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I Have a Dream

A Radio Play or Readers Theatre
presentation for the classroom

by Robert Mauro



Meriwether Publishing Ltd.

Contemporary Drama Service

PO Box 7710 • Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7710

CAST OF CHARACTERS

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
BLACK MUSEUM GOER 1
BLACK MUSEUM GOER 2
KKK MEMBER
WHITE FEMALE SEGREGATIONIST
OLD BLACK LADY
MOTHER
FATHER
YOUNG MARTIN
OLD BLACK MAN
BLACK GIRL
CORETTA SCOTT KING
ROSA PARKS
WHITE BUS DRIVER
WHITE POLICEMAN
FOUR BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS
WHITE COUNTER MAN
WHITE COUNTER WAITRESS
YOUNG BLACK MAN
WHITE MALE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER
WHITE FEMALE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER
BLACK FEMALE VOTER
BLACK MALE VOTER
BLACK CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER

PRODUCTION NOTES

VOICES:

A distinctive voice should be cast for the role of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. so that it will be recognized throughout the radio program. He introduces himself in the opening lines but after that the listener needs to identify the voice each time it is heard.

Where possible in the script the speakers should identify who they are mostly by what they say. The segregationists, for example, will be more hostile in their delivery.

In our society today there often is no way to recognize whether a speaker is a white person or a black person. In some instances in this script the black speakers may have their own distinct speech patterns just as members of the KKK may have their own accents. It is for the director to decide if distinctive speech patterns or accents should be used to separate a "black" voice from a "white" one. Some may feel this is inappropriate.

MUSIC:

The piano and vocal music of "We Shall Overcome" can be purchased from any local music store or directly from the publisher: Plymouth Music Co., 170 NE 33rd St., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33334.

SOUND EFFECTS:

Crying of a child, scales being played on a piano and later drifting into "We Shall Overcome," sound of whip being cracked, riot and gunfire, screams, loud explosions, sound of clubs hitting people, sound of gunfire, ambulance siren, marching feet, weeping, barking dogs.

1 *("We Shall Overcome" instrumental is heard playing softly as*
2 *DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. begins speaking.)*

3 **KING:** I never thought I'd be in a museum, but there I am.
4 That's me in those black and white photos. "Dr. Martin
5 Luther King, Jr." it says. Do they remember me? Do
6 they remember my life's mission?

7 **BLACK MUSEUM GOER 1:** Harriet, come here, honey chile,
8 look at all these photographs. Don't they bring back our
9 memories of the civil rights movement?

10 **WHITE FEMALE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER:** They certainly
11 do. I was in some of these demonstrations.

12 **BLACK MUSEUM GOER 2:** Yes. Some were joyful; some somber.

13 **KING:** Yes. *(We hear the sound of marching feet for a few moments.)*
14 Our many marches for freedom.

15 **BLACK MUSEUM GOER 1:** Everyone wanted to march with
16 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

17 **WHITE MALE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER:** Both blacks and
18 whites together.

19 **BLACK MUSEUM GOER 2:** Well, not every white.

20 **KKK MEMBER:** Yeah. Not me and my Klan buddies.

21 **WHITE FEMALE SEGREGATIONIST:** Not any of us that
22 believed in segregation!

23 **KKK MEMBER:** We KKK men wanted King gone!

24 **BLACK MUSEUM GOER 1:** Look at this. It's a copy of
25 Abraham Lincoln's momentous decree, his Emancipation
26 Proclamation.

27 **KING:** That document may have freed some of my people.
28 But not all of my people. It did, however, give millions
29 of Negroes hope that they were finally going to be free.

30 **WHITE FEMALE SEGREGATIONIST:** Not if we white
31 segregationists and the Klan could help it.

32 **BLACK MUSEUM GOER 1:** It was because of the Klan and
33 other white racists that true freedom for Negroes would
34 not come for some time.

35 **KING:** Yes. There was the Klan. They terrorized my people.

1 YOUNG BLACK MALE: They lynched us.
2 KING: And there was old Jim Crow.
3 BLACK GIRL: A set of unwritten laws.
4 KING: Old Jim Crow kept my daddy and his daddy's daddy
5 and my mother and her mother's mother shackled with
6 the chains of a new form of slavery — segregation.
7 WHITE FEMALE SEGREGATIONIST: Well, hey, we called it
8 separate but equal.
9 BLACK MUSEUM GOER 2: It was separate, but not equal.
10 BLACK MUSEUM GOER 1: Facilities, schools, jobs,
11 opportunities were never equal for our people under
12 Jim Crow.
13 KING: State laws were drawn up by white racist politicians
14 to perpetuate the disenfranchisement of men and
15 women of color.
16 WHITE FEMALE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER: This troubled
17 many of us Northern whites. And many decent
18 Southern whites.
19 WHITE MALE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER: So some of us
20 white folks became civil rights workers to fight racist
21 laws, like Jim Crow.
22 KING: Those laws kept the black man and the black woman
23 from experiencing true freedom.
24 BLACK MUSEUM GOER 2: They kept all Negroes from the
25 American dream.
26 KING: I wanted freedom for my children and for my people.
27 Not segregation. (*A crying child is heard for a few moments.*)
28 When you see tears well up in the eyes of your little son
29 or daughter because he or she can't go to a segregated
30 beach or amusement park he or she just saw on TV,
31 what do you say to that child? (*He pauses.*)
32 BLACK MUSEUM GOER 1: What *do* you say?
33 KING: It's hard to say anything. I wanted my children, and
34 *all* God's children — all men and women — to be free
35 and enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness!

1 BLACK MUSEUM GOER 2: Segregation is wrong. This
2 museum makes that perfectly clear.
3 BLACK MUSEUM GOER 1: It certainly does. It truly shows
4 how terrible segregation was.
5 KKK MEMBER: Not to the Klan it wasn't!
6 KING: People lived without opportunity or hope under
7 segregation.
8 OLD BLACK LADY: One cannot live without hope.
9 KING: (*He thinks back.*) I remember my Mama and Daddy. I
10 can almost see them. Two black parents looking down
11 into the eyes of their newborn babe. Me.
12 MOTHER and FATHER: Hello, Son.
13 KING: When I was born in Atlanta, Georgia things were not
14 as they are today for my people.
15 BLACK MUSEUM GOER 1: Back then we were called
16 Negroes, at least by the good people.
17 KKK MEMBER: We called ya nigras on a good day. (*He*
18 *laughs.*)
19 KING: This hurt my Mama. Wait. I can almost hear my Mama
20 now. She's looking at me in my crib.
21 MOTHER: (*To baby*) Look at you. Hello, Martin. Martin.
22 Hello, child. Say hello to your mother and father.
23 KING: I was born on January fifteenth, 1929.
24 MOTHER: We lived in a different world back then.
25 KKK MEMBER: Yer darn tootin'! A world of "whites only."
26 And we Klan boys enforced that with the rope and the
27 whip! (*Loud crack of a bullwhip*)
28 KING: It was a world where no Negroes or Jews need apply.
29 WHITE MALE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER: I remember it well.
30 No Jews or dogs or coloreds allowed.
31 WHITE FEMALE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER: It made me cry.
32 So we became civil rights workers.
33 WHITE MALE CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER: We knew what
34 discrimination was all about. And —
35 OLD BLACK LADY: And it was an especially cold, cruel

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