



LinguaQuest

Meet the Cast

STANDARD EDITION

Spark & Anvil

Copyright & License

© 2026 Spark & Anvil (501(c)(3) public charity). Chapter text and illustrations licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. App software © Spark & Anvil — all rights reserved. Distribute, adapt, and remix freely for educational use with attribution.

This book collects 5 chapter books from the *LinguaQuest* 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.

Spark & Anvil is a 501(c)(3) public charity. All apps free forever; no ads; no tracking; no in-app purchases.

spark-and-anvil.com

This is Volume 1 of 2 of the *LinguaQuest* — *Meet the Cast* series; each volume is a complete standalone book you can read on its own.

For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.

Contents

Copyright & License	
Contents	
Introduction	
Bough	
Drift	
Glyph	
Bridge	
Cant	
About Spark & Anvil	
More chapter books from Spark & Anvil	
Methodology	
License	

Introduction

The LinguaQuest cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 5 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*

Bough

LANGUAGE FAMILIES — languages have ancestors. tree-of-tongues; family resemblance.



Bough sat in the middle of the courtyard with four words written on four scraps of parchment, and she was refusing to line them up in a straight row.

"Mother," she read off the first scrap. Then the others, slow and careful: "Mātr. Māter. Mutter." She laid them out on the stone — not in a line, but in a little fan, like fingers spreading from one palm.

A boy watched her from the bench, arms crossed. "They're just different words for the same thing," he said. "So what?"

"So *listen* to them," Bough said. She was a small, chunky banyan-tween, her roots curling patient across the courtyard tiles, a folded scrap of parchment tucked in her branches. She read the four words again, and this time she leaned on the sounds. *Muh. Muh. Muh.* Every one of them started the same soft way.

"They *rhyme*," the boy admitted.

"They don't rhyme. They *remember*." Bough drew a little line back from all four scraps until the lines met at one empty spot on the stone. "There was a word here. A very old one. Nobody wrote it down, because nobody was writing anything down yet. But four grandchildren-words all point back to it — English *mother*, Hindi *mātr*, Latin *māter*, German *Mutter*. Four cousins who never met, all with their great-great-grandmother's chin."

She sat back. The boy uncrossed his arms and leaned over the little fan of words, and Bough watched his face do the thing she loved most — the small startled softening when someone realizes that words have families, and that the families are *real*.



Bough had learned to look for that resemblance a long way from any classroom.

She grew up in an old banyan grove where her family were the tree-walkers — the ones whose roots reached quietly under the ground from village to village. When she was small, she thought every grove was supposed to grow the same way. Then one summer she stretched her roots into a far village and felt, for the first time, a tree shaped *completely* differently from her own — trunks where she had branches, a canopy that spread instead of climbing.

Her first feeling was a hot little flush of *wrong*. This tree was doing it wrong. Hers was the right shape.

Her grandmother felt her flinch through the shared roots and came slow and warm across the grove. "You met a tree that isn't like ours," she said. It wasn't a question.

Bough nodded, embarrassed, not sure why.

"And some small part of you decided ours was the better one." Her grandmother didn't scold. She just pressed a root gently against the strange far tree. "Feel how deep this one goes. Older than ours, maybe. Fuller. It's not a worse tree because it grew a different shape. There's no *right* shape for a family, little one. There's only how deep it goes and how long it's been growing." She paused. "Anyone who tells you one family is better than another — they've just never put their roots down far enough to feel the others."

Bough sat with that a long time. The hot *wrong* feeling drained out of her and left something quieter behind: a kind of hungry respect. She took it with her when she left the grove.



At twelve she walked to LinguaQuest, because a place that studied how people talk ought to understand that people talk in more than one kind of tree.

Her mentor, Mira, met her at the gate and asked only one thing. "What are language families?"

Bough didn't rush to explain. She unfolded her little parchment on the ground and pointed — not to the top of it, but all across it. "These," she said. "So many trees. This tall one is Indo-European — English, Spanish, Hindi, Russian, all cousins. This one is Sino-Tibetan. This is Afro-Asiatic — Arabic and Hebrew and Hausa share a grandmother too. This wide one is Niger-Congo, the biggest of all." She kept her finger moving, gentle, so no tree got pointed at like it mattered more. "Each one is a whole forest of its own. Not one of them is the trunk that the others branch off."

Mira crouched to look. "And if a student walked in knowing only English?"

"Then they've seen one twig," Bough said, "off one branch, of one tree. And I'd want them to feel how much forest is still out there — not so they feel small, but so they feel *lucky*."

Mira smiled. "You belong here."



