

VOLUME 2

Moore Words

from



Words DO Matter

Aspire Banish Clarity Delicate
Elaborate Frigid Gaze Humble
Influence Jolt Kindred Lofty Myth
Neglect Objective Peril Quiver
Resilient Triumph Urge Venture
Withstand Xeric Yonder Zany

Inspiring
Stories To
Improve
Your Vocabulary

R. Lee Moore, Sr.

WORDS DO MATTER

Moore Words

INSPIRING STORIES TO IMPROVE YOUR VOCABULARY

VOLUME 2

MOORE WORDS, VOLUME 2

Inspiring Stories To Improve Your Vocabulary

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Ronald Lee Moore, Sr.

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Words
DO
Matter!

Dedication

To the curious minds—the readers who want to know more about history, understand different cultures, and discover the power of words.

To those who know that stories can do more than entertain. They can take us into the past, introduce us to new people and experiences, and even help us discover something new about ourselves.

To young people growing up in a world of texts, emojis, abbreviations, and social media—never forget the value of having the right words to express what you think, feel, believe, and dream.

And to everyone who enjoys a good story, a little imagination, and learning something new along the way—

This book is for you.

May every story expand your vocabulary, spark your curiosity, and encourage you to use your voice with confidence.

Because your voice matters.

Your story matters.

And **WORDS DO MATTER.**

Build Your Vocabulary with Moore Words:

Review the Words: Read the new words and their definitions.

See Them in Action: Notice how each word is used in the story.

Refer Back: Check the word list whenever you need a reminder.

Practice: Use the new words in your own sentences.

Follow these simple steps and watch your vocabulary grow—one word at a time!

INTRODUCTION:

VOLUME 2

In a time where swipes and scrolls have replaced chapters and paragraphs, where abbreviations and emojis often stand in for full expression, it has become increasingly important to preserve the richness of language and the timeless power of storytelling. **Moore Words: Volume 2** is not just a collection of stories—it is a revival, a resistance, and a gift.

This book invites you to pause from the digital noise and step into a world where words still matter and stories still carry weight.

Each short story within these pages is crafted with care, offering more than entertainment. They are vessels of knowledge—woven with social, cultural, and historical threads that not only inform but enlighten. Whether you're reading about a forgotten tradition, a pivotal moment in history, or a relatable modern dilemma, every tale is rooted in purpose and passion.

But **Moore Words: Volume 2** offers something more; vocabulary expansion with heart. Scattered throughout these stories are words—some familiar, others refreshingly rare—that stretch your thinking and deepen your understanding. These words are clearly defined and intentionally placed, encouraging readers to connect meaning with usage, all while enjoying narratives that are engaging and emotionally stirring.

Why does this matter now?

Because with the rapid rise of social media, AI-generated content, and bite-sized video culture, we are at risk of losing the cherished art of storytelling and the mastery of language. In the race to be quick, clever, and concise, we sometimes forget the value of depth, nuance, and precision. The ability to tell a story—rich in detail and vocabulary—is not just a literary skill; it's a life skill. It empowers us to share our truths, build connections, challenge ideas, and leave legacies.

Let's not throw the baby out with the bath water.

Technology is a tool, but language is a foundation. And **Moore Words: Volume 2** seeks to honor that foundation by integrating meaningful vocabulary into compelling stories that still feel modern, real, and relatable. It's a reminder that pages—real, physical pages—can still surprise us, move us, and teach us something new.

Whether you're a student hoping to build a stronger vocabulary, a parent looking for stories that matter, an

educator seeking fresh material, or simply a reader who loves both language and life, this book is for you.

If you are familiar with some of the words, practice using them until they become part of your vocabulary, your everyday writing or conversation.

So turn the page—literally.

Join us in preserving the art of reading, writing, thinking, and speaking with intention. Celebrate stories that carry cultural legacy. Embrace words that challenge and elevate. And remember that in a world full of noise, the clearest voices are often the ones that have taken time to learn the language of storytelling.

Welcome to **Moore Words: Volume 2**—where every story is a lesson, and every word matters.

Regards,

—*R. Lee Moore, Sr.*

NOT QUITE JUNETEENTH: NOT YET

The June sky over the countryside stretched wide and blue, brushed with cotton ball clouds. Ayana Harper, sixteen and restless, had wandered far from her family's Juneteenth picnic. She needed space to breathe, away from the crowd, the speeches, and her cousin's sticky cobbler hands.

As she slowly walked down a grassy slope near a wire fence, something stirred in the tall grass.

"A calf?" she said, squinting.

Sure enough, a light-brown calf had wriggled through a broken post and was now trotting toward the woods. Ayana gave chase, laughing.

“Hey! That’s not your field!”

The calf picked up speed. Ayana followed, sneakers thudding on the soft dirt. The wind caught her braids as the world turned into blur—trees, grass, and then—

Splash.

The ground gave out beneath her, and Ayana plunged into a cold, rushing brook.

Pulled From the Past

When Ayana Harper came to, the world smelled like wet grass, ash, and something faintly sour—like sweat left too long in the sun. Her clothes clung to her like seaweed, soaked from the brook she’d fallen into. Her head ached, her hands stung, and her eyes took a moment to focus.

A dark-skinned man leaned over her, a damp rag in one hand and a look of **clarity** in his eyes—clear, steady, almost gentle.

Clarity: The quality of being clear, easy to understand, or easy to see.

“You back with us, child?” he asked in a low Southern drawl, voice worn smooth like river stones.

Ayana blinked. “I think so... what happened?”

“Pulled you from the stream just ‘fore your head hit the rocks. Looked like you was chasing one of my calves.”

