



PipQuest

Meet the Cast

STANDARD EDITION

Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 2 chapter books from the PipQuest 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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Contents

[Copyright & License](#)

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Chompus the Great](#)

[Peglegra the Bold](#)

[About Spark & Anvil](#)

[More chapter books from Spark & Anvil](#)

[Methodology](#)

[License](#)

Introduction

The PipQuest cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 2 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*

Chompus the Great

CHOMPUS — one hit is luck. three hits is a chain. chains send opponents home.



On the little wooden board by Storm Bay, Chompus the pangolin scanned the pieces and did not move yet.

Three of the other player's pieces sat out in the open — one here, one a little further, one further still. They looked like snacks nobody was watching.

"Grab that one!" a young voyager beside him said, pointing at the far piece. "It's right there!"

"Wait," Chompus said softly. He curled his stripey tail and looked at all three at once. "If I bump the far one, the others swim away. But if I bump the near one first..." He rolled, and nudged the closest piece back to the start. Then the next turn, the middle. Then the last. One, two, three — all sent home. "There," he said, warm and slow. "Three little bumps in a row. That's a chain."

The young voyager's mouth fell open.



Chompus had not always been patient.

When he was very small, he played fast. If he saw a piece he could bump, he bumped it — snap, right away, grinning. But he lost, again and again, and he couldn't tell why. He would bump one piece, feel proud for a second, and then watch the whole board slip out of reach.

One evening he sat by the water with his tail all knotted up, feeling grumpy and small. An old sailor pangolin sat down beside him.

"You keep taking the first bite," she said gently. "But look." She spread her paw over the board. "See how the pieces sit in a little row? If you slow down and see the whole row, you don't get one bite. You get three."

Chompus stared at the board for a long, quiet moment. The pieces weren't three separate snacks. They were a *line*. Something in his chest went still and clear.

"See them together," he whispered.

"That's it, little one," she said. "One bump is just luck. Three bumps is a plan."



He walked to PipQuest when he was old enough, because it was a place for voyagers who wanted to be careful *and* brave.

Peg, the mentor, met him at the dock and asked him to show what he knew.

Chompus didn't say clever things. He just set three pieces out in a little row, tilted his head, and looked at them for a while. Then he bumped the near one, then the middle one, then the far one — snap, snap, snap.

"You waited," Peg said.

"I looked first," Chompus said. "The far one wanted me to hurry. But the near one was the true start."

Peg smiled. "You belong here."



A young otter came to Chompus one afternoon, cross and stompy.

"I bumped a piece!" she said. "A good one! And I still lost. It's not fair."

Chompus knew that feeling all the way down. He'd stomped that same stomp by the water, once.

"Show me the board," he said. She set it up the way it had been. Three of the other player's pieces sat in a row, and she pointed proudly at the very last one. "I bumped that one."

"That was a good bump," Chompus agreed. "But watch." He reset the pieces. "Which one is closest to you?"

"That one."

"Bump that one first."

She did. The other player, now stuck, couldn't cover the next piece — so next turn she bumped that one too. Then the last. Three pieces went home in a row, and the otter sat back, blinking.

"It's like... they were holding hands," she said slowly. "And I let go of the closest one first, and the rest came apart."

"Yes," Chompus said, delighted. "One bump is luck. Three is a chain. The chain wins the voyage — not the big grab, the *slow row* of little ones."

The otter grinned so wide her whiskers wobbled.



Later, when the board was put away, the otter came back with one quiet question.

"How do you know," she said, "which one to start with? Before anything's even happened?"

Chompus thought about the water, and the knot in his tail, and the old sailor's warm paw over the pieces.

"You slow down," he said, "and you look at all of them at the same time, until they stop being one-and-one-and-one and become a *row*. There's a feeling when it happens — everything goes calm and clear, like the whole board is holding still just for you." He curled his tail happily. "The hurry always points at the shiny far one. But the slow, seeing-everything feeling? That one's almost always right."

The otter nodded, and Chompus watched the cross, stompy feeling melt off her shoulders — the very same way, long ago, his had by the water.

He didn't say the rest out loud. He just felt it, warm and round and sure, all the way to the tip of his tail: *the best moves don't come from grabbing. They come from that quiet, patient, everything-at-once kind of looking.*

Peglegra the Bold

PEGLEGRA — the brave forward-leap. commit the piece and trust the dice.



