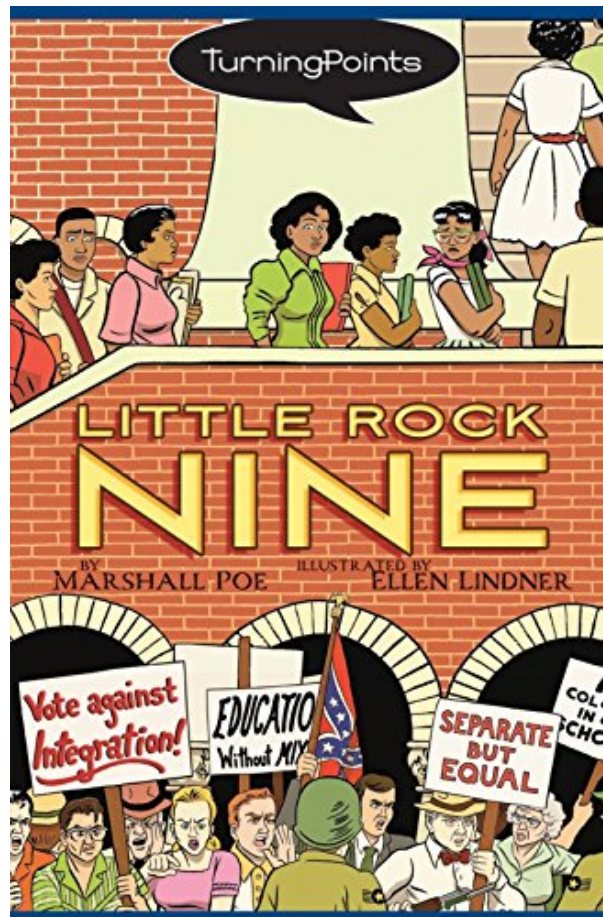
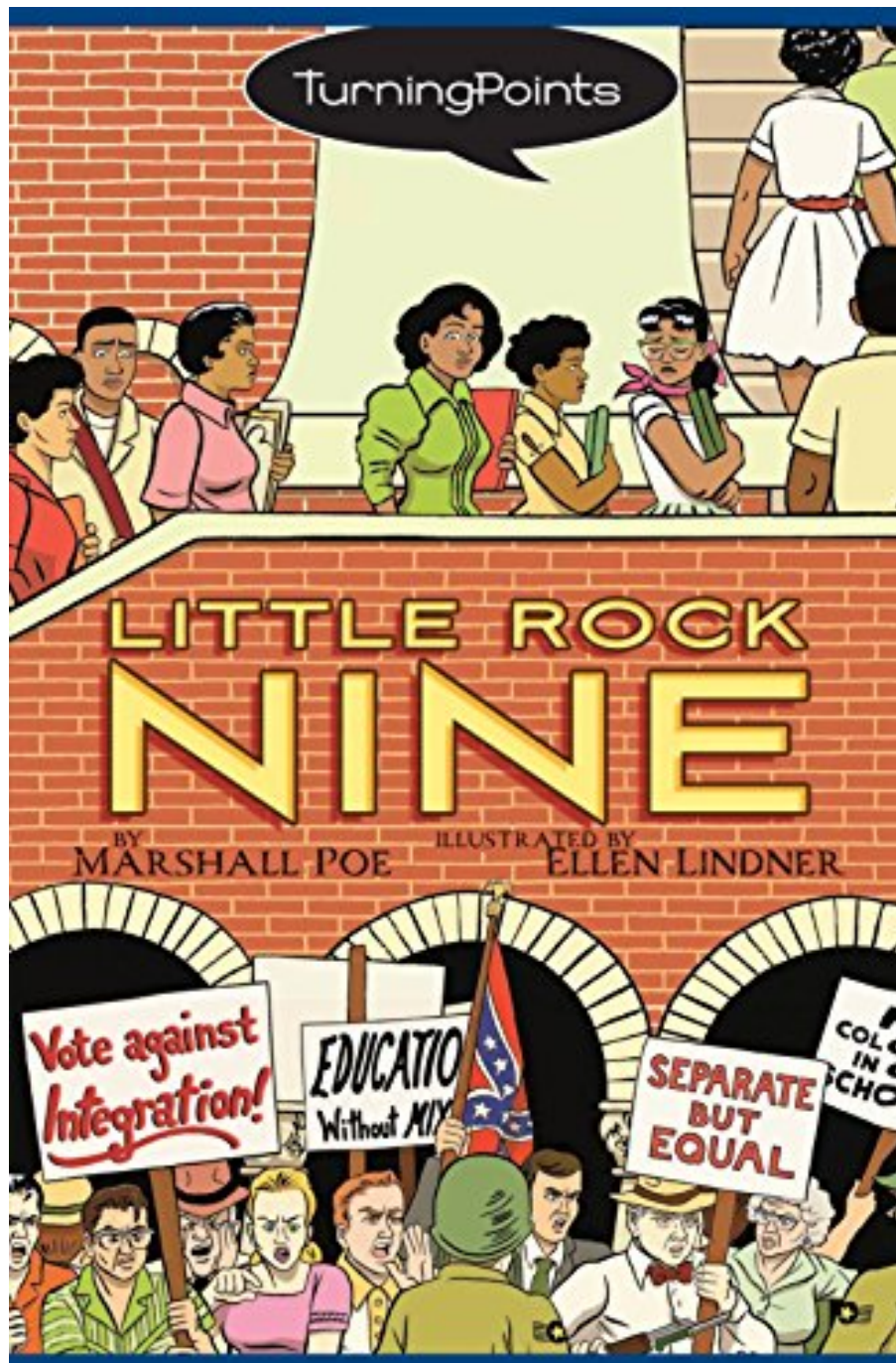


