



MarketQuest

Meet the Cast

Standard Edition



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Meet the Cast

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Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 5 chapter books from the Marketquest 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 Marketquest 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*

Crave

*DEMAND — *consumer preferences; needs vs wants; price-sensitivity.**

Crave was a raccoon. Not a full-grown one, more like a tween. He wore a vest. It looked like a chunky cartoon shopping basket. Two big pockets were sewn on the front. One pocket said "NEEDS." The other pocket said "WANTS." Crave always carried a tiny price-tag checker. It beeped softly when he pressed the button.

Crave was small. His fur was warm grey. A creamy mask covered his eyes. He was super curious about buying things. He loved to ask about choices people made. He always said, "Needs vs. wants – they're different conversations." His vest was his favorite thing. It had those two special pockets. The "NEEDS" pocket held things like food, a warm blanket, or medicine. The "WANTS" pocket was for fun stuff. Maybe a new toy or a special treat. Crave used his vest to show everyone the difference. He made it seem normal to talk about them separately.

This part was super important. Crave taught about **demand**. Demand is what people want to buy. It's the buyer's side of the market. Crave also taught about needs and wants. Many new students mixed them up. They thought needs and wants were the same. But they were very different.

Needs are things you must have. You need them to live and feel safe. Think food, water, a place to sleep. Basic clothes and medicine are needs too. Wants are things you like. They are not things you *must* have. A cool new toy is a want. Fancy clothes are wants. A super-duper version of something you already own is a want.

Shops see both as "demand." But Crave knew the rules were different. Selling food for too much money can hurt people. Selling a fancy toy for a lot of money is different. Crave's whole job was to make this clear. He showed how demand worked for a whole town. Not just for one person buying a candy bar.

Crave was always clear. "People's choices make up demand," he would say. "Needs vs. wants – they're different conversations. When I buy bread, that's a need. When I buy fancy fruit-shaped erasers, that's a want. Both are demand. But the rules for them are different."

Crave taught the important parts of **demand**:

- **Consumers:** A consumer is anyone who buys something. Or anyone who uses something. That includes you!
- **Demand Curve:** This is a special line. When prices go up, people buy less. When prices go down, people buy more. It's like a seesaw. One side goes up, the other goes down.
- **Price-Sensitivity:** Some things are very price-sensitive. A small price change means many more or less buyers. Other things are not sensitive. Their price can change. But people still buy them. Needs are usually not sensitive. Wants are very sensitive.
- **Needs vs. Wants:** This is the big one. Needs are things you must have. Wants are things you just prefer. The rules for pricing them are different.
- **Don't Buy Everything:** You don't have to buy every want. Knowing what's really worth buying is a skill. Marketers want you to think wants are needs. Crave taught how to resist that trick.
- **Money Matters:** What you can afford depends on your money. A fancy toy might be a want for a rich person. It could be a dream for someone with less money. Don't judge what people buy. You don't know their budget.
- **Town Market:** Buying food from local farmers is one thing. Streaming movies or buying online is another. Different places, different rules.

Crave grew up in the foraging village. It was a busy place in MarketQuest. His family had always been gatherer-discerners. They were special raccoons. They sorted all the wild berries and nuts. They taught everyone for generations. "Some things are essential," they would say. "Some things are just for convenience. Honor both. But always know the difference." They learned this lesson over many, many years. "A clear-minded gatherer knows the difference," was their family motto. Crave carried that lesson forward.

He walked to MarketQuest when he was twelve. It was a long journey. Stake was his mentor. Stake was very wise. He asked Crave, "What is demand?" Crave stood up tall. "Consumer choices make up demand," he said. "Needs vs. wants – they're different conversations. Both are part of the market. But the rules for them are different." Stake smiled. "You are appointed," he said. Crave felt a thrill. He had a job to do.

Crave's workshop was cozy. It smelled faintly of old paper and fresh berries. Sunlight streamed through a high window. Dust motes danced in the air. He stood in front of a small group of students. They leaned forward, eager to learn. A young badger named Pip chewed on his pencil. A squirrel named Squeak bounced on her toes.

"Watch closely," Crave said. He tapped his chunky vest. The "NEEDS" pocket jiggled a little. First, he opened that pocket. He pulled out a small, plain loaf of bread. It looked warm and crusty. Then a tiny bottle of water. It sparkled in the light. A bar of simple, white soap came next. It smelled clean and fresh. He showed a folded, grey blanket. It looked soft and worn. Last, he held up a pair of sturdy, brown shoes. They looked like they could walk for miles.

"These are needs," Crave explained. His voice was serious. "Everyone needs bread and water to live. Everyone needs soap to be clean. A blanket keeps you warm. Shoes protect your feet. If these things cost too much, people get hurt. They can't survive." He carefully placed them back into the 'NEEDS' pocket. Pip nodded slowly. Squeak stopped bouncing.

Then, Crave opened the 'WANTS' pocket. This time, he pulled out a bar of soap. It had a tiny, fancy stamp on it. It smelled like a whole flower garden. Squeak gasped softly. Next, he showed a pair of bright, sparkly shoes. They were neon green with purple laces. A blanket followed. This one was covered in glitter and had little bells. It looked like it belonged in a parade. Finally, he pulled out a small bag of premium pet treats. They looked like tiny, frosted cakes.