Her eyes narrowed. The sky looked... wrong. Too clean. Too still. No planes, no cell towers. Her wet sneakers looked ridiculous against the man’s hand-sewn boots. “Where am I?”

“Galveston,” he said. “Ain’t but a mile from the Seabrook property line.”

“Galveston?” Ayana pushed herself upright, eyes wide.

“That’s right.” He studied her, brows furrowing. “You got a mighty strange way of dressin’. You from the Seabrook house?”

She swallowed hard. “No, I’m not from here. What year is this?”

“Year?” He scratched his beard. “Eighteen sixty-four.”

Ayana’s mouth dropped open. Her heartbeat raced. “Oh my God. I fell into the water in 2026 and came out... here?”

The man blinked. “You really did hit your head, didn’t you?”

Ayana’s stomach twisted. Not quite Juneteenth... not yet.

She barely heard him. Her thoughts spiraled. She had come to Galveston in 1864. Just before Juneteenth. A time when freedom had been promised but not delivered. It was like history had reached out and pulled her backward.

She could hardly breathe.

Back in 2026

Ayana was no stranger to being overlooked. At sixteen, being a Black girl meant constantly shifting between two worlds—one that celebrated her style, her slang, her music, and one that ignored her voice in the classroom, followed her in stores, and whispered judgments behind smiles.

She was tired of fighting to be seen as equal, tired of teachers mistaking her intelligence for attitude, and of classmates who called her “too loud” when she was just being heard. Her mama always said, “You are your ancestors’ dream, baby girl. So don’t let nobody make you feel like a footnote.”

But now, here she was—right in the middle of their dream... before it even came true.

“Come on now,” the man said, reaching for her hand. “You best get outta them wet clothes ‘fore you catch your death.”

She hesitated, then took it. His grip was firm but gentle—not trying to control, just help.

He introduced himself on the walk back as Amos. A field hand. A husband. A father. “Ain’t got much,” he said, “but we make it work.”

As they walked down a narrow dirt road, Ayana saw rows of cotton stretching like white oceans. Bent backs moved between them—men, women, even children—hands covered in cuts from the sharp bolls, their shirts soaked through with sweat.

Everywhere she looked, there was labor.

And nowhere, not even in the breeze, was there rest.

Jolt: A sudden, strong movement; surprise that shakes you up.

Venture: A risky or daring journey or activity.

Ayana felt a sharp **jolt** in her chest—not from pain, but from understanding. She had read about slavery, seen movies and diagrams. But seeing it unfold in front of her? Watching real people walking, bent under the weight of a system built to break them? None **ventured** to resist nor escape.

That was different. That was unbearable.

The House Behind the Cotton

The dirt road wound past rows of cotton that seemed to stretch to the horizon. Ayana had never seen anything like it. The plants stood about chest-high, topped with fluffy white blooms, but the beauty of the cotton masked the **peril** it brought. Each boll had jagged edges that cut into bare fingers. Tiny drops of blood spotted the leaves where pickers worked, hunched like shadows under the punishing Texas sun.

“They start us before sunrise,” Amos explained as they walked, “and don’t let up till the horn blows at dusk. Some days it too dark to even see the cotton we pickin’.”

Peril: Serious and immediate danger.

Ayana's sneakers squished with each step. Her damp clothes clung to her skin, but she felt selfish even noticing her discomfort when she saw a boy no older than nine dragging a heavy sack across the plowed trenches.

"Does it always feel this hopeless?" she whispered.

Amos didn't answer at first. Then he said, "Some days. But we ain't forgot how to laugh. That's how we survive. How else could we **withstand** being treated this way?"

They reached a cluster of small wooden cabins beyond the fields. The cabins leaned like tired old men, each one made from gray, splintering planks. Tin and burlap patched the roofs. Smoke curled from a narrow chimney pipe atop one of the shacks.

Amos pushed open the door to his cabin.

Inside was a single room. Dirt floor. One corner had a straw mattress covered with a quilt stitched from scraps of old dresses and work shirts. A pot simmered over a wood fire built between three stones. The scent that filled the space

Withstand: To resist or stand firm against something difficult or dangerous.

was smoky, earthy, and warm—field peas, salted pork fat, onions, and sweet potatoes.

“This here’s what we got for dinner,” Amos said. “Some days it’s just beans. Other times we get scraps—pig tail, skin, or the foot if they feel generous.”

Ayana sat on a stool near the hearth. The fire warmed her skin and her soul. The smells were both unfamiliar and comforting. She could almost taste the broth in the air.

“I never thought survival could smell like this,” she said softly.

Amos raised a brow. “It ain’t fine eatin’, but it’ll fill your belly.”

Mabel entered the room next. She was tall and stately, her dark skin glowing with the heat of the fire, her hair wrapped in a scarf. She gave Ayana a slow once-over, then nodded.

“You the girl who fell in the creek?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

Yonder: Far away, but within sight (often used poetically or in old-fashioned speech).

“You got a name?”

“Ayana.”

“Sound like a name with some purpose to it,” Mabel said.

Ayana smiled shyly. “I like to think so.”

From a back curtain emerged four children—Josiah, Rose, Liddy, and Micah—ranging from toddler to teenager. Their clothes were patched and faded, their eyes wide and curious.

Josiah spoke first. “She look like she from **yonder** stars.”

“She dressed like one of them **zany** folks in the traveling carnivals,” Micah said, pointing at her sneakers.

Ayana laughed. “You’re not far off.”

They all sat cross-legged on the floor as Mabel spooned the stew into wooden bowls. They didn’t have much, but they ate like a family—close, grateful, talking over one another, laughing even when the stories were sad. It reminded Ayana of Thanksgiving with her cousins in Houston. She

Zany: Funny in a strange or silly way; wildly unconventional.

