

ABOUT THE BOOK

In 1865, at the reception to celebrate his second inauguration as President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln kept an eye out for a special guest: Frederick Douglass. Although Lincoln was white and Douglass was black, and although Lincoln was born free and Douglass had been born a slave, both were central figures in the American abolitionist movement.

This is a glimpse into an unusual friendship between two great American leaders. At a time when racial tensions were high and racial equality was not yet established, Lincoln and Douglass formed a strong bond over shared ideals and worked alongside each other for a common goal.

Award-winning poet, writer, and activist Nikki Giovanni's lyrical text combines with Bryan Collier's stunning cut-paper collages to tell the story of this unique historic friendship.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read the author's note. Do you think people act out of fear or do you, like Nikki Giovanni, agree that people act out of respect? Give examples that explain your answer.
2. What topic did Abraham Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd, disagree on? How do you think this might have affected their family life?
3. How does the author play with time in the book? Why do you think she made that choice? What are we able to learn because of the change?
4. Why did Lincoln walk five miles back to the store? What does this act show us about his personality?
5. Douglass dreamed of setting sail on the ships he worked on in Baltimore. Why? What do you dream about for your own future?
6. What are some things you do that are similar to Lincoln's and Douglass's activities? What does it mean to "better themselves"? How can you better yourself?
7. What do you think Lincoln saw in New Orleans that opened his eyes? Why do you think the illustrator added the faces to the trees?
8. Lincoln and Douglass's friendship bloomed based on what three important things? What three characteristics do you want in a friend? How can our friendships change us as people?
9. Describe John Brown's plan in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. How did the expansion of slavery make it hard for everyday northern farmers to make a living?
10. Explain how the South knew "there would be no compromise on the issue of slavery" if Lincoln was elected. How did this turn out to be true? What resulted?
11. Why was there a misunderstanding at the inaugural reception? What did Douglass refuse to do? Would you refuse the same injustice?
12. Which illustration in the book is your favorite? Why? Why do you think Bryan Collier used the palette of colors that he did? Why do you think the page depicting the Civil War was created without any words?
13. Study the timeline of Lincoln's and Douglass's lives. What is the most interesting fact that you learned from this page? Create a timeline of one of your most important friendships.

PROJECTS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Nikki Giovanni uses beautiful imagery to tell this story about Lincoln and Douglass's friendship. For example: "Stars sparkled brightly as the jewels peeping from the earlobes of the ladies." Make a list of phrases that appeal to your senses as you read. As you write your next story try to use your senses like Nikki Giovanni does.

READING

As you read the story fill out a chart about the characters.

Character	Description	Interesting Facts
Abraham Lincoln		
Frederick Douglass		
Mary Todd Lincoln		
John Brown		
Mammy Pleasant		

VOCABULARY

Create a simple board game which allows the players to advance by stating the correct definition of the following words from the book: cadence, reception, overseer, refuge, congress, mutual, abolitionist, seized, arsenal, emancipation, tracts, foolhardy, plantation, inevitable, nominated, compromise, dominated, grim, festivities, decline.

HISTORY

Create a diagram that compares life in the 1800s to life today in the following categories: Rights of people, transportation, education, clothing, and entertainment.

Research and write a newspaper story about one of the characters or incidents mentioned in the story (John Brown's revolt, for example). Be sure you can answer the five journalistic questions when you've completed your research (who, what, when, where, and why).

ART

Using Bryan Collier's cut-paper collage as inspiration, create a piece of art exploring the importance of friendship. Experiment with a variety of materials—old magazines, newspapers, cloth—or even try creating some papers. You might start with a sketch or jump straight to scissors and glue and see where it leads you. Write a brief artist's statement about how you made your art.

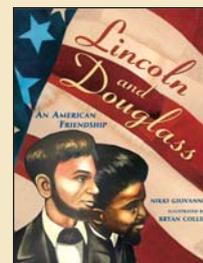
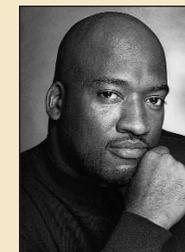
ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Nikki Giovanni has written many collections of poetry for both children and adults as well as several books for children, including the Caldecott Honor-winning *Rosa*, *The Sun is So Quiet*, and *Shimmy Shimmy Shimmy Like My Sister Kate: Looking at the Harlem Renaissance Through Poetry*. Nikki lives in Blacksburg, Virginia, where she is a University Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Bryan Collier grew up in Pocomoke City, Maryland, where he began painting at the age of fifteen. Bryan's first book, *Uptown*, won the Coretta Scott King Award for illustration and the Ezra Jack Keats New Illustrator Award. He has also received Caldecott Honors for his illustrations in *Rosa* and *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*



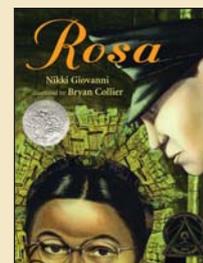
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Rosa

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ISBN-10: 0-8050-7106-7

\$16.95/\$22.95 CAN

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