Bough's workshop filled up fast, and the boy from the courtyard came back with the four scraps of parchment still crumpled in his fist.

"Okay," he said. "So English has this whole family. What's the *best* branch?"

Bough set down the leaf she was holding. "Say more. Why best?"

"Well — the oldest one? Or the one with the most people? Somebody must be winning."

"Watch," Bough said. She spread her parchment and put one root softly on the tallest tree. "Indo-European. About three billion people." She moved to another. "Sino-Tibetan. One and a half billion." Another. "Basque, over here — it has *no known relatives at all*. A whole family of one. Some people used to call languages like that *old-fashioned*, or *simple*." She looked up. "Do you think a tree that grew alone for that long, and still says everything its speakers ever needed to say, is simple?"

The boy hesitated. "...No."

"Every one of these trees can say anything. Ask a question, tell a joke, name a feeling nobody's named before. That's not a contest anybody wins — that's just what a language *is*." She tapped the empty spot where a proto-word once lived. "About two hundred years ago some scholars decided their own family was best. It was a mistake, and better scholars fixed it. But the mistake still whispers, so people like me keep saying it plain: no tree is above another. When you learn a new language, you don't conquer its tree. You climb into it as a guest, and you honor how deep it goes."

The boy looked down at his four cousin-words for *mother*, and this time he laid them out himself — in a fan, not a line.



Later, when the workshop had emptied, the boy lingered at the door.

"When you find a family," he said quietly, "and you feel how they all lean back toward one word nobody ever heard... what is that? What are you feeling?"

Bough thought about the far grove, and the hot *wrong* feeling that had turned into something better.

"It's a kind of belonging you didn't know you had," she said. "You hear a stranger's word and part of you leans toward it, like you almost remember. Because in a way you do — everyone's language came from somewhere older, connected to somewhere else older still, all the way back past where anyone can see." She curled a root around the little parchment. "The whole world of talking is one enormous forest, and no one is standing in the middle of it. We're all just leaves, way out on our own branches, close enough to touch the ones beside us."

The boy nodded slowly and went out into the evening.

Bough sat with her four cousin-words a while longer. She didn't say the last part out loud, but she felt it settle in her, warm and rooted and glad: *the whole forest leans a little toward each other, and being one small leaf in it is not a lonely thing at all.*

Drift

*SOUND CHANGE — *sounds shift slowly across generations. systematic patterns; predictable directions.**



High on the cliffside, Drift the swift-tween pressed his ear to the wind and caught a sound sliding out from under a word.

Two farmers were arguing about a fish downhill, and Drift's whole body went still. "There," he whispered, tugging his too-big time-traveler cap out of his eyes. "*Fish*." He hopped along the ledge, following the sound like a scent. "In Latin it was *pisces* — with a hard *p* right at the front. Same fish. Same old root. But somewhere, long ago, a whole crowd of *p* sounds got tired and softened into *f*." He tapped his glowing little chart. "*Pater* became *father*. *Pisces* slid to *fish*. Not one word — every last one of them. The whole crowd walked the same way at once." He beamed at the empty air. "You can't hear it happening. But you can catch it after it's done."



Drift's family were generation-watchers — swifts who lived long enough to remember how the village's own speech had shifted, and who kept track of every slide.

When Drift was small he came home crying, because an elder from the next valley had laughed at how he said a word. "That's not how it goes," the elder had sniffed.

His grandmother took him up to their favorite ledge and pointed her wing at the wind. "Youngsters always speak a little differently from the elders," she said. "Always have. When I was your age, they laughed at *me*." She chuckled. "That's not you being wrong, little one. That's just the wave. Sounds don't stand still — they drift, slow as tide, across the years." She smoothed his ruffled feathers. "The trick isn't to stop the wave. It's to learn to read it. Then you're never lost in it — you're riding it." Drift stopped crying. He started listening. He never really stopped.



He was twelve when he glided down into *LinguaQuest*, chart tucked under one wing, and Mira met him with a riddle.

"There's a word older than anyone alive," she said. "Nobody ever wrote it down. Nobody ever heard it. How would you find out how it sounded?"

Drift didn't blink. He landed, spread his glowing chart on the grass, and pointed. "You look at all its grandchildren," he said. "The words alive today that came from it. You line them up. You watch which sounds drifted, and which way." His feathers puffed with quiet excitement. "The drifts follow rules — if a *k* softened to an *h* over here, it softened everywhere in that family. So you run the rules backward. Step by step, valley by valley, until you're standing in a village nobody's seen in six thousand years." He looked up. "That's how we know how the oldest language sounded, even though no one alive ever heard it spoken."

