



New York State Testing Program

English

Language Arts Test

Listening Selection

Grade

6

April 26–28, 2010

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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Listening Selection***A Winning Heart***

by Rebecca Spohn

The squeaky sound of shoes running up and down the court, the loud whistle between periods, cheers from the bleachers, and coaches shouting encouraging words at players—Jordan loved every bit of it. The sights and sounds of basketball made his heart go fast. If only he could play the game, but he knew there was no point in thinking about it. Jordan looked down at his legs, they didn't work like other kids'. His muscles were weak and, he thought to himself, "the wheelchair would just get in the way out on the court."

After school, he and Tyler, his big brother, would shoot a few hoops at home in the driveway. Jordan liked to dribble the ball the best. Then he'd quickly spin his wheelchair away from Tyler towards the hoop and throw the ball with all his might.

"Crash!" It hit the backboard and fell through the net. "I slam dunked it," shouted Jordan.

"Lucky break," smiled Tyler. "Let's play again. Hey, I've got an idea. How about the loser has to clean the other person's bedroom?"

"It's a deal," said Jordan with great confidence. And sure enough, he won!

After dinner, Tyler reluctantly started to pick up clothes and magazines off Jordan's bedroom floor. "It's an absolute mess in here," said Tyler.

"Don't worry about dusting the place," laughed Jordan. He thought his big brother was the best. Tyler was going to go on to play basketball in college when he got older. He hoped his brother would be a great player, and he would go to all of his games and watch.

The next morning was Saturday and Jordan's birthday. "Pretty nice having the day off from school on your special day, hey, sport?" said Jordan's father.

"Yep!" said Jordan.

Go On

After lunch Jordan's mother brought in a big chocolate cake and everyone shouted, "Blow out the candles and make a wish." Jordan blew hard and wished with all of his might that he could play basketball like everyone else.

"Hey sport, I have a surprise for you!" said his father. "I've got three tickets to the professional basketball game at the dome for this evening. What do you think of that?"

"That's great!" said Jordan. Inside he was sad. Watching just wasn't the same as being involved in the action.

Driving to the game, Jordan looked out the window of their van. They passed big elm trees, houses of all shapes and sizes, and—Jordan couldn't believe his eyes. There were several men all playing basketball at a basketball court in the park, and all the men were just like him, in wheelchairs. They were moving fast, just like the squeaky shoes running up and down the courts at school.

When they arrived at the dome, there were cars and people everywhere. The excitement inside was contagious. Jordan's heart was beating fast. The whistle blew, the game started, and the court came alive with action. There were cheers from the bleachers, squeaky shoes, slam dunks, and encouraging words from the coach—"the coach," said Jordan to himself. "Could it be, could it really be?" The opposing team's coach was an important part of the game and giving advice to his players, and he was in a wheelchair just like Jordan.

That night, Jordan's heart was filled with hope and happiness. "This was the best birthday ever," he thought to himself. He remembered back to the men having fun playing basketball in the park and the coach. They were people just like him and part of the action in many different ways. He knew he would find a way too, someday.

STOP



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