

ENGLISH



K-3
Foundational
Skills



GRADE 3
FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS UNIT 10

Sam's Musical Journey

Reader

EDITION 1

Grade 3

Foundational Skills 10

Sam's Musical Journey

Reader

Acknowledgement:

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Foundational Skills 10 Reader

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Chapter

1

The Instrument of Choice

A young boy named Sam lived on Eighteenth Street in a neighborhood that was lined with trees and cheerful houses. Sam was eight years old and in the third grade. He had a special love for music.

He would wake up to birds singing outside his window every morning. He'd hum along, matching their tunes. He enjoyed all kinds of music and always came up with different songs.

Sam's passion for music was as great as his love for exploring new things. He knew music was extraordinary, and that it could make you feel happy, sad, or even take you on an adventure without ever leaving home.





Sam often dreamed of creating beautiful **melodies** on an instrument, but something was missing. As much as he loved music, deep down, he knew he needed to learn more.

Sam and his best friend, Ben, played catch in Sam's backyard one sunny afternoon. Sam started humming "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" to himself. Ben joined in.

"I think you have real music talent," Ben said.

Sam smiled. "Thanks, Ben. I wish I could make real music, not just humming."

Sam enjoyed the compliment. Music was something that Sam loved to hear. Ben thought momentarily and then said, "Why don't you try learning to play an instrument? If you did that, you could make music!"

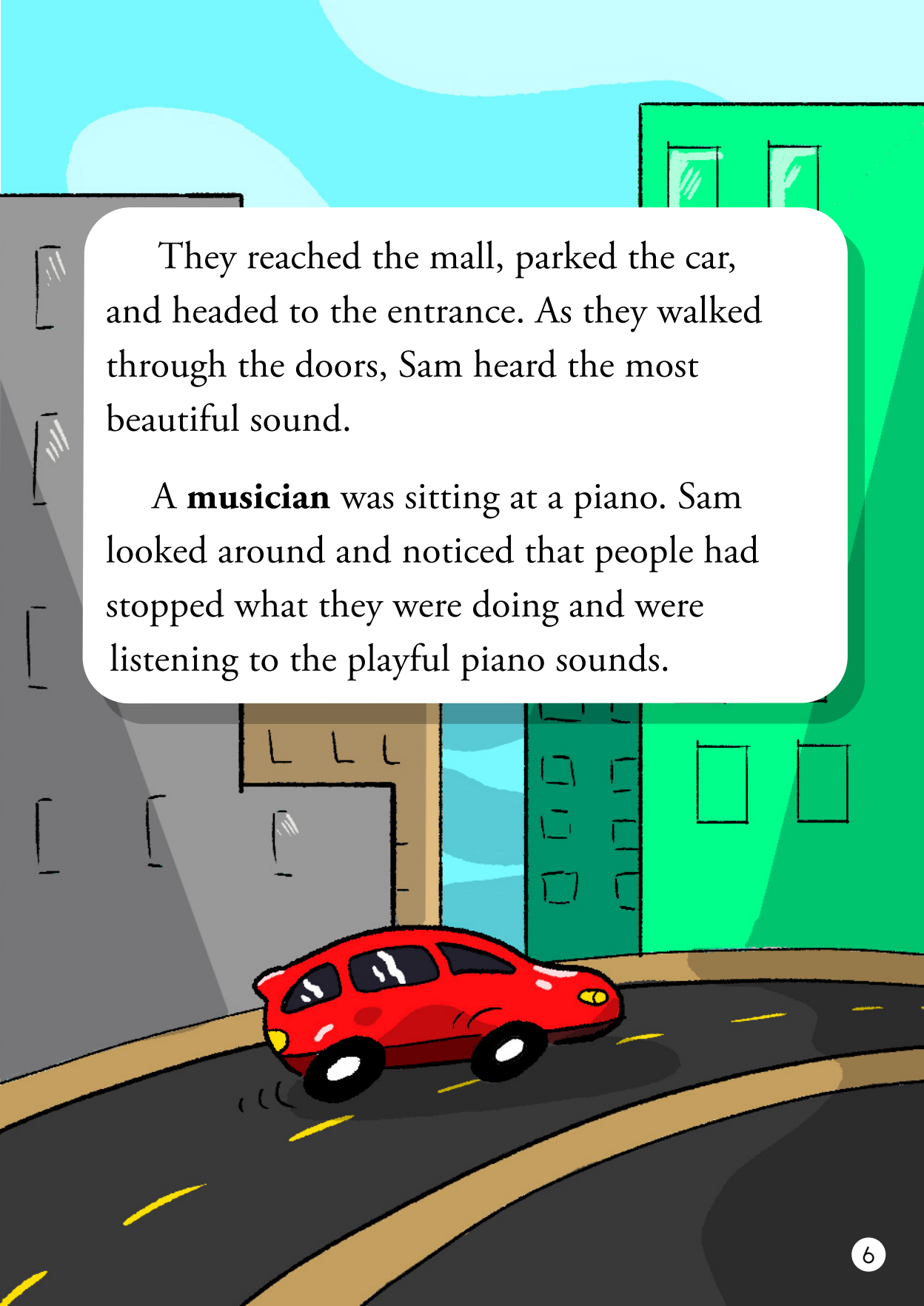
Sam's eyes lit up with excitement. "That's a brilliant idea, Ben! But I don't know which instrument to pick, so I must consider it."

Sam thought about all of the different instruments he liked. He knew that learning to play an instrument would be a fun way to bring more **melodies** to life.

The next day, Sam and his mom got ready for the mall. They jumped in the car and started the drive.

