

Going to the Big City

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

Jerry was excited as the taxi hurtled its way through the city streets. He'd never been in a taxi before, and this one was yellow and black with a TV screen in it. The driver didn't say much, but he was probably concentrating, because he was going so fast! He was dashing in and out of traffic, occasionally honking his horn and grumbling under his breath. Jerry grabbed onto his father and the side of the door to keep from sliding around the backseat as the taxi swerved again.

As the cars whizzed by, Jerry craned his neck to try and see the tops of the buildings they were passing. The skyscrapers reached so high the sun blinded him as his gaze followed them into the clouds. He'd never seen so many huge buildings at once. It made him a little dizzy.

The hotel lobby was sleek and sparkling. The marble floors were so shiny Jerry wished he could slide across them in just his socks. At the counter, a well-dressed man gave them a room key that looked like a credit card. Jerry had to use it in the elevator to get to their floor, and then he was the first one to open the door to their room. He whistled as he stepped inside. Fancy! There were two huge beds side-to-side, and the windows stretched from the floor to the ceiling. When he looked out, his stomach did a little flip; it looked like he was a mile high up in the sky. He could see the buildings and lights and a million cars zipping around. The air was filled with the sound of honks and ambulance sirens. How was he going to be able to sleep? He thought of his quiet home in his small town where the only sounds at night were the dogs barking or the sound of a thunderstorm.

But he was on vacation, so it was time to explore! He followed his parents back down the elevators and outside, where they walked along the busy streets, looking at all the shops and restaurants and people. Soon they were in Times Square, and there were probably more people on these streets tonight than there were in his whole hometown! He couldn't believe how many lights there were; they were everywhere. Flashing neon lights and giant video screens hung on the side of the buildings. Jerry turned around in a circle trying to absorb it all.

His parents decided to take the subway to get to Battery Park. Jerry had never been in a subway train before and wasn't sure if he liked going underground. Once they found seats, he relaxed and watched the crowds of people getting on and off the train at every stop. Soon it was their stop and they headed out above ground again. They walked to the waterfront and boarded a big ferry boat to Staten Island. His mother had read in a guidebook this was an easy way to see the Statue of Liberty – the ferry would go right past it. Once they landed on Staten Island, they could just get on the ferry again to go back. His father took lots of photos of the beautiful green lady with her crown, holding her torch high for all to see.

Next was a visit to Central Park. Jerry knew this was a huge green space right in the heart of the city. After walking for a few minutes through the park, the hectic noises and smells of the city were nearly silenced by the green grass and peaceful trees. Jerry and his family felt calm and relaxed as they noticed the little

playgrounds and beautiful bridges. Jerry strolled past small tables where old men played chess together, and a pond where couples rowed boats and smiled at each other. There was even a pretty memorial for a famous musician made from a mosaic of stones that simply said, "Imagine."

As they left the park, Jerry's stomach rumbled. His parents laughed, and his dad suggested it was time for some dinner. His mom said they could find food from all over the world in this city, so picking a restaurant could be difficult!

They decided that some delicious fresh pasta would hit the spot, so they took a cab ride into Little Italy. To their surprise, it was the annual fall festival called the Feast of San Gennaro. Mulberry Street and the adjoining roads were blocked off to traffic, and many people roamed around, visiting food booths and enjoying tasty samples. People were shouting and laughing. There was a Ferris wheel, and some restaurants had put their tables and chairs under tents right on the street for customers to sit. Jerry had never seen anything like it. After his family finished eating a bit of this and a bit of that and sat down for coffee and dessert, he thought he might explode.

"So, what do you want to do tomorrow?" laughed his mother as they all arrived back at their hotel.

"I want to see everything!" said Jerry, yawning happily. It had been a great day, and there was still so much to see! This was turning out to be the best vacation ever.

Jerry needn't have worried about the noise of the city below him. By the time he'd brushed his teeth and wished his parents good night, the boy was fast asleep as soon as his head touched the very soft pillow.

Questions

1. Name two methods of transportation Jerry used in the city.
2. Pick two verbs from the story that describe how the taxi/cars/traffic moved and find a synonym for each.
3. Compare Jerry's visit to Times Square and Central Park. How were they different?
4. What is one thing Jerry did with his family that you would like to do? Why?

Vocabulary List

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. Hurtled
2. Absorb
3. Hectic
4. Mosaic
5. Adjoining

Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1. "Jerry was excited as the taxi **hurtled** its way through the city streets."

- a. drove b. rushed c. forced d. crept

2. "Jerry turned around in a circle trying to **absorb** it all."

- a. take in b. buy c. see d. understand

3. "After walking for a few minutes through the park, the **hectic** noises and smells of the city were nearly silenced by the green grass and peaceful trees."

- a. chaotic b. loud c. honking d. human

4. "There was even a pretty memorial for a famous musician made from a **mosaic** of stones that simply said, "Imagine."

- a. collection b. artwork c. wall d. shelf

5. "Mulberry Street and the **adjoining** roads were blocked off to traffic, and many people roamed around, visiting food booths and enjoying tasty samples."

- a. busy b. newly-built c. connecting d. country