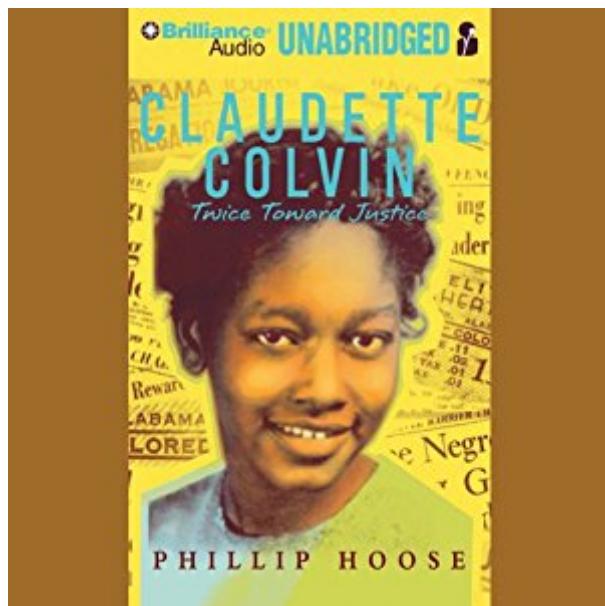


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# Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice



## 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 2009 National Book Award Winner for Young People's Literature and a 2010 Newbery Honor Book. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Little known piece of American history, at least unknown to myself.I'd never heard of Claudette Colvin, she was a 14 year old girl, who refused to give up HER seat before Rosa Parks.Loads of black and white photos depicting the south of the 1950's and current photo's of Claudette Colvin and the author in the Afterword.This should be in EVERY home with children 8 years and older and definitely in elementary classrooms.This book has won The National book award, An ALA best Book for young adults, and a Newbery Honor Book winner. AND an .com Top 10 Book: Teens Plus many

more . I recommend this to anyone who likes to read nonfiction, I recommend to anyone who likes courageous persons and willing to learn and understand so that past mistakes are not repeated . I recommend this to anyone outside the United States who want to learn something of the mid 20th century U.S. and the past connects with current events . A great read, I'd give it a 10 if I could, I bought it used and would have bought it new at twice the cost, that's just how highly I regard it. If this review has helped, click YES below. Thank you.

Why, oh why, is this book - not to mention its subject - so obscure? I'm 40 years old, liberal and fairly well versed on the civil rights era, yet I'd never heard of Claudette Colvin or had any clue that anyone did what Rosa Parks did before Rosa Parks did it. In fact, as I learned from this book, Rosa Parks' role, while vitally important, was really just a formality because anger over the bus segregation was already simmering madly due in part to the actions of Claudette Colvin and another teenager, Mary Louise Smith, who went before Rosa Parks and took the brunt of it. Phillip Hoose's book, "Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice" opens with a brief history of Jim Crow laws and segregation in the South, specifically in Montgomery, Alabama. Most of the information should be familiar to most readers, but there are details that really bring home the reality of Jim Crow - such as the man named Brooks who was shot for refusing to get off the bus unless he got his dime back. The next chapter is about Claudette's early life, which was nearly as tragic as most of her later life. Her father left his family and eventually her mother shipped her off to live with her great aunt and great uncle. Fortunately, Claudette was loved there and thrived, becoming a good student. However, in another tragic strike, her younger sister died of polio when Claudette was only thirteen years old. Still reeling from her loss, Claudette becomes passionately interested in civil rights following the arrest and sentencing of one of her classmates, Jeremiah Reeves. The next several chapters chronicle the lead up to Claudette's refusal to relinquish her seat, the violent incident itself, and the fall-out therefrom. Unlike Rosa Parks, Claudette was hauled violently off the bus, thrown into a squad car, handcuffed and locked in a jail cell. She knew enough not to fight back or even resist, but nonetheless her white accusers painted her as a wild unruly teenager which, despite the lack of truth, made her inappropriate as the "face" of the bus protest movement. Also unlike Rosa Parks, Claudette was not hailed as a hero for her actions. Many, perhaps most, blacks resented her for drawing attention to the situation and making their lives more difficult. Needless to say, she does not receive justice and her actions seem to have no impact on improving civil rights. Her story is an excellent illustration of the difficulty of standing up for what is right and bearing the consequences for no apparent gain when even your own friends and allies turn against you. In yet another tragic

