

The Singer and the Scientist



Age Range: 5–11

Grade Level: K–5

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About the book:

It's 1937, and Marian Anderson is one of the most famous singers in America. But after she gives a performance for an all-white audience, she learns that the nearby hotel is closed to African Americans. She doesn't know where she'll stay for the night.

Until the famous scientist Albert Einstein invites her to stay at his house. Marian, who endures constant discrimination as a Black performer, learns that Albert faced prejudice as a Jew in Germany. She discovers their shared passion for music—and their shared hopes for a more just world.

About the author—Lisa Rose:

Lisa Rose lives near Detroit, Michigan. She likes to swim, practice yoga, and eat ice cream, but not at the same time. Her previous books include *Shmulik Paints the Town*, *A Zombie Vacation*, and the *Star Powers* series.



About the illustrator—Isabel Muñoz:

Isabel studied Fine Arts at the University Complutense of Madrid, Spain. Painting for a living was her dream, and now she's proud to be the illustrator of several children books. She works from a tiny and colorful studio in northern Spain.



Pre-reading Discussion:

Consider the illustration on the front cover of the book:

- Describe the two people featured in the illustration. How do they feel about each other? How do you know?
- List details that similar. How are they the same?
- Identify ways that they are different.
- The white-haired man featured there is Albert Einstein. Tell all that you know about him.
- The woman depicted in the illustration is Marian Anderson. Predict what Marian did for a living. How do you know?
- Predict what you think this story is going to be about.

Post-reading Discussion:

All eyes in the audience were
on her.

All ears in the audience were
tuned in to her.

Holding the last note, she
wished that the night would
never end.

- The word *celebrity* means honored, stardom, and fame. Describe how people respond to celebrities. Does the audience listening to Marian sing on stage consider her to be a celebrity? How do you know?
- The word *talent* means skill, ability, and genius. Describe the difference between Marian as the talented singer and Marian as individual.
- Albert Einstein was considered to a scientific genius. Does that mean he was talented and skilled, like Marian? Explain your answer.
- Is being a genius a special attribute they both shared? How so?

Post-reading Discussion (cont.):

His voice boomed loudly as he explained that the Nassau was a whites-only hotel. All talking in the lobby ceased. Everyone looked at Marian, but not as a star. Not even as a person.

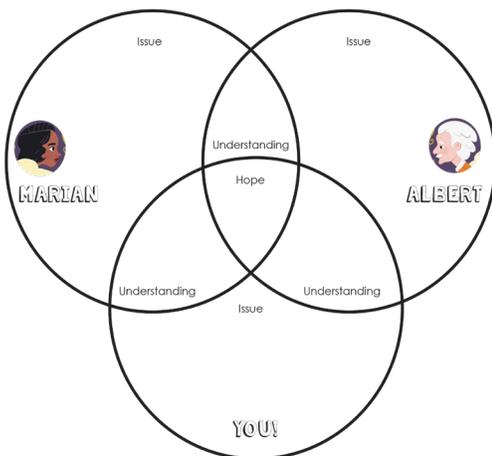
As they walked, Albert told her he was from Germany. He described how things has become very difficult for the Jewish people in Europe, and how he had been forced to leave Germany.

Years later, when the world had changed, Marian returned to the McCarter Theatre. This time, the theatre owner greeted her graciously and asked if he could make a reservation at the Nassau Inn nearby.

- Is she the same person, the celebrity, who was adored while singing on stage? If so, why is she being refused a room at the hotel? What changed?
- What does the term “whites-only” mean?
- The word *prejudice* means intolerance, contempt, and discrimination. Explain how the reception Marian experienced after her stellar performance was an example of prejudice.
- Explore the term “Not even as a person.” What does that phrase mean?
- Consider how Albert’s experiences in Germany were like Marian’s racial discrimination.
- Albert Einstein was world renowned for his discoveries in physics. He was a star, like Marian. Yet the Nazi’s treated him as if was not even “a person.” Where does this type of thinking come from?
- What does helping with a neighbor’s homework reveal about Albert’s character? What do you think Marian thought of his willingness to do so.
- Explain why Marian chose to stay with Albert in his humble home, rather than at the fancy Nassau Inn.
- How are you affected by Marian and Albert’s story? What did you learn about this unlikely friendship? What did you learn about yourself?
- Consider how the power of friendship can bring about comfort when dealing with unfairness, prejudice, cruelty, unkindness, and misunderstanding. What can you do to help bring comfort and understanding to victims of prejudice?

The Power of Friendship

As Albert played, Marian sang. It was the beginning of a friendship that would last long after that evening.