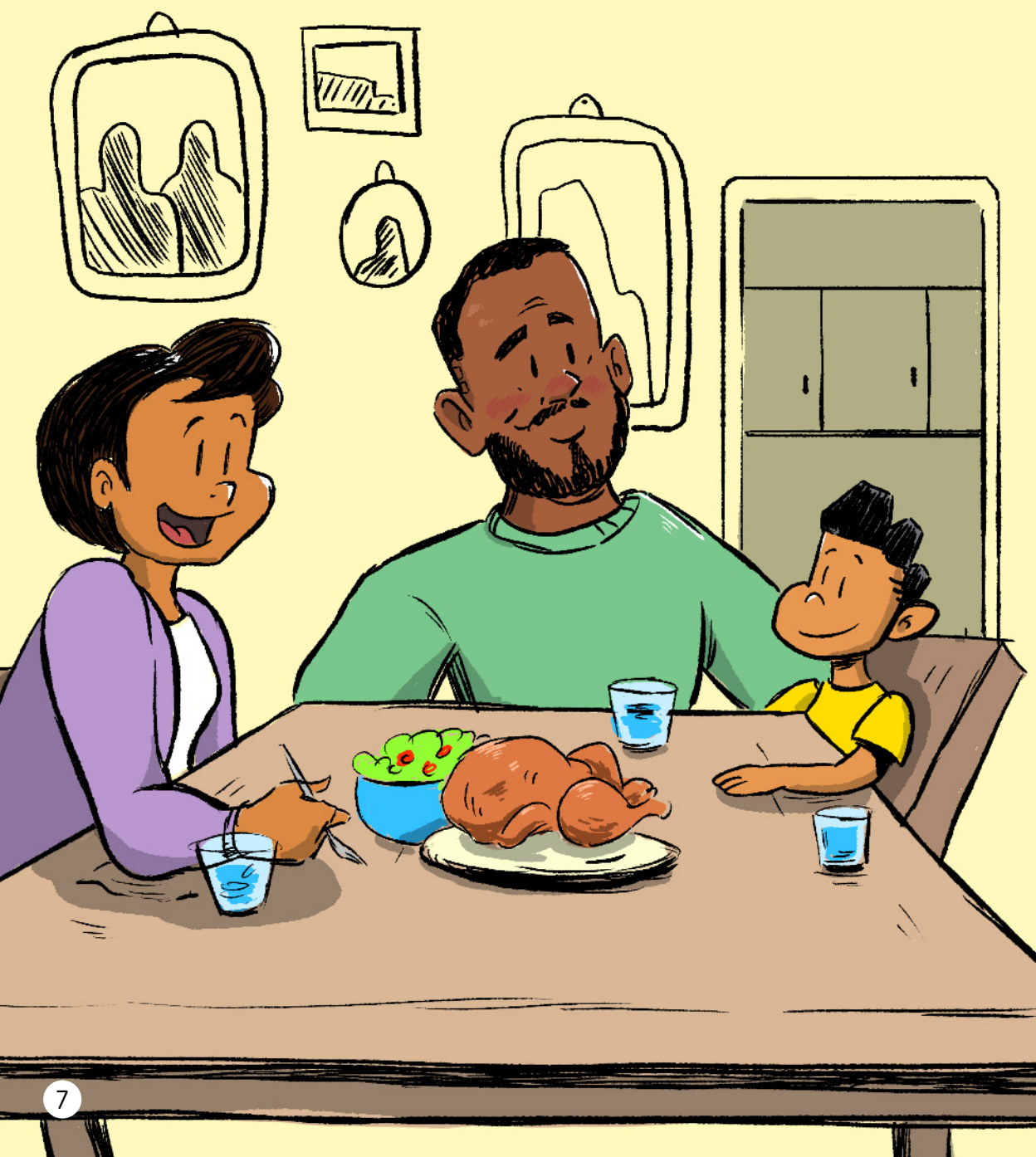
"Mom, how much longer until we get to the mall?" said Sam.

"We are only eighteen minutes away. Be patient," said Mom.



They reached the mall, parked the car, and headed to the entrance. As they walked through the doors, Sam heard the most beautiful sound.

A **musician** was sitting at a piano. Sam looked around and noticed that people had stopped what they were doing and were listening to the playful piano sounds.



Sam listened to each musical note the musician played and felt like the notes were weightless.

Sam thought, “Wow, I would love to play the piano.” At that moment, he knew what instrument he wanted to learn to play. He wanted to play melodies on the piano just like the musician at the mall.

Sam gathered his family after dinner. He told them he wanted to learn to play the piano. His parents were thrilled with his choice, but they reminded him that playing an instrument would take time and practice.

His mom smiled and said, “I used to play the piano when I was your age. I can teach you some basics, and you can take lessons.”

Sam thought about it. He decided to talk to his music teacher, Mrs. Anderson. She and his mom could both help him learn to play the piano.

He remembered that Mrs. Anderson always played the piano in his music class. He thought they could practice there, too. He couldn't wait to go to school tomorrow to see Mrs. Anderson and share the news.

Sam was on top of the world. His journey into the world of music had just begun. Sam couldn't wait to explore every melody, **harmony**, and all the wonderful sounds the piano could create.

Sam got ready for school the next morning. He walked into class excited to talk to Mrs. Anderson.



School



Sam walked up to his teacher and told her of his dream to learn how to play the piano.

Mrs. Anderson's face lit up with a warm smile. She agreed to help him and suggested they begin their lessons at eight o'clock the next day. She reminded him to ask his mom first.

Sam sprinted home. Bursting with excitement, he said, "Mom, guess what? Mrs. Anderson said she could teach me to play the piano! We'll start with lessons tomorrow at eight." His mom was delighted, promising to clean up their old piano for him to practice.

"That's fantastic news! We'll be ready for Mrs. Anderson tomorrow. I'll get the piano ready for you," she said with a smile.

Mom hadn't touched that old piano in a while, and it needed some care. It was the piano she used for her lessons when she was a girl, and now Sam could use it, too.



“Thanks, Mom,” Sam replied, feeling grateful. Sam’s mom and dad asked their neighbor, Mr. Kim, to help them roll the piano out of the corner in the family room. Dad pulled off the sheet that had kept the piano safe all these years.

Sam helped by wiping away the dust. Mom carefully polished the piano until it shone.

They took a step back once they finished cleaning and both admired the piano. It was a beautiful instrument. Sam’s mom gently tapped a few keys to ensure the piano was in tune.

Mrs. Anderson arrived at eight o’clock, and they got started. She explained the basics of the instrument. She told him, “Sam, a piano has eighty-eight keys. You can play high and low notes by pressing these keys. Each key has a different sound.”