Kindred: Having similar nature or origin; related in spirit or feeling.

recognized a **kindred** spirit. The way people laughed to keep from crying.

The food was simple, but it was sacred. The peas were soft and rich from the pork, the cornbread gritty and sweet, and the sweet potatoes melted on her tongue like sugar and smoke. She closed her eyes and let the flavors linger. This was soul food in its purest form—born of necessity, but flavored with hope.

“I don’t understand,” she said aloud. “How can you all still find joy here?”

Mabel looked up. “Because if we don’t, we vanish.”

Amos nodded. “They took our land, our names, our languages. They try to take our joy, too. But joy’s the one thing they can’t chain.”

Ayana felt something stir in her. These people had been torn from their homelands, stripped of culture, sold, whipped, and **banished** to the lowest rung of society. But they had

Banish: To force someone or something to leave a place as a form of punishment or rule.

Myth: A traditional story, often involving gods or heroes, which explains natural events or beliefs.

rebuilt something—an entire world. With laughter, food, music, and stubborn love.

They had created a new culture from the ashes of the one stolen from them. What once seemed like a **myth** became a reality for her.

She looked at Mabel, who sat straight-backed even as her feet were swollen from the fields. At Amos, who spoke little but moved with quiet pride. At the children, whose eyes gleamed with wonder.

“They see you like you ain’t human,” Mabel said suddenly, as if reading Ayana’s thoughts. “Like you some animal with no mind, no heart. But we got stories. We got dreams.”

Ayana nodded. “You have more than that. You have legacy.”

Josiah leaned in. “Tell us ‘bout where you from.”

Ayana took a breath. “It’s... a lot.”

And so she told them. About electric cars and cell phones. About music players no bigger than a spoon. About social media and video games. About the first Black man who traveled to outer space.

"You lyin'," Rose said, pointing in the air. "Ain't no way nobody can go up there, let alone one of us!"

"It happened," Ayana said. "His name was Guion Stewart Bluford Jr., born in Philadelphia."

The cabin fell silent. Even the fire seemed to hush.

"Maybe we do get free after all," Mabel whispered.

Ayana didn't say what she was thinking—that freedom, even in 2026, still came with asterisks.

"I mean," she said carefully, "we're not picking cotton anymore. But Black girls like me still get told to be quiet. Still get overlooked. Still get paid less, listened to less, loved less."

"That don't sound like freedom," Amos murmured.

"It's a work in progress," she replied. "Like y'all. Like Juneteenth."

Mabel smiled. "Not quite free. Not quite Juneteenth."

Ayana felt a tear slide down her cheek.

"Not yet," she whispered. "But we're getting there."

The Port and the Price

The next morning, Ayana woke before the rooster. The cabin smelled of ash and earth and the lingering scent of last night's stew. As Mabel quietly stoked the embers in the hearth, Ayana slipped outside into the humid dawn, drawn by the low sound of gulls crying in the distance.

She followed a sandy path Amos had pointed out the day before. It led east through the trees and opened suddenly into Galveston Bay.

The harbor was extremely inviting—a mix of early morning fog, cut hay, and salt breeze. The water stretched out like a silver sheet, glittering under the rising sun. Old wooden docks creaked as fishermen prepared their boats to launch. The gulls circled overhead, squawking at everything.

But Ayana didn't see the beauty—not right away.

All she could feel was the weight of history pressing down like an invisible weight on her chest.

Neglect: To fail to take care of something or someone properly.

Galveston's shoreline wasn't just a fishing hub. It had once been Texas' largest slave-trading port, rivaling even New Orleans in human trafficking. Before the Civil War, slave ships came directly to these docks—first legally, then in secret. After 1808, when the international slave trade was banned, smugglers rerouted their vessels here, unloading Black bodies in darkness and silence.

Ayana closed her eyes. She could almost hear the cries of families torn apart, could smell the fear and sickness that came with being chained below deck for weeks. The Gulf waters might have looked peaceful now, but they were haunted by sorrow.

She thought of John Seabrook Sydnor, the prominent Galveston slave trader and politician. He wasn't just a man with a name on a plaque—he had trafficked in lives. He helped build this island's economy, not on oil or cotton, but on human beings. Sydnor Street still ran through town in Ayana's time, but she had never known who he was.

"Funny," she muttered, "how some names get statues and others get **neglect**."

Quiver: To shake slightly, often from fear, cold, or excitement.

Behind her, Amos had followed quietly.

“You feel it, don’t you?” he said, voice low.

Ayana nodded. “All of it.”

He stared at the water. “They bring us in boats, just like cattle. Make us walk past these docks in chains.”

“And then they call it progress,” Ayana whispered.

Amos chuckled dryly. “Progress for them, maybe.”

He began walking the length of the docks, pointing out the warehouses.

“Used to be holding pens in there,” he said. “Brick buildings with barred windows. They feed you corn mush once a day, make you **quiver** in your own stink until you sell.”

Ayana swallowed hard. “They sold people here... like crops.”

“Worse,” Amos said. “Crops don’t cry when you take their babies.”

Xeric: Relating to very dry environments or adapted to little water.

Ayana's stomach turned. She tried to imagine what it felt like—being auctioned, prodded, inspected like meat.

The island had once been filled with these auctions. Courthouses hosted them on steps. Taverns allowed bidding in back rooms. Families were separated by the snap of a gavel.

The economy thrived.

The area with its abundant water resources was ideal for growing crops such as wheat, corn, peanuts and rice. Cotton from enslaved fields passed through the docks. Sugar, rice, tobacco—all grown by Black hands, exported by white greed. Even **xeric** crops were grown where there was very little water, such as blackberries, oregano, rosemary lemongrass and my favorite, okra. The crates that are loaded onto a ship carried the fingerprints of pain.

