

Research paper on warriors dont cry: a searing memoir of the battle to integrate ...

[Religion](#), [God](#)



Melba Patillo Beals, the author of *Warriors Don't Cry*, was one of the Little Rock Nine, the first black students to integrate with a white school in Little Rock, Arkansas. *Warriors Don't Cry*, being her memoir, is a harrowing tale of discrimination, prejudice and violence, attempting to place the reader in the state of mind of someone who is being oppressed. This book was written to shed light on what the Little Rock Nine went through, in the perspective of someone who went through the growing pains of integration. Being a first-hand account, events are told in an extremely accurate way, as Beals recounts everything that she and the other students went through as a result of these controversial measures. Beals, throughout the book, showcases herself as a timid girl who must learn to be a warrior, given the important role that has been placed on her to be a beacon for equal rights progress. Melba Beals is the main character of *Warriors Don't Cry*, starting out the book as a normal teenage girl; one of the more fascinating conflicts she must come up against is the historical importance that has been placed upon her for simply being able to have a normal education. Much more attention is placed on her than a normal girl would have to endure, and she must learn to be thick-skinned about it: "God's warriors don't cry" (Beals 44). Beals is open-minded throughout the book, but sometimes frightened as well. Sometimes she wants to just be a normal person, without this social weight placed on her: "Please, God, let me learn how to stop being a warrior. Sometimes I just need to be a girl" (Beals 147).

Being Melba Beals' account, the book certainly is biased towards her; that being said, attempts are clearly made to provide an even-handed account of what happened to her. If the book seems ham-fisted or sanctimoniously

dramatic, this is because these things really occurred during the tenure of the Little Rock Nine. Racists are appropriately shown to be monsters with horrible ideas about people; as one says after getting one black student suspended, “ One nigger down and eight to go” (Beals 150). It is clear that Beals wishes to expose the horrors of these words and the attitudes behind them, which is why she so clearly paints a good-versus-evil picture of her experience with integration.

In conclusion, *Warriors Don't Cry* shows Melba Beals as a narrator who must slowly find her courage in the face of insurmountable oppression and shocking fame in the shadow of desegregation. If there are any weaknesses with the narrator, it is that it is slightly harder to get an objective approach to the Little Rock Nine's story due to the personal investment Beals had in her story. Beals never pretends that she was a saint, though she claims that she built up her sense of peace and serenity along with her spirituality, even ending the book with the spiritual prayer “ Namasté (The God in me sees and honors the God in you)” (Beals 222). These strengths overcome the few weaknesses of the book, as it never purports to be anything else than Melba Beals' experiences at Central High School. By having its protagonist be such a victimized, innocent figure, it makes the phenomenon of racism look even worse by comparison, which was surely an intended effect with the book.

Works Cited

Beals, Melba Patillo. *Warriors Don't Cry*. Simon and Schuster, 2007. Print.