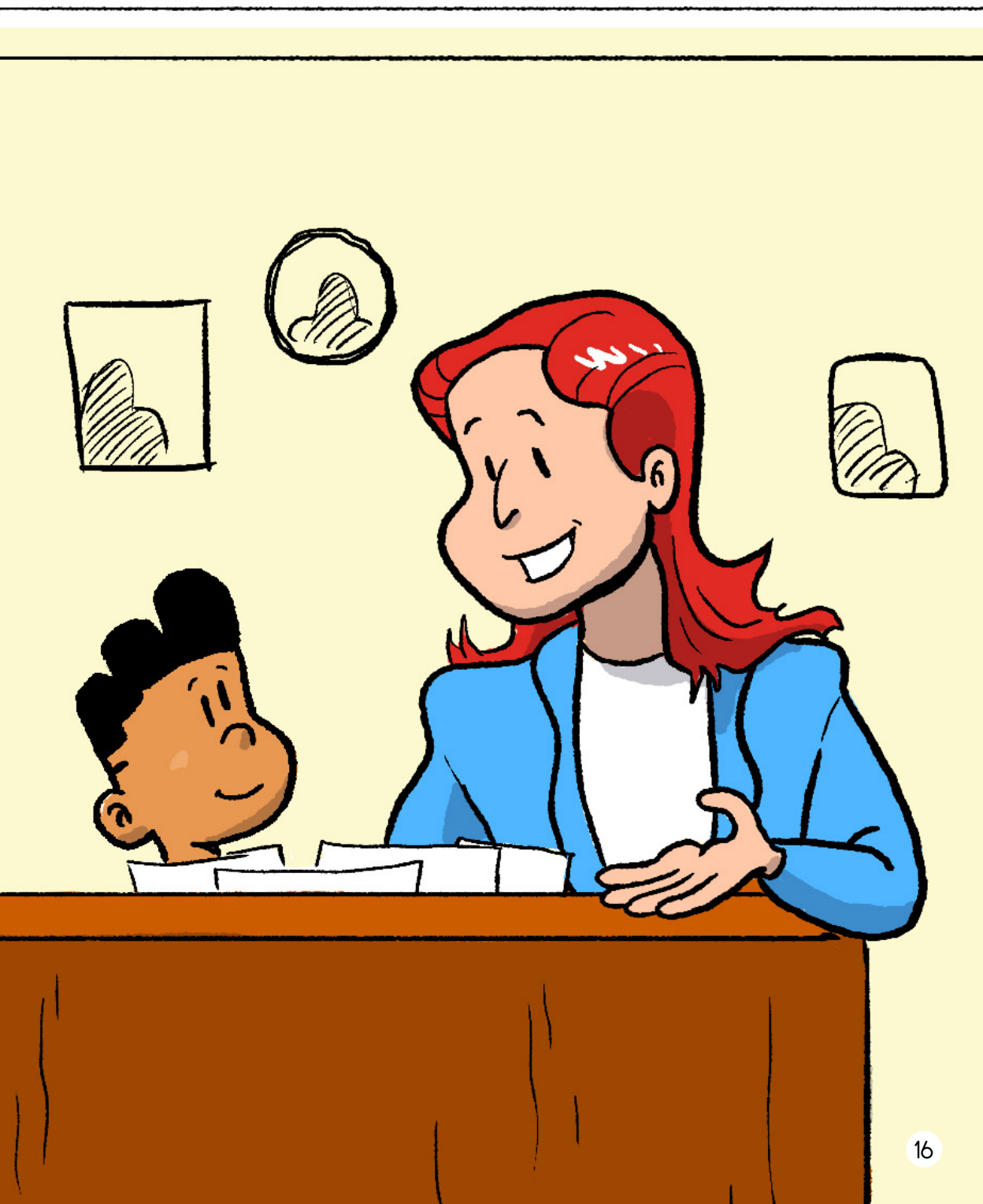
Sam tried to take in all the information while he stared at the piano. “Wow, that’s a lot of keys! But I’m ready to learn,” Sam said.

They started with the middle C key in the center of the piano. Mrs. Anderson showed him where to place his fingers and the correct **technique** to play the notes.

The two practiced a few simple tunes. It was as thrilling as riding a sleigh down a snowy hill. Sam wanted to wiggle with excitement!

Mrs. Anderson pointed to a piece of sheet music with what looked like a big “eight” at the beginning, indicating the **rhythm** and speed of the song.

Sam then realized that learning the piano wasn’t just about loving music, playing the keys, and reading the notes.





Learning to read sheet music was like decoding a secret musical language. It was neat!

Finally, Mrs. Anderson said, “That’s enough for today, Sam. Learning to play the piano takes time and practice. But remember, you’re on your way to creating beautiful music, and I’m here to help you every step of the way.”

It felt like their one-hour lesson had gone by so fast. Sam had learned so much and could not wait to learn more.

Mrs. Anderson started the next lesson by showing Sam how to read musical notes. She explained how the notes on the **treble clef** and **bass clef** matched the piano keys. Sam found distinguishing between the notes **complex**. It was like a musical battle in his mind, where the notes fought to get his attention.



Mrs. Anderson explained that to read notes, you need to follow the lines and spaces on the staff. The notes are placed on different lines and spaces. These notes tell you which key to play on the piano.

Higher notes are found higher on the staff. Lower notes are located lower on the staff. You'll find different notes on sheet music, each with its own shape and position on the staff.

Sam nodded and took in all of this information. He took notes as Mrs. Anderson taught him, then began to play. At first, the melody sounded more like a jumble of sounds than a beautiful tune. Finding the right keys proved to be quite a struggle. The notes just refused to flow smoothly.

"I just don't think I can read these notes and play them at the same time," said Sam.

“It’s okay, Sam. Learning the piano takes time and practice. Remember, every musician faces challenges at the beginning. Let’s take it step by step,” said Mrs. Anderson.

They continued the lesson together. Mrs. Anderson taught him that there are different types of musical notes.

There is a whole note, half note, quarter note, eighth note, and sixteenth note. Each note looked different and had different beats. Playing each of the notes would be more complicated than Sam thought.

Sam sighed, doubting himself. He kept wondering if he could ever play the piano like he had dreamed.

Melody of Dreams





“Mrs. Anderson, I still don’t know how to read all these notes,” said Sam.

Mrs. Anderson gave him a kind smile. She explained that many young musicians start just like Sam, and reminded him that it is **crucial** to keep trying and not give up. Sam believed Mrs. Anderson when she said he would get a little better every time.