“I read about this,” Ayana said. “In school. A little. But it’s different when you’re standing in it.”

Urge: A strong desire to do something or to encourage someone to act.

Influence: The power to change how someone thinks or acts.

Amos looked at her sideways. “You say you from 2026?”

“Yeah.”

“Don’t seem like it got that much better.”

Ayana took a deep breath. “We’re not shackled anymore. But we still feel the chains. Let me tell you about some giants of our time.”

“Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali, just to name a few.”

Amos was intrigued. He had the **urge** to know more.

“They were giants. Black men who stood up and said, ‘Enough.’ They marched, they spoke, they fought—not with fists, but with truth. They weren’t perfect, but they were powerful. They had **influence**. They shook the world.”

Ayana paused. “Sidney Poitier was one of the first Black actors in Hollywood to get real respect. Michael Jackson changed music forever. And we even had a Black president.”

Amos stopped walking.

“You lyin’.”

Ayana smiled. “His name was Barack Obama. He talked about hope. About change. But even he had to fight to be heard.”

Amos looked out over the bay. “Ain’t no river strong enough to carry that dream unless folks keep paddling.”

“And there were powerful Black women as well,” Ayana continued. “Hattie McDonald, Whitney Houston, and Serena Williams.”

They stood together in silence, the wind tugging at their clothes. Ayana felt the ghosts of the past settle around them—watching, listening.

“I don’t get it,” she said quietly. “How did y’all live through this and still... laugh? Still build families?”

Amos looked at her, eyes full of something that glowed behind pain.

“We had each other,” he said. “That’s all. We made a new kind of love. One born from knowing everything could be taken—and giving it anyway.”

Ayana thought of Mabel, braiding Liddy’s hair by the fire. Of Micah sneaking cornbread to Rose when she scraped her

knee. Of how they sang at night—not songs of slavery, but of survival.

They had forged joy from sorrow.

“We gotta tell the truth,” Ayana said. “Not the pretty version. The real one. About what was taken—and what y’all made from the pieces.”

Amos nodded. “That’s your job now. You carry the memory.”

Ayana looked back at the water, rippling against the dock.

“Then I’ll carry it like a drum,” she whispered, “so the world don’t fall asleep.”

Secrets and Songs

The sun was dipping low as Ayana and Amos returned to the cabin. A soft orange light spilled across the dirt path, warming the air and painting the cotton fields in gold. Somewhere nearby, a mockingbird sang a tune that Ayana

Resilient: Able to recover quickly from challenges or tough situations.

swore she'd heard before—maybe in a spiritual, maybe sampled in a rap song.

Back inside, the family was preparing for supper. The air was thick with the smell of fried cornmeal and roasted onions. Mabel crouched over the fire, using a cast-iron skillet balanced on a makeshift grate of stones. She stirred slowly with a wooden spoon so smoothly it looked like it had been used for generations.

“What’s cookin’?” Ayana asked, trying not to drool.

“Fritters,” Mabel said. “Cornmeal, onion, a little molasses in the batter. We fry ‘em when the sun gets low.”

Micah added, “And we got greens tonight! Wild mustard, picked ‘em fresh near the river.”

The scent was irresistible. It was earthy, rich, and a little sweet. The smoke stung Ayana’s eyes, but she didn’t mind. This was the kind of food that wrapped itself around your ribs and made your bones remember where you came from.

As they ate, Ayana noticed something deeper than hunger in the way they shared their food—Mabel slipping the crispiest fritter onto Micah’s plate when he wasn’t looking. Josiah slicing his own cornbread in half for Liddy. Even

Amos giving up the last sip of his greens' potlikker so no one else went without.

This wasn't just nourishment. It was protection. **Resilient** love in action.

After supper, Mabel pulled out a patchwork quilt and gathered the children around her.

"Time for your lesson," she said.

Josiah groaned. "Again?"

"Every night," she said, "till the words become yours."

Ayana leaned in, curious. Mabel began to sing—not loudly, not like a performance, but like a whisper meant for the soul.

♪ ♪ Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus... ♪

Ayana froze. She knew this song. Her grandmother had sung it while braiding her hair, had called it an "old freedom song." She never knew it had once been a coded message.

"They'd sing that," Mabel explained, "when somebody was planning to run. The song'd spread from cabin to cabin, carryin' the news without ever speakin' it plain."

"A secret signal," Ayana murmured. "That's... brilliant."

“It had to be,” Amos said. “Words got folks whipped. Songs slipped by.”

Rose added, “Sometimes we braid maps in hair. Tell stories in quilts.”

Ayana’s eyes widened. “You mean the patterns mean something?”

“Every square got a tale,” Mabel said, stroking the quilt in her lap. “One for safe houses. One for danger. One say turn left at the river. You got to be shrewd when they watch your every move.”

Ayana was floored. She thought of how people today used TikTok dances, coded memes, “shade,” and slang to speak truths that couldn’t be said outright. Maybe things hadn’t changed as much as she’d thought.

Later, she sat outside with Amos while the children drifted off to sleep inside.

“Y’all really built something beautiful here,” she said softly.

He looked surprised. “This?”

“This. The food, the music, the quilts, the language—it’s culture. It’s yours. It came outta suffering, yeah, but it’s still yours.”

He nodded slowly. "Truth is, we don't always feel like we got much left. They stripped us down. Took our drums. Our gods. Our names."

Ayana placed a hand over her heart. "But you made new names. New gods. New songs. You took what they gave to break you and turned it into memory. That's not just surviving—that's creating."

Amos looked at the stars. "Still feels like a miracle sometimes. To love this much when you expected nothin' but pain."

