

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR DAVID MARGOLICK'S *ELIZABETH AND HAZEL*

1. How were Elizabeth and Hazel's lives up until September 4, 1957, alike? How were they different? How about after that day?



**ELIZABETH AND HAZEL**  
TWO WOMEN OF LITTLE ROCK



**DAVID MARGOLICK**

2. Consider Elizabeth's experience at Central High School: how might her life have been different had she *not* decided to become part of the small group of blacks attending Central in 1957?

3. How do you think *you* would have responded to the treatment that Elizabeth and the other black students received? If you had been one of the Little Rock Nine? If you had been one of the white students? (Consider the time and place—and be honest.)

4. Author David Margolick notes on page 192: "Lots of students, black and white, identified with Elizabeth. Anyone who'd ever felt abused, or alienated, or lonely, or just different from everyone else—and who in high school hasn't?—would have." Are there ways in which you have identified with Elizabeth? How about Hazel?

5. At age fifteen, Hazel became notorious for a moment that was frozen in a famous photograph that spoke of hatred and racism, a moment for which she has since apologized and has tried to atone. "There's more to me than one moment," Hazel has said. Discuss the ways in which Hazel has tried to rise above the moment for which she is remembered. Should she be held responsible forever for something she did at such a young age? To what point should an adult be held responsible for something done in youth?

6. Years later, Elizabeth is astonished to hear Hazel say that she doesn't remember her feelings about what she did on September 4, 1957, or how her family and others close to her felt about it—that "there wasn't much conversation about it," that it was just a matter of "hamming it up and being recognized—getting attention." Elizabeth finds this unbelievable (page 235). What do you think motivated Hazel that day? Racism? Just being part of the crowd? Attention seeking? Do you think that she had any sense of the import of her actions at that time? What do you think about Elizabeth's response?

7. By the end of *Elizabeth and Hazel*, the friendship between the two has unraveled. What do you think that the future holds for the two? Do you see them establishing friendship again? Was it ever a true friendship?

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR DAVID MARGOLICK'S *ELIZABETH AND HAZEL*

Suggested additional class resources:

If you would like to give your students more background on the history of school desegregation, *Brown v. Board of Education*, or the Little Rock Nine, Episode Two of the award winning PBS series *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years 1954-1965* includes film excerpts from television news reports on the desegregation of Central High and interviews with some members of the Nine. The series' website ([www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize)) also contains a wealth of primary sources, including video, photographs, and primary documents. In addition, the website for the Central High School National Historic Site ([www.nps.gov/chsc](http://www.nps.gov/chsc)) has resources available for teachers and students, as does the site for the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, TN ([www.civilrights museum.org](http://www.civilrights museum.org)).

For further discussion of racism and prejudice, visit the website for Facing History and Ourselves ([www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org))