Sam continued to practice with Mrs. Anderson’s **guidance**, working through each challenge one note at a time. He came to realize that even minor changes in his technique could make a big difference in the music he played.

Chapter

2

The Road to Rhythms

Sam arrived at Mrs. Anderson's music room for his piano lesson one day. He looked a bit down, and his backpack felt heavier than usual. As Sam sat down at the piano, he started coughing nervously. He thought he might be getting sick.

Mrs. Anderson noticed something was bothering him. She asked, "Sam, do you have something on your mind?"

Sam sighed, and his voice sounded troubled. "Mrs. Anderson, I'm not sure I can do this. The music is too tough, and I don't think I'm improving. Maybe I should try a different instrument. Maybe I am just not good enough," said Sam.



“Sam, learning to play any instrument can be hard. But remember, with practice, you can overcome these obstacles. I promise,” said Mrs. Anderson.

Sam nodded, hoping that Mrs. Anderson was right, although he wasn’t feeling so sure.

“Okay, Sam, let’s be thorough in what we will practice today. Let’s get started,” said Mrs. Anderson.

Sam was still worried about if would ever be able to play the piano well. How long would it take him to learn? When would he be able to play his own music? What if he didn’t like it anymore? He didn’t want to disappoint anyone. He decided to continue to focus on playing the piano.



When Sam struggled with a song, Mrs. Anderson sat beside him and said, “Sam, close your eyes, and imagine you’re at the base of a tree. Learning the piano is like climbing that tree. Each note you learn, and each song you conquer takes you higher to the top of that tree.”

Sam closed his eyes, and pictured the tree in his mind. He felt calmer and more determined as he played the song again.

“Let’s break it down. Remember, any time you play music, take it step by step and note by note,” said Mrs. Anderson.





Sam agreed, and with Mrs. Anderson's guidance, they practiced the song in smaller parts. They broke up each piece and practiced it one at a time. Sam practiced each part many times.

Mrs. Anderson would count the **tempo** and the beats. He grew tired but kept going with Mrs. Anderson's help. I can get through this song little by little, he thought to himself.

Sam continued to practice the song tirelessly. He learned to navigate the tricky rhythms and **master** the tough parts. Slowly, the song began to come together. Sam felt a burst of happiness.

He turned to Mrs. Anderson with a big smile and said, “I never thought I could do it, Mrs. Anderson. I wanted to give up, but you helped me through it. I realize now that I must keep going when things get rough.”

Sam felt so proud of himself as he left the lesson that day. He noticed something amazing start to happen as the weeks passed: Playing music felt more and more natural.





Sam began to look and sound like a real musician. He even started to watch videos of professional musicians to see how they performed. Sam wanted to be just like those musicians and be confident in himself. He was learning that success came to those who never gave up, no matter how hard the struggle.

As Sam headed toward his classroom a few weeks later, he spotted a colorful sign in the hallway that read “First **Annual** Talent Show.”

The loudspeaker came on. “Good morning, students. This is Dr. Sandberg, and these are the morning announcements. This month, we will host our first talent show. Tryouts will take place on November 4 at 9:00 a.m. The show will take place at 1850 SW 90th Ave. Everyone is welcome to participate. Teachers will pass out flyers today in your homeroom. Teachers, make sure to pass these out ASAP.”

Everybody started whispering to each other. Sam’s heart raced at the thought of being able to **showcase** his piano skills. He wondered if he should join the talent show.

TALENT SHOW!



Chapter

3

Sam's Grand Performance

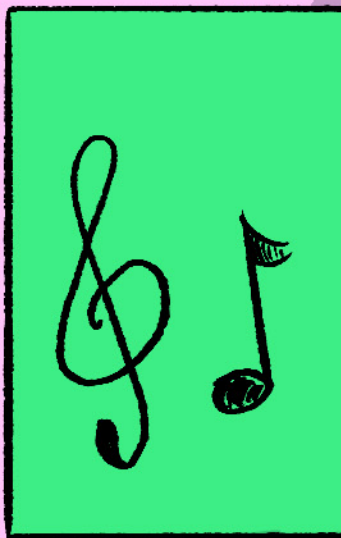
Sam went to Mrs. Anderson's music room the following day. When he reached her room, he found Mrs. Anderson tuning a violin.

Sam cleared his throat and asked Mrs. Anderson if she thought he should participate in the talent show.

Mrs. Anderson put the violin aside and gave Sam her full attention. "Sam, that's wonderful news! It's a fantastic opportunity to showcase your talent."

Sam fiddled with his backpack strap, his thoughts racing like a speeding train. "But what if I make a mistake in front of everyone?" he asked.





Mrs. Anderson smiled kindly at Sam, recognizing his hesitation. “It’s natural to have those thoughts. Even professional musicians get nervous sometimes. But remember, it’s not about being perfect. It’s about sharing your love for music with others and doing something you enjoy. I do not doubt that you can do it.”

Sam felt a sense of determination growing within him. The decision was challenging. He knew it was time to take a leap and try out for the talent show.

Saturday morning finally arrived. It was the day of the school talent show tryouts. Sam woke up with excitement and nerves swirling in his belly.

Sam hopped in the car with Dad and headed toward school.

