

**TchaiCATsky**  
*goes missing*



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**STORY +  
STUDY GUIDE**

TchaiCATsky Goes Missing



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Mom and Dad wanted to keep Tchaicatsky under wraps.

But the cat was out of the bag.

At least 100 people had gone to my piano concert. They had seen our cat play Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, and Tchaikovsky. Word got around.

There was a story about Tchaicatsky in our town paper. All the TV stations wanted to do a show on him.

Mom and Dad said no.

But the TV people kept calling our house. The phone rang day and night.

Finally, Mom got us an unlisted number.

Then, one morning the doorbell rang. I answered it.

A man stuck a microphone in my face. A movie camera was filming behind him. "Hello, this is Sam Roach from WCATV," he said. "About your cat . . ."

"MOM!" I shouted. "MOM!"

My mother came running to the door. "I already told you people. We're not putting our cat on TV."

They wouldn't listen.

Camera guys followed us everywhere. They wanted to know everything about Tchaicatsky. They bothered my friends. They interviewed my baseball coach. I needed a guard just to go to school.

They even bothered Mrs. Sherman, our piano teacher. “What’s it like teaching piano to a cat?” a news guy asked her.

“Back off!” she screeched.

“Is it like teaching a child prodigy?” he went on.

Mrs. Sherman opened her giant yellow handbag. She pulled out a book of piano sonatas. She banged the news guy over the head. Then she went into our house.

Finally, Ray Beano’s people called my parents. They wanted Tchaicatsky on *The Every Night Show*.

“Maybe we should do Ray Beano,” Mom said. “Then all the other TV people would leave us alone.”

“I don’t think so,” Dad said.

Mrs. Sherman agreed with Dad that it was a bad idea. “Tchaicatsky is too young and sensitive. His work will suffer.”

But Mom had already made up her mind. I think she liked the idea of going onto Ray Beano with Tchaicatsky.

So they did the *Every Night Show*.

At first Ray made jokes:

“Would TchaiCATsky like some mice tea?” he asked. “Or, how about some cake and mice cream?”

When the audience stopped laughing, Mom carried Tchaicatsky to the piano. He played for the rest of the show. The audience couldn’t get enough of our little genius. They cheered through every commercial.

Mrs. Sherman was angry. A few days later, she gave us a piece of her mind.

“He’s not the same cat,” she said. “His concentration is off. He used to love practicing. Now he hardly moves his little paws across the piano.”

The paparazzi didn’t stop coming to our house. In fact, they camped out on our front lawn.

Tchaicatsky’s fans joined the news people. They wanted his paw print for their autograph books. They cheered whenever he practiced.

They wouldn’t leave us alone. Mom and Dad started parking their car at a neighbor’s house. They came in the back way. Mrs. Sherman and my friends did the same. I learned that being famous isn’t all it’s cracked up to be. In fact, it can mess up everything.

My birthday was coming up. Mom planned a bowling party. I was excited: Finally, something was about me.

Mrs. Sherman was just finishing a lesson with Tchaicatsky. Mom wanted to bring him along.

“He’s been under a lot of pressure,” Mrs. Sherman said. “And he’s tired. Let him rest.”

“Amen,” Dad said.

We all slipped out the back door without Tchaicatsky.

I was happy. For once, I’d get all the attention. Having a celebrity in the house wasn’t easy on me.

My party was a laugh riot. I hit three strikes and opened a million presents. My cake looked like a baseball diamond. And my parents got me a new mitt. I didn’t think about Tchaicatsky all night.

When we got back home, Tchaicatsky was still sleeping. He didn't meet us at the door.

"Mrs. Sherman was right," Dad said. "Tchaicatsky is exhausted."

The next morning, our cat didn't come down for breakfast. Mom called him three times. Then she raced up the stairs. Our cat wasn't in his bed. I checked the basement. We looked all over the house.

Tchaicatsky was gone.

"He's been catnapped!" Mom declared.

We put up signs. A search party fanned out all over town. The newspapers and TV stations ran stories about the catnapping.

Nobody could find Tchaicatsky.

Mrs. Sherman blamed us. "He got too much attention," she said. "After Ray Beano, he was never the same cat. He must have run away."

She stopped coming over for my piano lessons. She never called us again. I figured she was still mad.

I decided to look for Tchaicatsky myself. My friends offered to help. We walked around every block in our little town three times.

We made a list of every suspicious person. Anybody who asked too many questions was on it, like:

The postman,

The cable guy,

The house painter,

The washing machine guy,

Our baseball coach.

We checked them all out.

Then, one day, we ran into Mrs. Sherman. She was carrying her big yellow bag and talking to herself.

“Hello,” Mrs. Sherman,” I shouted. She saw me and started running.

I noticed something peek out of her bag. “Did you see that?” Mike screamed.

We chased Mrs. Sherman. Soon we caught up. Something was scratching in her handbag. Then I heard meowing.

“What do you have in that bag?” we shouted.

“My music, like always,” she said.

And then her bag started shaking. Tchaicatsky peeked out. He looked right at me with his big yellow eyes.

“Give him back,” I said.

“He came of his own free will,” she said.

“You took him,” I said.

Finally, Mrs. Sherman pulled the cat out of the bag.

Tchaicatsky purred all the way home.

The next week, school ended. My parents said we all needed a long vacation. We stayed in a little cabin in the woods. It had a small living room with a piano.

Dad and I went fishing all day. Mom took up bird watching. So did Tchaicatsky.

By the time we got back home, all the TV vans were gone. They were onto another story.

# Story Questions

(Possible answers are in parentheses.)

1. Who narrates, or tells, the story? (Danny narrates the story.)
2. What is this story's point of view called? (The story's point of view is first person.)
3. Why did all the talk shows want Tchaicatsky? (They likely thought Tchaicatsky would draw a big audience.)
4. Who is opposed to Tchaicatsky going on the show? (Both Danny's father and Mrs. Sherman are opposed.)
5. Why do you think they oppose the idea? (Danny's father likely thinks the interest in Tchaicatsky will continue. Mrs. Sherman says going on the show will be bad for Tchaicatsky.)
6. Why do you think Danny's mother finally decides to go on Ray Beano? (She says the talk shows may leave them alone if Tchaicatsky goes on. Also, she seemed to like the idea of the attention they would get.)
7. What is your opinion of his mother's decision? (Answers will vary.)
8. What are some effects of Tchaicatsky's appearance on the Ray Beano show? (The news people kept coming. They camped out on the front lawn, along with fans. Tchaicatsky's concentration was off. Mrs. Sherman was very unhappy about it.)



9. Who catnapped Tchaicatsky? (Mrs Sherman catnapped him.)
  10. What lesson did Danny learn? (He learned that being famous wasn't so great, after all. Ordinary time alone with family is better; it's pleasant and relaxing.)
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## Activities

1. Write a diary entry from Mrs. Sherman's journal about the story events.
  2. Create a timeline of story events. It may be illustrated.
  3. What fan mail might Tchaicatsky have received? His fan mail could have been letter, an artwork, a gift, a recording, or something else. Create your own fan mail to send to Tchaicatsky.
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