Mira crouched over the chart, eyes moving along his traced lines. "You didn't tell me a rule," she said softly. "You dug up a lost village and handed it to me." She helped him fold the chart. "There's a workshop up on the ridge. It's yours."



Drift's workshop was carved into the cliff face, all wind and echo, and the day a knot of students climbed up to visit, he held his chart out over the drop so the light caught it.

"Watch," he said, and traced a slow line. A little *p* sound bloomed on the tablet, shimmered, and melted into an *f*. Then a *t* softened into a *th*. Then a hard *k* thinned into a breathy *h*. "*Trēs* became *three*," he said. "*Km̥tom* became *hundred*. One slide, one direction, and it caught every word in the whole branch of the family at the same time." He let the wind tug the chart. "That's the thing to feel in your bones: it's not sloppy, and it's not random. When a sound drifts, it drifts *regular*. That's how you know it's real change and not just one person's mumble."

A boy squinted. "But English is done changing, right? It's finished?"

Drift laughed so hard his cap slipped. "Finished! Oh, no." He steadied it. "You and your grandmother don't say every word the same. Listen close and you'll hear it right now — different in the mountains, different in the city. Every one of those little differences is a wave just starting." He grew warmer. "The way you and your friends talk today? Somebody older probably calls it 'wrong.' It isn't. It's tomorrow's ordinary, drifting in early."



After the others scrambled back down, the boy stayed on the ledge, kicking a pebble off the edge.

"An older kid told me I say a word 'lazy,'" he said. "That I'm doing it wrong."

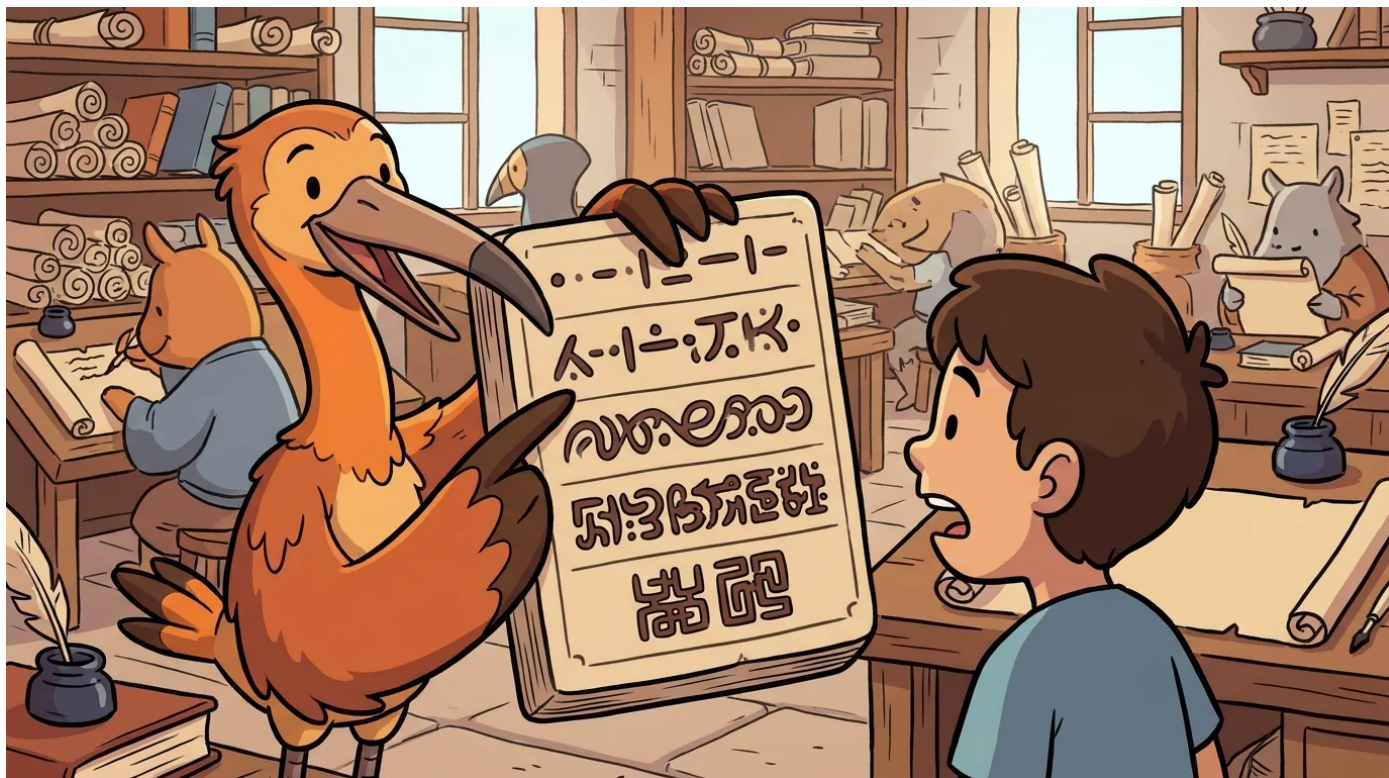
Drift settled beside him, quiet now, the way he got when something mattered. "You're not doing it wrong," he said. "You're doing it *next*. Your mouth is standing on the newest edge of a wave that's been rolling for a thousand years." He nodded at the horizon. "The elders said it one way. You say it another. Someday kids who aren't even born yet will say it a third way — and they'll get laughed at too, and they won't be wrong either." He tucked his chart away. "There's a peace in that, once you feel it. Nobody's speech is broken. Not the old way, not your way, not the way that's coming."