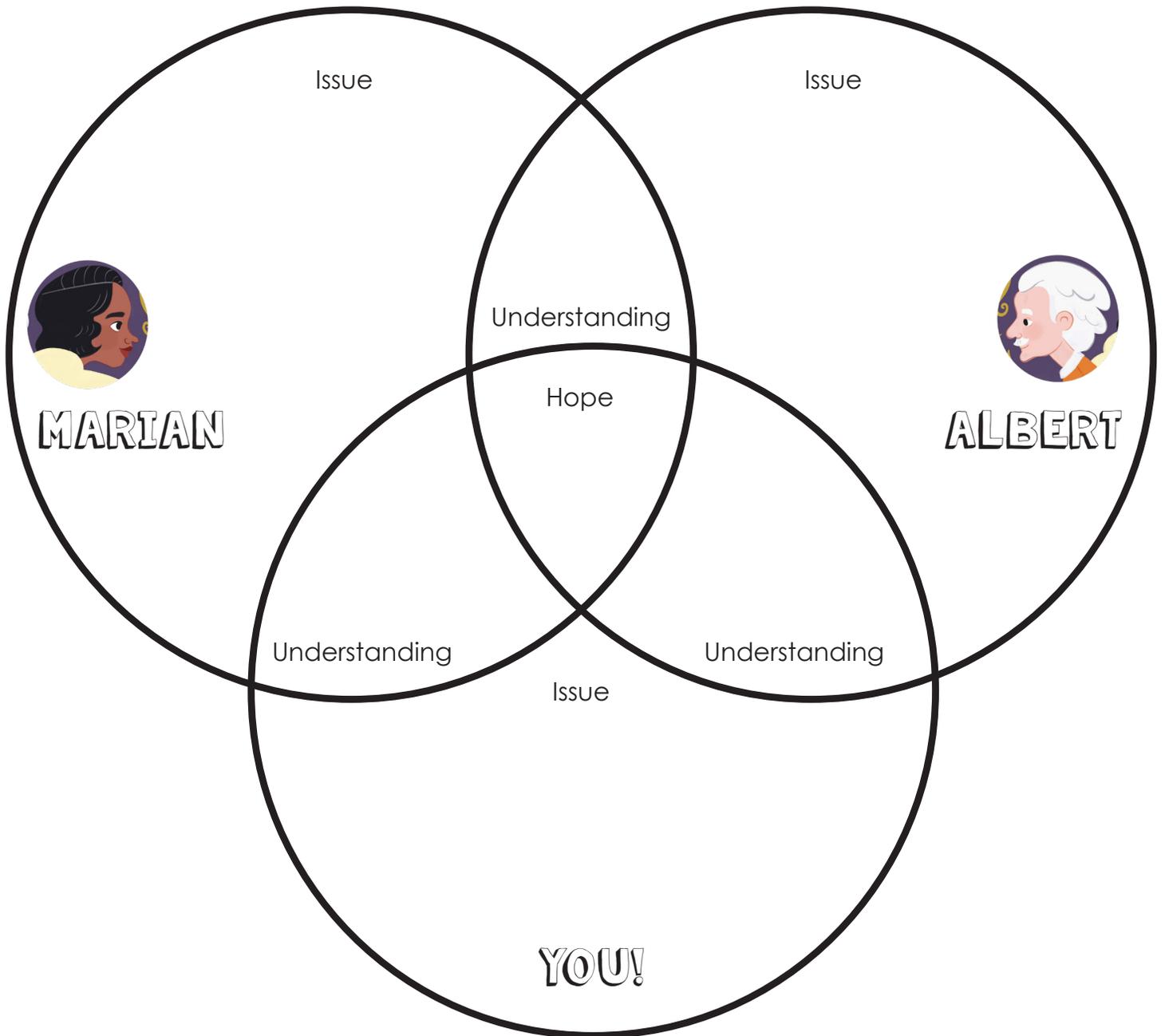
The Power of Friendship:

The Singer and the Scientist is the story of the power of friendship. Marian and Albert were celebrated for their talents and gifts. Yet they were both unjustly persecuted by others. Using the template found on the following page, analyze and identify with the healing power of their friendship.

- Choose an issue they, and you, have experienced or are trying to understand.
- In the section labeled *Issue*, describe the shared injustice affected Marian and Albert. Describe your interpretation of the issue being explored.
- In the sections labeled *Understanding*, describe how the friendship Marian and Albert shared helped to deal with the issue.
- In the center section labeled *Hope*, describe how time and history has, or will, bring about social change.

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Guide created by
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A Common Core State Anchor Standards Alignment

English Language Arts Standards » Reading: CCRA.R.1, R.2, R.3, R.7, R.8, R.10

English Language Arts Standards » Speaking & Listening: CCRA.SL.1, SL.2, SL.4, SL.6

English Language Arts Standards » Writing: CCRA.W.2, W.4, W.5, W.7

