Story: The Music of Family

When Yvette's father tells her that he's getting married, she's sure he's joking.

But he's telling the truth. Soon, his girlfriend Amy and her two sons Tommy and Will are moving in. Right away, there are a lot of changes. It's not just three extra people in the house. They come with new things and new rules.

There are new pictures on the walls and new clothes in the closets. There are a lot of new toys on the floor. And there's a grand piano in the middle of the living room, the only room big enough to squeeze it in. The piano comes with rules about being quiet. "Amy needs to practice," Yvette's father explains. "She can't have distractions."

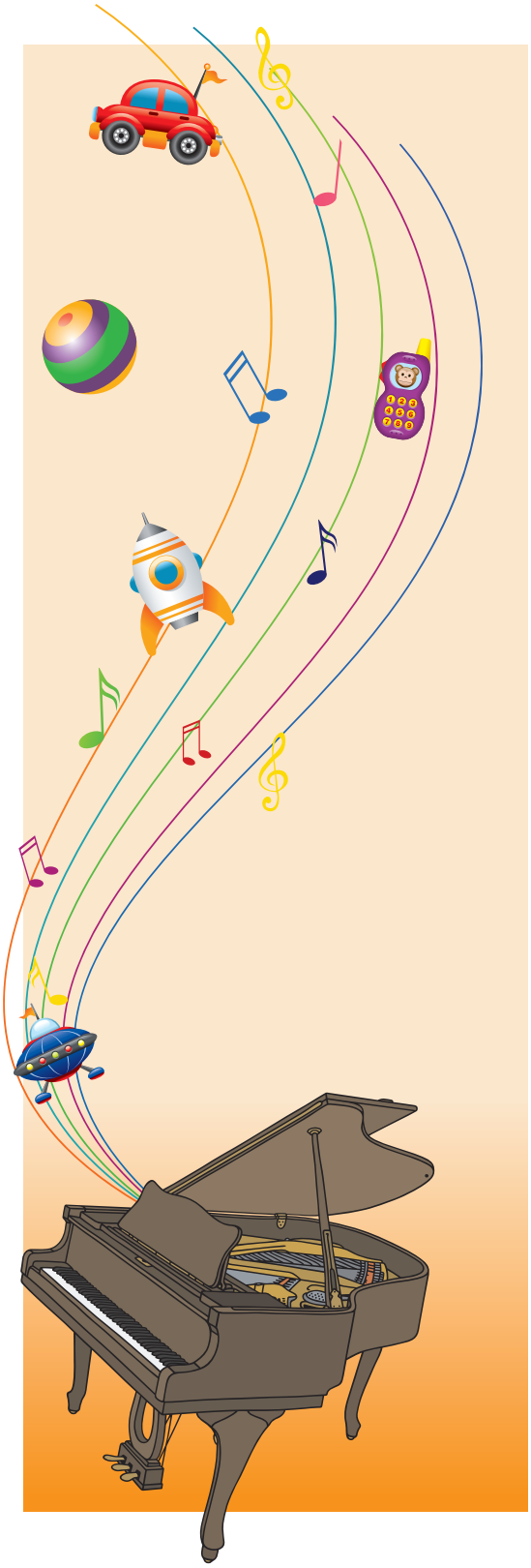
Amy is a concert pianist, so she needs to practice a lot. "But I play the fiddle," says Yvette, "and I don't need quiet to do that. And you don't need quiet when you sing."