event, Claudette was taken advantage of during this low period by an older man who left her when she became pregnant. As if she wasn't already "unruly" enough, there was no way an unwed pregnant girl could be recognized by the civil rights leadership. But none of that stopped plucky Claudette who agreed immediately to join the lawsuit Browder v. Gayle which was ultimately - more than the year long boycott - what finally ended segregation on buses and other public services. This book is chock-full of important information which most students (not to mention most adults) are probably unaware. Claudette Colvin is a tragic hero who paid as high or higher price in the fight for civil rights as any, yet who - so far - has received little of the recognition she deserves. Eclipsed by Brown v. the Board of Education, Browder v. Gayle was a landmark Supreme Court case which paved the way for the end of segregation (those dratted "activist judges"!). And finally, while I think that most people are aware that there was opposition and even violence from whites, I don't think that most people - even many younger blacks - fully appreciate how entrenched Southern whites were against losing the "Southern way of life", how hard they were willing to fight and what they were willing to do to prevent desegregation. Even I was breath-taken again at the level of violence and the danger for anyone who spoke out against segregation. This is an important lesson to remember in an era in which many would like to convince us that the election of the first black president means that racism is dead. Many thanks to Phillip Hoose for researching the life and times of Claudette Colvin so thoroughly and for writing this book in such a clear and accessible manner, especially for letting us hear Claudette in her own words. With plenty of pictures to illustrate the text, this book can be understood by readers as young as seven or eight, and should be read by readers of all ages. The book has won four major awards, including the Newbery. It deserves them all and many more.

The author went to great lengths to gain truthful accounts and information before writing this book. The book is written simultaneously in the author's narration and in Claudette Colvin's own words, and they are organized for easy distinction. To give away some of the book: Most everyone has heard of Rosa Parks who was told to relinquish her seat to a white passenger on a public bus, of which she refused. However, before Rosa Parks there were two similar incidents in that same Alabama city. The accounts and facts are very informative and revealing of the time period (1950s), the mindsets of many people of both sides of the color line, and excellent depictions that do not sensationalize anything (that is very important to me as a seeker of truths!). The book is excellent for younger readers (maybe as early as 8 or 9, depending on maturity and a bit of help from grown ups to understand the material), and certainly for older readers.

Sometimes it's really hard to find a good nonfiction for preteens and young adults, but it's even harder to find a nonfiction book about history for someone who only reads fantasy books and doesn't read nonfiction at all. I really enjoyed reading Claudette Colvin, I actually feel like I learned something! There was someone BEFORE Rosa Parks! This is the story that needed to be told, so many people know about Rosa Parks, but not every one knows about Claudette, and when I become a school librarian someday in the near future, I want to include this book on my shelves because students need to know not just about Rosa Parks but how there were many more like her before her and after her who stood up for their rights. I think it's also interesting to note why Claudette's story isn't always told and the book really addresses that issue and some historical books that include Claudette don't explain why her story was often disregarded compared to Rosa Park's story. This novel helps you learn about Claudette's story, but it also gives some history on Rosa Parks as well and that the two even knew each other! The reason why this is a great reason to suggest to your son or daughter or to a student is because this book has a lot of facts and a lot of the story comes from the recounting of Claudette herself from interviews. To me that made this book credible and authentic and therefore, worth my time and yours.

Excellent book written for a wide audience. Claudette is a powerful and complex historical figure and this book isn't afraid to explore her complexities to even a young reader. Great information for the older and younger reader alike.

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