Ayana nodded, feeling tears rise. "Love here means something more. You don't just love because it's easy. You love because you have to."

A breeze picked up, rustling the corn stalks behind them. It carried the scent of smoldering firewood and the faint sweetness of crushed mint, which Liddy had tucked into the window earlier to keep the bugs away.

Ayana looked up. "Do you ever think about what comes next?"

"Freedom?"

She nodded.

“Yeah,” he said. “But freedom ain’t just a word you whisper. It’s something you gotta earn, even when you already deserve it.”

Ayana thought about her life back in 2026.

Freedom didn’t always feel like freedom there, either.

It meant watching documentaries about Dr. King every February, while classmates still called her “aggressive” when she raised her hand too often.

It meant reading quotes from Malcolm X online while police stared at her and her friends like suspects at the mall.

It meant admiring Muhammad Ali’s defiance and Sidney Poitier’s grace and Michael Jackson’s genius—while still getting told by teachers she was “too loud,” “too confident,” “too much.”

Freedom meant being followed through Target in a hoodie.

Frigid: Very cold in temperature; lacking warmth in emotion.

Urge: A strong desire to do something or to encourage someone to act.

Delicate: Easily damaged or requiring careful handling.

Freedom meant code-switching when around "them", changing how you speak or behave to gain social acceptance.

Freedom meant still needing to fight for respect, and still not being fully seen.

Ayana whispered, "I guess we're still learning how to be free."

Amos didn't answer, but he reached out and gave her hand a gentle squeeze.

And in that moment, in the stillness between fireflies and stars, she understood something deeper than any textbook had ever taught her.

These people weren't passive victims of history. They were architects of resilience. They had laid the foundation for her—brick by bitter, beautiful brick.

Working the Fields

The next morning, Ayana rose to the clang of a cracked metal bell being struck outside. It was still dark—barely past 4 a.m.—and the air was thick with humidity and the scent of churned soil. Mabel was already up, tying a cloth around her hair.

“Time to move, baby,” she said gently. “We don’t get to snooze through the sunrise.”

Ayana stumbled into her clothes—borrowed ones this time, because her jeans and shirt were still damp and sticky from the brook. She wore a shabby cotton dress and some leather-strapped sandals too small for her feet.

Outside, Amos and the children were gathering at the tool shed near the main house. Two white overseers on horseback barked orders while sipping coffee from tin cups.

Ayana’s heart pounded. The **frigid** tone in the men’s voices made her instinctively stand straighter. One of them narrowed his eyes at her.

“New girl?”

“She with me,” Amos said quickly. “Sister’s daughter.”

“Hmph. Keep her in line.”

Ayana swallowed the knot in her throat and followed the others. She had the **urge** to explain what just happened the day before but thought better of it. As they entered the field, the sky began to lighten into pink and orange. But there was no beauty here—only row after row of cotton, stretching farther than Ayana could see.

They worked in silence at first. Ayana crouched beside Mabel, who demonstrated how to twist the cotton bolls gently from the plants without getting pricked.

But there was no avoiding the sharp edges. Within twenty minutes, Ayana's fingers were covered in tiny cuts. The cotton looked soft, but it was anything but gentle—**delicate** to the eye, but cruel to the touch.

The sack tied around her shoulder grew heavier with each row. The strap dug into her collarbone.

Sweat beaded on her face, soaked into her dress. The heat wasn't just physical—it was oppressive, like the sky itself had joined the system that kept these people low.

"Why don't y'all run?" she whispered to Mabel as they worked.

"Where we gon' go?" Mabel said. "Ain't like we blend in anywhere."

Ayana looked up at the overseers, who patrolled the rows like hunting dogs.

Peril: Serious and immediate danger.

“They got dogs. Guns. Eyes everywhere,” Mabel continued. “And they pay folks to turn us in.”

Ayana’s chest tightened. “So you just... stay?”

“We survive. And that takes more than runnin’. It takes wisdom, baby. Takes patience. Takes knowin’ when to plant seeds and when to wait for rain.”

Ayana reached for another boll, her fingers burning. “You ever dream of more?”

Mabel smiled faintly. “Every day. But dreamin’ can be **peril** if you don’t keep it quiet.”

Hours passed. They took a short break for a sip of water—a shared bucket that everyone drank from. The water was lukewarm and metallic-tasting, but Ayana had never been so grateful for it.

As they ate a midday meal—cold corn mush wrapped in cloth from the night before—Ayana sat under a pecan tree with Micah and Rose.

“They never teach this stuff in school,” she exclaimed. “Like... the truth?”

“They don’t wanna remember,” Micah said. “They wanna move on.”

“But we’re still stuck in it,” Ayana said. “Even in my time.”

“How’s that?”

Ayana sighed. “My people still get arrested more, paid less, blamed faster. They want us to be like everyone else—but don’t wanna give us what everyone else has.”

She paused. “Sometimes it feels like we’re free in name, but not in life.”

Micah tossed a pecan shell into the grass. “Then freedom ain’t real. Not yet.”

Later that afternoon, Ayana worked beside Liddy, who hummed a tune under her breath. It wasn’t a spiritual—more like a rhythm to help pass the time.

“You ever get angry?” Ayana asked her.

“All the time,” Liddy said. “But we gotta be careful. Anger get you whipped. Or worse.”

“What do you do with it?”

“I hide it,” Liddy said. “Bury it deep. But I sing it out sometimes. In songs they don’t understand.”

Ayana thought of how she and her friends in 2026 used music the same way—to vent, to resist, to claim space. She thought of artists who rhymed about oppression and brilliance and Black pride. Maybe that was their way of surviving, too.