On the voyage board in Fruitlandia, Peglegra stood at the edge of a point and looked all the way home.

She was a small stoat with warm orange fur and soft cream stripes, and a little pouch of dice bounced at her side. One of her pieces sat far ahead of the others. Home was close for that one. But it stood all alone.

"You're going to leap it, aren't you?" a young player whispered.

Peglegra didn't answer yet. She rolled. A five and a three. Her whiskers twitched. She could send the lonely piece forward — a huge jump, almost home — but out in the open, where it could be knocked all the way back to the start.

She counted quietly under her breath. Then she grinned. "The math is on my side," she said. And she leaped.

The piece sailed forward. The other player rolled — and missed. Peglegra let out a long breath, and her shoulders finally dropped.

"That," she said, "is the brave forward-leap."



Peglegra had not always been bold.

When she was little, she froze at every roll. A piece all alone scared her. What if it got hit? What if she lost everything she'd built and had to crawl back to the beginning? So she never moved anyone forward on their own. She kept every piece paired up, huddled and safe — and she lost, slowly, every single time, because a voyage you never dare to run is a voyage that never ends.

One evening her grandfather sat beside her at the board. He didn't tell her to stop being scared.

"That flutter in your chest," he said, "the one right before a big move — do you feel it now?"

Peglegra nodded, small.

"Good. That flutter isn't a warning to hide. It's just your heart getting ready." He tapped a lone piece. "Brave doesn't mean you don't feel it. Brave means you count first, and then you leap anyway." He smiled. "Bold and counted is craft. Bold and guessing is only luck."

Peglegra didn't win that night. But something loosened in her. The flutter had a job now, and that made it easier to hold.



She came to PipQuest when she was twelve, because it was a place that cared about brave and smart at the same time.

Peg the mentor met her at the board. Peg didn't ask her to prove she was fearless. She just set out one lonely piece and asked, "Should it run, or should it wait?"

Peglegra looked. She counted the ways the other side could reach it — the exact rolls that would send it back. Only a few. "It should run," she said. "There are only four rolls that hit it. And running it gets me twelve steps closer to home. That's worth it."

Peg's eyes crinkled. "You didn't just feel brave," she said. "You *counted* your brave. You belong here."



One afternoon a young stoat came to Peglegra's corner of the board, arms crossed, cross about it.

"I keep losing," he said. "Either I stay too safe and never get home, or I leap and get smashed back to the start. There's no winning."

Peglegra knew that feeling exactly. "Show me your board," she said.

He did. One of his pieces was far ahead, all alone. "I'm scared to move it," he admitted.

"Okay. Before you move anything — count," Peglegra said. "How many of your friend's rolls could reach that lonely piece?"

He worked it out on his paws. "Um... only three."

"Three out of thirty-six chances. That's small. And if you leap, how much closer to home do you get?"

His eyes went wide. "A lot. Almost there."

"So the leap is worth it. Not because you *feel* like it — because you *checked* it." She nudged the piece gently. "Try."

He leaped. The other side rolled — and rolled wrong. His piece was safe, and nearly home. He whooped so loud he startled a passing bird.

"See?" Peglegra said. "Boldness didn't beat the fear. Counting did. The fear got quiet once you knew the odds."



Later, when the board was still and the young stoat had gone home happy, he crept back with one more question. He was quieter now.

"When your heart's pounding," he said, "and you don't know for sure it'll work out... how do you make yourself leap anyway?"

Peglegra thought about the roost of her own small days — the frozen paws, the huddled pieces, her grandfather's calm voice.

"You don't make the pounding stop," she said. "You let it come. You count your chances until the fear goes small enough to carry. And then that flutter turns into something else — a lift, right under your ribs, like you're already halfway across the gap." She looked out over the voyage board toward home. "That feeling — heart-up, ready, about to go — that's not something to run from. That's the best part. That's brave getting ready to happen."

The young stoat nodded slowly, and Peglegra watched the worry ease out of his shoulders.

She didn't say the rest out loud. But she felt it, warm and steady in her chest: *the flutter was never the enemy. It was just courage, arriving early.*

About Spark & Anvil

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- **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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