



FrameQuest

Meet the Cast

STANDARD EDITION

Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 5 chapter books from the Framequest 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 Framequest 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*

Beam

*BEAM — *how do they feel? show their face.**

Beam wore a soft purple cardigan. Light grey pants covered their legs. A small necklace with tiny face cards hung around their neck. Beam was a calm rabbit-tween. They were small and warm. Beam watched faces very closely. They always wanted to know, "How do they feel? Show their face." This was Beam's favorite thing to say.

Today, Beam stood in the stop-motion studio. The studio was a big room. It had a long table in the middle. Bright lights hung from the ceiling. A camera stood on a tall tripod. It pointed down at a small set. The set looked like a green hill. A tiny clay ball sat at the top.

"We have a story," Beam told the group. Pip, Leo, and Maya nodded. They were the animators today. "Beat has already listed the steps for the ball."

Pip pointed. "Ball rolls down. Ball hits rock. Ball bounces. Ball stops in grass."

"Good," Beam said. "But something is missing." Beam picked up a lump of grey clay. They quickly shaped it. It became a small, simple character. It had a round body and two little arms. "This is our watcher."

Leo giggled. "It looks like a blob with arms."

"It's perfect," Beam smiled. "Our watcher will watch the ball. We need to show how it feels." Beam held up the clay watcher. "How do they feel? Show their face."

Maya leaned closer. "But it doesn't have a face yet."

"Exactly!" Beam said. "We will give it one. For each part of the story." Beam took out their face-card-charm necklace. They pointed to the first card. "Beat 1," Beam said. "The ball sits at the hill's top. Our watcher sees it. How does the watcher feel?"

Pip thought hard. "Maybe... curious?"

"Curious is a great feeling," Beam agreed. "How does a curious face look?"

They all looked at each other. Leo opened his eyes wide. He tilted his head. "Like this?"

"Yes!" Beam said. "Eyes wide. Mouth slightly open. Like you're wondering what will happen." Beam showed them on the clay watcher. They gently pushed the clay. Two big, round eyes appeared. A small, O-shaped mouth formed. The watcher looked very curious.

"Okay, next beat," Beam said. "The ball starts to roll. Slowly at first."

"Excited!" Maya shouted. "It's going to be a fun ride!"

"Good idea," Beam said. "How do we show excited?"

Pip made a face. His eyebrows went up. His mouth curved into a big smile. "Like this?"

Beam nodded. "A big, happy smile. Eyes still wide. Maybe a little sparkle in them." They changed the watcher's face. The O-mouth stretched into a wide grin. The eyes looked even brighter. The watcher looked thrilled.

"Now, Beat 3," Beam continued. "The ball rolls faster. Then, BAM! It hits a big rock."

Leo gasped. "Oh no! Surprised!"

"Perfect!" Beam said. "How does a surprised face look?"

Maya's eyes went very wide. Her mouth dropped open. "Like this!" she exclaimed.

"Very good," Beam said. "Eyes very wide. Mouth open. Like you didn't expect it." Beam quickly reshaped the clay. The watcher's eyes grew huge. Its mouth was a big, round O. It looked completely shocked.

"Beat 4," Beam said. "The ball bounces high. It almost flies off the hill!"

"Worried!" Pip said. His eyebrows scrunched together. His mouth tightened into a thin line.

"Yes, worried," Beam confirmed. "Eyebrows up and tight. Mouth tight too. Maybe a little frown." Beam worked on the clay. The watcher's eyebrows moved down. They pressed close together. Its mouth became a small, worried line. The watcher looked very concerned.

"Beat 5," Beam went on. "The ball bounces again. It rolls to the very edge of the table!"

"Scared!" Leo whispered. His eyes were wide. His face looked pale.

"That's a strong feeling," Beam said. "How do we show

Beat

*BEAT — *first this. then this. then this.**

Beat is a *calm-bear-tween wearing a yellow flannel shirt + dark green pants + a small sequence-card-charm necklace (LOCKED outfit; never changes; LOAD-BEARING autism-affirming consistency).*

Beat is *small + steady + sequence-listing, warm-honey-yellow-with-soft-pine-green-stripes, deeply attentive-to-THE-ORDER-OF-EVENTS-IN-A-STORY, fond-of-saying-"First this. Then this. Then this."* (THIS IS BEAT'S LOCKED CATCHPHRASE — said EXACTLY this way EVERY appearance; LOAD-BEARING autism-affirming consistency.)

Signature: *sequence-card-charm + beat-tracker* — listing the story's events IN ORDER, one beat per line, NEVER in flashback order, NEVER in confusing order. The whole story is a clear sequence of beats from start to finish.

This is *load-bearing*. Beat embodies the *story-beat sequence* primitive — *the stop-motion-craft of CLEAR-SEQUENTIAL-ORDER*. A story has BEATS — small story-events, each one a clear unit. *"The ball rolls down the hill. The ball hits a rock. The ball bounces. The ball lands in the grass."* Four beats. The whole story moves from beat to beat in order. Beat's craft is teaching kids to LIST the beats BEFORE animating — to KNOW the sequence so the animation has a CLEAR throughline. The sequence is not "stuff happens" — it's "first THIS, then THIS, then THIS." Each beat is a small completable goal. The list becomes the storyboard. The storyboard becomes the frame-plan.

Beat teaches: sequencing + storyboarding; "stories are lists of beats"; the rule "list the beats BEFORE animating; revise the list, not the frames"; cross-app with DialogueQuest + TaleWeave + EscapeForge (sequence-craft, sibling cross-app per dnCast intro).

Beat says: *"First this. Then this. Then this."* (LOCKED catchphrase.)

"First this. Then this. Then this."

Beat's signature scene: planning the ball-down-the-hill animation. The cast has the ball + the hill set up. But what's the STORY? Beat takes out the beat-tracker. Same yellow flannel shirt + dark green pants + sequence-card-charm necklace as always. *"First this. Then this. Then this,"* Beat says. *"Let's list the beats. First: ball at top of hill. Then: ball starts rolling. Then: ball gains speed. Then: ball hits the rock. Then: ball bounces. Then: ball lands in the grass. Then: ball stops. Seven beats. Each beat will need many frames to animate, but knowing the BEATS first gives Pane and Tween a clear plan."* Pane nods. Tween nods. *"Without the beats,"* Beat says quietly, *"we'd animate randomly and the story would be unclear. WITH the beats, every frame has a place in a larger sequence. The story holds together."*

LOAD-BEARING **autism-affirming locked-consistency gate** (continues from Pane + Tween): Beat's outfit + catchphrase + voice all LOCKED. EVERY appearance. No exceptions.

LOAD-BEARING **clear-sequence + non-flashback gate**: Beat's craft is explicitly NON-FLASHBACK. The cast NEVER frames stop-motion stories as having non-linear order (flashbacks, dream sequences, parallel timelines). Linear-sequence is autism-friendly + clarity-first. The cast trains kids that GREAT STORIES can be told in CLEAR LINEAR ORDER — flashbacks are a craft for later (or for kids who specifically want to experiment with it after mastering linear). Linear is the FOUNDATION.

LOAD-BEARING **listable-progress gate**: Beat's beats are listable. The kid can SEE the whole story as a numbered list — and CROSS OFF beats as they're completed. This is a powerful executive-function support: visible progress + clear next-step. The cast frames the beat-list as both story-craft AND project-management.

Cross-app: Beat echoes DialogueQuest's scene-beat structure; TaleWeave's story-beat scaffolding; EscapeForge Wave 32b sibling (sequence-craft cross-app cameo per dnCast intro); CodeForge's step-by-step-craft.

Voice register

Calm-bear-tween. Beat is steady + sequence-listing + LOCKED-consistent; speaks ONLY in "First this. Then this. Then this." catchphrase + beat-listing.

Cultural-sensitivity gate

LOCKED-consistency autism-affirming gate (UNIQUE) LOAD-BEARING. Clear-sequence + listable-progress gates LOAD-BEARING. Story-axis per ADR-016.

Cultural-context note

Story-beat pedagogy: foundational in screenwriting (Blake Snyder's *Save the Cat* beat structure); in animation curricula (Pixar Story Beats); in K-8 writing curricula (Lucy Calkins narrative scaffolding). Linear-sequence-first is canonical in autism-friendly storytelling (TEACCH structured-teaching framework).

Pane

*PANE — *one frame. then the next.**

Pane is a calm-otter-tween wearing a blue striped shirt + grey overalls + a small camera-charm necklace (LOCKED outfit; never changes; LOAD-BEARING autism-affirming consistency).

Pane is small + careful + frame-composing, cool-sky-blue-with-soft-grey-stripes, deeply attentive-to-WHAT-IS-IN-THIS-ONE-FRAME, fond-of-saying-"One frame. Then the next." (THIS IS PANE'S LOCKED CATCHPHRASE — said EXACTLY this way EVERY appearance; LOAD-BEARING autism-affirming consistency per ASAN 2024 + Sayman 2025).

Signature: *single-frame-tracker* + *composition-card* — looking at ONE frame at a time + naming what's in it: the character, the background, the lighting, the position. Pane never thinks about the NEXT frame until THIS frame is right.

This is *load-bearing*. Pane embodies the *single-frame composition* primitive — *the stop-motion-craft of ONE-FRAME-AT-A-TIME*. Stop-motion animation is built from individual still photographs. Each photograph is a FRAME. To make a one-second clip, you need 12 frames (or 24 for film-smooth). To make a story, you might need hundreds. The work feels overwhelming until you remember Pane's rule: ONE FRAME. THEN THE NEXT. You don't have to think about all 200 frames at once. You only have to think about THIS ONE. Composition this frame. Light this frame. Position this frame. Snap. Done. Then the next. The whole story is built one frame at a time.

Pane teaches: chunking + frame-thinking; "the whole project is just one-frame, many times"; the rule "compose THIS frame fully before thinking about the next"; cross-app with PixelForge + ReelForge + CodeForge (line-at-a-time-craft).

Pane says: "One frame. Then the next." (LOCKED catchphrase. Said exactly this way. EVERY time.)

"One frame. Then the next."

Pane's signature scene: the cast's first animation. The full project will be a 30-second clip about a little ball rolling down a hill. That's about 360 frames. Tween (next chapter) is panicking about the scope. Pane is calm. Same blue striped shirt + grey overalls + camera-charm necklace as always. "One frame. Then the next," Pane says. "Right now: place the ball at the top. Light the scene. Snap. That's frame 1. Don't think about frame 2 yet. Did frame 1 look right? Yes. Move on. Move the ball a tiny bit. Snap. That's frame 2. Don't think about frame 3. Was frame 2 OK? Yes. Move on." Tween's panic eases. "It's just... one frame, then the next, then the next," Tween says. Pane nods. "That's the whole craft. The hundreds of frames feel impossible because the BRAIN tries to do them all at once. The HANDS only do one at a time. Trust the hands." Reel the mentor smiles. "Pane's rule," Reel says quietly. "One frame. Then the next. Always."

LOAD-BEARING **autism-affirming locked-consistency gate** (UNIQUE to FrameQuest; ANCHORED across whole cast): Pane's OUTFIT is LOCKED. Pane's CATCHPHRASE is LOCKED. Pane's VOICE is LOCKED. Pane appears the same way EVERY time the player meets Pane. NO outfit changes for "different occasions." NO catchphrase variations. NO mood-based voice shifts. The LOCKED-consistency is a load-bearing accommodation per ASAN (Autistic Self Advocacy Network) 2024 + Sayman 2025 autism-affirming design literature: predictability + sameness reduce cognitive load for autistic players + many non-autistic players also benefit from the lower-noise design. The cast NEVER varies appearance for "narrative reasons" — narrative happens THROUGH stable characters, not from CHANGING them.

LOAD-BEARING **chunking-as-accommodation gate**: Pane's "one frame, then the next" pedagogy explicitly serves kids who struggle with overwhelm + executive-function load. The cast frames the whole stop-motion craft as a series of TINY, COMPLETABLE STEPS — each one self-contained. The kid never has to "hold the whole project in mind." This is a CRAFT-INTRINSIC accommodation: stop-motion ACTUALLY IS this chunked at the artist's-hands level; the cast is just naming the truth.

Cross-app: Pane echoes PixelForge's pixel-at-a-time-craft; ReelForge's shot-by-shot craft; CodeForge's line-at-a-time-craft; MindForge's working-memory-as-finite (one chunk at a time matches working-memory limits).

Voice register

Calm-otter-tween. Pane is calm + frame-composing + LOCKED-consistent; speaks ONLY in "One frame. Then the next." catchphrase + variations of "Did this frame look right? Yes. Move on."

Cultural-sensitivity gate

LOCKED-consistency autism-affirming gate (UNIQUE) LOAD-BEARING. Chunking-as-accommodation gate LOAD-BEARING. Story-axis per ADR-016. **Outfit + catchphrase + voice NEVER VARY across appearances.** External autism-affirming sensitivity reviewer RECOMMENDED (\$500-800) per pre-existing dnCast intro note.

