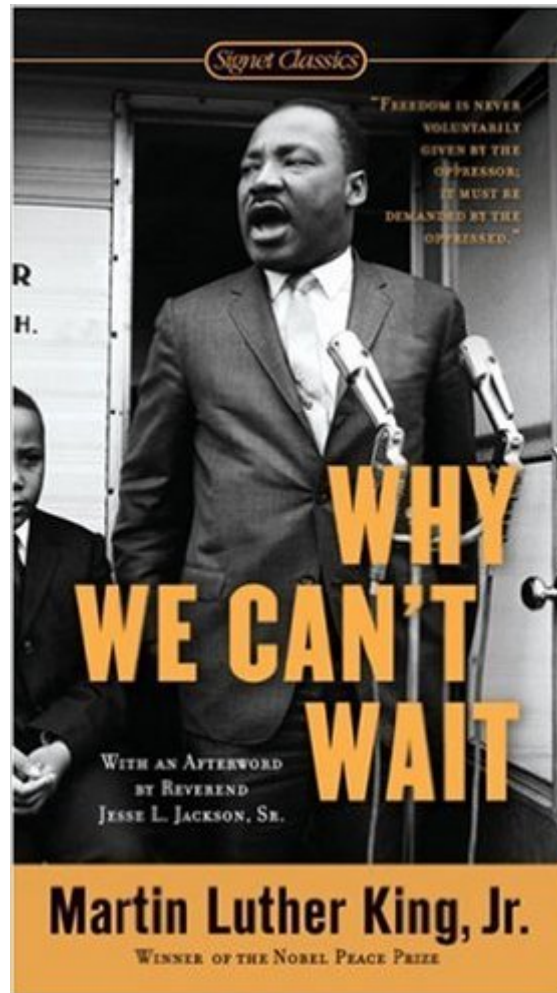


The book was found

Why We Can't Wait (Signet Classics)



Synopsis

Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963
Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you see the vast majority of twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs." when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness" then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair.

• Why We Can't Wait Martin Luther King's Classic Exploration of the events and forces behind the Civil Rights Movement

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I chose to read this book originally as part of a high school assignment, and am very glad that I did

so. As a white male born in 1980 who grew up in a predominately white area, I had a hard time understanding why race seems to be such a big issue in this country. As I saw it, slavery happened a long time ago and bigots were idiots to be ignored until they all died off. Why all this talk of discrimination and affirmative action? Why all the pleas for acceptance and peace? This book came as a slap to the face of my preconceived notions. I realized suddenly that many of the men and women I see every day lived during that time, only a few decades ago, when white people didn't let black people drink from the same water fountains, and when blacks could be beaten and abused in the streets for daring to ask for equal treatment. I had heard of this before, but it had always seemed in the distant past. I was repeatedly astonished that such things could have happened in America. My views took a new spin. Suddenly, King's arguments for affirmative action sounded reasonable. How could a black man "pull himself up by his bootstraps" if he has no shoes? How could the children of poor blacks in the south go to college, even if they were allowed to, when their parents couldn't afford the tuition? While I still do not like the idea of racial discrimination of any kind, I now see that there is reason to try to tip the scales back a little, at least for a generation or two. Above all, I was surprised at how Godly a man King was.

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