“People still don’t get us in my time,” Ayana said. “They say we’re too loud, too bold. They call us names for speaking truth.”

Liddy smirked. “Then keep speakin’. Even if it make ‘em uncomfortable.”

By evening, Ayana could barely move her arms. Her fingers were raw, her back was stiff, and her spirit felt bruised.

But as the family walked back to the cabin, she heard laughter.

Real laughter.

Rose and Micah were teasing Josiah about how many times he tripped over his own feet that day. Liddy was skipping, her braids bouncing with each step. Amos and Mabel walked hand in hand, their shadows long and intertwined like tree roots.

How?

How could people be so broken by circumstance and still move with joy?

And that's when Ayana realized:

This wasn't survival.

This was rebellion.

To love in a world that tells you you're unworthy?

To protect one another when you're treated like property?

To sing, to dance, to feed, to pray—when the world wants you silent?

That was power.

That was their resistance. That was how they would last.

Ayana looked up at the sky—no longer blue, now streaked with purple and fire.

It was the same sky her ancestors once looked at, in chains and in hope.

She had chased a calf into a brook.

And found her people waiting.

Not Quite Juneteenth

The evening air buzzed with insects and low murmurs. Fireflies blinked between the trees like nature's lanterns. Inside the cabin, the family gathered around the hearth as Mabel lit the lamp with a matchstick, its glow casting flickering shadows on the walls.

Ayana sat with her back to the wall, fingers still sore from the cotton, and heart heavy with urgency. She couldn't hold it in anymore. Not just the knowledge of what was coming—but the truth of what still hadn't come.

"I have to tell you something," she said softly.

They all turned to look at her. Even the littlest one, Josiah, stopped licking molasses off his fingers.

"I'm not from here. Not from this time."

Amos gave her a long, slow **gaze**. Mabel set down her sewing. Rose leaned forward, curious.

"I fell into a brook back home—in 2026—and woke up here, in 1864. I know how strange that sounds, but it's the truth."

Gaze: To look at something steadily and with focus.

No one spoke at first.

“You a spirit?” Josiah whispered.

Ayana laughed gently. “No. I’m just a girl. But I came back for a reason.”

Mabel crossed her arms. “Go on, child.”

“In just over a year, a Union general—General Gordon Granger—he’s going to arrive right here, in Galveston. He’ll stand up in front of everybody and read an order. General Order No. 3. It will say that all enslaved people are free. Not just in words. But by law. He’ll read it loud enough for the wind to carry.”

They stared at her as if the lamp had grown wings.

“But... we free now?” Liddy asked hopefully.

Ayana shook her head. “Not yet. The Emancipation Proclamation happened already, yes. But your master hasn’t told you. And he won’t. Not until someone makes him.”

Clarity: The quality of being clear, easy to understand, or easy to see.

Quiver: To shake slightly, often from fear, cold, or excitement.

Amos frowned. “You saying they been hidin’ our freedom?”

“Yes,” Ayana said. “For over two years by then. The war will be almost over. But here in Texas? Y’all won’t know until June 19, 1865.”

There was silence. Not confusion—**clarity**.

Pure, aching realization.

Mabel closed her eyes. “So we been working, bleeding, buryin’, prayin’... all while already free?”

Ayana nodded.

“Not quite free,” Amos whispered. “Not quite Juneteenth.”

“Not yet,” Ayana echoed.

The emotion in the room changed. It wasn’t just disbelief—it was heartbreak. It was betrayal.

“We got to tell folks,” Micah said, jumping up and urging the others. “Tell ‘em what’s comin’.”

Objective: A goal or purpose; or something based on facts rather than feelings.

Elaborate: To explain something in greater detail or with more information.

Amos gently pulled him back down. “That might bring more trouble than hope, boy.”

“But we got a right to know!” Micah cried. “How else we s’posed to prepare?”

Ayana could see the boy’s hands **quiver** with a need to act.

“You do have a right,” she said firmly. “But you also have to be smart. This is where things get complicated. You’re not just waiting for freedom—you’re preparing for it. Quietly. Safely.”

“What’s the point of bein’ free if you gotta hide it?” Rose asked.

Ayana’s heart squeezed. “Sometimes the **objective** is to survive long enough to be loud later.”

She looked around the room. “Freedom will come. But so will other things. They’ll try to rewrite what happened. Make it sound like it wasn’t so bad. Like slavery was just... folks helping out on farms.”

Mabel scoffed. “Helpin’? We been beat, sold, torn from our babies.”

Ayana nodded. “I know. And that’s why Juneteenth matters. It’s the day y’all knew. The day y’all got to start telling the story yourselves.”

Amos leaned forward. “But what happens after?”

Ayana took a breath. “Progress. Pain. Pride. All tangled up.”

She began to **elaborate**:

“There’ll be Black churches, Black schools, Black-owned businesses. There’ll be HBCUs (Historically Black College and University) and jazz and blues and soul food restaurants on every corner.”

She paused. “But there’ll also be Jim Crow. Lynching. Sharecropping. Laws written to push y’all down again. Even in 2026, my people still fight for basic dignity.”

Mabel whispered, “It don’t end with freedom.”

Ayana shook her head. “No. But it begins with it.”

Amos stood. “Then we prepare.”

“Prepare how?” Rose asked.

“We teach,” he said. “We learn to read, even if we gotta do it by moonlight. We write songs that tell the truth. We hide what they try to erase. We fortify our minds.”

Liddy clapped softly. “And our hearts.”

Ayana felt a swell of pride. These people had no vote, no wealth, no freedom.

But they had each other.

And a vision.

A **lofty** one.

Mabel took Ayana’s hand. “You said you came back for a reason.”

