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# MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

*by* **Herb Boyd**

*illustrations by* **Pablo Marcos**



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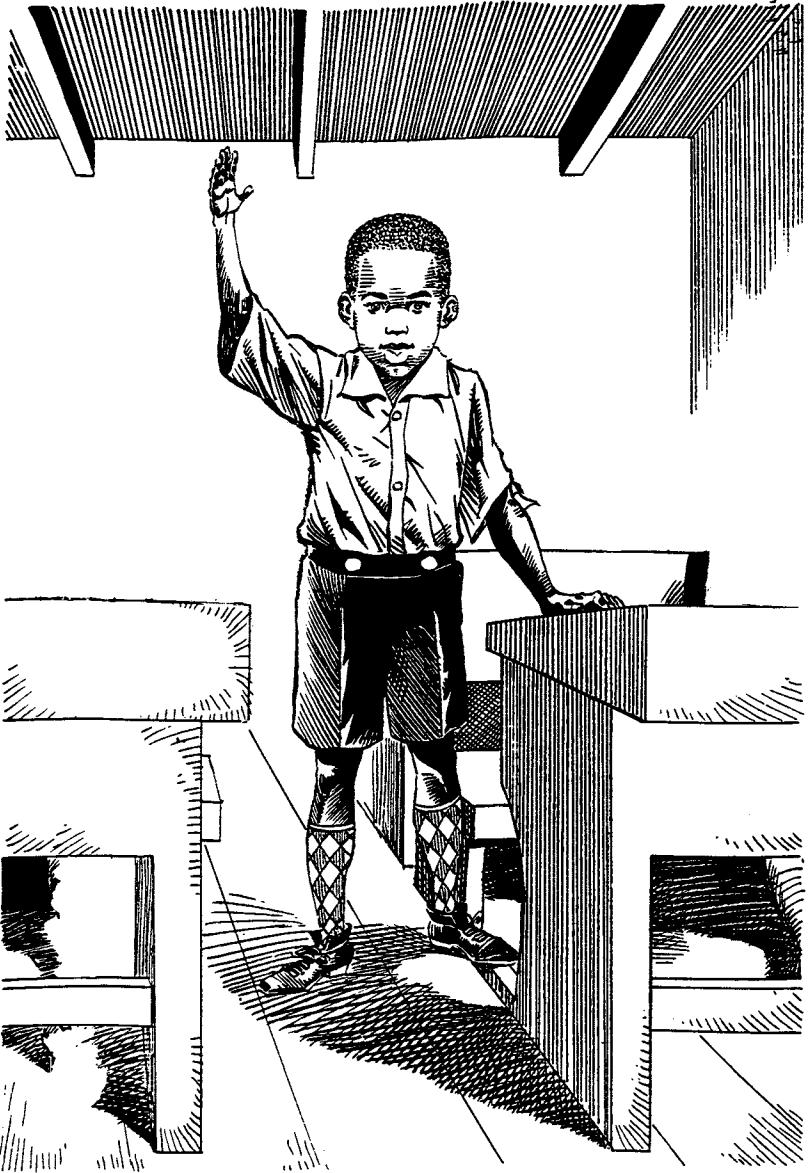
## Chapter 1

# Coming of Age in Atlanta

Each of the kindergarten students was eager to answer the teacher's question. But as usual, the hand of the slender little boy in the middle row was first in the air. He was even quicker to respond than his older sister, Christine, who sat in the front row.

"Well, M.L., tell us what you'd like to be when you grow up," the teacher said.

"I want to be a preacher like my father and my grandfather, so I can use big words like they do," the boy replied.



“I Want to Be a Preacher.”

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“You do like to use big words, don’t you, Martin?” the teacher said.

“Yes, ma’am. I learned how to spell another one the other day from my grandmother. Rambunctious. I’ll spell it for you. R-A-M-B-U-N-C-T-I-O-U-S. She always calls me that.”

“And what does it mean?” the teacher asked.

“My grandmother says it’s a word to describe somebody who can’t keep still and is always busy getting into something.”

Just as Martin Luther King, Jr. finished his reply, the school bell rang. “Okay, children,” the teacher said, “gather your books and I’ll see you all tomorrow. And try not to be too rambunctious!”

The children laughed and several of them crowded around Martin, slapping him on the back. Martin gathered up his crayons and coloring book, tucked them neatly into his school bag, and

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marched out of the room and down the hall with his sister.

One by one their friends said good-bye and went off in different directions. Martin liked the praise they had given him, but they were keeping him from hurrying home. His mother had promised to take him shopping for a new pair of pants and a shirt. On Sunday he was going to be baptized at his father's church.

Martin had asked to be baptized because Christine recently had been, and whatever Christine did, five-year-old Martin was right behind her. He had even pestered his parents to allow him to attend Yonge Elementary School with Christine, a year ahead of schedule.

It was a little chilly for September in Atlanta as Martin and Christine walked home down the tree-lined street. Although Christine was sixteen months



Martin and Christine Walked Home.