The boy said his word — his own way, out loud, unhurried — and for the first time it didn't feel like a mistake. It felt like his place in a long, slow line.

"Feel that?" Drift said, gentle as the wind. "That calm settling in? That's you letting go of being ashamed. We're all just riding the same slow wave together. It never stops. And it was never yours to fix."

Glyph

*WRITING SYSTEMS — *alphabet, abjad, abugida, syllabary, logograph — each captures speech differently.**

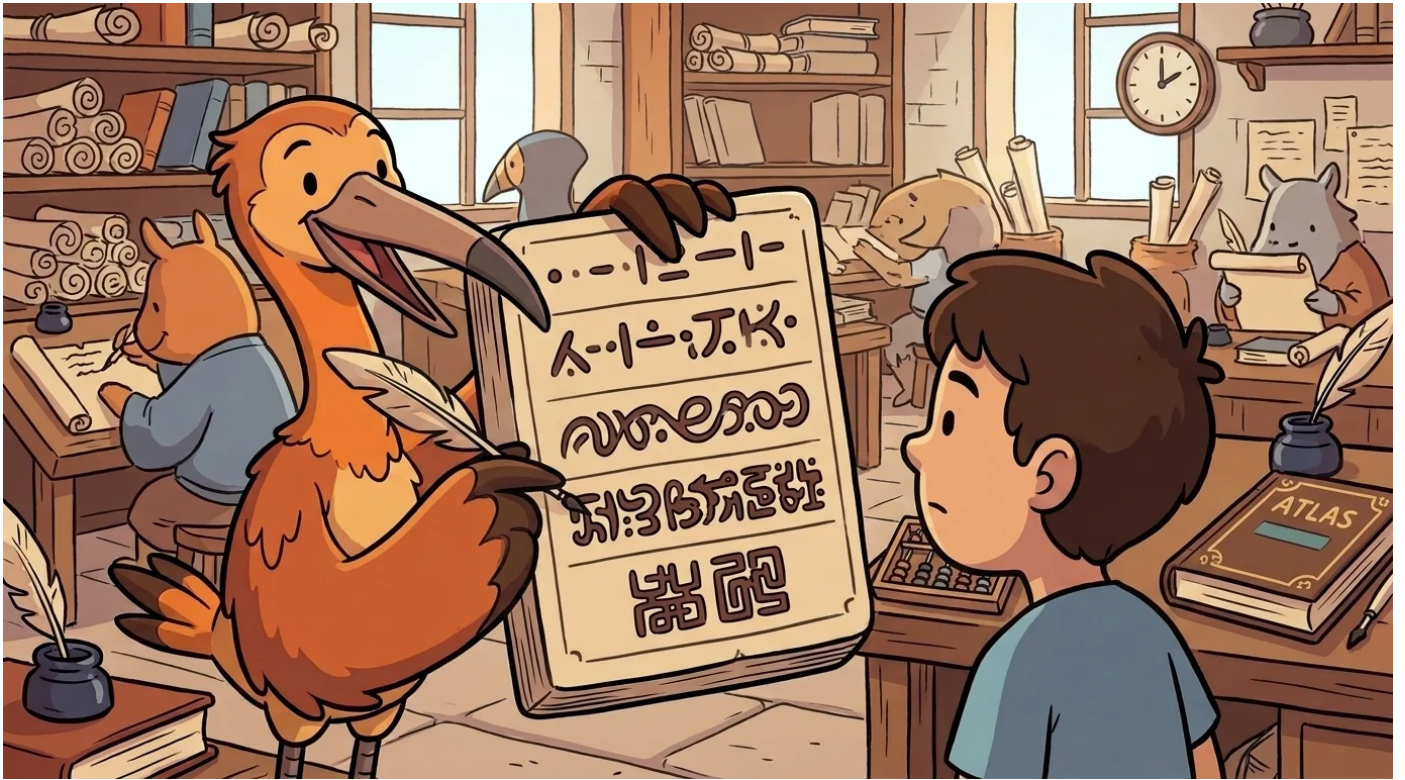


In the scriptorium, Glyph the ibis-tween had the same two words written five different ways down her tablet, and she was daring a visitor to call any of them wrong.

