

"THE CRICKET IN TIMES SQUARE"

By George Selden

Questions

1. What was the strange noise Tucker and Mario heard in the subway station?
2. What did the noise sound like?
3. Why does Mario want to keep the cricket?
4. How did Mario's parents feel about Mario keeping the cricket?
5. How did Tucker and the cricket meet? What is the cricket's name?
6. How does Chester get to the subway?
7. Why was Chester chirping?
8. What friend of Tucker's surprised Chester after he told his story about arriving in New York? What is his name? What is unusual about the relationship between this friend and Tucker?
9. How did Chester feel when he saw Times Square for the first time?
10. What helped Chester feel better when he looked around in Times Square?
11. Who did Mr. Smedley (music teacher and frequent customer at the newsstand) compare Chester the cricket to?
12. Why did Mario want to go to Chinatown?
13. Why do you think Mr. Fong, a store owner in Chinatown, got excited when Mario had a cricket?
14. Who owned this ancient cricket cage before Mr. Fong had it?
15. What is the story of the first cricket told by Mr. Fong?
16. Who spent the first night in the cricket cage?
17. What did he use for blankets?
18. Did Chester like the cage?
19. What did Chester eat by accident while he was dreaming? What did he think it was?
20. What happens when Chester gets caught?
21. What 2 things have happened so far that show Chester as honest and respectful?
22. Why does Mario go to Chinatown again to visit Mr. Fong?
23. What do crickets like to eat?
24. Where does Mario find mulberry leaves?
25. Why did the three animals have a dinner party?
26. What tragedy occurred during the dinner party?
27. How does Mama Bellini react to the fire and finding out that the three animals were in the newsstand?
28. What changes Mama Bellini's mind about Chester having to leave?
29. What is Mr. Smedley's reaction to Chester's musical talent?
30. What does Mr. Smedley do so that "the whole world would know of this cricket"?
31. What happened after the article is printed?
32. How does Chester start feeling after several days of concerts?
33. What 3 things upset Chester the most on Thursday?
34. What does Chester decide to do to make himself happy?
35. What did Chester hear from Mario to help him make this decision?
36. Describe what was going on while Chester played his last concert.
37. What did Chester take with him to remember New York?
38. How did Mario react when Chester was gone?
39. How did Mario know where Chester went?

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ANSWERS

1. a cricket chirping
2. like a quick stroke across the strings of a violin or harp
3. Mario thinks crickets bring good luck; he wants a pet; he thinks crickets are smart
4. Mama did not like the idea; thinks crickets carry diseases; Papa liked the cricket and suggested to keep it in the newsstand to make Mama happy; Papa liked how the cricket made Mario happy
5. Tucker watches the Bellinis and wanted to meet Mario's new pet; he went in the newsstand after it closed and introduced himself to the cricket; cricket's name is Chester
6. he got into a picnic basket; ate some liverwurst; fell asleep; woke when being moved but got stuck in the sandwiches; movement of train freed him and jumped out of basket while in subway station
7. he was nervous; did not know where he was
8. a cat; Harry; cats and mice are usually enemies
9. terrified and excited at the same time; everything was so big and strange looking, but the lights were beautiful and there were lots of different sounds
10. he recognized a star he would always look at in Connecticut (one familiar thing)
11. Orpheus - the greatest musician who ever lived
12. to get a house for Chester; Chinese like crickets and build them special cages
13. (answers will vary) Chinese really like crickets and feel that they are lucky; Mario was more than an ordinary American boy; that Mr. Fong found crickets special
14. the Emperor of China owned the first cricket
15. wise man, His Shuai, spoke only truth; many men came to have their future told; when bad men were told they were bad and would die, they all wanted to kill Hsi; the high gods saved Hsi by turning him into a cricket, because they thought Hsi was too precious to lose; a cricket's song is one who speaks the truth and knows all things, just like Hsi
16. Tucker
17. \$1 bills
18. Yes, but he didn't like being locked in; he felt more at home (soft bark in stump) in the Kleenex than in the cage
19. half of a \$2 bill; a leaf
20. he has to stay in his cage until Mario can pay his Mom and Dad the \$2
21. when he ate the \$2 bill, he was willing to take the blame instead of making it look like someone else did it; he wouldn't escape from the cage (with Harry's and Tucker's help), but instead felt he needed to stay for Mario's sake
22. to learn what crickets like to eat so Chester wouldn't eat anymore money
23. mulberry leaves (they read this in an ancient Chinese story)
24. outside Mr. Fong's store there was a mulberry tree
25. two month anniversary of Chester's arrival
26. Tucker's dancing caused a box of matches to fall from a shelf and started a fire
27. she wants Chester taken away
28. she feels that any cricket that could play so beautifully would never set a fire, so Chester was allowed to stay longer (Chester happened to play Mama Bellini's favorite song)
29. he could not believe his ears; "Chester has perfect pitch"
30. wrote a letter to the music editor of the New York Times newspaper
31. hundreds of people crowded around the newsstand to hear Chester; Bellini's sold all the newspapers and musical magazines (never happened before); the two men from Chinatown

- came everyday to the 2 concerts; Mama "loved" Chester; Mr. Smedley came everyday and also recorded Chester's playing
32. tired; not real happy; not as much fun to play on a schedule; he did not like being looked at by the strange people – they got too close
 33. it was September and he was missing the Autumn changes; he missed the country; a person tried to steal his bell
 34. go back to Connecticut
 35. Mario wished Chester never came to New York if it only made him unhappy (Chester did not ever want to make Mario sad either)
 36. the Bellini's loved it – it was Papa's favorite song; everyone in the subway became quiet; the song was heard on the street above and the police had to stop traffic as the crowds grew; all of Times Square became as quiet as the meadow in Connecticut (unheard of in such a big city)
 37. the bell because Mario said it was Chester's
 38. he was happy because he knew Chester would be happier in the country
 39. because the bell was gone and only the Bellini's and Chester knew where it was hidden

vocabulary (with context clues)

- Scrounging (Tucker's definition for collecting bits of paper & shreds of cloth)
 Pity (a word Tucker uses after finishing his cookie)
 Bustle (activity in the subway)
 Gradually (pg 10)
 Rummaged (pg 10)
 Haunches (part of a mouse)
 Liverwurst (Chester's favorite food)
 Tuffets ("a couple of tuffets away from my (Chester's) stump")
 Lurch (train movement)
 Forlornly (comment after Chester describes how he got to the subway)
 Leery (how Chester felt about exploring New York City)
 Prophecy (Mr Smedley predicting great things for Chester)
 Pagoda (this is the shape of Chester's cage)
 Kumquats (the dessert Mr. Fong shared with Mario)
 Scurried (how Tucker runs across the floor)
 Amateur (type of radio show)
 Anxious (how Chester felt when asked to sing)
 Oblige (Chester was happy to do this when asked to play more)
 Jinx (what Mama Bellini calls Chester)
 Melancholy (how Chester played an Italian folksong while he was feeling down)
 Ballad (what Chester played)
 Accompanist (description of Chester while playing the song Mama Bellini loved)
 Nightingale (Mario thought his mom was crying like one)
 Suspicious (what Harry thinks the people will be if they hear music coming from a closed newsstand)
 Limbered (what Chester did to his wings before playing)
 Gesture (pg 119)