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First Published in the UK in 2020 by Frances Lincoln Children's Books, an imprint of The Quarto Group.

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-0-7112-4520-4

The illustrations were created digitally.

Set in Gotham Rounded.

Published by Katie Cotton

Designed by Karissa Santos

Edited by Katy Flint

Production by Nicolas Zeifman

Editorial assistance from Nick Whitney

Manufactured in China 102019

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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A Black woman is marginalized because she is a woman and because she is Black. Her experiences overlap and cause great harm. When you just look at a person through a single lens you can only narrowly understand them and their experiences.

WHEN YOU LOOK AT ALL OF THE PARTS OF A PERSON AND WHERE THEY ARE OPPRESSED, YOU WILL BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW DEEPLY DISCRIMINATION ADVANCES ONWARD.

Knowing who you are, where you have agency, how your identities came to be, and how they determine your role in society helps us to understand ourselves and how we can change a system where some folx have privilege and power, and some folx are under-resourced and oppressed, to one where we are all striving for liberation.

PULL OUT YOUR NOTEBOOK. CREATE A LIST OF THE SOCIAL IDENTITY CATEGORIES WE MENTIONED IN THIS CHAPTER. CAN YOU THINK OF MORE? NOW, WRITE DOWN YOUR IDENTITY WITHIN THOSE SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED CATEGORIES.

stay strong

racial identities

privilege?

power?

discrimination

Reflect:
WHAT DO YOU NOTICE? ARE THERE PARTS OF YOU THAT HOLD POWER AND PRIVILEGE WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY? ARE THERE PARTS OF YOUR IDENTITY THAT EXIST OUTSIDE OF THE DOMINANT CULTURE?

community social identity

who am I?



My ethnic identity encompasses all I know about our family background: English, African American, French, Irish, and (I've been told) Sioux. When I was a kid, our school district referred to me as white. (Maybe because I lived with my white mom? Maybe because of my light skin? Maybe to fill some statistical quote? I don't know.) I am a Black biracial person.

Race is confusing. There is, of course, no scientific evidence that proves folx with the lightest skin are smarter, prettier, and better. This has been the way we, as a species, have been doing things for centuries. Ta-Nehisi Coates writes, in *Between the World and Me*,



*“BUT
RACE IS
THE CHILD
OF RACISM,
NOT THE
FATHER.”*

We have been taught to categorize people based on their skin color, their nation of origin, their physical features by the people with the most power.

Folx in the dominant culture have worked for centuries to create laws, policies, and institutions to guarantee that they will always maintain that power and we'll look more closely at this in the next chapters.

Activity:

Pull out your notebook (or, a piece of paper), grab a favorite pen, and find a place where you can think without interruption,

Take a deep breath and reflect on your own race and ethnicity. You may use these questions for guidance:

- 1.
2. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR ETHNIC IDENTITY? IS THIS SOMETHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY HAVE TALKED ABOUT? YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS?
3. DO YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR RACE? (HOW OFTEN?)
4. DO YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR ETHNIC IDENTITY TOO?
5. DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR RACIAL IDENTITY AND YOUR ETHNIC IDENTITY ARE SIMILAR? ARE THEY IN HARMONY WITH EACH OTHER?

