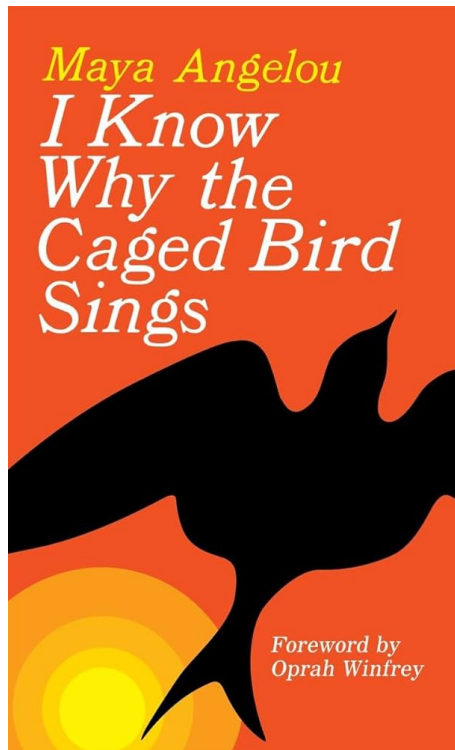




I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

By Maya Angelou

Review by Hannah B

Gr. 11



Autobiography

Why did you want to read this book? How did you hear about it? What grabbed your attention?

I read this book because it was recommended to me by my English teacher. I also had heard many positive regards of this book from my peers at school and my parents, so I decided that it would be a valuable read for me.

Did you like this book? Why or why not? Would you recommend it?

Yes I liked this book because the author not only told a unique story about her life and growing up, but she used countless rhetorical devices and literary strategies to compel the reader and make the book interesting to read. Yes, I would recommend this book to any reader in high school or older.

Is this book a part of a series? If so, which number is this in the series and what is the series called?

Yes, this book is part of a seven-book autobiography series. "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" is the first book in this (unnamed) series.

Without spoiling the story, what is this book about? What interesting details can you tell us about it?

"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" is a memoir about Angelou's hardships growing up as an African American girl in the 1930s and 1940s, and how education and literature helped her overcome trauma and discrimination. The book provides an insightful perspective of the life of a child from St. Louis Missouri during the Great Depression and World War II. It gives inspiration to the reader that there is hope to succeed despite facing challenges.

Who are the main characters? Who was your favorite character and why? What makes them interesting?

The main characters include Marguerite (Maya), her brother Bailey, her grandmother "Momma", her Uncle Willie, and her mother and father. My favorite character was Momma because throughout the entire memoir, the author portrayed how strong and resilient her mother was. Momma faced extreme racism during many parts of the book and it was extremely powerful to read about how she faced discrimination head-on in any situation and remained true to her heritage and identity. It was also interesting how throughout the book, Angelou revealed diverse aspects to her grandmother's personality, including her strong ties to religion, her strictness, her strength, and her kindness. Maya

proves in this book how much of an influence Momma was to her, and her character was very significant to the story.

Does this book remind you of any other books or media?

This book reminds me of "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee. This is because both books demonstrate topics about the evils of racism, prejudice, and discrimination in the 1900s.

Who would you recommend this book to? What type of person would enjoy this?

I would recommend "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" to any reader in high school and older (due to some graphic content). I think that people interested in history would enjoy this story due to the setting and the influence of early-1900s society throughout the memoir. Furthermore, any people who value themes about family, education, and perseverance will enjoy reading this.

What are your thoughts on the cover of the book? Do you think the cover fits what the book is about?

The cover of "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" is a silhouette of a bird flying in front of a sunset-like background. This illustration definitely portrays the themes of the book because a very significant point in the novel was the author's experience with sexual assault, and her struggles with coping and growing from this trauma. Throughout the rest of the book, Maya demonstrates how she persisted through this hardship and uses literature to spread her story. As shown in the title and the cover of the book, Maya represents the bird and her writing is the song.

Any other thoughts about the book?

Like many people in my life have said to me, I believe that "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" is a powerful story that I will remember and value throughout my life.