

## Sean Moses Is Martin Luther, the King Jr.

**Moses Powe**

**Angelina Valieva, Illustrator**

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*In the upbeat, informative picture book Sean Moses Is Martin Luther, the King Jr., a boy and his family celebrate Black leadership and heritage.*

Moses Powe's picture book *Sean Moses Is Martin Luther, the King Jr.* celebrates Black history through a creative Black student who finds inspiration from Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of racial equality.

When Sean Moses is asked to speak in school at the Black History Month Program, he is eager to get home and tell his parents. Sean is convinced that Martin Luther King Jr. is an actual king, and he is determined to portray the civil rights leader as royalty. Despite his parents' objections to Sean's claim, Sean goes ahead to explain why Martin Luther King Jr. deserves the title.

The book adopts an exciting way of teaching about Black leaders and their achievements through the conversations between Sean and his parents: Sean's parents engage in a fun guessing game as they try to determine which leader Sean has been asked to portray. As they take each guess, the accomplishments of notable Black leaders are highlighted. The conversations are direct, concise, and accessible.

The stories of leaders including Malcolm X, Thurgood Marshall, Marcus Garvey, and Frederick Douglass come in brief segments that summarize their major accomplishments and most famous quotes, which are separated from the main text and are easy to identify. But the language that the leaders used, as when W.E.B. Du Bois says "Believe in life! Always human beings will live and progress to greater, broader, and fuller life," are undercontextualized; and some references, as to the Affordable Care Act and health insurance, are not explained for the prospective young audience.

While artful, the book's illustrations are monochrome, impeding their ability to engage the audience. And because Sean himself is depicted portraying the leaders whom he and his parents discuss, images of the leaders themselves are often muted.

Still, Sean is an enthusiastic guide whose excitement is contagious: as he thinks about what attire he should don to portray Martin Luther King Jr., and as he memorizes King's 1963 speech for the Black history program, he becomes a source of inspiration, delivering lessons on, and imparting appreciation of, Black history and impactful Black leaders.

In the upbeat, informative picture book *Sean Moses Is Martin Luther, the King Jr.*, a boy and his family celebrate Black leadership and heritage.

EDITH WAIRIMU (January 28, 2022)

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