**TAKE
A DEEP
BREATH.**

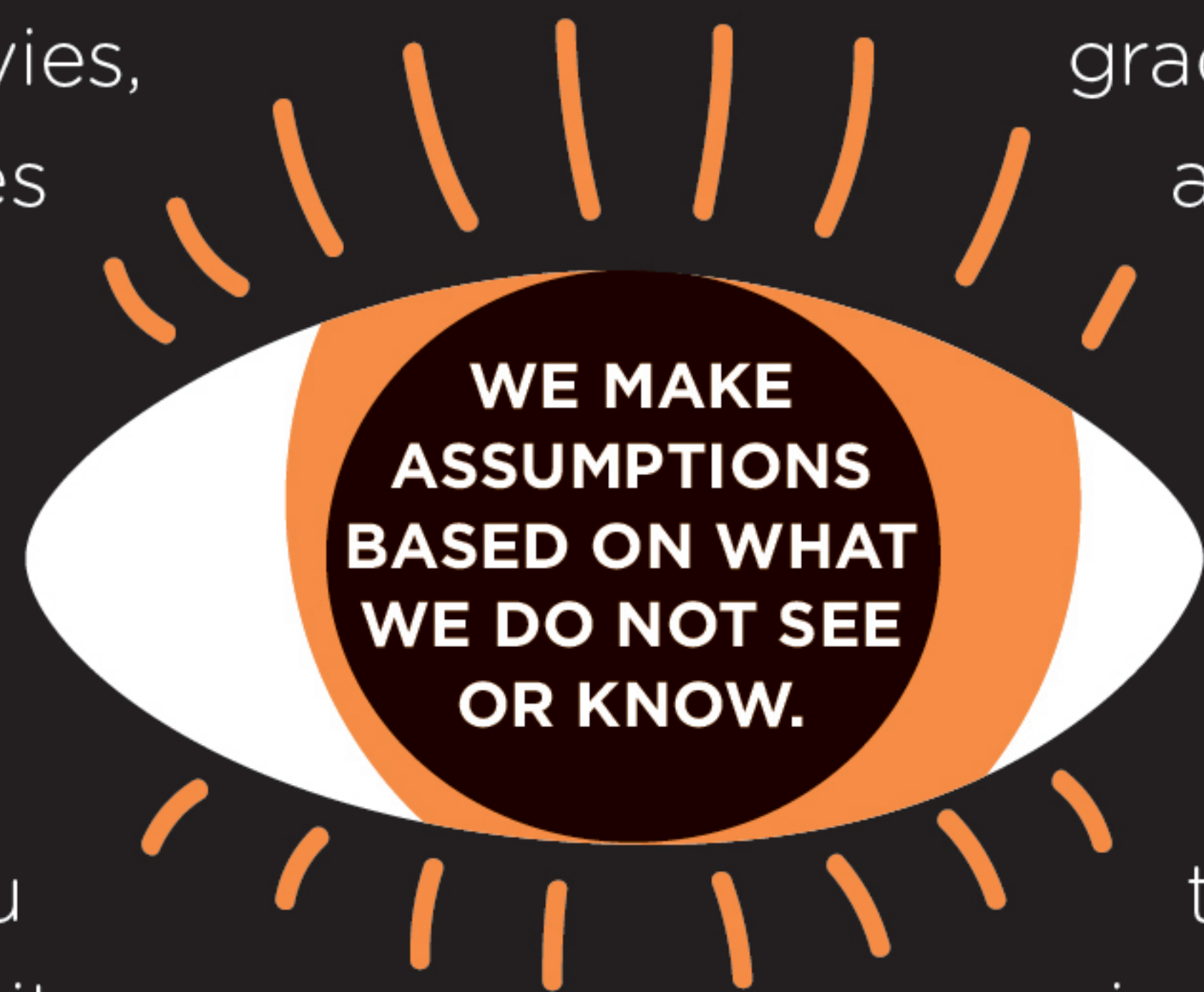
What we do not know, our lack of information and knowledge, contributes to our prejudices and biases.

Many people, moments, and movements have been left out of history. The stories have almost always been told by those in the dominant culture. When you don't see Black and brown folx on TV and in movies, when their stories are not in our history books, you begin to draw your own conclusions about why you regularly see white actors, authors, and models. This becomes your normal and it's easy to go along with this ordinary way of life.

When you only read one

account of history through a single lens, you do not have the whole truth.

I think about the single story I've been told throughout my schooling. In fourth grade we learned about the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, but only as a thing of the past. My teachers never invited anyone from the Onondaga Nation to speak to our classroom. We could have learned about how the school on the reservation used to be an assimilation school and how they Onondagas used



the same space to reclaim their language and their culture, but we did not.

What assumptions did I make?

If stories of resistance and accomplishments are purposefully left out of our history books or told from the perspective of those in dominant culture, we have no voice. No one knows who we are and that we exist. The legacy we are left with is one that has been shaped by the oppressors. I learned The Black Panther Party created the Free Breakfast for Children program, which is present in so many American neighborhoods and schools because I watched a documentary about them a couple of years ago. If I hadn't heard their own words, I would never know.

In her 2009 TED Talk, the Danger of A Single Story, Chimamanda Adichie shares,

“THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE SINGLE STORY IS THIS: IT ROBS PEOPLE OF DIGNITY. IT

