

Finishing School

Maya Angelou (1928 – 2014)



Maya Angelou April 4, 1928 – May 28, 2014

- Maya Angelou, born Marguerite Annie Johnson, was an American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist.
- Poet, dancer, singer, activist, and scholar Maya Angelou was a world-famous author. She was best known for **her unique and pioneering autobiographical writing style.**

During the Victorian reign, Finishing School was a famous prestige school for wealthy young girls. It emphasized cultural studies, for social activities, introduced good manners and etiquette and taught skills such as dancing singing and much more. Finishing School prepared ladies for future life. The title Finishing school by Maya Angelou has a different meaning. Angelou's main character Margaret went through her own Finishing school that happened to be inside a white woman's kitchen.

- Margaret is a ten-year old black girl who lives in the south at the time slavery system has gone but racial segregation and discrimination is still very strong. She comes to work as a servant in a house of a white wealthy woman, Mrs. Cullinan.
- All meals have to be at a certain time all drinks have to be from a certain glass. Nevertheless, Margaret accepts the new rules and works as hard as possible for the white rich and ugly lady because she Margaret feels sorry for her Mrs. Cullinan.

- Margaret starts work early and leaves late and is overloaded. She thinks that she can compensate for the fact that Mrs. Cullinan can never have children. At first she develops human feeling for her mistress rather than taking racial issue seriously.
- Later, however, she realizes that her employer has no human feeling towards her. To her employer she is just a stupid, wordless black servant. She is simply an object that serves for the comfortable life style of her white masters.

- Margaret also realized that her mistress gave her a new name Mary and it disappointed her. The fact that her original name given by her parent was easily changed by a white woman made her sad. Margaret felt that she had been robbed of something very important. She could not tolerate such a mistreatment.
- Margaret take revenge by breaking Mrs. Cullinan's favorites pieces of china which were left to her by her rich parents.

Mrs. Cullinan indulged her china piece while Margaret had nothing to indulge but her dignity. From her Finishing school, Margaret learnt race differences and dignity.