



**MindForge**

*Meet the Cast*

STANDARD EDITION

# Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 6 chapter books from the Mindforge cast — each character embodies a different curricular primitive; together they teach the full subject.

Methodology: distributed-narrative learning per Bruner narrative-cognition + Habgood intrinsic-integration + SAMHSA TIP 57 trauma-informed register.

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*For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.*

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# Introduction

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The Mindforge cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 6 characters you'll meet in this book teaches a specific primitive — a particular tactic, a particular technique, a particular way of seeing. Together they form an ensemble: the cast IS the curriculum.

Read in any order. Each chapter stands alone.

Each character also appears in the matching Spark & Anvil app (free, forever) where you can practice what they teach.

— *The editors at Spark & Anvil*

# The Knowing Pair

*notice-and-act pair* — Inside carries the noticing skill (name what is happening inside, no judgment). Settle carries the acting skill (take the noticed-state and choose a small caring step). Together they show that emotional skills are notice-then-act, not solve-it-now. The chapter trains capacity, not deficit.



The mindforge reflection room was quiet at sundown. Long, gentle beams of orange light slanted through the high windows, lighting up dust motes that danced like tiny, sleepy stars. One figure, Inside, sat cross-legged on a floor cushion, watching the motes swirl. Inside's movements were small and slow, their gaze soft and curious. They didn't try to catch the dust, only to see it.

Across the room, Settle was carefully polishing a set of smooth, grey stones, arranging them in a neat line on a low wooden table. Settle's hands were steady and sure. Where Inside was all about watching, Settle was about doing — but never in a rush. The air was still and warm, filled with the comfortable silence of two friends working near each other.

Suddenly, a faint shimmer appeared in the middle of the room. It was like a heat-haze on a summer road. A low, electric hum followed, a sound that made your teeth feel fuzzy. Inside blinked slowly, turning their full attention to the shimmer. Settle paused their polishing, placed a stone down with a soft click, and watched Inside's face. The comfortable quiet had been replaced by something new. Something jittery and uncertain.



Inside leaned forward, their expression open and curious. The shimmer grew more solid, taking on the vague shape of a glass jar, filled with a vibrating, buzzing energy. The hum grew louder. It wasn't an angry sound, not yet, but it was restless. It was the sound of a hundred tiny wings beating against glass.

"I'm noticing something," Inside said, their voice barely a whisper. "It feels... busy."

Settle nodded from across the room, giving Inside space to continue. Settle didn't ask what was wrong or how to fix it. They just waited, listening.

"It feels like a jar full of bees," Inside murmured, their eyes tracing the shape in the air. "They're all bumping into each other. Bumping against the sides. They aren't trying to get out, I don't think. It's just... a lot of movement in a small space. It feels tight. And fizzy."

Inside didn't flinch from the buzzing energy. They didn't call it bad or scary. They just described what they saw and what it felt like, giving it a name and a shape. A jar of bees. A tight, fizzy feeling. By naming it, the shimmering shape seemed to become a little clearer, a little less chaotic. It was still buzzing — but now it had a definition. It was a kind of thing, not an everything.



Settle took a slow, deep breath and let it out. "A jar of bees," Settle repeated, their voice calm and even. The words were not a question, but an acknowledgement. *I hear you. I see it too.* The simple act of agreeing made the room feel a little steadier.

Settle stood up, moving without any suddenness. "Alright. A jar of bees. It's not trying to sting us. It's just buzzing."

Settle walked over to the space where the shimmering jar hovered. They didn't try to touch it or shoo it away. Instead, they looked around the room, their practical gaze scanning the floor, the walls, the empty tables. They were looking for a solution — but not to get rid of the jar. They were looking for a place for it.

"A jar needs a safe place to rest," Settle said thoughtfully. "So it doesn't get knocked over. A place that's strong and steady, where it can just... be." Settle's calm presence seemed to lower the hum in the air just a little. They weren't fighting the feeling. They were making a plan to care for it.



"What if we build a small, steady shelf for it, right here?" Settle suggested, gesturing to a clear space on the floor where a sunbeam had just faded. "Close to the ground, where it can't fall."

Inside's eyes lit up with understanding. "A shelf with soft edges," Inside added, "so the glass doesn't feel like it's on something hard and sharp. It should feel held."

Working together, they began to gather materials from the room itself. Settle collected motes of solid, quiet thought. Inside gathered handfuls of the soft, gentle light that still lingered in the air. Settle shaped the thoughts into a low, sturdy platform. Inside wove the light into a cushion to place on top, a padding that glowed with a faint, warm orange.

They didn't speak much. They just worked, one anticipating the other's needs. Settle would form a corner, and Inside would be there to soften its edge. Together, they built a small, simple, and deeply sturdy place. With a shared, careful movement, they guided the buzzing jar to rest upon the cushioned shelf. The glass settled into the soft light with a sigh. The buzzing continued — but it was contained, supported, and safe.



The sun had now completely set, and the mindforge reflection room was filled with a gentle, silvery twilight. The only other light came from the soft glow of the cushion beneath the jar. The frantic buzzing from within had quieted, replaced by a low, contented hum. It was the sound of a hive at rest.

Settle and Inside sat on the floor nearby, watching it. The tight, fizzy feeling in the room was gone, replaced by the familiar, comfortable peace.

"See?" Settle said softly. "We didn't have to open the jar or let the bees out. We just had to give them a place to be."

"And we noticed they were bees," Inside added, their voice full of quiet wonder. "Not monsters. Or a storm. Just... bees. Naming it helped."

They sat in the calm that followed. They hadn't defeated the feeling. They hadn't chased it away. They had noticed it, named it, and built a place for it. They had made a place for the buzzing to exist without taking over the whole room. And in the quiet, they knew that was enough.

**Listen along + meet more of the cast at:**



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/mindforge/settle-inside>

# About Spark & Anvil

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Spark & Anvil is a 501(c)(3) public charity. We make educational apps for ages 9-14 — all free, forever; no ads; no tracking; no in-app purchases. Mindforge is one of 140+ apps in the portfolio.

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- **ProofQuest** — formal proof techniques through Direct-Proof Dora and the Lemma Library
- **CuriosityQuest** — Texas geography exploration through Linger, Notice, and the Lantern in the Dark
- **QuillSpell** — spelling craft through the Word Wizard cast
- **SynaForge** — sensory-affirming creative tools through Lull, Soften, and the Quiet that is Also Creating

## Methodology

Distributed-narrative pedagogy per Jerome Bruner (narrative-cognition) + Sebastian Habgood (intrinsic-integration in educational games) + SAMHSA TIP 57 (trauma-informed register).

Trauma-informed-design framework per Eggleston et al. (2025) and Stoltenburg et al. (2024).

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