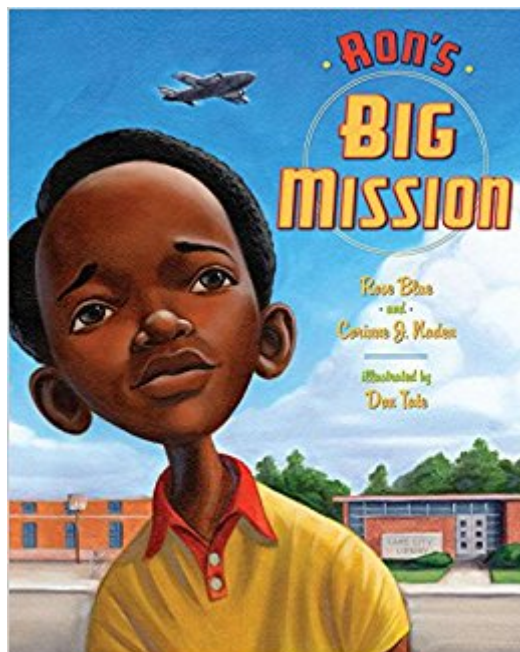


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Ron's Big Mission



Synopsis

Nine-year-old Ron loves going to the Lake City Public Library to look through all the books on airplanes and flight. Today, Ron is ready to take out books by himself. But in the segregated world of South Carolina in the 1950s, Ron's obtaining his own library card is not just a small rite of passage—it is a young man's first courageous mission. Here is an inspiring story, based on Ron McNair's life, of how a little boy, future scientist, and Challenger astronaut desegregated his library through peaceful resistance.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 440L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Dutton Books for Young Readers (January 22, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0525478493

ISBN-13: 978-0525478492

Product Dimensions: 9 x 0.4 x 11.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 41 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #115,082 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Social Activists](#) #118 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1900s](#) #156 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism](#)

Age Range: 6 - 8 years

Grade Level: 1 - 3

Customer Reviews

Grade 1
When nine-year-old Ron tries to take library books home instead of just looking at them, he knowingly challenges the rule that "only white people can check out books." The boy does not back down, even when his mother and the police arrive. The librarian finally relents and creates a library card for Ron, who proudly checks out the airplane books he loves to read. The purpose of Ron's "mission" is revealed with dramatic subtlety. There's no hint of racism as he walks through his 1950s South Carolina town on the way to the library where he is its "best customer." The truth emerges when a white patron offers to check out his books for him as the clerk blatantly ignores the boy. Stylized cartoon illustrations convey the town's benign facade while revealing

tension through Ron's expressions of determination mixed with fear. The impact of his actions shows in the confusion and anger of onlookers. Readers do not learn if the library will change the rules for everyone, or just for Ron, but the final scene resonates as the child eagerly opens his book to page one. An author's note explains that this is a fictionalized account of a real incident from the childhood of astronaut Ron McNair, who died in the 1986 Challenger explosion. This context lends power and poignancy to the event and adds to the book's value as an introduction and discussion starter for concepts of racism and individual courage.

— Steven Engelfried, Multnomah County Library, OR Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

In this story based on an incident from the life of astronaut Ron McNair, nine-year-old Ron walks into his local public library with a mission—to secure a library card for himself so that he can take books home to read. Because it's 1959 and segregation laws prohibit African Americans from borrowing books, Ron is at first declined. The police arrive, but Ron refuses to be deterred; finally the head librarian agrees to bend the rules—Ron is her best patron, after all—and a very happy Ron leaves, books in hand. Based on interviews with Ron's mother and a South Carolinian librarian, the story emphasizes McNair's focus and determination to succeed, even if it means pointing out injustices along the way. Vibrant illustrations portray a cozy small town where rules are obeyed, mostly without thinking. Tate's figures feature oversized heads with very expressive faces that vividly convey well-meant kindness and the frustrations of injustice. Appended with a note on McNair's adult life, this will make a good choice for reading aloud and discussing. Grades K-2. --Kay Weisman

As a teacher, these stories are inspiring, and fun to use as read alouds, along with a look online at the actual story. In this case, an animated version on YouTube was great for comparing author presentation styles. And for students to learn about real heroes who faced adversity, even at a young age, is truly inspiring!

This book can be a wonderful, age-appropriate way to introduce some of the issues of race disparity and struggle in our past, which is part of the backdrop of such issues today. It can also be a great example of a boy, who is black, who loves reading and science and air planes and, as the book explains after the story, pursues those interests all the way to becoming an astronaut as an adult. Exciting stuff! As a white mother of white children I am making a concerted effort to speak to them

openly about color, and to point out differences. Kids see these differences whether or not grownups speak about them, and I want to make sure the first input my children get on the subject comes from me and not a random child at school, or a movie or TV show they see somewhere later. I want to expose my kids, as best as I am able from my place of privilege, to a variety of people from many places - and books are part of how I hope to do this. This book was a big winner for my five-year-old on several levels. He's into science and outer space, and most importantly, he understands how libraries work. The idea that a kid who loved books would not be able to check out a book from a library because of the color of his skin (or for any reason), not to mention that grownups would actually call the police because the kid politely (though standing on a counter) insisted he be allowed to check out books, was incredible to him. The setting and mechanism of how it all is supposed to work (a library), vs. how it had been working for Ron, was something he could relate to. This was a good basic, early exposure to a subject that's hard to understand, while still leaving a kid feeling good about Ron's victory at the end of the story. My son asked to read the book many times over the course of several weeks, and I'm sure we'll be reading it again soon.

Great book for children to see that you can achieve success in spite of obstacles.

Enjoyed reading this book to my kindergarten class. Developed many lessons!

Arrived as promised.

my 7yr old nephew loved it

True events get kids to thinking...hey, that could be me making a difference!

Perfect!

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