



2020

### The 1619 Project: Born on the Water

Erica Sonzogi

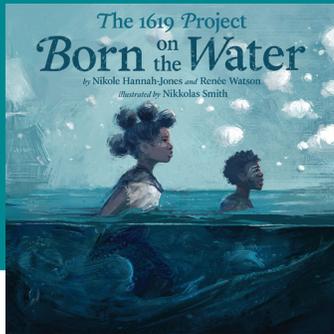
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## Book Review

# The 1619 Project: Born on the Water

### Author

Nikole Hannah-Jones  
and Renée Watson

### Illustrator

Nikkolas Smith

### Reviewer

Erica Sonzogi

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### Rating

Outstanding

### Level

Primary

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### Pages

38

### Year

2021

### ISBN

9780593307359

### Publisher

Kokila

Chronicling her life, a grandmother teaches her grandchildren about their past. She begins with their life in a village prior to being kidnapped and forced onto a ship to Virginia, where they worked as slaves for 250 years. During this horrific time, two people decided to create a family and have a child, named William Tucker, who was the first Black child born in the United States. Continuing to explain their family's history, Grandmother speaks of the Civil War and how many of their ancestors rose from slavery to become inventors, athletes, singers, and artists. Concluding their history, she reiterates to her grandchildren that their ancestors hoped their descendants would be proud of their history and all that their ancestors went through.

Equally educational, heartbreaking, and uplifting, this book presents each part of the grandmother's history as its own poem. The illustrations expertly capture the changing tone of the story. They are bright, colorful, and filled with smiling joyful people when describing the village in Africa, and they become darker and ominous when the ancestors are kidnapped. Throughout the story, readers feel the torment and anguish of the people taken from their homes against their wills. This book certainly fulfills its purpose to help Black American children feel connected to their roots. It empowers all readers with the knowledge of a resilient people who loved, resisted, and persevered. The book also includes a website for educators to find additional materials to assist with instruction.