**Brief Chapter-by-Chapter Analysis of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings***

Chapter One:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: After the divorce of their parents, Maya and Bailey are sent from California to Arkansas as

 if parcel post. They Adjust to new way-of-life /routine.

Chapter Two:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Willie introduced and sympathized with as a cripple, which he tries to hide from visitors

 who come to the store. Maya falls in love with reading

Chapter Three:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: ‘Whites’ are looking for vengeance, because they think a black person has messed with a

 white woman, Willie is hidden in a vegetable bin.

Chapter Four:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Bailey insults Maya’s bullies, who tease her about being ugly in school. Bailey becomes the

 most important person in her life

Chapter Five:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas:

 Major Event: Maya sees poor white trash girls disrespecting Momma. Maya realizes Momma has won the

battle against them, though. She realizes that Momma radiates beauty as a result of this misfortunate experience.

Chapter Six:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Reverend Thomas stays with them, has come to visit. He is presented as a very greedy eater.

Chapter Seven:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Momma doesn’t speak harshly of ‘Whites’ under any circumstance, even though when she

 testifies the calls her “Mrs”.

Chapter Eight:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Maya and Bailey are told on Christmas to go outside, and think they are to be punished.

 They are given gifts from their parents instead, then think they don’t love them. Maya destroys the doll

 given to her by her mother; a symbol that communicates she still thinks her parents are dead.

Chapter Nine:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas and Saint Louis

 Major Event: Big Bailey, their father and a stranger to Maya, comes to visit. They think he is taking them

 to California, but are deceived when he takes them to Saint Louis to see Vivian, their mother.

Chapter 10:

 Setting: St. Louis

 Major Event: Adjusting to all the organized crime of the Baxter family. Maya learns that her real name is

 Marguerite from her uncle.

Chapter 11:

 Setting: St. Louis

 Major Event: Maya is sexually molested by Mr. Freeman multiple times, but enjoys the physical contact

 without understanding its intentions. Maya and Bailey grow apart. She reads lots of books.

Chapter 12:

 Setting: St. Louis

 Major Event: Maya is raped and threatened by Mr. Freeman who tells her that if she speaks out, he will

 kill Bailey.

Chapter 13:

 Setting: St. Louis

 Major Event: Maya names Mr. Freeman as the rapist, and after the trial, is beaten to death by her

 uncle. Maya thinks she is an evil person because she lied in court, and decides not to speak at all.

Chapter 14:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: They return to Stamps and Maya is relieved. Bailey fantasizes about city life to his friends

 and exaggerates city excitements.

Chapter 15:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Mrs. Flowers gets Maya to speak by memorizing and reciting a poem, and takes her under

 her wing. Maya is beaten by Momma for saying “By the way”.

Chapter 16:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Maya begins working for Mrs. Cullinan, but cannot stand being called Mary. Maya breaks

 Mrs. Cullinan’s china.

Chapter 17:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Bailey stays out to watch a movie starring an actress that resembles their mother. He thinks

 that having seen the film is well worth the whipping it would cause him to watch twice.

Chapter 18:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Annual revival religious meeting occurs. Maya notes that the preacher is advocating for all

 churches, not just his own.

Chapter 19:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: People crowd into Momma’s store to hear the boxing match. Joe Louis represents all black

 people, and they rejoice when he has won.

Chapter 20:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Maya receives a Valentine from Tommy and the annual Summer Fish Fry comes around.

 Maya is upset by the token of ‘love’ because of her bad experiences before. She meets her first true female

 friend, Louise, and rips up the Valentine card.

Chapter 21:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Bailey becomes sexually active, and loses his virginity to Joyce. Joyce runs away with

 another man and leaves Bailey heartbroken.

Chapter 22:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Maya attends Florida’s funeral. She faces the finality of death for the first time. Mr. Taylor

 dreamt about Mrs. Florida wanting children.

Chapter 23:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Maya graduates from the Eighth grade, but Mr. Donleavy mars the ceremony with his racist

 speech.

Chapter 24:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Maya’s toothache provokes a visit to the dentist. Dr. Lincoln refuses to treat Maya as she is

 black.

Chapter 25:

 Setting: Stamps, Arkansas

 Major Event: Bailey sees the corpse of a black man and is shocked at the pleasure it gives the white

 man. Momma was going to arrange for them to go to California by train

Chapter 26:

 Setting: Los Angeles to San Francisco

 Major Event: The children begin to realize their mother’s imperfections. Maya recalls Vivian’s gambling

 tendencies.

Chapter 27:

 Setting: San Francisco

 Major Event: Maya notes all the changes that occur due to WWII, and how no one talks about the

 Japanese displacement and how black people have moved in to places where the Japanese once where and

 profited from their misfortunes.

Chapter 28:

 Setting: San Francisco

 Major Event: Maya feels at home, and even is promoted a grade and put into a white school. She soon

 receives a scholarship to the California Labor School, where she studied drama and dance. She became

 very influenced by her teacher, Ms. Kirwin who treated her no differently to other white people

Chapter 29:

 Setting: San Francisco

 Major Event: Maya looks up to Daddy Clidell, even though he is a conman. She rationalizes that ethics

 depend on necessity. She sees Daddy Clidell as a true father figure

Chapter 30:

 Setting: San Francisco (partly Mexico)

 Major Event: Big Bailey invites Maya to go to Mexico, but ends up too drunk to drive back. Maya drives

 50 miles with only minor accidents, but is not appreciated for this achievement. Big Bailey cheats on his

 girlfriend

Chapter 31:

 Setting: Southern California somewhere

 Major Event: Maya and Dolores get in a fight, and Maya is stabbed with scissors. She feels too hurt and

 guilty to tell her mother, and so she runs away instead.

Chapter 32:

 Setting: San Francisco (Junkyard)

 Major Event: Maya goes to spend the night in a car in a junkyard. She awakens to a group of adolescents,

 but they accept her into their group, with their rules. She feels a sense of equality in junkyard

 society, Maya stays for a month before calling Vivian to go back to San Francisco.

Chapter 33:

 Setting: San Francisco

 Major Event: Bailey begins dating a white prostitute, and modeling himself after his mothers’ male

 suitors. Vivian and Bailey have a brief falling out. Bailey moves out and his mother finds him a job at the

 US army in the South Pacific

Chapter 34:

 Setting: San Francisco

 Major Event: Maya becomes the first black streetcar worker in San Francisco, after taking a semester off

 from school. She begins to question her sexuality.

Chapter 35:

 Setting: San Francisco

 Major Event: Maya, in her worry of being a lesbian, ends up pregnant.

Chapter 36:

 Setting: San Francisco

 Major Event: Maya admits to Vivian that she is pregnant after graduation. She has a son soon after.