



Warriors Don't Cry

By Melba Pattillo Beals

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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 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.

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