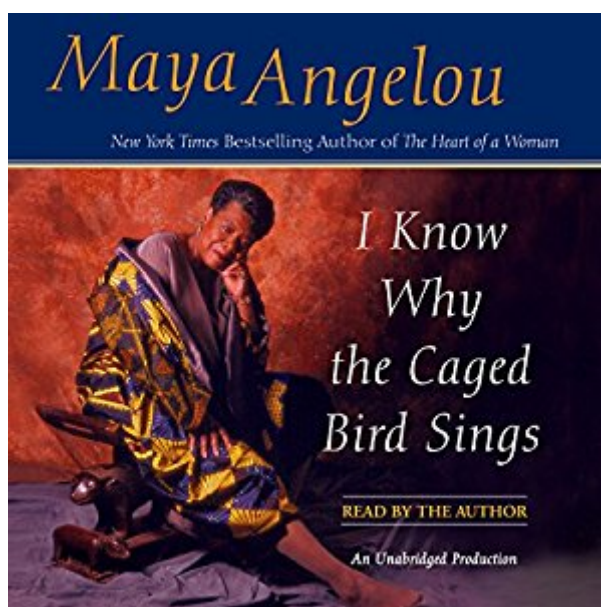


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# I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings



## Synopsis

Sent by their mother to live with their devout, self-sufficient grandmother in a small Southern town, Maya and her brother, Bailey, endure the ache of abandonment and the prejudice of the local "powhitetrash". At eight years old and back at her mother's side in St. Louis, Maya is attacked by a man many times her age - and has to live with the consequences for a lifetime. Years later, in San Francisco, Maya learns about love for herself and the kindness of others, her own strong spirit, and the ideas of great authors ("I met and fell in love with William Shakespeare") will allow her to be free instead of imprisoned. Poetic and powerful, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is a modern American classic that will touch hearts and change minds for as long as people read - or listen.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 10 hours and 12 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Random House Audio

Audible.com Release Date: January 4, 2011

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B004HYHTN6

Best Sellers Rank: #4 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Study Aids #104 in Books > Education & Teaching > Studying & Workbooks #271 in Books > Education & Teaching > Test Preparation

## Customer Reviews

In a poetic, yet detached way, Maya Angelou captures the heart of her struggles growing up female and Black during the Depression. Her style and description draw in the reader and keep her spellbound even during the most painful scenes. You feel deeply for the author and her little brother as they drift through their lives living for a bit of affection. Neglected by their divorced parents, Maya and her brother get sent to Arkansas at ages 4 and 5 to live with their grandma and handicapped uncle. Although life is hard and love not demonstrated, Maya learns much from her grandma and uncle. The theme of this book is the quest for the child to be loved by the adult. Maya feels inferior. She feels ugly and compares herself to her magical brother Bailey. Both children are starved for true affection and daydream a white movie actress on the screen is their long lost mother. Maya and her

brother are eventually united with "Mother Dear" in St.Louis when she is eight. Unfortunately Mother's boyfriend begins to abuse Maya(...). This is graphically portrayed in the book. Maya's feelings of not belonging and not being truly loved are compounded after the abuse.I admire all the autobiographical books by Ms.Angelou. She has achieved a lot in her life for a person who started out in such a sad situation.This book should be read and re-read.

Going into my freshman year of high school and my first honors english class I was told by my church to beware of the evil book they would force me to read-- I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.It was protested because of the vivid picture painted of her sexual abuse.After reading it I can only shake my head at the people who warned me of this book. By refusing to read it because of something horrible happening to someone you fail to really realise that things of that nature happen.Reading this book was an eyeopener to me-- to understand just where people like Maya come from. I was riveted throughout this book. Easily it is one of the better books I've read.

May I tell you why I choose to have my ninth grade students read it? I have noticed a lot of reviews by young people, which I applaud, but an adult perspective might be helpful.I don't particularly feel the need to defend its merits. (I am not articulate enough to do justice to that task.) As with any book, some will love it and some won't. Guaranteed, it will make you uncomfortable at times, because one chapter describes the rape of a young person--which is painful for any compassionate human being to hear. Plus, there are other sexual issues, largely stemming from the earlier assault, but also because she is a teenager in the last phase of the book. Such questions about love and sex are characteristic of the teenage years. Many young people, as well as adults, are confused about such topics. While these are generally the most controversial segments from the book, the fundamental lesson of the book goes far beyond the survival of one victim. I won't supply you with the answers as to what one should take away from the text. It is a personal experience for each of us.We can all learn from Maya's honest account of her childhood journey. We can all try on her experiences and live vicariously through her for a while, and see how it changes our own perspective on what it means to be a human being.I'll be the first to admit, this book is a challenge for all my students in one way or another. Some because they are white and live in the northern US. Some because they are male and it's difficult to view life through a woman's eyes. Some because of the adult vocabulary and extensive use of figurative language. Some of these experiences are so remote from their own, while others are very close to home. It helps them to see how much we actually do have in common with those who at first seem very different. They all can benefit from

reading it, if they give it a chance. (Adults may be better equipped to appreciate fully this text. However, young people can take so much from it. Maybe one day, we can have an abridged version, so it is still rich in language and meaning, yet condensed so more young people can access its many gifts.) Beyond the darkness of some of those experiences (discrimination, rape, humiliation and fear) lies a powerful sense of hope, dignity, determination and resilience. One of my favorite aspects of the book is its emphasis on the power of education, language and literacy. Throughout Maya's life--books, poetry, impassioned voices have all inspired her. Her autobiography is a moving tribute to a literate way of life and an enduring legacy to that tradition.

"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," by Maya Angelou, is the first volume in this author's extraordinary series of autobiographical narratives. "I Know..." begins with her childhood and takes us into her young womanhood. This book has, since its publication, become a beloved contemporary classic of African-American literature. After their parents' separation, young Marguerite (her given name) and her brother, Bailey, are sent to live with their strong-willed grandmother in Stamps, Arkansas, deep in the segregated South. Angelou also describes her time spent with her other grandmother in St. Louis, as well as her young adulthood in San Francisco. The overall time period of the book overlaps that of World War II. "I Know..." offers important insights into the world of racial segregation, and painfully records the toll taken by racism in its various forms. Also powerful and important is Angelou's recollection of surviving a brutal sexual assault when she was a child. Angelou recalls vividly the authors who made an impact on her during her childhood and young adulthood: James Weldon Johnson, Edgar Allan Poe, William Shakespeare, and others. The book concludes with her sexual awakening as a young woman. "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" is an American classic which has lost none of its power in the 30 years since it first appeared. Angelou's prose is direct and personal, and marked with passages of wit and beauty. For scholars of African-American literature, women's studies, or literary autobiography, this is an essential volume.

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