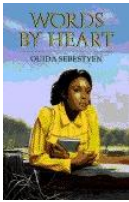


# Passages

## Reading Level 8



**Title:** Words by Heart

**Author:** Ouida Sebestyen

### Sample From The Book

Old Bullet had guessed they were going somewhere – Lena’s folks – before they came out the door. He stood under the wagon like a spare horse, wagging hopefully. Ben Sill’s family hadn’t mingled much since they came from Scattercreek, where everyone was black, to this town where no one was. But tonight was a special night, Lena’s night, when her Magic Mind was going to matter, not her skin.

As they were leaving, a firefly winked out over the roof of the rent-house they had lived in that summer. Lena looked up at it, Is tonight when my whole life changes? Wishing on it for the thing she wanted would have been admitting she doubted herself. So she only asked.

Her papa and step-mama rode on the wagon seat. Lena sat in the back with the little kids, jouncing like a meal sack while her stiff-starched dress mashed to smithers. Bethel Springs Schoolhouse, where they were going for the contest, was used for grade school on weekdays and for church on Sundays, now that the dance hall was gone. Before that, folks had gone to church in the big solid-floored Melodyland with a real piano up front. But the congregation prayed mightily every Sunday that this blight on the community would be banished, and one afternoon during an electrical storm, it was. Of course, they didn’t have a church either after that, and had to use the schoolhouse...



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