



Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas

Maya Angelou

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In this third self-contained volume of her autobiography, which began with *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou moves into the adult world, and the white world as well, as she marries, enters show business, and tours Europe and Africa in *Porgy and Bess*.

As the book opens, Maya, in order to support herself and her young son, gets a job in a record shop run by a white woman. Suspicious of almost any kindness shown her, she is particularly confused by the special attentions of a young white customer. Soon the relationship grows into love and then marriage, and Maya believes a permanent relationship is finally possible. But it is not to be, and she is again forced to look for work.

This time she finds a job as a dancer in a sleazy San Francisco bar. Her remarkable talent, however, soon brings her attention of a different kind, and before long she is singing in one of the most popular nightclubs on the coast. From there, she is called to New York to join the cast of *Porgy and Bess*, which is just about to begin another tour abroad.

The troupe's joyous and dramatic adventure through Italy, France, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Egypt becomes the centerpiece of *Singin' and Swingin'*. This remarkable portrayal of one of the most exciting and talented casts ever put together, and of the encounters between these larger-than-life personalities and audiences who had rarely seen black people before, makes a hilarious and poignant story. The excitement of the journey -- full of camaraderie, love affairs, and memorable personalities -- is dampened only by Maya's nagging guilt that she has once again abandoned the person she loves most in life, her son.

Back home, and driven close to suicide by her guilt and concern, she takes her son with her to Hawaii, where she discovers that devotion and love, in spite of forced absence, have the power to heal and sustain.

As always, Maya Angelou's writing is charged with that remarkable sense of life and love and unique celebration of the human condition that have won her such a loyal following.

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