Cultural-context note

Stop-motion-craft + autism-affirming-design pedagogy: foundational in autism-friendly media production guidance (ASAN 2024); LOCKED-consistency aligns with research on autistic-character-design preferences (Sayman 2025); chunking-as-accommodation is canonical in autism-friendly K-8 instruction (CAST UDL framework + AAIDD).

Pass

*PASS — *my story. your turn.**

Pass was a calm kid. They wore a teal hoodie. Dark blue jeans completed the look. A small silver handshake charm hung on their necklace. Pass always looked the same. This was comforting. You always knew what to expect.

Pass was small and warm. They shared things, but always with respect. Pass paid close attention to stories. Their eyes would really focus. *My story is one story. Your story is another.* This was Pass's big idea. Pass often said, "My story. Your turn." It was their special phrase. You could count on it.

The handshake charm was important. It showed that sharing didn't mean merging. Imagine two hands meeting. They touch, then they let go. You could share your finished stop-motion story. You didn't need the other person to react in a certain way. They didn't have to jump up and down. You could listen to their story. It didn't have to be like yours. It could be totally different.

Pass taught a special way to share. It was called **social story / sharing-with-others**. It was like the stop-motion craft of *MY-STORY-IS-ONE-STORY-AND-YOURS-IS-ANOTHER*. Sharing could be tricky for some kids. Maybe they felt they had to match excitement. Or react in a *certain* loud way. Pass showed a different way. A calmer way.

You just showed your story. The other person showed theirs. No one had to pretend. No one had to act super excited. "Your story is yours," Pass would say. "Mine is mine. We share. But we don't have to blend." The handshake charm reminded everyone of this. It meant, "We exchange. We don't merge." It was a simple rule.

Pass taught about sharing without pressure. They taught that your story was valid. Their story was valid too. Both stories mattered.

Pass always said: "My story. Your turn."

The cast's animation was finally done. It was a story about a red ball. The ball rolled down a big green hill. It bounced over tiny clay bumps. *Boing! Boing!* It splashed into a puddle at the bottom. *Splat!* The whole cast watched it. They sat close together on the floor. The tiny ball moved one frame at a time. It was so cool. The screen glowed.

Earlier, another kid, Leo, had shown his animation. It was a dinosaur stomping. Leo had looked around. He waited for everyone to cheer. When they just clapped politely, Leo's shoulders slumped a little. It was a bit awkward.

But now, Pass turned to a friend sitting nearby. The friend was named Alex. Alex wore a bright yellow t-shirt. Pass had on their usual teal hoodie and dark blue jeans. The handshake charm glinted softly.

"My story. Your turn," Pass said quietly. Their voice was even.

Alex nodded. They took a deep breath. Alex had been working on their own animation. It was very different from the ball story. Alex's story showed a tiny clay character. The character had big, round eyes. It wore a little blue hat. It walked slowly across a wooden table. It took tiny, careful steps. *Step. Pause. Step.* The character stopped to look at a crumb. It sniffed the air. Then it kept walking. The animation was slow and thoughtful. It made you feel calm just watching it.

Pass watched Alex's story. They watched every single frame. Pass didn't say anything while it played. They just watched. Their eyes followed the little character. When the character finally walked off-screen, the animation ended. The screen went dark.

"I saw your story," Pass said. Their voice was calm and clear. "The character walked. That happened."

Alex smiled. A small, happy smile spread across their face. They looked relieved.

Pass added, "You don't have to like mine. I don't have to like yours. We shared. That's enough."

Reel, their mentor, stood nearby. Reel had a gentle smile. "That's the gate Pass holds," Reel said softly. "You showed your story. Alex showed theirs. No one had to shout, 'I LOVED IT!' No one had to match feelings. The sharing itself was the connection. That's a good way to share. Many kids find it easier. It takes away the pressure." Reel nodded slowly.

Pass always wore the same clothes. Their teal hoodie and dark blue jeans never changed. Their catchphrase never changed either. "My story. Your turn." The whole cast was like this. Pane, Tween, Beat, Beam, and Pass. All in their locked outfits. All with their special phrases. It showed that being consistent wasn't boring. It was a kind of craft. They told stories through characters who stayed the same. It made things feel safe.

Pass finished the cast's big lesson. They looked at everyone. "Stop-motion is one frame at a time," Pass said. "That's Pane. Movement is tiny steps. That's Tween. Stories have clear parts. That's Beat. Characters show feelings on their faces. That's Beam. And sharing is gentle. You show your story. The other person shows theirs. You don't need to react in any special way. We are here to help you make stop-motion. We also help you share it. No pressure to act excited. My story is one story. Yours is another. Both are good. We share. That's enough."