"Hello, world," she said, tilting the tablet toward the boy who'd wandered in. "Watch." She pointed to the top line — neat separated letters. "Here it is with an alphabet, one letter for about one sound." Her feather slid down. "Here, an abjad — the consonants written strong, the vowels tucked into little marks." Down again, to a row where each mark carried a built-in hum. "Abugida. Then a syllabary, one symbol per whole beat. Then—" her feather stopped on a pair of dense, beautiful shapes — "a logograph, where the symbol holds a whole word at once." She looked up, eyes bright. "Five roads. Same destination. Go on — pick the 'best' one. I'll wait."

The boy opened his mouth, then closed it. He couldn't.

"Exactly," Glyph said, delighted.



Glyph came from a family of scriptorium-elders, ibises who had kept the village's writing for as long as anyone could remember, in more scripts than most people knew existed.

When she was young, she made a mistake she never forgot. A traveler had shown her a page of Arabic, and she'd wrinkled her beak and said, "Where are all the vowels? That looks *broken*."

Her great-aunt, who was patching an old scroll, set down her needle very slowly. "Broken," she repeated, not angry, just quiet. "Child. That script has carried poetry and law and prayer for a thousand years. It isn't missing anything. It's built for a language where the meaning lives in the consonants — so that's what it writes, clear as a bell." She looked at Glyph over her spectacles. "The only thing broken here is a young bird who called a stranger's home ugly because it wasn't hers." Glyph's ears burned. She never forgot the lesson underneath the sting: *new to me is not the same as strange, and familiar to me is not the same as simple.*



She was twelve when she walked into LinguaQuest, tablet under one wing, and Mira met her with a test disguised as a question.

"Some folks say the alphabet is the cleverest way to write," Mira said. "The most advanced. What do you say?"

Glyph could have argued. Instead she set her tablet down and lit up the five lines. "I say look," she said. She pointed to the logograph. "Chinese has whole crowds of words that sound the same. This script tells them apart at a glance — the alphabet would blur them together." She pointed to the abjad. "This one packs a whole word's meaning into a handful of consonants, because that's how the language is built." She sat back. "Each one grew up to fit its own language, like a shoe fits a foot. 'Advanced' is the wrong question. The right question is *fitted*."

Mira studied the glowing rows a long moment. "You didn't rank them for me," she said. "You showed me why ranking them is the mistake." She stepped back from the doorway. "The workshop with the wide windows is yours. Good light for reading."



Glyph's workshop was full of side-by-side scrolls, and the day a group of students crowded in, she had the same phrase waiting on her tablet, glowing in all five scripts.

"Same meaning, five ways of catching it," she said, and walked them along the row. "Latin letters — five of them, one per sound. Arabic — the consonants strong, marks for the vowels if you want them. Devanagari — consonants with the vowel built right in. Japanese hiragana — one symbol for each whole syllable. Chinese — two characters, each holding a whole word." She turned the tablet so the light rippled across all five. "Every one says *hello*. Not one of them is trying to be the others."

A girl frowned at the Chinese characters. "But those look so much harder."

"Harder to *you*," Glyph said gently, "because they're new to you. To a child in Beijing, your alphabet looks like a fence full of little sticks." She smiled. "New isn't hard. Familiar isn't simple. If you ever hear someone say a script is 'too slow' or 'skips the vowels like it forgot them' — that's just somebody who's only ever seen one road, mistaking it for the only road." She tapped the tablet. "There are five. At least. And each one is exactly right for the mouth that made it."



After the lesson, the girl stayed, running her feather-light finger over a script that wasn't the alphabet.

"My family writes in one of these," she said quietly. "Not the letters everyone at school uses. Someone said it looked 'weird.'"

Glyph came and sat beside her, and looked at the script the way you look at something precious. "It isn't weird," she said. "It's a whole way of holding your language on a page — clever, complete, worked out over lifetimes by people who loved it." She let her gaze rest on the five glowing rows. "Your script has a seat right here, next to all the others. Not below them. Beside them." Her voice went soft and warm. "Every one of these is somebody's home. Yours too."

The girl traced her family's script again — slower this time, almost proud. And a happy warmth spread across Glyph's face, the kind that comes from watching someone stop shrinking and start belonging.