LITTLE ROCK NINE (TURNING POINTS) BY MARSHALL POE



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From School Library Journal

Grade 4 Up—In 1957, Little Rock faces a split populace as it attempts to integrate a high school after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. This book focuses on two fictional teens: Will McNally, the white son of a local attorney, and Thomas Johnson, the black son of his domestic help. Their tenuous friendship is the lens for the conflict as each teen wrestles with the larger social implications of the Supreme Court decision. While the artwork is flat and the faces overly simplified so as to mute expression, details of fashion and decor help to emphasize the setting. Most evocative is the frequent depiction of African Americans silently doing menial jobs while the discussion of their roles and rights happens around them. A variety of perspectives and concerns are expressed, and only Will's grandfather comes across as a straw man for racism. The debates have an easy, conversational flow, and what could be a staid reenactment of a civics lesson takes on the character of an actual event. There is a difficult balance required while creating composite characters to work alongside actual participants and not supplant their historical roles. The book ends up more about the issues than the event that inspired them.—Benjamin Russell, Belmont High School, NH

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About the Author

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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.

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By Jawanda

For readers. Set up like a comic book.

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Never forget!

By Just ask me!

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.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

5+ Star Graphical Look at One of Educations Defining Moments

By Deltareviewer

William and Thomas have several things in common - they love teasing their baby sisters, enjoy playing baseball, and will attend the same high school. However, they have a major difference - William is white and Thomas is black. They want to be friends but the integration of Central High has tensions running high. It was during an after school altercation that William and Thomas see their friendship means more than anything else. William risks everything to come to the aid of Thomas and in doing so they educate themselves, their family and the kids that know them. Integration was difficult but cultural understanding is done one family at a time.

I was totally blown away by this book. Now don't get me wrong, I read as many children's books as others because I'm a mother of two elementary students. But this book transformed a historical moment into a moving graphical novel. The graphics (much like a comic strip) gives added dimension to the historical nature of the story. My kids were totally engrossed in the story and they LOVED it. They found something different to talk about in every frame (faces, facts, figures, family, and friends). The story was familiar to them because we visited Central High on one of our family vacations and this book was right on track. I know what I will be giving for gifts over the next year, copies of *LITTLE ROCK NINE*, for all the children that I know.

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