

4a

Salute to Courage

Second Edition

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A Beka Book  Reading Program

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*This story could be read during black history month.

Pronunciation Key

Symbol • Example

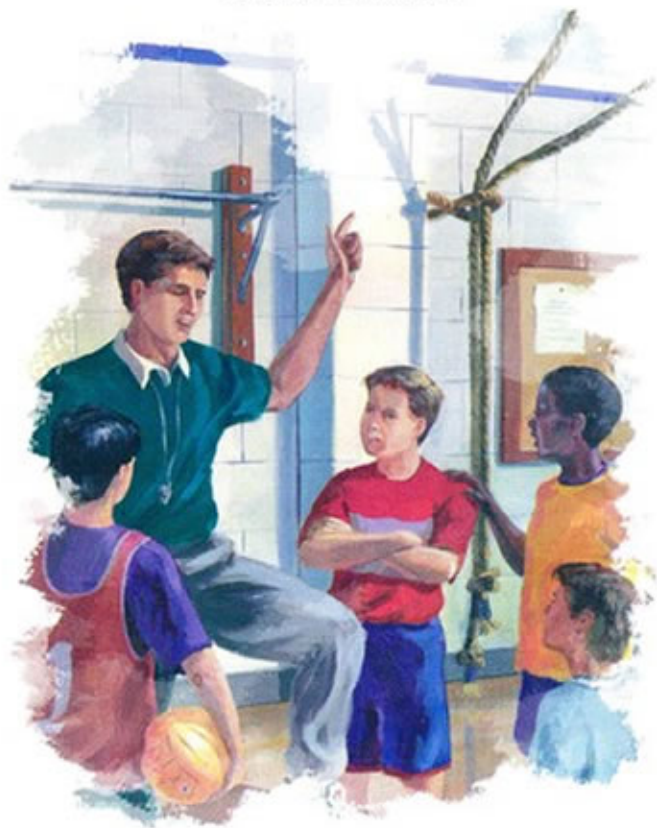
ā	āte
â	dâre
ă	făt
ä	fäther
ə	ago (ə·gô')
ē	ēven
ĕ	ĕgg
ĕ (ər)	pondĕr
ī	īce
ĭ	ĭt
ō	ōver
ô	côrd, taught, saw

Symbol • Example

ō	nōt
oi	boil
ōō	fōōd
ōō	bōōk
ou	out
th	thin
th	there
tû	pic ^t ûre
û	ûnit
û	hûrt
Û	Ûp
zh	measure

Ronny, the Rope Climber

Arthur S. Maxwell



It happened in the gym one afternoon. Mr. Skinner, the gym teacher, was talking to a group of boys near the long ropes that dangled from the ceiling.

“This is the last time this year that we are going to try to beat the school record,” he said, “and I hope one of you will do it. You have sometimes come very close to it. You must each try a little bit harder.”

The boys knew exactly what he meant. The school record stood at 2.1 seconds for climbing 15 feet from a standing start. Bob had done it once in 2.5 seconds, Dick in 2.4 seconds, Jerry in 2.6 seconds, and Ronny in 2.2 seconds. But no one, so far, had even equaled the record.

“Ready!” called Mr. Skinner, stopwatch in hand. “Bob first. One, two, three, go!”

Leaping as high as he could, Bob grabbed the rope and shot up faster than a monkey. He touched the board at the 15-foot mark, then slid down again and waited anxiously to hear the result.

“Just under 2.4 seconds,” said Mr. Skinner. “Good try, Bob, but it’s not quite good enough. Let’s see what Dick can do.”

Dick leaped at the rope and flew up and down again in less time than it takes to tell of it. But he too was not fast enough. “Exactly 2.3 seconds,” said Mr. Skinner. “Now Jerry.”

stopwatch—*a watch that can be started and stopped instantly; used for timing races*

Jerry tried hard too, but didn't do any better than he had before.

"Well, Ronny, it's up to you," said Mr. Skinner. "All our hopes are on you now."

By this time quite a crowd of boys had drifted into the gym. All the school had heard about the rope contest and how near a few of the best climbers were to breaking the record. Now they pressed close to see what Ronny would do this time.

Ronny wanted to beat the record more than anyone there could guess. He wasn't the best of students. He never got very good grades, but he could climb a rope. And he thought that maybe this could be one way in which he could bring honor to the school he loved so much.

"Are you ready, Ronny?" asked Mr. Skinner.

"Ready," said Ronny.

"One, two, three, go!"

With a gleam in his eye and a grim look on his face, Ronny leaped at the rope. Hand over hand, he sped to the top. A moment later he was sliding down again.

"Two seconds!" shouted Mr. Skinner excitedly. "Well done, my boy! Well done!"

A cheer went up all over the gym. Ronny had beaten the record!

“But Mr. Skinner,” Ronny said. “There’s something I have to tell you.”

“What is it, Ronny?” asked Mr. Skinner. All the boys leaned forward to hear what Ronny had to say.

“I’m afraid I didn’t touch the marker. I missed it by about a half inch.”

Only a half inch! And nobody had seen. Not even Mr. Skinner. It would have been so easy for Ronny to have let everyone think he had touched the marker. But though it meant losing the record, Ronny wouldn’t purposely mislead the others.

Mr. Skinner took him by the hand and looked him straight in the eye. “I’m proud of you, Ronny,” he said. “More proud than you will ever know. You have brought more glory to your school today by your honesty than you ever could by your rope climbing.”

By this time all the boys were crowding around, wondering what would happen.

“Didn’t he break the record?” several asked.

“No,” said Mr. Skinner. “He climbed in two seconds, but he failed to touch the marker by a half inch. He is disqualified.”

disqualified—*made not suitable
or ineligible*

There were groans all over the gym. “What a shame!” cried some.

“Why didn’t you keep your mouth shut, Ronny?” said others.

Mr. Skinner blew his whistle. As silence fell, he said, “Because of my inaccuracy, I am going to give Ronny one more chance.”

Cheers rang out again, with shouts of “Do it this time, Ronny.”

Ronny stepped to the rope.

“Take an extra-high leap,” Mr. Skinner said.

Up went Ronny, faster than ever, his hand hitting the marker so everyone could see it. Down he came like a streak of lightning.

“Magnificent!” cried Mr. Skinner, clapping Ronny on the back.

“You did it in 1.9 seconds and broke the record all to pieces!”

inaccuracy—mistake; error

magnificent—excellent; superb

*Character Theme—Honesty
& Integrity*



Thinking It Through

1. What was the school record for climbing 15 feet from a standing start?
2. Why was it so important to Ronny to beat the record?
3. What confession did Ronny make to Mr. Skinner after everyone thought he had beaten the record?
4. Why did Mr. Skinner give Ronny another chance to break the record?
5. When Ronny confessed to not touching the marker, did the other boys think he had made the right choice?
6. If Ronny had kept quiet about missing the marker, do you think he would have felt as proud about “breaking the record” as he did after he actually did break it? What other feelings may he have had?



From the Bible

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor.

—*Ephesians 4:25*