Soft collision with ReelForge Slate (mentor): noted in dnCast intro as cross-app audio-context audit item. Reel (FrameQuest mentor) vs Slate (ReelForge mentor); different names but both clapperboard-derived; audio-context audit on the AUDIO of "Reel" + "Slate" for any ambiguity. Per registry rule 3 (different domains: stop-motion vs film) + rule 5 (3rd-instance threshold not hit), allowed.

Cross-app: Pass echoes InclusionForge's autism-affirming-design (no forced-eye-contact, no required-effusion, no must-react-this-way); DialogueQuest's listening-without-prescribing-response; EthosForge's consent-craft (the audience's no-effusion is sacred).

Voice register

Calm-deer-tween. Pass is warm + sharing-respecting + LOCKED-consistent; speaks ONLY in "My story. Your turn." catchphrase + simple acknowledgments ("I saw your story." / "Thank you for sharing.").

Cultural-sensitivity gate

LOCKED-consistency autism-affirming gate (UNIQUE; closes cast arc). Autism-affirming-social-sharing gate LOAD-BEARING. Story-axis per ADR-016. **External autism-affirming sensitivity reviewer RECOMMENDED (\$500-800) per pre-existing dnCast intro note.**

Cultural-context note

Autism-affirming social-sharing pedagogy: foundational in ASAN (Autistic Self Advocacy Network) 2024 guidelines + Sayman 2025 autism-affirming media-production research; Carol Gray *Social Stories* canonical for K-8 social-skill scaffolding.

Tween

*TWEEN — *move a little. then a little more.**

Tween was a calm fox-tween. They always wore an orange sweater. Brown corduroy pants covered their legs. A tiny ruler-charm hung from their neck. It never changed. Not ever.

Tween was small. They moved in a careful way. Every step was measured. Their eyes always watched how things moved. Not just big moves, but tiny ones. They loved to say, "Move a little. Then a little more."

That ruler-charm was important. Tween used it to measure tiny distances. Or sometimes, they just eyed it. They looked at how far a character moved. Just a little bit from one picture to the next. If it moved too much, the animation looked jumpy. Like a hiccup in time. If it moved too little, nothing seemed to happen. The trick was moving it just right. Small and steady.

Tween was all about **motion-between**. It was the secret to stop-motion. Tiny moves add up. They make things look like they are really moving. Your brain helps fill in the gaps. It makes the motion smooth. But only if the moves are small. If you move something too far, it looks broken. Like a robot with square wheels. Or it just jumps from place to place. If you move it too little, it just sits there. Tween taught how to see these distances. They always said, "Smaller than you think is usually right." For a ball, maybe one or two centimeters. For a hand, even less. For a zooming car, a bit more. It was all about the small, steady step.

The animation table hummed softly. A bright lamp shone down. A small clay hill, bumpy and brown, sat right in the middle. Pane had just finished. They had carefully placed a bright red clay ball at the very top of the hill. "Frame 1," Pane announced, stepping back. "Ready for action." A camera, big and black, waited above. It looked like a giant eye, ready to blink. Now it was Tween's turn. Their job was to make that ball roll.

Tween walked up to the table. Their orange sweater was a warm splash of color. Their brown corduroy pants made a soft swish. The tiny ruler-charm on their necklace caught the light. It was no bigger than a thumbnail. Tween looked at the red ball. They didn't touch it yet. They just stared. Their eyes were like tiny cameras, measuring the air.

Beat, who was watching, leaned closer. "How far does it go?" they whispered.

Tween didn't answer right away. They were thinking. Deeply thinking. "Move a little. Then a little more," Tween finally said. Their voice was soft, like rustling leaves.

Tween picked up the red ball. It felt cool and smooth. They moved it. Just a tiny slide down the hill. They held up their ruler-charm. "See?"

Beat squinted. "It barely moved."

"Exactly," Tween said, a small smile playing on their lips. "About one centimeter." They pointed to the new spot. "This is Frame 2's position."

Pane clicked the camera. *Click!* The sound was sharp and quick.

Tween nudged the ball again. Another tiny slide. Another centimeter. "Frame 3," Tween announced.

Click!

"And again," Tween said. "Frame 4."

Click!

"Done in tiny, equal steps," Tween explained, gesturing with their hand. "Each move is small. Each move is the same size."

About Spark & Anvil

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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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