

PICCOLO

a Rock'n'Roll Romance about a
Small Man falling in Love Big Time



written by

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Reading Sample

INT. FIBBER'S MUSIC CLUB / BACKSTAGE - EVENING

Cyril and Todd are in a narrow, untidy backstage area of a small music club. In the back you can hear the muffled VOICE of an ASPIRING COMIC, ruining his punch lines. Todd hands Cyril a plastic bag.

TODD
Get dressed!

Cyril looks into the bag, pulls out a tail-coat. He eyes the long tails disapprovingly.

CYRIL
No chance!

TODD
Pantalones!

Todd hands Cyril a black pair of trousers. Cyril looks at Todd, who pulls his shades onto his nose tip, shoots back a fiery glance. Cyril sighs, takes off his jeans.

TODD
Atta boy!

A kind-faced SHOW HOST (50) peeks around the corner.

SHOW HOST
You're on next.

Todd looks at his batman wristwatch.

TODD
I thought we still had five?

SHOW HOST
I better end this tragedy
prematurely. The poor lad'll get
tarred and feathered otherwise!

Cyril stops dead, panicking, like a deer in the headlights. Todd nudges him in the side.

TODD
Give us a minute.

The show host exits. Todd looks at Cyril keenly.

TODD
You heard the man. Chop chop!

CYRIL
I don't think this is a good idea!

TODD

Do you want to go on stage in your
Y-fronts?

Cyril pulls up his trousers. Todd hands him a dinner
shirt. Cyril takes it hesitantly.

CYRIL

I'm not ready. The song still
needs some work.

TODD

Rubbish! Go out there and sing
something. Anything! Do the Randy
Newman number if you like.
Your songs are better though!

INT. FIBBERS MUSIC CLUB - SAME TIME

Open mic night. About 30 people have found their way into
the club tonight. The ceiling is low. At the tables sit
mostly couples - men with a pint of beer, women with a
long drink - At the bar and in the room stand lonesome
men between 20 and 40, many with a beer gut.

On stage an ASPIRING COMIC tries unsuccessfully to cheer
up the crowd. They mostly ignore the talent-free guy.

ASPIRING COMIC

... and then the man says... no, wait,
the woman... the one in the dress,
she says... "Read the card!"

The comic presses on a cassette player hanging around his
neck. the tinny speakers play a BRASS FANFARE and
APPLAUSE. he pulls out a handful of confetti from his
pocket, throws it in the air. the show host steps in
from backstage, smiling bravely, and clapping wildly.

SHOW HOST

What a talent! Give a big hand
for Boombox-Bernie!

ASPIRING COMIC

But I'm not done yet!

SHOW HOST

Too bad he has to catch his bus!

The show host gently pushes the comic backstage. Some
tired claps from the audience, some shout "BOO!", some
whistle disapprovingly. Gradually, the whole audience
joins in. The booze-fueled mob crave the humiliation.

INT. BACKSTAGE - SAME TIME

The comic trudges sadly offstage. The cassette player still plays FANFARES and APPLAUSE. He passes by Cyril who stands on a box to sneak a peek at the audience. Cyril looks at the comic briefly, turns to Todd.

CYRIL

They'll slaughter me out there!

Cyril jumps off the box, intends to sprint after the comic.

TODD

You stay here! Okay, it's a lively crowd. But they are right. That sad clown couldn't mime for a blind audience without being booed off.

CYRIL

I'm not going out there! It was a stupid idea anyway, this gig.

TODD

It was your idea originally!

CYRIL

Exactly.

TODD

You've been working towards this for weeks. I'll be missing my last train, and you want to skedaddle? No way, big boy! You are going out there and show the world how much talent hides in these kingly 4 foot 11 of yours.

CYRIL

Only a 4-2 gnome like you could build me up like this!

He slaps Todd's shoulder gratefully.

INT. FIBBER'S MUSIC CLUB - SAME TIME

As the show host makes his next announcement, a STAGE HAND carries in an electric piano with a stand. He then places a stool behind it, as well as Cyril's extended pedals.

SHOW HOST

Thankyou, thankyou, thankyou!
Next you'll witness a world premiere. Get out your lighters, hold on to your loved ones. Now's time for some quieter sounds Please welcome Cyril Davidson!

The crowd settles down, focus on the stage. The host gives Cyril a cheerful smile. Cyril stands on top of the stage stairs. Todd pushes him from behind. Cyril takes off the tail-suit, hands it back to Todd, and hesitantly walks on stage.

Some people still can't see Cyril, since the piano blocks the view. A beer-fueled bloke sees Cyril first, and starts to laugh. More and more people join in. Some women elbow their partners disapprovingly. Still, the crowd is ready to mock the dwarf shuffling onstage meekly.

SHOW HOST (cont'd)
(whispering to Cyril)
Don't worry. They can be convinced
by a good show. Go get 'em, tiger!

