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## Piccolo

by Garf Collins

### *A children's story*

I always had a fear of being small and ordinary. Well wouldn't you if you were the smallest thing in an orchestra. I'm called 'piccolo' which sounds lovely but it's an Italian word which only means small. I'm short and dark brown and when my player was playing me you could hardly see me underneath his hands. In the orchestra I hardly ever had an interesting part to play and often had nothing to do.

Next to me were the flutes. They liked to wave themselves about and glitter. One of them was even made of gold. Behind me were the percussion. Nasty noisy things which made sudden big noises. I always jumped when they smashed the cymbals together and banged the big drum.

I was very nervous about the violins too. There were so many of them that you daren't risk annoying them because they thought themselves so important since they played most of the time. I felt out of place because I was the only instrument with a foreign name apart from the self-important thing with a wavy neck called a Cor Anglais. What a daft name. It means English Horn so why call it that in French. On the other hand, behind me were some curly trumpet-sort of things called French Horns – in English! It was all very confusing.

I was really frightened of the things in the corner. They were called the brass section because their instruments are made of that. They made a big noise and the trombones had long sticks which went in and out and made it quite dangerous for the violas. These are like big violins and the others made jokes about them so sometimes we tried to cheer each other up.

At the front there was always a person waving a stick at us and trying to boss us about. This was the conductor who thought he could make the instruments do what he wanted. (It's mostly a man with long hair.) Sometimes, the orchestra decided amongst itself what it wanted to do and he had to follow them. That was a good joke. At the end he would often make the

audience clap an instrument like a flute or an oboe but never pointed at me. I am sure you can see why I had to change.

I couldn't stand this lowly existence any more. I had to make a plan to escape and started letting my keys stick a bit which made the conductor frown at my player so he decided to sell me. Fortunately, I was bought by a young woman who belongs to a marching band. Often, as many as a dozen of us lead the whole band as we march along. I, and my friends, no longer call ourselves piccolos. We are a group called grandissimo.