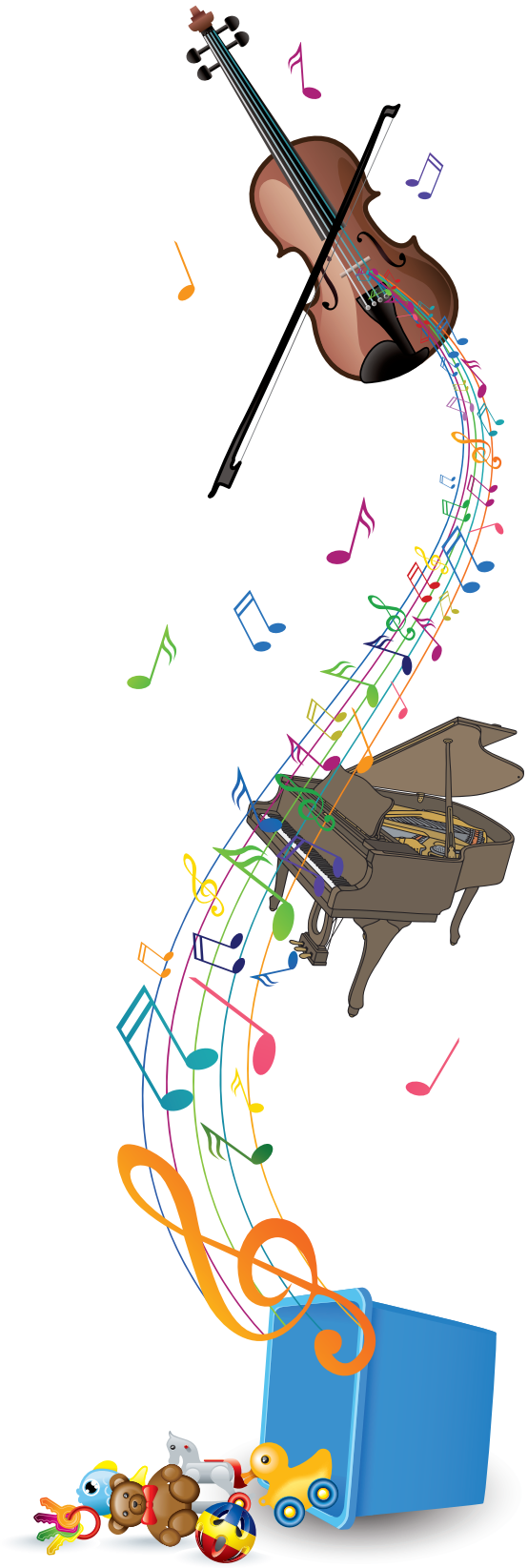
"That's different," says her father. "This is her job."

Tommy and Will, who are just six and four years old, leave their toys out all over the house. "You never let me leave my things in a mess!" says Yvette.

"That's different," says her father. "The boys are still really little."

Three extra people, a ton of extra things, and a whole lot of being quiet. It feels like a bad kind of different to Yvette. "I hate this mess and I hate this quiet!" she tells her father one night. "Our family doesn't work like this. It doesn't sound like this. What about our music and our rules?"





Her father gives her a big huge hug. “I know this is hard, Yvette. Please try to be patient. I’ll bet you have more in common with them than you think.”

The next day, when her father and Amy are outside working in the garden, Yvette brings her fiddle downstairs. She finds Tommy and Will playing in the living room. She sits down beside them on the floor. “OK, little brothers,” she says. “If we’re family now, there are some things you have to know.”

“What kinds of things?” asks Tommy.

“Family songs,” says Yvette. “We can sing them together.” She starts singing her favourite folk song. “OK, on three,” she says, the way her father starts a song when he plays with his band. “One, two, three!” Cautiously, Tommy joins in. Even Will tries to sing along.

Yvette spies the boys’ toy bin. She turns it upside down and puts it between them. “Now,” she says, “we have a drum.” She starts to tap her hands slowly on the bin in time with her singing. “Try it!” Tommy and Will join in too.

Soon Tommy and Will can carry the song all on their own. “Now for the fiddle,” says Yvette. She stands up and starts to play.

All of a sudden, Yvette hears two more voices joining them. It’s her father and Amy! He sits down on the floor with the boys, and Amy sits down at the piano to play. The house is full of music. The music sounds a little messy with the drumming from the little boys, and a little elegant with Amy on the piano, but it sounds good to Yvette. Different, but good.

“How’s this sound, Yvette?” Amy calls over the playing.

“Like our family,” she says, smiling.

Glossary *(Definitions of Story Words)*

To have something in common: When something about different people or things is similar or alike.

Concert pianist: A professional piano player.

Distraction: A thing that takes your attention away from what you want to focus on.

Elegant: Graceful or stylish in nature.

Folk song: A traditional song, often connected to a specific heritage or culture.

Grand piano: A large piano where the strings run horizontally.

Patient: The ability to wait calmly.

To spy (spies): To see or notice something.

Elements of a Story

Elements of a Story: The pieces of a story that come together to make it complete. Story elements include character, setting and plot.

Character: The people or animals in the story.

Conflict: The problem in the story that needs to be addressed or fixed.

Plot: What happens in the story.

Setting: Where and when the story takes place.

Theme: A story's main idea.