Walking backwards, applauding, the host disappears backstage. Cyril climbs on his stool. The stage lights blind him. He raises his hand, shielding his eyes. The stage technician reacts quickly, switches off all lights but one white spotlight.

Cyril can see a few scoffing people in the audience. He adjusts the microphone, starts to play a piano intro of a ballad. Just when the audience calm down, a SPITEFUL HECKLER at the bar interrupts rudely:

SPITEFUL HECKLER
I hope you play something short!

Some in the crowd laugh. The malicious humour infects the crowd, more and more snicker. Cyril tries to continue for a few bars, but as the crowd's sneering gets louder and louder, he hits the keyboard with the flat hands, causing a sharp DISHARMONIC CHORD.

SPITEFUL HECKLER
That was short!

Cyril straightens up.

BACKSTAGE Todd looks worried.

CYRIL
Is that all? Can't come up with
anything else? Eh?

The crowd grows more silent. Some drunks still giggle.

CYRIL
A dwarf sits down at a piano, and
all you come up with is "Play
something short"? Poor attempt,
buddy. Hey, if I come up with 12
better jokes on my size, can I
then play my song in peace?

The audience is listening. Some surprised laughs.

CURIOUS LISTENER

Then get on with it!

CYRIL

Let's see...

(ponders shortly)

A botanical joke: "Oi, bonsai,
should I prune you?"

Only a few laughs, but it stays quiet.

CYRIL

Bureaucratic joke: "You gotta be
sooo tall to play here."

Cyril lifts his hand up as far as it can. The exaggerated
gesture triggers a few laughs in the audience.

CYRIL (CONTD)

Futuristic joke: "Show me how to
become a real Jedi, oh Yoda!"

a table full of men laugh and toast with their glasses.

CYRIL

(imitates gollum))

Literary joke: "Master, give us
the ring. It is too heavy for you,
my preciousss! Gollum!"

a LONG-HAIRED STUDENT with thick glasses cheers.
He wears leather trousers and a t-shirt stating
"Hobbit in frenzy".

LONG-HAIRED STUDENT

For the Shire!

A few more laugh and clap. The mood lightens up.

At the **STAIRS** Todd grins grimly.

TODD

(TO HIMSELF)

Slay them, big boy!

Cyril smiles for the first time.

CYRIL

Politically correct: "We prefer
vertically challenged when taking
on new staff. After all, they have
problems with interspatial
relationships." -- How I hate
these hypocritical philistines!

few laughs, more applause.

CYRIL

Economic commentary: "Especially the small investors influence the financial markets today."

Cyril plays a little FANFARE ON THE PIANO.

At the **STAIRS** the show host smiles quietly and content.

CYRIL (cont'd)

How about sports? "I can throw you at least fifty feet!"

A BEARDED BODYBUILDER laughs especially loudly, then chokes. His laughter infects the audience. They laugh more and more.

CYRIL (cont'd)

Interested but dumb: "How long have you been a dwarf? - Oh, only shortly."

Some get the punch line. A young woman laughs mirthfully after a small moment, in which she understood the joke.

CYRIL (cont'd)

Thank you! Fairy tale joke:
(squeaky kiddie voice)
"Can you say 'Hello' to Snow White from me?"

Two YOUNG GUYS in the audience chant:

YOUNG GUYS

(sing)
Hi ho, hi ho, and off to work we go ...

CYRIL

Thanks, my brothers in spirit!

A bunch of people start CLAPPING RHYTHMICALLY.

CYRIL

A gallant quip:
"You are a born limbo dancer!"

Cyril slides off his stool, limbo-dances under his piano stand effortlessly. The audience gives scene applause. Cyril sits down again.

CYRIL (cont'd)

(talks girlish)
Erotic: "I always knew,
size *doesn't* matter!"

A few women laugh loudly. Their fellows clap almost relieved. A CHEEKY GIRL stands up.

CHEEKY GIRL
I can make you bigger!

More claps and laughs. The RHYTHMIC CLAPS GROW LOUDER. Cyril smiles coyly, but he liked that remark.

CYRIL
How many jokes do I have?

A NITPICKER shouts from the stage corner:

NITPICKER
Eleven. One to go.

Cheers and claps all over. Cyril thinks. The crowd starts CHANTING like right before a corner kick at football:

FOOTBALL FANS
Woooooooooooooooooaaaaaaaaawww!

The FOOTBALL FANS throw up their arms. A CLIQUE of thinly-clad girls cheer for Cyril:

GIRL CLIQUE
Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!

Cyril plays on his piano self-consciously. The crowd CLAPS, waiting eagerly.

SPITEFUL HECKLER
Can't come up with nothing more,
eh shorty!?