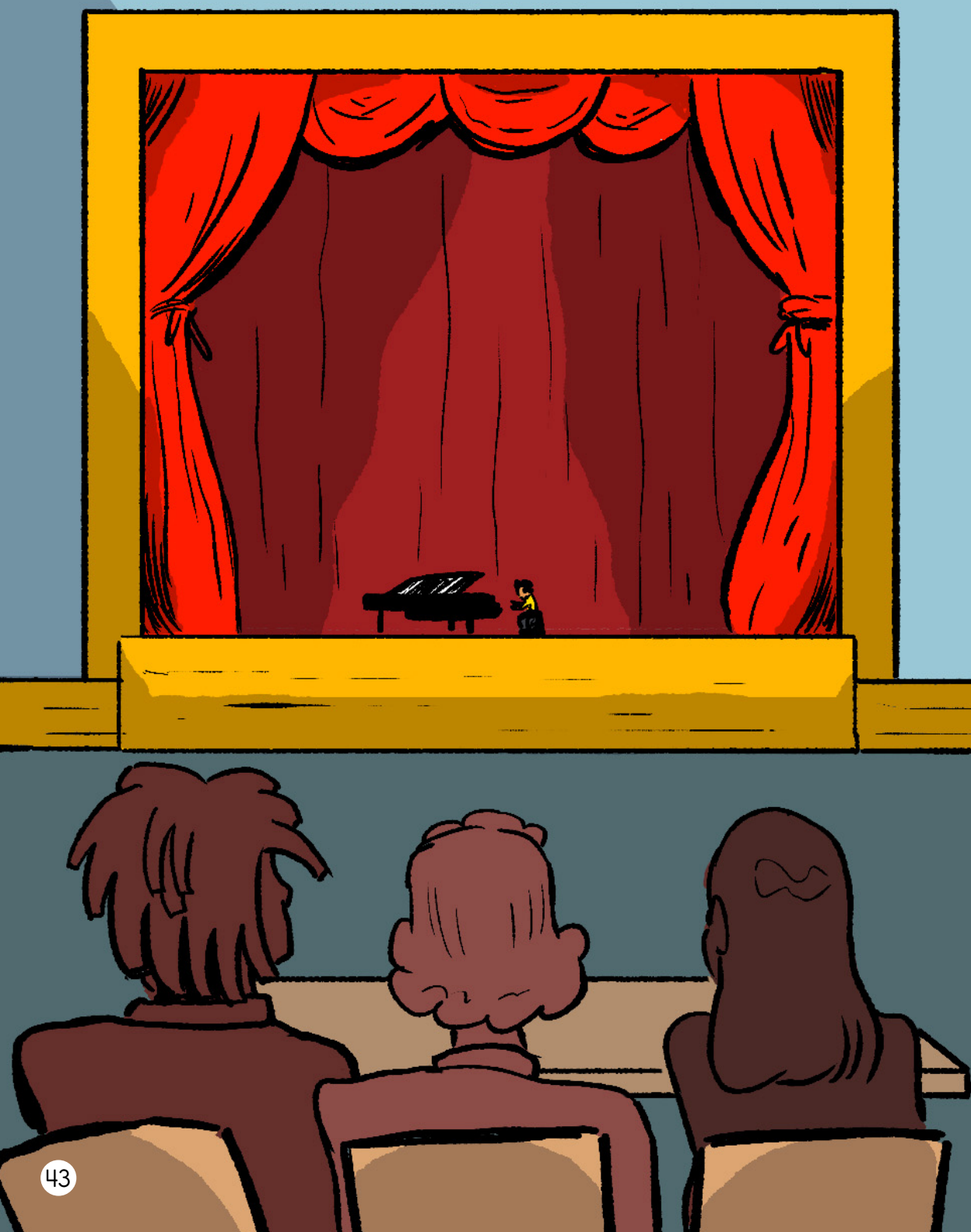
Students of all ages gathered for the tryouts. Sam watched kids perform magic tricks, sing their hearts out, and do funny stand-up comedy routines. They were all so well prepared. He wondered if he would stand out and earn a spot in the show.

Sam noticed four groups. Each group was labeled North, East, South, and West.

“Mrs. Anderson, where should I go?” asked Sam. “You are in group West,” said Mrs. Anderson.

AUDITIONS!





Sam got into his group and waited his turn. When his turn finally came, Sam took a deep breath and stepped onto the stage.

He sat at the piano, started playing, and let his music fill the room. He was shocked to hear applause at the end. He hoped that meant that they liked his audition.

Sam asked Mrs. Anderson when he would find out if he had made the talent show. Mrs. Anderson told him the list would be posted the next week.

Sam checked the bulletin board nonstop in the school hallway. Days passed, and Sam grew impatient. The wait felt almost impossible. He hoped the music teachers would not be **indecisive** because he couldn't wait to see the final list.

Finally, the day came. He saw a crowd gathered around the bulletin board. Sam joined the group as his heart pounded with anticipation. He saw the list posted on the board, and he was about to find out if his name was on it.

Right there, in the middle of the list, was Sam's name: "Sam – Piano Performance." He couldn't believe it! He had made it! A rush of joy washed over him.



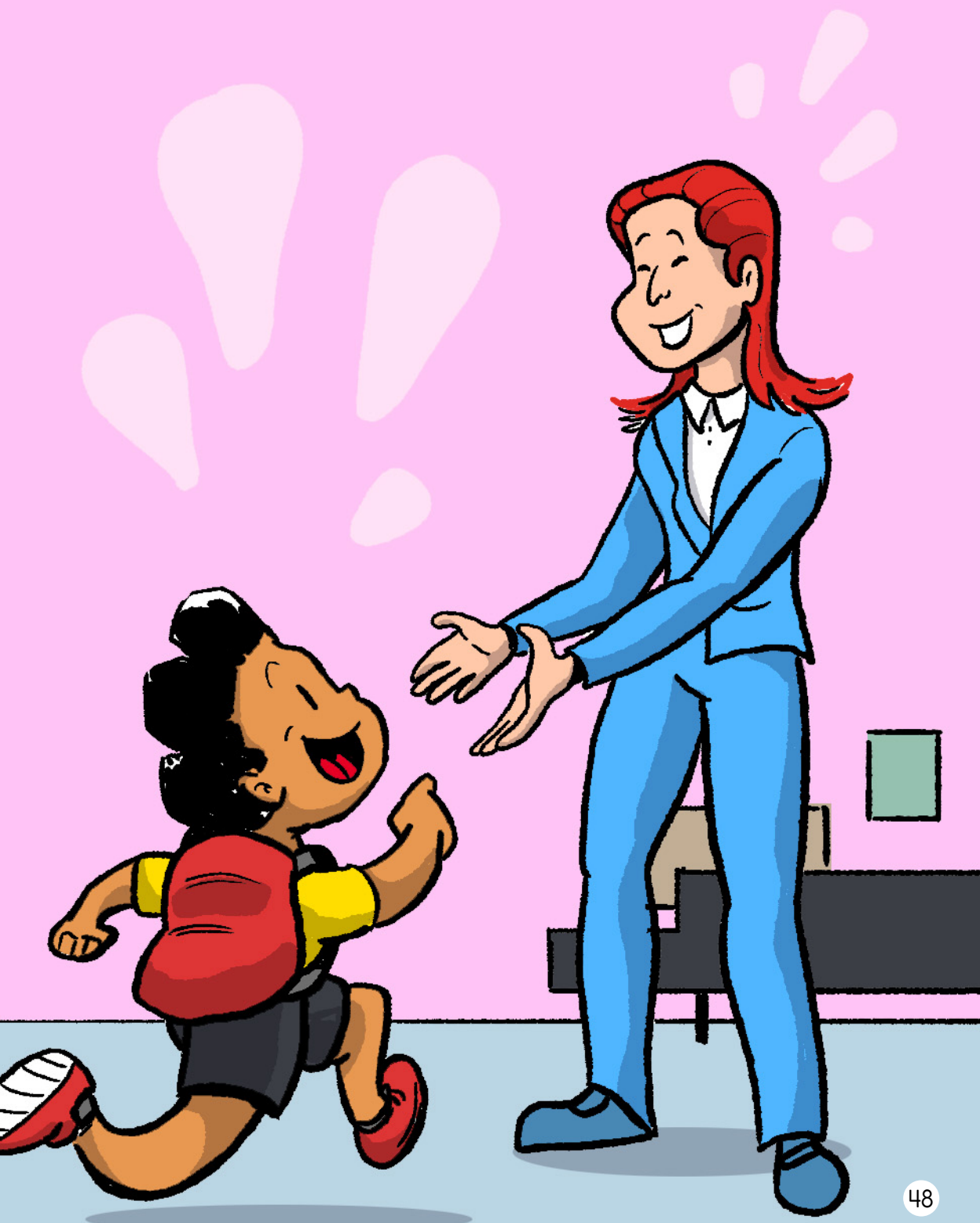
Sam knew he wanted to make an **impact** at the show. Even though he felt a bit **insecure** about how to do that, something inside told him he could.

