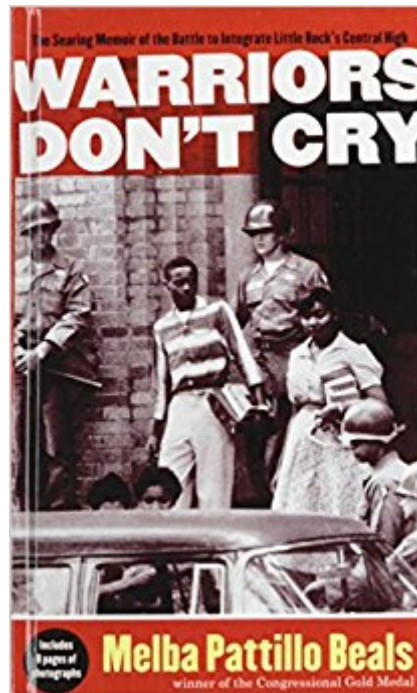




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# Warriors Don't Cry



## Synopsis

You've gotta learn to defend yourself. Never let your enemy know what you are feeling. -- The soldier assigned to protect Melba Please, God, let me learn how to stop being a warrior. Sometimes I just need to be a girl. -- Melba's diary, on her sixteenth birthday In 1957 Melba Pattillo turned sixteen. That was also the year she became a warrior on the front lines of a civil rights firestorm. Following the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*, she was one of nine teenagers chosen to integrate Little Rock's Central High School. This is her remarkable story. You will listen to the cruel taunts of her schoolmates and their parents. You will run with her from the threat of a lynch mob's rope. You will share her terror as she dodges lighted sticks of dynamite, and her pain as she washes away the acid sprayed into her eyes. But most of all you will share Melba's dignity and courage as she refuses to back down. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One of the nine black teenagers who integrated Little Rock's Central High School in 1957 here recounts that traumatic year with drama and detail. Beals, who is now a communications consultant, relies on her own diary from that era and notes made by her English teacher mother--as well as dubiously recreated dialogue--to tell not only of the ugly harassment she was subjected to but also of the impressive dignity of a 15-year-old forced to grow up fast. Arkansas governor Orval Faubus set the tone of the time by resisting integration until a federal judge ordered it. Although Beals was assigned a federal soldier for protection, the young integrationist was still attacked and prevented

from engaging in school activities. She recalls stalwart black friends like Minniejean, who was suspended, and a white classmate who surreptitiously kept her informed of the segregationists' tactics. Beals looks back on her Little Rock experiences as "ultimately a positive force" that shaped her life. "The task that remains," she concludes, "is to cope with our interdependence." Photos not seen by PW. Author tour. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Grade 7 Up-Beals, one of the nine black students who integrated Central High School in Little Rock, AR, in 1957, tells an incredible story of faith, family love, friendships, and strong personal commitment. Drawing from the diaries she kept, the author easily puts readers in her saddle oxfords as she struggles against those people in both the white and black communities who would have segregation continue. Her prose does not play on the sympathy of readers; it simply tells it like it happened. She shares the physical, mental, and emotional torture and abuse she suffered at the hands of teenagers and adults. She also shares the support, the encouragement, and the help she received from both whites and blacks. While the book's length may discourage younger readers, those who begin it will find the reading easy and fast. This abridgement of the author's 1994 adult title of the same name is fascinating as well as enlightening and honest. Valerie Childress, J.W. Holloway Middle School, Whitehouse, TX Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Without getting into a long and winding "poor me," the writer explains what she went through during a difficult period in our history, when some of our people were raised in a way today's Americans would not think enlightened or proper. Their actions and behavior we would now (and many did then but were too scared or unable to act on) consider abominable, and the author experienced it. We need to know how our forbears both behaved and responded. Read this and know.

I'm so glad the author kept this piece of our history alive. When we read the headlines, it's clear we're not past the inequalities, the hatred, the self-justifications of the toxic racism the author experienced. I'd like to thank her here for remaining so stalwart and dignified. The author gives us insights into how difficult it is to break the barriers. The people who could'nt support her were certainly not evil, not moral slackers... they knew first-hand the power of the institutionalized hatred, and they knew the potential cost to their families... Not a mild rebuke. Not some mild social disapproval. One's house could be burned down in the middle of the night, or blown up. Lynchings

were not unknown. And to add fuel to the fire, the local authorities, the state government, the military units called in were complicit in the open threats of violence and sometimes the instances of actual violence perpetrated against this handful of teenagers.

The book was excellent. It was well written, the author created a sense that you were right there with her integrating the school. Every time one of the white children spit at her, kicked her, tried to set her on fire or push her down the stairs I was on the edge of my seat rooting for her. Her relationship with Danny the 101st Airborne Ranger who was her bodyguard was very moving, and how she used prayer to monitor her self talk and constantly regain composure and the initiative against her adversaries. This is a must read for anyone who has ever been violently treated as an outsider, a must read for youth struggling with identity and purpose, older people who lived through the era and middle aged people who are struggling with the direction of society. I was moved by Melba's courage, her passion, her ability to put her life on hold as a sixteen year old girl coming into her womanhood, for the struggle of her people. Today's youth face a hard road of war and poverty. The financial freedoms that we knew as Americans are fast fading away. Like Melba's generation the youth face war, racism and an uncertain future. This book hopefully will inspire the next generations of Melbas. In the coming years ahead the youth will face new unprecedented challenges and our society will need warriors like Melba Beal to stand up and say no this is wrong no matter what the consequences.

This was an awesome book. I lived during this time period, but lived in another state. I think everyone in my state lived in a bubble - not really knowing that these types of things were going on. It was enlightening to read this wonderful story about our country's past in the south. Thanks to the author for writing it.

It is an honest story of a struggle that most kids don't need to understand today, because most kids are accepted regardless of race nowadays.. However, this struggle is a real and cruel part of our history. This is a great story for teenagers or adults. Personally, I found the religious statements an obstacle as I tried to read the book. I was trying to understand that religion was a huge part of the main character's motivation, but I felt disconnected from the book after these references started to appear on almost every page.

This book was recommended to me by a fellow traveler. I looked it up on , and though it didn't cry out to me, I realized that it was about desegregation during the mid 50's when I was a teenager myself but didn't recall much about it. The book is extremely well written by the author who was one of the nine black students who integrated the first white high school in Arkansas. I was shocked to read what these courageous young people and their families endured physically and verbally by classmates, teachers, neighbors, all the way up to Governor Forbus. I literally could not put this book down.

Bought for my daughter who is reading this in class. I read it first. It is an important story, but it drags so much I lost interest after the first half. Which is a shame, because I find this piece of history fascinating. I am appalled at the people who said and did terrible things based on race during this time. I'm sure all readers will do as I have done and ask themselves, how would I have reacted? We'd all like to think we are above that kind of thing, but considering the times and the generations of tradition, I wonder if many of us might have fallen victim to the same awful thinking if that's all we'd been taught. A good reminder that each of us needs to think for ourselves and establish higher standards for how we treat each other and believe.

My respect and admiration for the author is beyond words. What she and the other black students endured made for painful and sad reading. I salute their remarkable courage!

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