Ayana nodded, blinking tears. “I think it was to remind you that your love built the future. That you didn’t just survive history—you shaped it.”

The room was quiet. But in that quiet, something was planted.

Not just hope. But legacy.

Lofty: Very high in the air or noble in ideas and goals.

Jolt: A sudden, strong movement or surprise that shakes you up.

Ayana stood slowly and whispered, “Not quite Juneteenth...”

They all answered in unison: “Not yet.”

The Return

That night, Ayana could barely sleep.

The quilt Mabel gave her was warm and fragrant with pine smoke and lavender leaves tucked between the stitches. But Ayana lay wide-eyed, staring at the ceiling, her mind filled with images: bloodied cotton fingers, stolen lullabies, coded quilts, and fire-lit faces singing freedom into the night.

She didn't know how long she drifted, but at some point, she heard the sound again—hoofbeats. But softer now, echoing inside her chest.

Then came the rushing of water.

And a voice. A herdsman's voice.

“Hold on now, girl—don't let go...”

Then silence.

When Ayana opened her eyes, she was lying in the brook.

Cold water rushed around her ankles. Her T-shirt clung to her ribs. Her curls were soaked and full of leaves. And somewhere beyond the woods, a Juneteenth band was still playing a Stevie Wonder cover.

She sat up slowly, heart pounding, the **jolt** of reality hitting her like thunder.

She was back.

Home.

Ayana stumbled out of the water, shoes squishing, and ran toward the festival grounds. When she reached the crowd, no one seemed to notice anything unusual. Kids waved flags, aunties danced with paper fans, uncles flipped ribs on the grill while soul music poured from the loudspeakers.

The scent of barbecue, hot oil, and peach cobbler wrapped around her like an old song. But Ayana stood in the middle of it all—changed.

Forever changed.

She ran to her mom, who was sitting under the tent, chatting with her friends and sipping lemonade.

“Baby, what happened to you?” her mom asked, eyes wide. “You look like you fell in a swamp.”

Ayana nodded. “I kinda did.”

She dropped into her chair, dripping, breathing hard. Then she whispered:

“I saw them.”

Her mother blinked. “Who?”

“Our ancestors. In Galveston. Before Juneteenth. A year before.”

Her mother looked at her, unsure whether to laugh or worry.

Ayana leaned closer, her voice steady now. “Mama, they didn’t even know they were free. Not yet. But they hoped. They loved each other even when everything was designed to break them.”

Her mother touched her face gently. “Baby... you okay?”

“I am now,” Ayana said. “And I know what I’m supposed to do.”

Epilogue: We Are the Proof

Triump: A great victory or achievement.

On the last day of school, Ayana stood in front of her class, holding a folded quilt and a small speaker. Her teacher had allowed her to give a final project presentation—something “creative.”

She took a breath, then clicked PLAY.

The soft sound of a spiritual filled the room:

♪ ♪ Wade in the water, wade in the water, children... ♪

Ayana unfolded the quilt, showing off the patterns she'd sewn herself. A flying geese block. A log cabin square. A freedom path.

“My ancestors couldn't write books,” she began. “So they told their stories in songs and stitches. They turned their pain into patterns. Their faith into food. Their suffering into strength.”

Humble: Not proud or boastful; showing modesty.

Banish: To force someone or something to leave a place as a form of punishment or rule.

Aspire: To have a strong desire or goal to achieve something important.

She looked around the room. Some classmates leaned in. Others stared, surprised by her sudden fire.

“Juneteenth isn’t just a day off,” she said. “It’s a **triumph**. A warning. A beginning. The people who waited for freedom—they weren’t weak. They were wise. They survived so we could be here.”

She paused, voice **humble** but powerful.

“And now it’s our turn—to remember, to speak up, to push forward.”

Ayana held up a single strip of cloth. “We are the thread. If we forget them, we **banish** their memory. If we remember, we honor their dreams.”

A long silence followed.

Then—applause.

And not just polite applause. Real, moved clapping. A few students stood. Even her teacher wiped her eyes.

Ayana smiled. She didn’t need to **aspire** to be a hero.

She only needed to tell the truth.

Final Note

Ayana would never forget the heat of that cotton field. The taste of cornbread cooked on stone. The warmth of Mabel's voice. The way Josiah called her a spirit. The knowing in Amos's eyes.

She would never forget that freedom isn't a finish line—it's a promise.

Not quite Juneteenth. Not yet.

But someday...

Always.

Lessons learned drawn from both Ayana's journey and the lived experiences of the enslaved family she encounters. They foster both empathy and historical understanding:

1. Freedom is more than a word—it's a lived experience.

Although slavery was legally abolished, the enslaved people Ayana meets are still in bondage because no one told them they were free. This shows that freedom requires access to truth, justice, and the power to act—not just laws on paper.

2. Our ancestors were resilient, creative, and wise.

The enslaved family uses quilts, songs, and quiet wisdom to survive. They are not just victims of history but architects of culture. Ayana learns that Black history is full of strength, invention, and resistance.

3. Silence can be deadly—but stories give life.

The people of 1864 don't know they're free because their enslavers kept it hidden. Ayana realizes that sharing stories, especially uncomfortable ones, is a form of activism and justice.

4. Dignity can exist even in oppression.

Despite brutal conditions, the enslaved family cares for each other with tenderness, humor, and joy. They prove that love and dignity can withstand cruelty, and that culture grows even in the harshest soil.

5. History repeats if we forget.

Ayana sees that many of the struggles in 1864 still exist in 2026—discrimination, injustice, and invisibility. The story teaches that remembering history isn't about guilt—it's about growth, responsibility, and awareness.

6. Everyone has a role in shaping the future.

Ayana realizes she doesn't have to be famous to make a difference. By carrying her ancestors' stories and speaking truth, she becomes a link in the chain of progress.