He quickly ran to Mrs. Anderson. “Mrs. Anderson! Mrs. Anderson! I’m in! I’m in!” shouted Sam.

“That’s wonderful news, Sam,” said Mrs. Anderson.

They both shared the same sense of disbelief that the show was approaching so quickly. It was just a few weeks away, so it was time to decide on the perfect piece for Sam to play.

“Now, I hope this is not **inconvenient**, but we need to think about what song you want to perform,” said Mrs. Anderson.

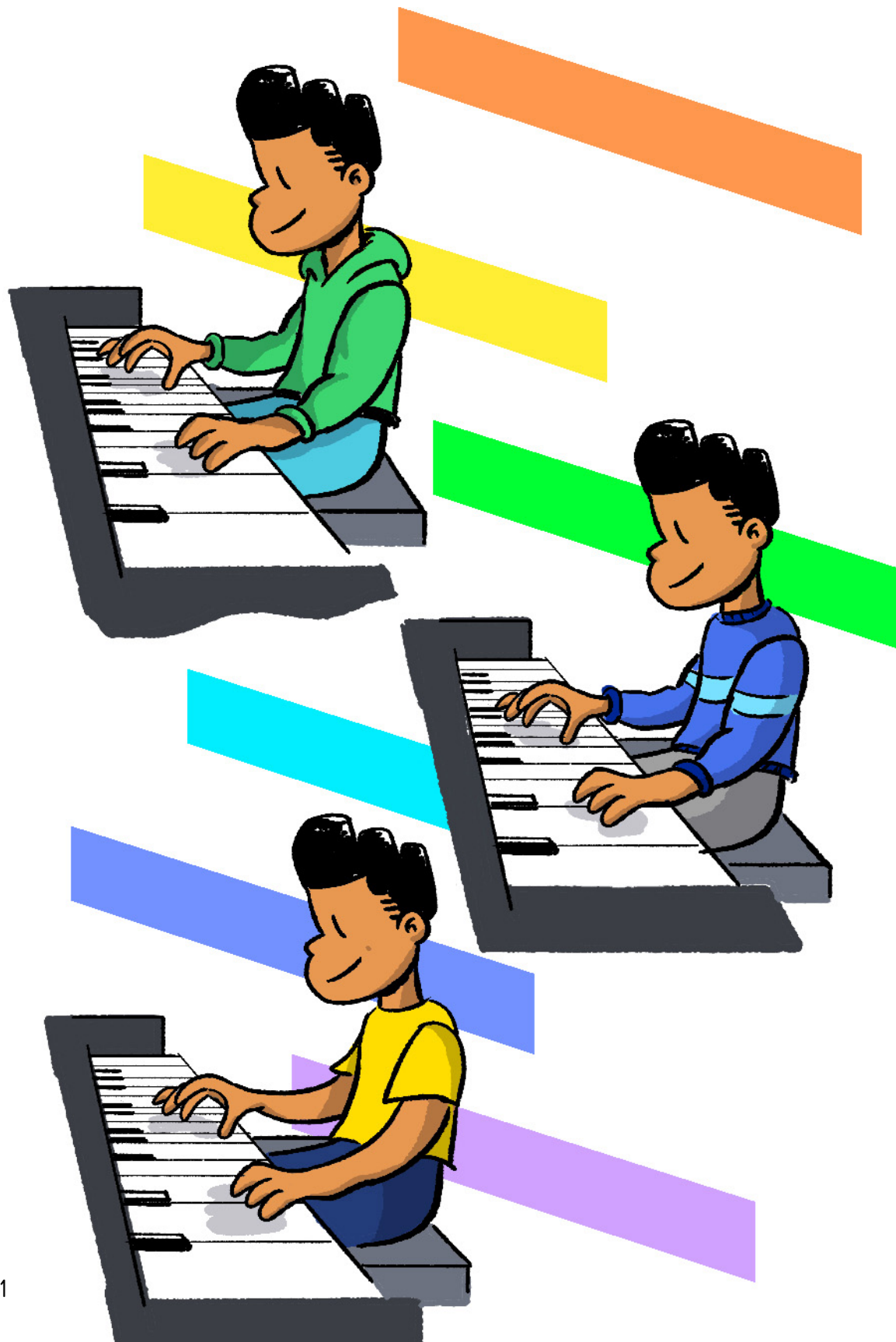




“Thanks, Mrs. Anderson. I will think about it some more. See you tomorrow at my lesson!” said Sam. Sam felt proud of all his hard work.