"Doesn't that feel good?" Glyph murmured, looking down at all five scripts side by side. "Knowing there's room on the page for every last one of us. There always was."

Bridge

*COGNATES + LOANWORDS — *shared roots; trade-route borrowings. languages are connected through history.**



The market square smelled of cinnamon and dust, and Bridge the camel-tween was on his knees in the middle of it, chasing a word.

A merchant had just haggled over a sack of sugar, and the sound of it — *sukkar* — snagged on Bridge's ear like wool on a thorn. He tugged his little atlas out of his pack and flipped it open on the cobblestones, tracing a line with one hoof. "Sanskrit," he muttered, following the ink. "*Śarkarā*. Then Persian, *shakar*. Then the traders carried it into Arabic, *sukkar*." His hoof kept sliding. "Italy said *zucchero*. And here it lands, on this cart, on this Tuesday." He looked up at the startled merchant, cape slipping off one shoulder. "Do you know how far your sugar walked to sit in that sack?"

The merchant did not know. Bridge, grinning, told him anyway.



Bridge had grown up on the trade road, in a family of caravaneers who crossed continents for a living. His mother could smell a mountain pass a week away. His grandfather had once walked from one sea to another and back.

But it was his aunt who gave Bridge the thing that changed him. She was old, her hump gone soft and lopsided, and one night by the fire she pressed a small thick book into his hooves. "The camel carries what the trader gives," she said, poking the cover. "Salt, silk, a bolt of cloth. But listen, little one — the trader carries something too. A word. He says it at every stop, and by the time he reaches the far city, that word has stepped off the road and stayed." She smiled her lopsided smile. "Both arrive somewhere new. Both change a little on the way. Fill this book. Follow the words home."

Bridge filled the book. He never stopped.



He was twelve when he walked the last stretch of road into LinguaQuest, atlas strapped to his back, hooves aching. Mira was waiting at the gate, and instead of a greeting she gave him a puzzle.

"There's a word I can't place," she said. "*Algebra*. An old word. A math word. Where does it come from?"

Most travelers would have shrugged. Bridge dropped his pack, knelt, and opened the atlas right there in the dirt. "*Al-jabr*," he read, following the line backward. "Arabic. It meant *the reunion of broken parts* — putting a thing back together." His hoof traveled on. "A scholar wrote it in Baghdad, more than a thousand years ago. Traders and scholars carried it into Latin, and Latin handed it to us." He sat back on his heels. "It didn't fall out of the sky into your math class. Somebody walked it here."

Mira crouched to look at the traced line, and something in her face went soft. "You didn't just answer me," she said. "You showed me the road." She helped him to his feet. "Stay. There's a workshop with your name on it."



Bridge's workshop was small and lined with maps, and the day a cluster of students crowded in, he had a jar of ketchup on the table for no reason they could see.

"Watch," he said, and opened the atlas to a page thick with arrows. "Say a word travels. Where does it go?" He traced one route for them — silk and tea and paper strung along the old Silk Road, ginger and cinnamon riding the spice ships, whole crowds of words spilling into English after armies crossed in the year 1066. "Nearly six words in every ten you use came in from French or Latin," he said. "Borrowed. Every one."

A girl in the front frowned. "So English is fake? All borrowed?"

"Richer," Bridge said at once, gently. He picked up the ketchup. "This word started as *kê-tsiap* in southern China — a fish sauce, not a tomato in sight. Malay traders said *kichap*. English sailors said *ketchup*." He set the jar down with a little thump. "The sauce changed. The recipe changed. The word held on the whole way." He looked around at them. "A word that travels isn't broken. It's a passport with a hundred stamps in it."

The girl turned the idea over. "So when someone says a word 'doesn't belong'—"

"Then they don't know where it's been." Bridge tapped his atlas. "Every language is a quilt. All borrowed pieces, stitched together. Nobody's word is a stranger here."



After the students had gone, the girl stayed behind. She was tracing one of the arrows with her finger, following it out past the edge of the map.

"My grandmother has a word," she said quietly. "For a kind of soup. It's not an English word. Kids at school laughed at it once."

Bridge came and sat beside her. He didn't reach for the atlas. "Say it," he said. She did, careful and small. He listened the way you listen to something rare. "That word crossed a border to be with you," he said. "It's carrying your grandmother's whole kitchen inside it. Her mother's kitchen too, probably." He rested a hoof on the map. "It belongs on the page. Right here, with the sugar and the algebra and the ketchup. All travelers. All home."

The girl said her grandmother's word again, and this time it stood up straight. Bridge felt the warmth of it spread all the way through his chest — that quiet, steady gladness of watching someone stop being ashamed of where they came from.

