

Reading Notes

- subway** an underground railway system, often used extensively in large, populous cities
- Times Square** a major commercial intersection in the heart of Manhattan, New York City; one of the world's busiest pedestrian intersections
- Grand Central Station** a bi-level, underground railroad terminal, located in Manhattan, New York City

Vocabulary

1. an **abandoned** drain pipe left by the owner
2. the **bustle** of the day a lot of busy activity
3. had long since **subsided** became less strong or intense
4. **conductors** on the shuttle people who collect money on a train
5. comfortable **niche** in the wall a comfortable habitat

Comprehension Questions

1. Who are the characters introduced in this chapter?
Tucker Mouse, Papa, Mama, and Mario Bellini, Paul the conductor

2. What is the general setting of the book?
The story takes place in the subway station of Times Square, in New York City.

3. Describe the newsstand in detail.
It contains piles of magazines and newspapers. The inside of the stand is small and cramped, with one three-legged stool. A shelf holds a radio, a box of Kleenex, matches, a cash register, and an alarm clock. At night the stand is covered by a big wooden cover with a lock.

4. What can we learn about Tucker Mouse so far?

He lives in a drain pipe in Times Square. He likes to collect things and sit in the opening of his home and watch the people in the subway station. He has a kind heart towards Mario and desires the success of the newsstand.

Quotations

But in all his days, and on all his journeys through the greatest city in the world, Tucker had never heard a sound quite like this one.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is a subway station a good place for a newsstand?
2. Why do you think the author does not identify the sound at the end of the chapter?

Enrichment

ATTENTION TO DETAIL: A subway station is usually a very busy, noisy place, especially in a big city with a large population. As the author introduces us to the setting of his story, he draws attention to the many sounds heard by the characters.

1. What specific sounds can Tucker Mouse hear in the subway station as he watches Mario?

He hears the sound of feet on pavement, the roar of subway cars approaching Times Square, a rush as the subway cars proceed down the tunnel, and silence.

2. Tucker is not only familiar with the sounds in the subway station, but also with the sounds that can be heard from the street above. The author uses a repetition of descriptive phrases to capture what Tucker hears through the iron grilles. Find six things he names and list them below.

the thrumming of the rubber tires

the babble of voices

the hooting of the car horns

the barking of dogs

the howling of the car brakes

the purring of airplanes