

2021

## Review: Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans

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### Recommended Citation

Schwedt, Rachel and DeLong, Janice A., "Review: Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans" (2021). *Ages 10-12*. 9.

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## ***Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans***

By Kadir Nelson (author and illustrator)

Balzer + Bray, 2011

### DESCRIPTION:

In *Heart and Soul*, the story of blacks in America from 1565 through to 2011 is synthesized in a clear manner understandable for young people. In a little over 100 pages, the entire time period cannot be covered in detail, but the ideas, the people and the events that molded this era struggle have been carefully chosen. Famous figures such as Frederick Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King are portrayed alongside unknown determined African American people. Each page of text is illustrated with stunningly beautiful full-page paintings. Choosing to speak through an unnamed narrator, who follows her own family through the years, makes the narrative personal, giving the book an emotional impact beyond the recitation of facts.

### CRITIQUE:

Kadir Nelson is unsurpassed in his skill as a portrait artist, but in this title he proves his talent as a writer as well as a painter. His pictures capture not only the physical representation of his subjects, but shows their strength and dignity. The facts of history are made personal and impossible to ignore. This title would be an excellent catalyst to encourage further exploration of the people and events portrayed. A timeline, Bibliography, and Index add value for the researcher. This book carries an important message for readers young and old.

### RELATED SUBJECTS:

African Americans, Booker T. Washington, Buffalo soldiers, Civil Rights Act, Desegregation, Duke Ellington, George Washington Carver, Harlem, Harriet Tubman, Heroes, History, Jackie Robinson, Jim Crow Laws, Joe Louis, Langston Hughes, Martin Luther King, Missouri Compromise, Race relations, Reconstruction (Civil War), Segregation, Rosa Parks, Slavery, Tuskegee Institute, United States, Voting Rights Act

### CHARACTER THEMES:

Boldness, Citizenship, Coping, Courage, Dedication, Determination, Diversity, Ethnic pride, Fairness, Fearlessness, Inspiration, Leadership, Persistence, Resilience, Resolve, Respect, Strength, Survival (Emotional), Work ethic

### AWARDS:

30 Multicultural Books Every Teen Should Know, 100 Magnificent Children's Books, Capitol Choices (DC), Coretta Scott King Author and Illustrator Honor Award, Cybils Award, *Horn Book* Fanfare Award, Jane Addams Children's Book Award, *Kirkus Reviews* Best Children's Book of the Year, Notable Books for a Global Society, Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People, *Publisher's Weekly* Best Children's Book of the Year, *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year, Teacher's Choices, YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults