



# ***New York State Testing Program***

**English**

**Language Arts Test**

**Listening Selection**

Grade **4**

**January 12–16, 2009**

This listening selection is to be used in administering Book 2 of the English Language Arts Test. The entire selection is to be read aloud twice to the students. For complete directions, please follow the instructions in the *Teacher's Directions*.

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## ***The Bell That Knew the Truth***

*A Story from China*

Long ago, on the southeastern coast of China, there lived a wise judge named Chen. He was known not only for his great sense of justice, but also for his clever solutions to difficult problems. This is the story of one of his most famous trials.

There had been a robbery in Judge Chen's village. The sheriff and his men questioned several suspects, but they couldn't figure out who was guilty. So they brought the men before Judge Chen, hoping he could solve the mystery.

Most of the villagers packed the courtroom to see how Judge Chen would handle the problem. Much to everyone's amazement, he didn't ask the suspects a single question. Instead, he ordered, "Fetch the bell from our local temple. It has magical powers. With its help, I will determine who the thief is."

The bell was soon brought into the courtroom and placed behind a curtain. Judge Chen then addressed the court. "This bell will now conduct the trial. It has the ability to tell the guilty from the innocent. If an innocent hand touches the bell, nothing will happen. However, if the hands of a thief touch it, it will ring. I want each suspect to step forward, place his hands behind the curtain, and touch the bell. Those who are innocent have nothing to fear."

Although it seemed unlikely that a bell could have magical powers, the spectators in the court kept silent. When they had doubted Judge Chen in the past, he had always proven them wrong.

One by one, the suspects put their hands behind the curtain. The tension in the room grew as the bell remained silent. Finally, the last man put his hands behind the curtain and then removed them. Still, the bell made no sound.

There was a great uproar in the court. The people wondered if their wise judge had made a mistake and the bell wasn't magical after all. On the other hand, maybe the bell didn't ring because all the suspects were innocent.

**Go On**

Judge Chen raised his hand to quiet the courtroom. “Order in the court! This trial is not yet over.” He then turned and spoke to the suspects. “If you are innocent, raise both hands.”

Though it seemed like an odd command, all the suspects did as he ordered. Judge Chen then pointed to one man and said, “This is the thief!”

“But the bell didn’t ring when I touched it!” the man protested.

“It is true that the bell didn’t ring,” replied Judge Chen. “However, it’s also true that *you* are guilty. We now have proof that you did *not* touch the bell, for it was covered with ink. All the other suspects obviously touched it, since their hands are dirty. It was your clean hands that gave you away. You were afraid the bell would ring if you touched it. The bell may not be magical, but it did tell the truth.”

The thief was then led away. Once again, the people marveled at the great wisdom of Judge Chen.

**STOP**









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