

I know why the caged bird sings

Business



I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou is 281 pages of pure heart and reality. This autobiography caught my interest at the library for its creative title, which implies that even though some of us go through tough events and meet oppressing people, we can still take something sweet from our experiences and turn our lives into something worthwhile. Angelou draws inspiration from one main aspect: reality.

Everything that she writes is very true and she tells events exactly the way they happened and exactly how she was feeling. Angelou does not leave out any details because they may be too gory or immoral for the faint-hearted, but rather embellishes on every event that shaped her life, and explains every hardship she had to endure. The author discusses topics such as rape, the complication of having colored skin, never having a true home, running away, sleeping in junkyards, having a w**** for a mother, and driving her drunk father home from Mexico, all with a passion for telling the truth and giving readers her childhood as a whole, rather than a watered-down version. Angelou remains a free spirit throughout her troubled life. This is best demonstrated by the passage, “ I was a loose kite in a gentle wind, floating with only my will for an anchor” (245), in which the author describes her feelings after running away from the trailer park in which her dad and his girlfriend live. She uses this metaphor and sensory details to showcase her innocent optimism, which allows her to erase everything that is clouding her world.

But it also describes her need for a solid home and family in her life, something which she has not yet fully experienced. Her older brother, Bailey, has been her only solid foundation that has allowed her to push through life’s

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hardships. The quote, “ The world had taken a deep breath and was having doubts about continuing to revolve” (30) describes Angelou’s childhood feeling every time some of the girls from the white side of town came over to her Momma’s store to mock her family for the color of their skin. She never fully understood what caused them to be humiliated so, but every time she wished to be in another place and the world stood still, if just for a moment. This entire novel is a tug-o-war with the innocence of childhood and the obscurity of growing up with black skin and a disjointed family. Angelou does a marvelous job of revealing the truth to its most powerful degree, and enlightening readers of her hardships.