"There," he said softly. "Feel that? Every time you welcome a word's whole journey — your heart makes a little more room. And it never runs out."

Cant

*SOCIOLINGUISTICS — *dialect, register, code-switching, formal/informal. how you speak depends on who you're speaking with.**



The market square went quiet the moment the storm-cloud rolled in, because Cant the starling changed his whole voice mid-sentence.

He'd been chatting with a bread-seller, warm and loose — "yeah, so, the trick is you let the dough just sit, y'know?" — when the wind picked up and the first fat raindrops hit the awnings. Cant snapped upright on his perch, and his voice came out sharp and carrying, cutting clean across the whole square. "COVER THE STALLS. RAIN'S FAST. MOVE NOW." Merchants scrambled. Tarps went up. Then the danger passed, and Cant turned right back to the bread-seller, soft again. "So — where were we? The dough."

The bread-seller blinked. "You've got a whole different bird in there when you need it."

"Same bird," Cant said, ruffling his shimmery feathers. "Different call. It's the only way I know how to be understood."



Cant came from a long line of village announcers — starlings whose whole family trade was knowing which call fit which moment. His grandfather had a warning-call that could clear a square, a song-call for weddings, and a low easy chatter-call for the shop.

When Cant was small, he got them mixed up once. He used the loud warning-call to ask his mother for breakfast, and half the village came running with buckets, thinking there was a fire. He was so mortified he wouldn't speak at all for two days.

His grandmother found him hiding in the rafters. She didn't scold him. She sat beside him and said, "Different people need different calls, little one. That's not confusion — that's a gift you haven't finished unwrapping yet. The call that fits the listener is the right call for that moment." She nudged him gently. "You didn't do it wrong. You just hadn't learned which pocket to reach into." That was the day Cant started sewing his vest — a pocket for every voice, so he'd never freeze up again.