7. Freedom requires preparation.

The family doesn't just wait for freedom—they get ready for it by teaching, learning, and building unity. Ayana learns that we must prepare ourselves emotionally, mentally, and spiritually to fully live in freedom.

8. Culture is a powerful form of resistance.

From secret songs to cooking traditions, the story shows how Black culture was preserved in quiet, clever ways—even under surveillance and violence. Culture becomes a shield, a torch, and a language of survival.

9. Love is a revolutionary act.

In a system meant to destroy them, the characters show love to one another—through meals, protection, humor, and sacrifice. This teaches that choosing to love in unjust circumstances is not weakness—it's power.

10. The past is not past—it's part of us.

Ayana's time-travel reminds us that history isn't something we leave behind—it's something we walk with. It influences our present, and how we respond to it shapes the future.

Conclusion

As you turn the final page of this volume, we hope you've discovered more than just stories—you've uncovered new ideas, met characters who reflect both history and hope, and collected words that now feel like your own.

Each tale was designed not just to entertain, but to leave a lasting imprint: a new perspective, a powerful word, or a deeper understanding of the world and your place in it. Through laughter, learning, frustration, and triumph, these stories are meant to spark thought, inspire dialogue, and encourage growth—both intellectually and emotionally.

In reading *Moore Words*, Volume 2 you've joined a community of learners, dreamers, educators, and storytellers who believe that words have power, that stories can heal, and that language can bridge the gap between generations, cultures, and time.

We live in an era where attention is fleeting, language is abbreviated, and deep reflection is often traded for convenience. But you, dear reader, chose to slow down. To engage. To grow.

That choice matters.

So whether you read this book cover to cover or dipped in and out of the stories that called to you, we hope you feel a little more informed, a little more empowered, and a lot more equipped to share your thoughts with confidence and clarity.

Keep reading. Keep learning. Keep telling stories that matter. And above all—keep speaking with purpose.

The world still needs your voice.

Thank you for taking this journey with us. Until next time, stay curious—and keep turning the page.

Regards,

—*R. Lee, Sr.*

Social Media Abbreviations

Social media abbreviations

Social media abbreviations are shortened forms of words or phrases commonly used in digital communication to save time, space, and effort—especially on platforms with character limits like X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, or Instagram. They allow users to communicate quickly and casually, often reflecting internet culture, humor, or trending topics.

Why they matter:

Efficiency: Speeds up conversations and posts.

Character limits: Helps users stay within word or character limits.

Community connection: Shows familiarity with digital culture and keeps you “in the loop.”

Tone & expression: Adds humor, sarcasm, emotion, or informality (e.g., “LOL,” “SMH,” or “FOMO”).

In short, social media abbreviations are a modern shorthand that helps people communicate faster and feel more connected in the fast-paced world of online interaction.

A-F

AMA - Ask Me Anything

AI - Artificial intelligence

ASAP - As Soon As Possible

ATM - At The Moment

BAE - Before Anyone Else (often used to refer to a significant other)

BFF - Best Friends Forever

BRB - Be Right Back

BTW - By The Way

DM - Direct Message

DYK - Did You Know

EOD - End of day

EOW - End of week

FB - Facebook

FF - Follow Friday (used to recommend people to follow, mainly on Twitter)

FOMO - Fear Of Missing Out

FTW - For The Win

FYP - For You Page (common on TikTok)

G-L

GG - Good Game (common in gaming communities)

GM - Good Morning

GN - Good Night

GRWM - Get Ready With Me (common in beauty/lifestyle videos)

GTG - Got To Go

HBD - Happy Birthday

HMU - Hit Me Up (contact me)

ICYMI - In Case You Missed It

IDC - I Don't Care

IDK - I Don't Know

IG - Instagram

IMO/IMHO - In My Opinion / In My Humble Opinion

IRL - In Real Life

JSYK - Just So You Know

JK - Just Kidding

LMAO - Laughing My A** Off

LMK - Let Me Know

LOL - Laugh Out Loud

M-R

MFW - My Face When

NBD - No Big Deal

NSFW - Not Safe For Work

NVM - Never Mind

OMG - Oh My God / Gosh / Goodness

OOTD - Outfit Of The Day

OP - Original Poster (the person who started a thread/post)

PM - Private Message

POV - Point of View

PPL - People

QOTD - Quote Of The Day

RN - Right Now

ROFL - Rolling On the Floor Laughing

RT - Retweet

S-Z

SMH - Shaking My Head (disapproval or disbelief)

SN - Snapchat

SO - Significant Other / Shout Out

SRSLY - Seriously

TBH - To Be Honest

TBT - Throwback Thursday

TFW - That Feeling When

TGIF - Thank God It's Friday

TMI - Too Much Information

TTYL - Talk To You Later

TYT - Take Your Time

UOK - You Okay?

WBU - What About You?

WCW - Woman Crush Wednesday

WTF - What The [expletive]

YOLO - You Only Live Once

YW - You're Welcome

Words
DO
Matter!

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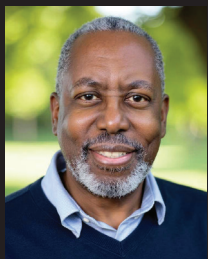
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R. Lee Moore, Sr. is an author and storyteller whose engaging works blend entertainment, education, and inspiration. Known as a gifted raconteur, he brings stories to life with humor, history, and meaningful insights.

Through his **Moore Words** series, he celebrates the power of language and the importance of building a strong vocabulary in today's fast-paced digital world.

His stories encourage readers to expand their vocabulary, deepen their understanding, and discover how the right words can educate, enlighten, and connect us.



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