The piano notes join with the rhythm of the claps and chants. Cyril plays a chord riff: the intro of a Randy Newman song. Cyril lifts up his left hand, conducts the audience, his right hand continues playing. The audience claps the beat.

CYRIL
And last, not least: musically:

Cyril plays with both hands now.

CYRIL
(sings)
Short People got no reason
Short People got no reason
Short People got no reason
To live.

Some people in the audience gasp: How dare he?! Others recognise the song. Some laugh.

CYRIL (cont'd)

(sings)

*They got little hands
Little eyes
They walk around
Tellin' great big lies
They got little noses
And tiny little teeth
They wear platform shoes
On their nasty little feet.*

More and more start clapping along. Some "Whooo!"

CYRIL (cont'd)

(sings)

*I don't want no Short People
Don't want no Short People
Don't want no Short People
`round here...*

The audience CLAPS, CHEERS, LAUGHS. Cyril made it! He's happy.

BACKSTAGE Todd clenches his fist in victory.

TODD

You've dunnit, big boy!

EXT. NARROW STREET - NIGHT

Cyril and Todd are high from their success, and from alcohol, too. Cyril now wears the tail-coat. Todd still wears his shades, peeks over its rims to see anything.

TODD

"You're welcome here anytime!" he said. Didya hear that, big boy?

CYRIL

(sings "Fiddler on the Roof")
*"If I were a big man,
yabbadabbadibbidabbadoo!"*

Cyril dances a bit like Tevye. Todd stumbles on, laughing. While he turns around watching Cyril, he bumps into a light pole, falls down. Cyril stops, looking worried. Todd lies on the street, laughing wildly.

TODD

You stay close to me, big boy.
I'll make you huge!

A HEFTY IRISHMAN stops by.

HEFTY IRISHMAN

You two are doing gigs?

CYRIL

Have you just seen me on stage?

Todd struggles back on his feet.

TODD

You gotta talk to me about fees!

HEFTY IRISHMAN

Got time on March 17?

TODD

Let me check my diary.

Todd pushes up his shades, studies his empty palm thoroughly, then looks up at the man.

TODD

Guess we could reschedule the 17th. Where's the gig?

HEFTY IRISHMAN

You know the "Shamrock"?

CYRIL

The Irish pub?

HEFTY IRISHMAN

Exactly. I'll need a couple of leprechauns for St. Patrick's Day.

TODD

A couple of what?

HEFTY IRISHMAN

Goblins like, you know: bearded fairies with green hats and all. I bet you got your own costumes.

CYRIL

We own what?

TODD

Hold on, cousin. Lemme deal with this.

Todd straightens up, eyeballs the Irishman.

TODD

And how much would you shell out?

CYRIL

Todd, no way I'm going to ...

HEFTY IRISHMAN

35 for five hours, plus tips.

TODD

And what makes you think us
leprechauns need your measly
pennies, fatso? Don't you know
we've all buried a bucket of gold
at the end of the rainbow?

The Irishman laughs nervously.

TODD

Keep on laughing, Porky Pig. And
have you forgotten to never ever
take your eyes off a leprechaun?

A wolfish grin on Todd's lips.
The Irishman is just about to laugh.

HEFTY IRISHMAN

And why's that then?

CYRIL

(quietly)
Todd, don't!

TODD

That's why!

Todd's fist PUNCHES forward, hits the Irishman right in
his family emeralds. The man cups his groin, writhing in
pain. His face is now in Todd's reach, who aims, punches
the nose, and at the same time kicking the man's shin.
All this happens in a flash. Then Todd's foot pulls the
man's other leg. The Irishman goes down. Todd is about to
kick the man's gut, but Cyril pulls his cousin away.

CYRIL

Let's leg it!

Todd spits on the whimpering man. Then they run away.

INT. CYRIL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cyril and Todd sit at the kitchen table. Todd cools off
his fist with an ice-bag. A bottle of malt whisky is on
the table, next to it two half-filled glasses.

CYRIL

What was all that for?

TODD

He was going on my nuts.

CYRIL

Rather the other way round.

TODD

Cousin, that was just a lesson in modesty. We, the compact class of homo sapiens, we will take over the world one day!

CYRIL

Yeah, sure...

TODD

There are seven billion people. The ice caps are melting, the deserts are inhabitable. One day there'll be hardly any space to live. Then we'll have the advantage, according to Darwin: small, nimble, economical - after all we eat and drink less.

Todd takes a huge gulp of whisky.

CYRIL

Obviously!

TODD

And then them beanstalks are an obsolete phase-out model. The future belongs to us dwarfs!

CYRIL

I'd be happy to get a little advance from the present.

TODD

Stick with me, big boy. I'll make you huge.

CYRIL

Or we'll end up in the clink.

TODD

Don't worry. Nobody's gonna tell the fuzz he was beat up by a dwarf.

They toast each other, raise the glasses, grinning.