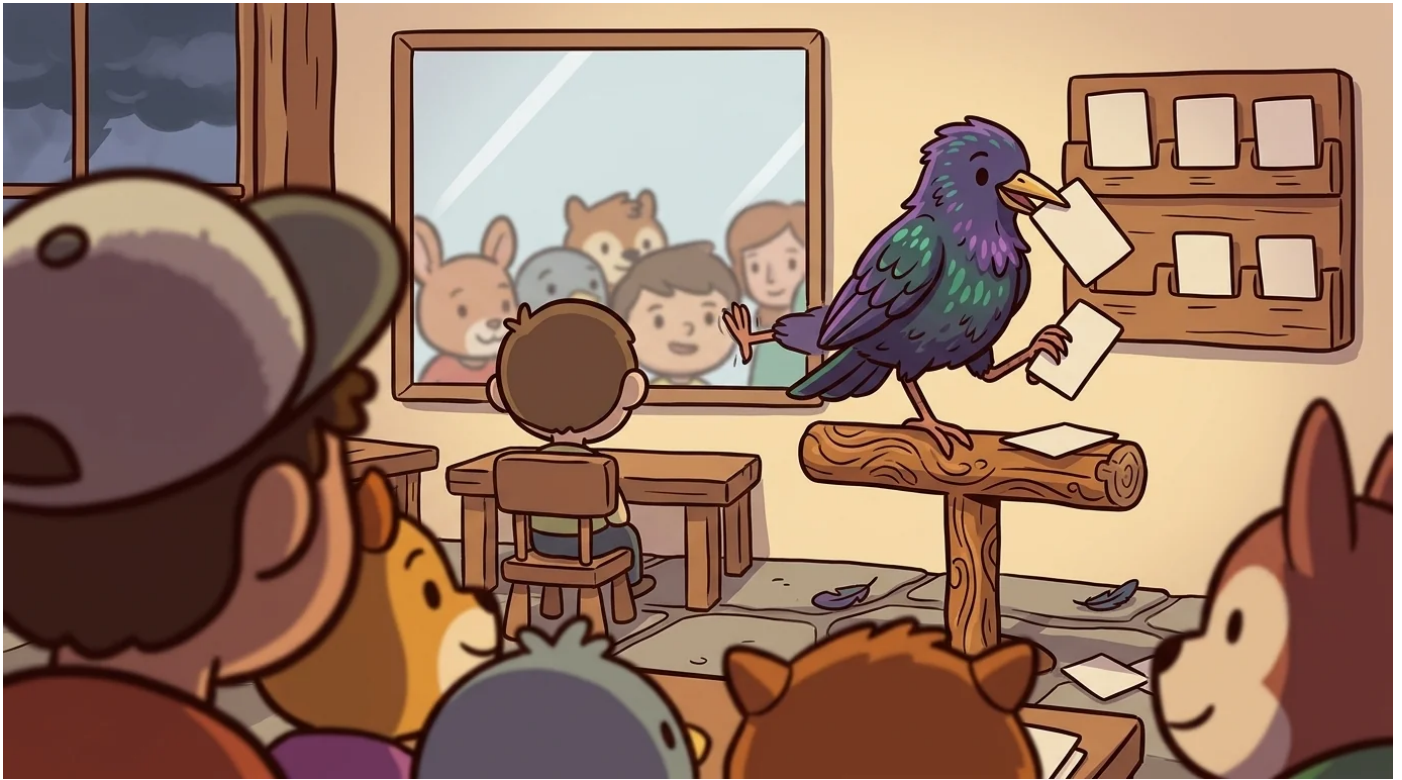


He was thirteen when he arrived at LinguaQuest, vest full of voice-cards, and Mira met him with a challenge instead of a hello.

"There's a family down the road," she said. "They speak a way some folks call 'broken.' The kids are ashamed of it. What would you tell them?"

Cant didn't reach for a card. He answered from his chest. "I'd tell them nothing's broken," he said. "The way they talk has rules — real ones, as tight as any school-book. It just has *different* rules." He fluffed up, indignant on their behalf. "When someone calls a way of talking 'broken,' what they usually mean is 'it's not how the powerful people talk.' That's not the same as wrong."

Mira watched him a long moment. "You didn't recite me a lesson," she said. "You defended somebody." She stepped aside and opened the gate. "The workshop at the end of the row is yours."



Cant's workshop had a mirror on one wall and a rack of his voice-cards on the other, and the day a nervous cluster of students filed in, he decided to show them rather than tell them.

He pulled a card labeled *formal* and cleared his throat. "Good afternoon," he said, in a smooth, buttoned-up voice. "It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance." The students giggled. He tugged a second card — *informal* — and slouched. "Yeah, hi, what's up." More giggles. Then a third card, and his voice went warm and cozy, the tone you use with people who've known you forever.

"Three voices," Cant said. "One bird. Three sets of rules I know by heart. That's not being confused — that's being *good at more than one*." He tapped the mirror. "People do this all day long. You do it. You talk one way with your friends, another way in a school essay, another way at your grandmother's table. Switching between them has a name — code-switching — and it's a skill, not a stumble."

A boy near the back spoke up, quiet. "My cousin talks two ways. At home and at school. Somebody told him he was 'faking' at school."

"He's not faking," Cant said, firm as the warning-call but gentle. "He's *bilingual in tone*. He can read a room and reach for the right pocket. That's harder than what the person mocking him can do, not easier." He crossed to the rack and touched the *family-talk* card. "And this one — the way you speak at home, the way your own people speak — that one is never up for grading. You can learn the school-voice too. You can carry both. Nobody makes you throw one away to hold the other."



After the lesson, the boy lingered by the mirror, not quite looking at himself.

"At home we say things a way my teacher marks wrong," he said. "In red pen."

Cant hopped down beside him. He didn't argue with the teacher; he just spoke to the boy. "The way your family talks isn't a mistake in your mouth," he said. "It's a whole grammar, handed down, working exactly as it's built to. Learn the essay-voice for the essay — that's a good pocket to have. But when you go home and slip back into your own words—" he paused, and his own voice dropped into something soft and private — "notice the feeling. That warm, steady one, right here in your chest." He touched a wing to the boy's ribs. "That's home. It travels with you everywhere you go, in every voice you own."

The boy tried it — said a sentence the home way, out loud, on purpose, not flinching. And there it was: the warmth, steady and sure. He looked up, surprised by it.

"Feel that?" Cant said, feathers shimmering. "Hold onto it. Your voice can shift a hundred ways — but that feeling underneath doesn't have to shift at all. And it never, ever has to be ashamed."

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

More chapter books from Spark & Anvil

Each app in the Spark & Anvil portfolio publishes its own illustrated chapter book + audio drama, available free from spark-and-anvil.com/books. Highlights include:

- **GambitTales** — chess tactics through Sir Pinwell, Lady Skewer, Queen Vesper, and the Twin Knights of Fork Hill
- **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).

License

© 2026 Spark & Anvil (501(c)(3) public charity). Chapter text and illustrations licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. App software © Spark & Anvil — all rights reserved. Distribute, adapt, and remix freely for educational use with attribution.

Cover art, chapter illustrations, and chapter text are reviewed for age-appropriate, trauma-aware content before publication. Audio drama transcripts available at spark-and-anvil.com/cast.