

“The Little Rock 9” Readers Theatre Script

Developed by Ms. Barry’s class with Educational Drama Specialist Mary Beth Bowen
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GIRLS Don’t let her in! {Gesture}
BOYS Get out of here! {Gesture}
GIRLS Go back to where you came from!
1 Fifty years ago,
2 An angry mob of whites
3 in Little Rock, Arkansas
4 screamed at a 15-year-old black girl.
5 They were trying to keep her out
6 of the all-white Central High School.
7 The name of the black teenage girl was
ALL ELIZABETH ECKFORD
8 She, along with eight other black students
9 became known as...
ALL THE LITTLE ROCK NINE.
10 They ended up as heroes
11 in a struggle against segregation.
12 It was a time in America
13 when the entire South was
ALL SEGREGATED
14 Hold up! {Gesture}
15 What does segregated mean?
16 I don’t know. {Gesture}
17 Remember in social studies class?
18 Seeing those photographs with signs that said
ALL WHITES ONLY {Gesture}
19 Blacks and whites could not use the same bathrooms.
ALL NO WAY! {Gesture}

20 Drink from the same water fountains.
ALL YOU’RE KIDDING!
{Gesture}
21 Or stay at the same hotels.
ALL THAT’S TERRIBLE!
{Gesture}
1 Oh yeah. I remember what that
was called – segregation.
ALL SEGREGATION {Gesture}
THE SEPARATION OF
BLACKS
AND WHITES {Gesture}
SO UNCOOL. {Gesture}
2 Separate restaurants.
3 Separate swimming pools
4 Separate seating on buses, trains and in movie theatres.
5 And worst of all, for black children,
ALL SEPARATE SCHOOLS.
6 Were the schools for blacks as good as the white ones?
ALL NO! {Gesture}
7 The black schools were terrible.
8 Many of the black schools had...
9 No indoor plumbing.
10 No desks.
11 Old textbooks
12 Dilapidated and overcrowded buildings.
13 And no school buses.
14 Many blacks students had to walk miles to get to school.
15 But then, in May of 1954

ALL SOMETHING GOOD HAPPENS! {Gesture}
 16 The US Supreme Court rules that
 17 segregated public schools
 18 violate the rights
 19 of black students.
 20 The case is called
 ALL BROWN VERSUS THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.
 21 And the Court orders that...
 ALL ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS MUST BE INTEGRATED! {Gesture}
 1 That means blacks and whites will go to the...
 ALL SAME PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
 2 But many whites in the south *resist* integration.
 3 So the southern schools stay segregated.
 4 But then, a civil rights group
 5 called the N-double-A-C-P
 6 starts to fight to enforce the integration law.
 7 The N-double A-C-P
 8 recruits black students
 9 in Little Rock, Arkansas,
 10 to integrate the all-white
 ALL CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL.
 11 The N-double-A-C-P chooses black students - and parents -
 12 who it thinks will be strong enough
 13 to handle the pressure
 14 of integrating an all-white school.
 ALL {Gesture & Sound Effect}
 15 September 4th, 1957.
 16 It's the first day of school
 17 for the Little Rock Nine.
 18 The plan - was for all nine black students
 19 to arrive at the school together.
 20 But there is a miscommunication...
 21 and 15-year-old Elizabeth Eckford,
 1 arrives...at school.... by *herself*.
 2 She is surrounded by an angry mob
 3 of several hundred whites.
 4 They jeer at her and chant:
 ALL TWO, FOUR, SIX, EIGHT, WE DON'T WANT TO INTEGRATE. {Gesture}
 5 Elizabeth looks for a *kind* face in the angry mob.
 6 She sees an old lady who *looks* kind,
 7 But the old lady *spits* at her.
 8 Elizabeth tries to enter the school.
 9 But the governor of Arkansas,
 10 Orval Faubus,
 11 has called out the Arkansas National Guard.
 ALL {Gesture}
 12 The soldiers, armed with guns,
 13 don't let Elizabeth enter.
 ALL {Gesture}
 14 And when the other members of the Little Rock Nine arrive,
 15 The soldiers turn them away.
 ALL {Gesture}
 16 But three weeks later,
 17 the Little Rock Nine
 18 are finally allowed inside the school.
 19 That's because President Dwight D. Eisenhower...
 20 sends US Army soldiers...
 21 to escort the black students... into the school.
 ALL THEY DID IT! {Gesture}

1 But even though the Little
Rock 9
2 had succeeded in *integrating*
the school...
3 the real torture was *just*
beginning.
4 Many white students
began to *torment* the black
students,
5 hoping to drive them out of the
school.
6 And even though each black
student
7 had a US army soldier for
protection,
8 provided by President
Eisenhower,
9 the Army soldiers were reluctant
bodyguards.
10 The white students tortured the
black students every day.
11 Pushing them,
12 Shoving them,
13 Kicking them,
14 Knocking them down,
15 Spitting on them,
16 The white kids would also step
17 On the back of the black kids'
heels.
ALL THAT HURTS! {Gesture}
18 But despite all the physical and
emotional torment,

19 the Little Rock Nine
20 never told their parents
21 about what was happening at
school.
ALL WHY NOT? {Gesture}
1 Because if their parents had
known the truth..
2 they would have pulled them
out of school.
3 Today, fifty years later,
4 Every single one of the Little
Rock Nine are still alive.
5 They are all successful.
6 When asked the question
ALL WHY DID YOU PUT UP
WITH ALL THAT
SUFFERING? {Gesture}
7 They all point to something
8 that Martin Luther King Junior
told them...
9 During that difficult year.
10 he said...
ALL YOU'RE NOT DOING THIS
FOR YOURSELVES.
{Gesture}
ALL YOU'RE DOING THIS FOR
FUTURE GENERATIONS.
{Gesture}