



## **I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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Maya Angelou was born with a first name of Marguerite but her brother couldn't pronounce it properly and, over time, she adopted this as a form of what he called her. Maya and her brother, Bailey were sent to live with their maternal grandmother and uncle when their parents separated. They lived and worked in the store that she ran thus learning about business and people. Their grandmother was very strict with them so homework and church were a regular part of their lives.

One day the children were surprised when their father came to visit them. They didn't have memories of the man and Maya was cautious. She didn't want to go with him when he announced that they were going to see their mother in St. Louis but Maya was obedient and went with him. It was shortly afterwards, at the age of eight year that Maya was raped by her mother's boyfriend and this led to a Court hearing in which she was a witness. Maya had always been told that she must tell the truth but when she was on the stand she lied. The following day, her perpetrator was found dead.

After that, Maya quit talking. She withdrew into herself but, at the same time was very observant. The children returned to the care of their grandmother and were returned again to the care of their mother who had moved to San Francisco. Throughout her childhood and youth Maya noticed the many ways that individuals were discriminated against due to their colour, ethnicity, socio-economic situations, occupations, and sexual preference.

Throughout this book, Maya describes with clarity the dilemmas that she encountered and how each of them was resolved in her mind. She names individuals who had a powerful influence on her and the ways that this occurred.

Maya lived until she was eighty-six years old and this book only takes the reader to the point where she became a teenaged single-parent.

May Angelou went on to become a poet, writer, performer, teacher and director. She inspired thousands of individuals with her honesty, wisdom and courage.

"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" is an American classic that provides insight into the life of a child who experienced the discrimination because of being black, the trauma associated with having divorced parents, the legalistic upbringing by an aging grandparent and handicapped uncle, the horror of being sexually abused and the hurt of being rejected by the brother who was her best friend.

As a child, Maya turned to books as an escape when she was in trouble. As an adult, Maya wrote books to inform and inspire others.

Although I had seen Maya many times on television this was the first time that I had read anything that she had written. It definitely will not be the last time though.

Her early life was so difficult but Maya was intelligent and she used both her knowledge and wisdom to build a life that rose above the troubles she had faced.