Mrs. Anderson knew that choosing the right song was crucial. She wanted it to be an immediate hit for the crowd. It should capture everyone’s attention from the very first note.

Sam felt a bit of discomfort mixed with excitement. He had many songs to choose from. Some were **classic** and timeless, while others were more modern and upbeat. Sam knew that while he wanted the song to be perfect, even great musicians are sometimes imperfect.

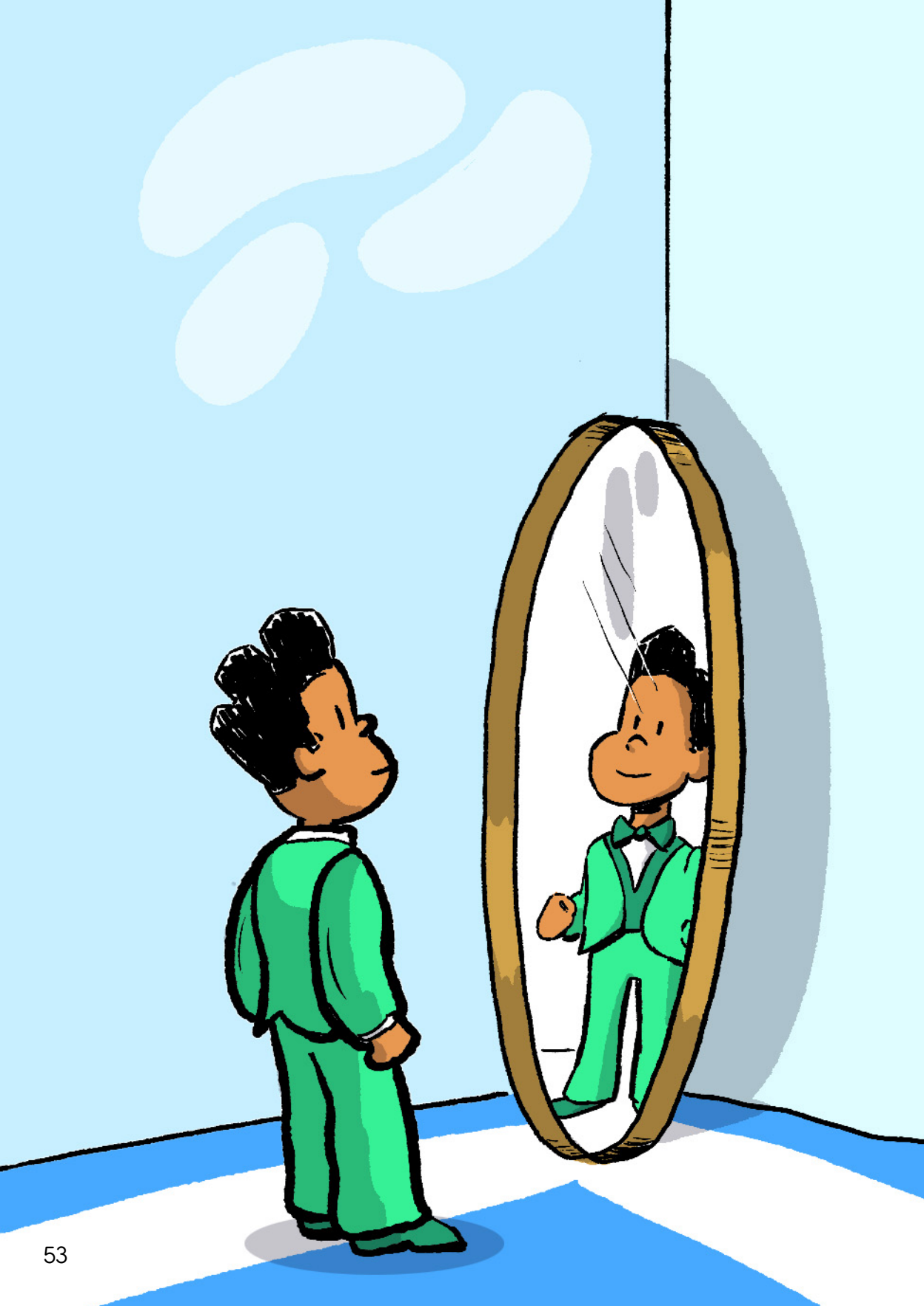


They eventually discovered a beautiful piece that felt just right.

He practiced every day and could tell he was making improvements. Complex notes became easier. He was bringing the song to life. Sam turned an incomplete piece into a beautiful **masterpiece**.

It was the day of the big talent show. He was feeling a mix of happiness and nervousness. His heart drummed in his chest.

“You’re going to do great, Sam,” his parents said with joyful faces. “Just be yourself and play your best.”



Sam grabbed his backpack and headed out the door. The day was a bit rainy, with soft drops of water falling from the sky. It was not a good sign.

Anticipation washed over him as he entered the auditorium. Sam saw students, families, and teachers filling the space and a beautifully decorated stage with colorful curtains and bright lights. Sam looked around and tried to predict how performing in front of so many people would feel.

He spotted his teacher, Mrs. Anderson, sitting in the front row. Sam felt relief and walked over to her.

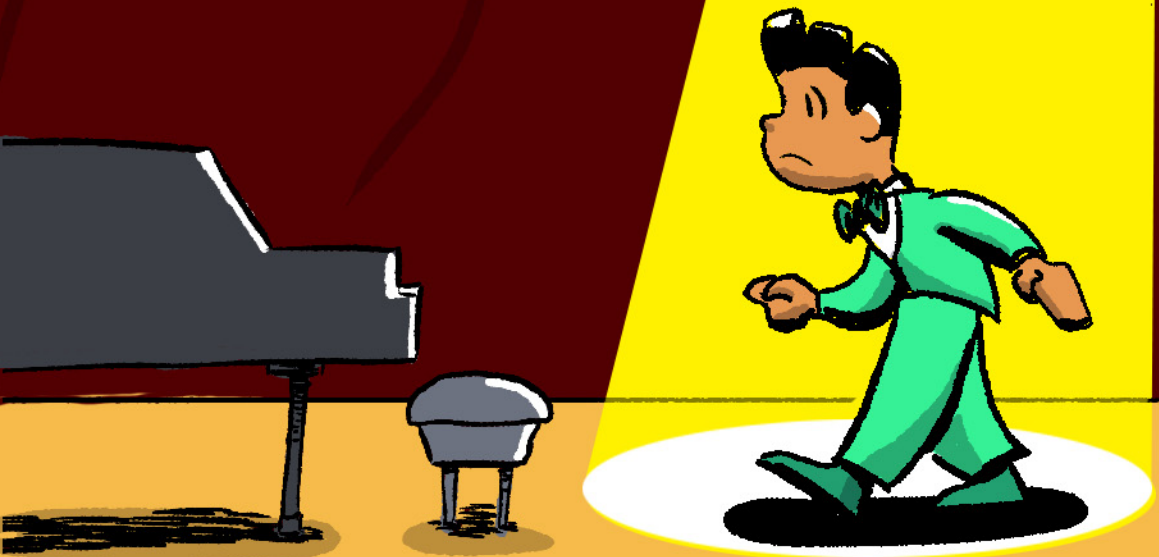
“Mrs. Anderson,” he said with a nervous smile, “I’m starting to feel a bit funny, like I have butterflies in my stomach.”

