

Comprehension Test:

The Fiddlers

It was at a concert in New York where a celebrated teacher of the violin was exhibiting his pupils. A boy of twelve stepped on the stage and began to play. A hush fell over the room. His face, his fingers, every move and look proclaimed an embryo artist.

With easy assurance, in which was no trace of effort, he played one number after another, the audience urging him on with enthusiastic applause. Each of us felt that thrill of personally discovering this new star in the musical heavens. The concert over, a gentleman rushed forward to congratulate the teacher.

"You must be wonderfully proud of that brilliant boy!" he exclaimed.

The teacher was unresponsive. "Not very proud," he said.

"But surely he will be a master."

"No. He will probably be a fiddler in a restaurant."

The man was a bit indignant. Was this coolness born of professional jealousy... the envy of an older man for the brilliant youth? The teacher did not leave him long in doubt.

"The boy could be a master," he explained, "but he never will. Some of the others who performed less well today you will hear from later. But he... no. He will be a fiddler. It comes too easy; he will not work."

Each statement below can be proved to be true or false by the information given in the story. Write "True" or "False" on the line before each statement. Then write the proof for your answer. Use only ideas from the story, but you may use your own words. Lengthy answers may be completed on the other side of this page.

- _____ 1. This story was written by a member of that concert audience.

- _____ 2. The young student was an artist.

- _____ 3. The audience was polite throughout the concert.

- _____ 4. The gentleman from the audience was suspicious.

- _____ 5. The teacher disparaged the young violinist's talent.

- _____ 6. The teacher felt that the habits of the youth became the habits of the man.

- _____ 7. The teacher knew from experience what success cost.

- _____ 8. The title refers to all violinists who played at this concert.

- _____ 9. The teacher thought talent was the most important ingredient in success.

- _____ 10. A concert violinist would be pleased to be called a fiddler.
