



SafetyForge

Meet the Cast

STANDARD EDITION

Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 6 chapter books from the SafetyForge 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

The SafetyForge 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

digital-safety help-seeking pair — Tell carries the *talk-to-a-trusted-grown-up* skill (when something online is bigger than you). Trace carries the *look-back-at-clues* skill (notice patterns, sources, signals). Together they show that online safety is two friends and a calm grown-up, not a single hero.



The big orange beanbag at the Safetyforge Center made a gentle *whoosh* as Tell flopped onto it. Outside, the sun was bright, but inside, the air was cool and smelled faintly of cinnamon from the snack-bot, S.N.A.X., who was quietly polishing its own chrome shell in the corner. Across from Tell, Trace was curled in a blue armchair, their brow furrowed in concentration as they tapped on a tablet. They were exploring a new level in their favorite game, *Cosmic Critters*.

Suddenly, Trace made a small noise — a little "hmpf" of confusion. "Hey, Tell," Trace said, not looking up. "Look at this."

Tell leaned over, peering at the screen. A message from another player, *CritterFan782*, was blinking in the chat window. It read: "URGENT! Forward this to 10 friends or your Cosmic Critter loses its sparkle FOREVER! It's the new rule!"

"That feels... weird," Tell said, sitting up. "A rule? The game developers never send rules through player chat." A tight, prickly feeling sprouted in Tell's stomach — the feeling they got when a story didn't quite make sense, or when someone was trying to rush them into something. "It feels kind of mean, too."



Trace's fingers flew across the screen, but they weren't forwarding the message. Instead, they were scrolling backward, their eyes scanning old chat logs. "Hang on," Trace murmured. "This isn't the first time. It just feels... familiar."

Tell watched, fascinated. Trace was like a detective on the hunt. They didn't panic or get upset. They got curious. They opened a notepad app on the tablet and started a list.

"Here," Trace said, tapping the screen. "Last Tuesday. A message from *CritterFan914*. It said you had to buy a special gem or your critter would get sad." Trace kept scrolling. "And the week before that. *CritterFan211*. A message about a secret level that you could only unlock if you shared a 'secret code' with your whole friends list."

Trace paused and underlined the three usernames with a finger. "See?" Trace said quietly. "It's a pattern. It's always a user named *CritterFan* with random numbers. And it always asks you to do something fast, for a weird reason. It's not just one person being strange. It's the same strange thing, over and over."



Tell looked at the list Trace had made. The tight, prickly feeling in Tell's stomach hadn't gone away, but now it had company: a sense of clarity. Seeing the clues laid out like that made the problem feel less like a ghost and more like a puzzle.

"You're right," Tell said. "It *is* a pattern. And it's making the game feel crummy."

Tell took a deep breath. Trace had done their part. They had looked back and found the clues. Now it was Tell's turn. The problem felt organized, but it still felt too big to solve alone. It was time to bring in someone with more experience.

"Okay," Tell said, standing up and brushing dust from their pants. "We named the problem, and you tracked it. Now we tell someone."

Tell nodded toward the other side of the room, where the center's guide, Jax, was helping someone un-jam a 3D printer. "This is bigger than us. Let's go show Jax. Together."



They walked over to Jax, tablet in hand. "Hey Jax," Tell began, "we found something weird in *Cosmic Critters*."

Trace held up the tablet, showing Jax the message and the list of similar ones they had collected. Jax stopped tinkering with the printer and gave the screen their full attention. Jax didn't look worried or scared — which made Tell's shoulders relax a little. Instead, Jax looked interested.

"Wow," Jax said, looking from the tablet to their faces. "First off, great job not forwarding that. And Trace — this list is amazing detective work. That must have felt confusing and annoying to get messages like that." Jax's voice was calm and steady. "It's not cool when someone tries to pressure you in a game."

"These are called chain messages," Jax explained, pointing to the screen. "Sometimes they're part of a scam, sometimes just a prank to see how far they spread. The threat about your critter losing its sparkle isn't real. It's just a trick to get you to share it. You two did the exact right thing — slowed down, looked at the pattern, and came to talk it out. Let's block and report these accounts together. You can show me how."



Back on their beanbags, the *Cosmic Critters* game world felt bright and fun again. The weird, pressuring messages were gone, blocked and reported. A sense of quiet relief settled over them. S.N.A.X. rolled over and offered them both a juice box, which they accepted gratefully.

"I feel so much better," Tell said, taking a sip. "Trying to figure that out by myself would have felt... heavy. Like I was supposed to know the answer already."

Trace nodded, tapping away on their tablet to organize their critter's inventory. "But finding the pattern made it feel smaller," Trace added. "It wasn't some random scary thing. It was just... a system. A boring, broken system."

Tell smiled. "You're good at tracking the clues. And I guess I'm good at knowing when it's time to talk it out."

They bumped their juice boxes together in a small toast. They hadn't just gotten rid of a problem — they had figured out *how* to get rid of it. They had a system of their own. And working together, they knew they could handle the next weird thing that came their way.

Listen along + meet more of the cast at:



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/safetyforge/tell-trace>

About Spark & Anvil

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. SafetyForge is one of 140+ apps in the portfolio.

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- **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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