Mrs. Anderson giggled, her voice full of softness and warmth.


“Sam, it’s perfectly normal to feel this way. Every performer gets a little nervous before going on stage. Remember, you’ve prepared for this. I do not doubt that you’re going to do well. Just breathe and enjoy the moment,” said Mrs. Anderson.

Sam took a deep breath and felt a little better. He knew Mrs. Anderson was right. He watched as other students performed their acts. Some acts were funny, making the audience burst into laughter. Others were beautiful, evoking tears of happiness. Everyone was so talented.

Then, the moment arrived. The principal announced, “Now, please welcome Sam to the **stage** for his piano performance!” Sam’s heart skipped a beat.







Sam sat down in front of the piano, took a deep breath, and started to play. Sam's nervousness faded away with the first notes of his piece. He allowed the music to tell his story.

Sam's face displayed a mix of concentration and happiness. His eyes stayed on the music sheet and the notes before him. While playing, he tapped the piano's pedals with his feet.

Sam felt like he had transformed from being terrified to feeling fearless. Sam continued to play, and although he made a mistake or two, he kept going. He hoped no one would notice. As he reached the song's end, he could feel everyone's eyes on him.

Sam played his final notes, and there was a moment of silence. Suddenly, the audience erupted with noise. Everyone clapped and cheered.


Sam's heart swelled with emotion as he took a bow. He was on cloud nine. He had played his first performance, but at that moment, he realized it would not be his last.

“Great job, Sam! Congrats, Sam!” shouted his friends and family.

“Bravo! Bravo!” shouted Mrs. Anderson.








His best friend, Ben, was the first to give him a high five as he came off the stage. “Sam, that was incredible! It seemed like it was a piece of cake for you.”

Sam’s parents, standing close by, quickly embraced him. His dad said, “Son, you’ve come a long way since you first started learning to play. It’s been such a great learning experience for you. We are both so proud of you.”

Mom suggested, “How about we celebrate with some ice cream?”



Sam’s eyes lit up. “Ice cream sounds perfect! Let’s do it.”

Glossary

A

annual (AN-yoo-uhl): something that happens every year

anticipation (uhn-ti-suh-PAY-shn): excited about something that is going to happen in the future

B

bass clef (bas klef): a musical symbol used in music to represent the range of lower musical notes

C

classic (KLAS-ik): something that is respected as the best of its kind and can stand the test of time

complex (KAAM-pleks): complicated, not easy to understand

crucial (KROO-shl): very important

G

guidance (GAI-dns): help or advice given by someone trusted

H

harmony (har-muh-nee): the way different musical notes or sounds are played together to create a song

I

inconvenient (in-kuhn-vee-nynt): something that causes trouble or makes things difficult

impact (IM-pakt): an impression or effect made on someone

indecisive (in-duh-sai-suhv): not being able to decide something quickly

insecure (in-suh-kyur): unsure of oneself or not confident

M

master (MAST-er): to become very skilled at something, through practice, repetition, and/or talent

masterpiece (MAST-er-pees): a work of art that is the best example of the artist's work

melodies (MEL-uh-deez): a sequence of musical notes arranged together to form a tune

musician (myoo-ZISH-un): someone who creates and performs music

R

rhythm (RITH-uhm): a strong, regular pattern of beats or sounds in music

S

showcase (SHOW-kays): to present and highlight the skills, talents, and work of a specific group of people

stage (stayj): a platform in a theater, auditorium, or other building where performances are held

T

technique (tek-NEEK): a method used to do a task

tempo (tem-pow): how fast or slow a song plays

treble clef (treb-ul klef): a symbol used in music for higher musical notes

About this Book

This book has been created for use by students learning to read with the program. Readability levels are suitable for early readers. The book has also been carefully leveled in terms of its “code load,” or the number of spellings used in the stories.

The English writing system is complex. It uses more than 200 spellings to stand for 40-odd sounds. Many sounds can be spelled several different ways, and many spellings can be pronounced several different ways. This book has been designed to make early reading experiences simpler and more productive by using a subset of the available spellings. It uses *only* spellings students have been taught to sound out as part of their phonics lessons, plus a handful of Tricky Words, which have also been deliberately introduced in the lessons. This means the stories will be 100% decodable if they are assigned at the proper time.

As the students move through the program, they learn new spellings and the “code load” in the decodable Readers increases gradually. The code load graphic on this page indicates the number of spellings students are expected to know in order to read the first story of the book and the number of spellings students are expected to know in order to read the final stories in the book. The columns on the opposite page list the specific spellings and Tricky Words students are expected to recognize at the beginning of this Reader. The bullets at the bottom of the opposite page identify spellings, Tricky Words, and other topics that are introduced gradually in the unit this Reader accompanies.

TRICKY WORDS:

brilliant, journey, technique, rhythm, language, distinguishing, doubting, conquer, natural, annual, routines

Code Knowledge added gradually in the unit for this Reader:

- Decode multisyllabic words with final stable syllables *-ble*, *-tle*, *-gle*.
- Identify the meaning of words with affixes (*im-*, *non-*, *dis-*, *in-*).
- Decode multisyllabic words with multiple sound-spelling patterns for *igh*.
- Decode multisyllabic words with multiple sound-spelling patterns for *ough*.

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