



From Me to You: The Power of Storytelling and Its Inherent Generational Wealth: an African American Story

Deidra R. Moore-Janvier

Mascot Books

(252pp)

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Designed for young audiences, From Me To You is a sensitive, forthright account of slavery and civil rights movements in America.

Deidra R. Moore-Janvier's phenomenal social science text *From Me To You* addresses the extensive impacts of the transatlantic slave trade and follows the continuous fight for African Americans' civil rights.

The work is a response to Janvier's eight-year-old son's questions about racism and slavery; it is also designed to be of help to other young people who have similar questions. It differentiates the transatlantic slave trade from similar historical institutions by its magnitude, the brutality inflicted on enslaved Africans, and its multigenerational consequences on the lives of African Americans. It also traces the struggle for Black rights throughout different events in American history and highlights the remarkable achievements of African American civil rights leaders.

The book's contextual information is detailed and extensive. It covers historical facts about African societies prior to the transatlantic slave trade; about the geographical locations of regions connected to the transatlantic slave trade; about other slave trades that existed in ancient times; about slavery in historical Africa; and concerning events surrounding the start of the transatlantic slave trade. Such information facilitates in-depth understandings of the subject.

Further, the book creates engaging ways to involve its young audience in the discussion, inviting children to voice their perspectives about slavery. Conversations between Janvier and her son, Justin, act as a model: Justin shares his definition of what slavery is, as well as conveying his understandings of multiculturalism and African American history. His questions regarding slavery and the terms used in the past to refer to African Americans are astute, and Janvier responds with care, adding well to what Justin already knows about the topic. Further, the book's straightforward definitions of complicated terms—including "slave," "slavery," "duress," and "enslaved person"—help to make its discussions clear. Janvier differentiates between chattel slavery and other similar systems like indentured servitude, too.

Clear drawings of African slaves convey their devastation at being transported from their homes, dispersed and left in foreign lands, and forced to work for others. These show some of the horrors that African slaves endured—all while remaining sensitive to the book's young audience. They do not show the full extent of the cruelty that slaves suffered. Meanwhile, the biographies of notable Black civil rights leaders, including Barbara Jordan and Ida B. Wells, are also accompanied by illustrations, helping when it comes to identifying and recalling the leaders.

The work includes short, easy-to-remember, and uplifting affirmations that emphasize the beauty, value, and purpose of each child, despite the existence of challenges like racism. They also encourage children to apply the knowledge that they learn, work toward their dreams, and believe in themselves. Inspiring quotes from Black leaders, including Maya Angelou, Marcus Garvey, and James Farmer, Jr., flesh out the book's message of recognizing and protecting

Black civil rights. Practical, fun ways for engaging in antiracism work from a young age are suggested, too, as with a spotlighted program that involves educating children about different countries via sharing special cuisines and music.

Designed for young audiences, *From Me To You* is a sensitive, forthright account of slavery in America that emphasizes the contributions of past and present civil rights leaders.

EDITH WAIRIMU (May 4, 2022)

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