flew through her hands like the gold spinning from Rumpelstiltskin’s loom. The other seamstresses would tease Rosa Parks and say she used magic. Rosa would laugh. “Not magic. Just concentration,” she would say. Some days she would skip lunch to be finished on time.





This Thursday they had gotten a bit ahead of their schedule. “Why don’t you go on home, Rosa,” said the supervisor. “I know your mother is feeling poorly, and you might want to look in on her.”

The supervisor knew Rosa would stay until the work was done, but it was only December 1. No need to push. Rosa appreciated that. Now she could get home early, and since Raymond would be working late, maybe she would surprise him with a meat loaf, his favorite.

“See you in the morning.” Rosa waved good-bye and headed for the bus stop. She fiddled in her pocket for the dime so that she would not have to ask for change. When she stepped up to drop her fare in, she was smiling in anticipation of the nice dinner she would make. As was the evil custom, she then got off the bus and went to the back door to enter the bus from the rear.



Rosa saw that the section reserved for blacks was full, but she noticed the neutral section, the part of the bus where blacks or whites could sit, had free seats.

The left side of the aisle had two seats and on the right side a man was sitting next to the window. Rosa decided to sit next to him. She did not remember his name, but she knew his face. His son, Jimmy, came frequently to the NAACP Youth Council affairs. They exchanged pleasantries as the bus pulled away from the curb.

Rosa settled her sewing bag and her purse near her knees, trying not to crowd Jimmy's father. Men take up more space, she was thinking as she tried to squish her packages closer. The bus made several more stops, and the two seats opposite her were filled by blacks. She sat on her side of the aisle daydreaming about her good day and planning her special meal for her husband.





“I said give me those seats!” the bus driver bellowed. Mrs. Parks looked up in surprise. The two men on the opposite side of the aisle were rising to move into the crowded black section. Jimmy’s father muttered, more to himself than anyone else, “I don’t feel like trouble today. I’m gonna move.”

Mrs. Parks stood to let him out, looked at James Blake, the bus driver, and then sat back down.

