

Chapter Four



“Have you ever heard of grafting?” The miner asked the children when they arrived.

“It has something to do with gardening, but I don’t know what it means”, said Melody.

“Well then, grafting is when you take part of one plant and connect it to another. For example, sometimes a farmer will take a healthy branch from one apple tree and use it to replace an unhealthy branch on another. Or

sometimes a farmer will do it for beauty. They might graft a purple rose onto a red rose plant so that the plant will yield purple and red roses. When grafting is successful, the living parts of two different plants become one plant. It's rather amazing, isn't it, that plants have the ability to sustain and benefit from the grafting done by loving farmers."

"I see," said Harmon, "So do you do grafting with these flowers somehow?"

"As a matter of fact, we do," said the Major. We have shown you our major and minor third plants, and how they make sound when placed on the magic piano path. But what would we do if we wanted to make more than two sounds at the same time? We place the root on the piano and it waits for the flower before making a sound. Then when we have placed the seed pods and finally place the flower, they both make a sound together. So we put our heads together and wondered what would happen if we grafted our flowers together.

"What would happen? My brother hypothesized that we could get three notes to play at the same time. It worked! There is only one root, but the rest of the

flower connects well, and together they become one plant. Watch us!”

The major knelt at one of his flowers, and the miner climbed on his back so he could reach the top. When he placed his minor third on the majors, the flowers instantly clung to each other, and it was readily apparent that they were looking at one plant now instead of two.

“We call this a Major triad flower”, the miner said. “That’s because my brother here has his flower head closest to the root. Okay, Melody, would you like to do the honors? Make us some music on the piano path.”

Melody had to take a couple of trips to the piano in order to get all of the pieces, but she was delighted with the results. She placed the root on “C”, three seed pods, and the major’s flower. No music played until she placed the last two seedpods and the miner’s flower. When she did, all THREE notes played together and a beautiful sound came from the path.



“We call that a C major triad”, said the Major. “The root is on ‘C’, that’s how you know which part of the chord gets the name.”

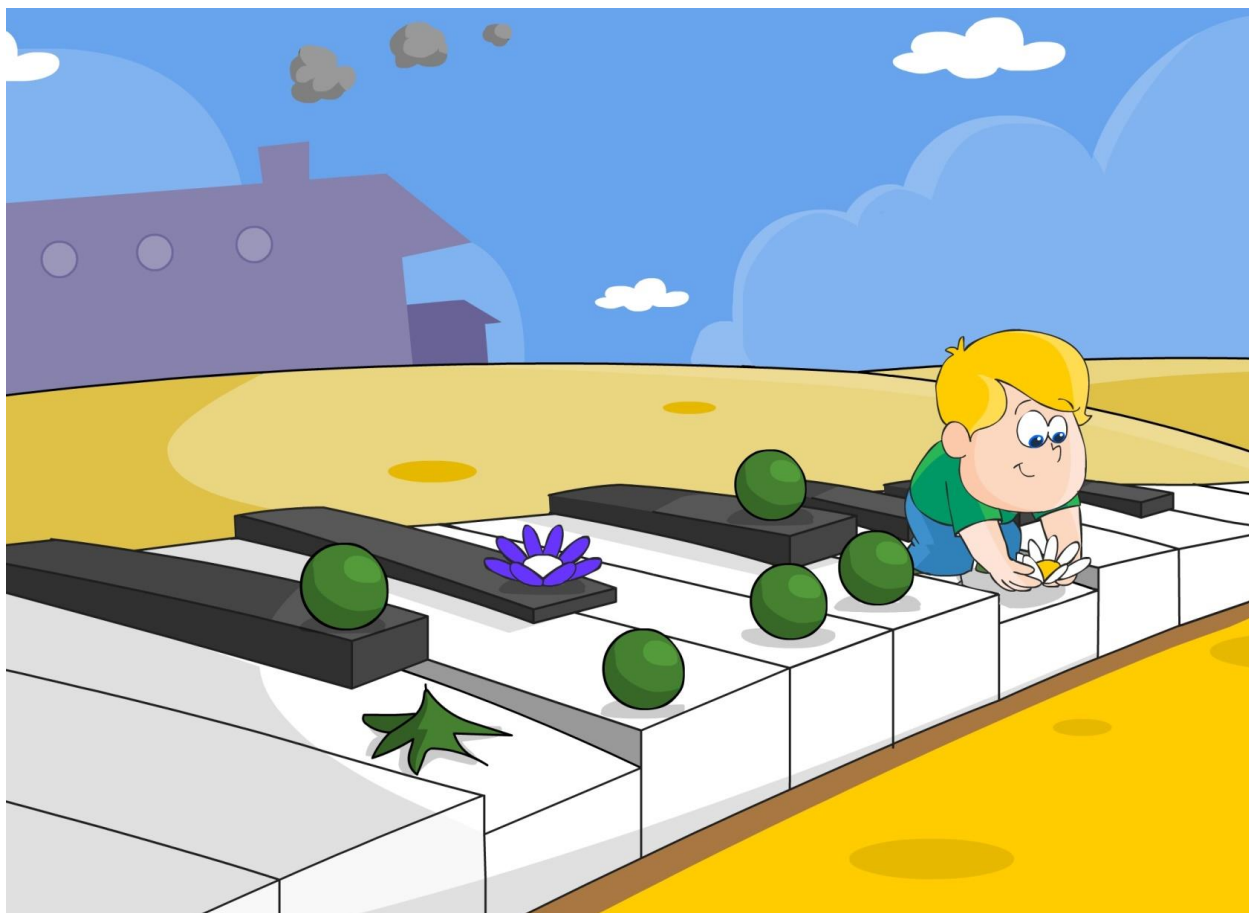
“I get it”, said Harmon. “But what I want to know is whether or not the purple flowers are strong enough to hold up a flower bigger than itself. The major’s flowers are bigger.”

“Excellent question,” said the miner. “My flowers grow in heartier conditions underground, and they have no problem supporting the extra weight.” To prove this, they grafted a major third onto the miner’s flower. It worked!

“Okay, Harmon, you know the drill. Place it on the piano. And just for fun, put the root on C again so we can compare the two chords.”

Melody helped him carry the pieces to the piano, and Harmon carefully placed each flower part on the piano. The resulting sound was not as chipper as Melody’s major triad, but the minor triad had a beautiful sound of its own, and Harmon liked it.





Melody observed that with the root in the same place on “C”, Harmon’s last flower placement was on the same spot as her triad, on “G”. The only difference was where the middle flower was put.

Harmon was thinking his own thoughts. “I think I know why you call it a triad. Is it because there are three notes played?”

“Yes”, said the miner. “Tri is a Latin root that means three. Triangles have three sides, tricycles have three

wheels, triceratops have three horns, and a triad, major or minor, has three notes in it. Who said Latin was a dead language?”

“BAAAHMMMM!!!!”

A loud sound rang from the nearby factory.

“Oh dear, I think we’ve been away too long”, said the Major. “We had better go inside and see what the trouble is.”