



Knock on Any Door

By Willard Motley

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Knock on Any Door By Willard Motley

Willard Motley's 1947 best seller shocked the nation with its harsh depiction of the dark underbelly of the American dream. *Knock on Any Door* dramatizes young immigrant Nick Romano's struggle to survive when his father's business folds, leaving his family with no choice but to move to a poor neighborhood across town. A series of petty crimes land the former Catholic altar boy in reform school, where forceful "rehabilitation" only creates a hardened and resistant spirit among the inmates. Once released, Nick returns to Chicago, where family conflicts and a brief, tragic marriage spiral him further downward, culminating in his arrest for the murder of a police officer. The whole city watches the thrilling legal battle unfold as Nick takes the stand to fight for his life.

Motley researched his novel on the streets of his native Chicago, talking to immigrants about their experiences and visiting juveniles in Illinois's youth detention centers. In *Knock on Any Door*, Motley creates a painfully vivid picture of poverty, the struggle for ethnic identity, and the flaws of the penal system in urban America.

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Knock on Any Door By Willard Motley **Bibliography**

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Editorial Review

Review

"Motley wrote of [Chicago] and its people with brutal honesty and with exquisite sympathy. There are sections of *Knock on Any Door* that might move you to tears and other parts that will move you to anger."—Bill Granger, *Chicago Tribune Magazine*

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