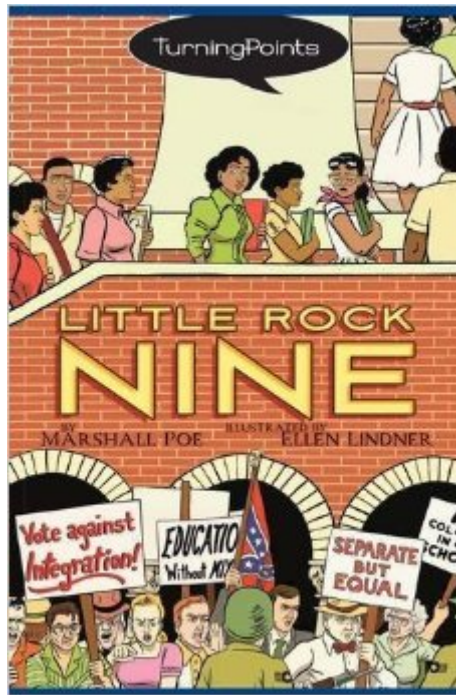


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# Little Rock Nine (Turning Points)



## Synopsis

There are moments in every country's history when decisions are made and actions are taken that will change the course of that country's future. Turning Points historical graphic novels bring these moments in American history to life. Sixteen-year-old William McNally and fifteen-year-old Thomas Johnson both live in Little Rock, Arkansas, in the summer of 1957. They both love baseball and teasing their little sisters. There's just one big difference -- William is white, and Thomas, the son of William's family's maid, is black. After the Supreme Court rules in favor of desegregating public schools, Little Rock Central High School prepares to enroll its first nine African-American students, and William and Thomas are caught in the center of a storm.

## Book Information

Series: Turning Points

Paperback: 128 pages

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Language: English

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ISBN-13: 978-1416950660

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.4 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (22 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #974,856 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #69 in Â Books > Children's Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > History #576 in Â Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1900s #681 in Â Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

'The Little Rock Nine' is a story that never seems to lose its luster. It is a tale of nine courageous youngsters that are brave enough to tackle racism. The story centers around one of the nine named Thomas Johnson and his friendship with William McNally. Sounds simple enough, but Thomas' mother is the McNally's maid. Thomas and Williams share similar hobbies and enjoy their friendship, without focusing on society's view. Until the Supreme Court order Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas to become segregated and Thomas is one of the nine that will be attending

the school. Under the harsh glare of society and their peers, we'll find out how true their friendship is. The Little Rock Nine was presented in a different light with the focus off of the nine and specifically one and his story. I didn't really like the style, with it being like a comic. Misleading, marketed more toward teens in my opinion. A decent read though.

I wanted to like the graphic novel treatment of Central High's desegregation because I like the idea of turning historical events into approachable material for reluctant readers. But I didn't feel like this work did the historical figures justice. The beginning is slow to start and the characters seem two dimensional; however, the work gains steam and hits its stride midway through the episode. I had to force myself to keep reading, but the second half of the work is very well done. In the end, it just doesn't compare to the autobiographies written by Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine. There's nothing more powerful than learning about what happened through the voices of those involved.

There's a scene I remember in the movie "Forrest Gump" where the National Guard has to be called in to maintain order at the University of Alabama while it was being desegregated. One of the black students drops a book and Forrest (who else?) is there to pick it up for her. On national TV. Even though I understood the scene when I saw it, and what it meant, I must admit I wasn't familiar with the whole desegregation business. This book turned out to be quite an education on the subject! Little Rock Nine by Marshall Poe (author) and Ellen Linder (artist), focuses on the efforts made to desegregate a school in Little Rock, Arkansas. Already one attempt to do so had been thwarted and some of the parents were wary of again putting their children into harm's way, no matter how much they personally believed in the cause. The book does a good job of showing how difficult the whole process was and just how much was at stake for everyone involved. I wonder, though, just how fresh has this whole affair remained in the collective American memory? I mean, we are talking about an event that threatened to tear the country apart at every level, starting from families on up to the federal government itself. And think about this; the National Guard had to be called in to protect Americans... from OTHER Americans! Hopefully, there are some teachers out there who will decide to incorporate this book into their classes. They will use it to remind their students, and themselves, how much progress has been made. And they can also teach people that even though racism may still be rampant, open minds and brave hearts may once again defeat ignorance and fear of the unknown, just like they did so many years ago in Little Rock, Arkansas.

This graphic novel, which is identified as a work of "historical fiction", reminds us of the personal

risks taken by blacks and whites in the Southern US in order to integrate their schools. Brown vs. Board of Education is a fait accompli at the beginning of the book, and President Eisenhower finally demands that it be complied with by the end. In between we have the opportunity to meet two families, one black, one white, whose sons become friends and are self-sacrificing enough to take the lead in the integration fight. In the process, we are reminded that there was no unanimity within the races: many whites favored integration, and many blacks resisted it. The story resonates with a more contemporary civil rights fight, that for gay rights, in that immigration opponents of both races find justification for continued segregation in the Bible (without being able to cite anything, of course) and in what one character deems "God's will". It is unfortunate that except for NAACP leader Daisy Bates, it is women who stand back while the men take charge, on both sides. This may well reflect the typical family structure of the day, but these are fictional characters, so it really wasn't required to tell the story. What is most disturbing about this book is that, despite its subject--the effort to obtain quality education for all--a book stated as being for middle schoolers is in the graphic novel format, as if nothing but a comic could hold their interest.

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