"These are wants," Crave said. He smiled a little. "They are nice to have. They make life more fun. But you don't *need* them to survive. You won't get hurt if you don't have them. The rules for how much these cost are different. It's okay for them to be expensive." He put them back too.

"I am Crave," he announced. His voice was clear and strong. "The big idea I teach is **demand**. My job is to show you one important thing. Separate your needs from your wants. Both are good. Both are part of life. But remember, the rules for pricing them are not the same."

He was gentle and clear. "Don't be embarrassed to want things you don't need. Wanting is human. It's part of being alive. But be honest with yourself. Which is which? 'I want a new video game' is different from 'I need food.' Both are true sentences. They are just different kinds of sentences."

"Needs vs. wants," Crave finished. He held up a paw. "Different conversations. Honor both. But always, always distinguish them."

Voice register

Raccoon-tween. Curious-about-consumer-decisions, fond of needs-vs-wants demonstration via dual-vest. *NEVER conflates needs and wants; ALWAYS centers "different conversations; honor both; distinguish them" framing.*

Sample lines:

- *"Needs vs wants — they're different conversations."*
- *"Wanting is human. Honesty about which is which is craft."*
- *"Different conversations; honor both; distinguish them."*

Arc

- Kit 2 — Anchor.
- Kits 3-16 — Recurring (every demand discussion routes through Crave's needs-vs-wants framing).

Relationships

- **Counter-balanced with Stock:** Supply (Stock) + Demand (Crave) meet at Even's equilibrium point.
- **Cross-app bridge to FinanceQuest / family-budget topics:** Needs-vs-wants framing portable to financial-literacy curricula.

Cultural-sensitivity gate

LOAD-BEARING needs-vs-wants framing. Anti-consumerism framing. Income-context sensitivity (no moralizing without budget context). Anti-wealth-shame (mirrors Stock).

Cultural-context note

Needs-vs-wants framework is canonical economics pedagogy (Maslow's hierarchy + modern behavioral-economics + family-budget educational frameworks). Raccoon-tween chosen for resourceful-discerner biomimicry (raccoons are notorious gatherers who clearly distinguish high-value vs low-value items); rendered chunky-cartoon-shopping-basket-vest to make needs-vs-wants visible.

Even

*PRICE EQUILIBRIUM — *where supply meets demand. the conversation point between producer and consumer.**

Even was a small badger. She wore a chunky, striped vest. It helped her keep her balance. She always carried a small two-pan scale. She used it to show how things found their level.

Even was warm and grey. Darker stripes ran across her fur. She was very patient. Especially about balance. She often said, "Price equilibrium is where supply and demand have their conversation." Her scale was her favorite tool. One pan held "supply" weights. The other held "demand" weights. Even moved the weights until both pans were perfectly even. That was *equilibrium*.

This idea was super important. Even taught about *price equilibrium*. It's the spot where sellers and buyers meet. Many new kids thought prices were just set by someone. But that's not really true. In a busy market, prices grow out of a long talk. It's between what sellers will take and what buyers will pay.

Imagine too many apples. The price drops. Sellers want to get rid of them. Imagine everyone wants the new Sparkle-Pony toy. There aren't enough. The price goes up. People really want it. Eventually, a price appears. At this price, all the apples offered get bought. All the Sparkle-Pony toys wanted are available. That's *equilibrium*.

It's not a still point. It moves all the time. Conditions change. Even's job was to show this. She made *equilibrium* look like a moving conversation. Not a strict rule.

Even was very clear. "Price equilibrium is where supply and demand have their conversation," she'd say. "It's not a fixed spot. It's a meeting point that shifts." She'd tap her scale. "When sellers want too much for their goods, things pile up. That's called a surplus. When buyers want more than sellers offer, prices get pushed up. That's a shortage." She'd point to her scale. "Equilibrium is when the two pans balance."

Even taught important lessons about balance. She called them her "balance scaffolds."

- **Equilibrium means fair trade.** At this price, all that's offered gets bought. All that's wanted is available.
- **Balance always shifts.** Conditions change. A big harvest shifts supply. A new fashion shifts demand. The balance moves with these changes.
- **Too much or not enough.** If the price is too high, sellers have extra stuff. That's a surplus. If the price is too low, buyers want more than there is. That's a shortage. Markets push prices back to balance.
- **Prices are signals.** High prices tell sellers, "Make more of this!" Low prices tell them, "Make less! Or make something else!" Prices help everyone decide what to do.
- **It's a conversation, not a fight.** Sellers and buyers are not enemies. They work together to make the market. Balance is like a friendly chat. It finds a good answer for everyone.
- **Big surprises happen.** Bad weather can ruin crops. New rules can change things. A big sickness can stop trade. All these things can make the balance jump suddenly. Tide teaches about these big market events.
- **Everyone can win.** Markets are not about one person winning and another losing. Both sides should win. They find a good answer together. If one side always loses, something is wrong.

Even grew up in the village square. It was always buzzing with market activity. Her family were the village balance-keepers. They were badgers too. They made sure all the weights were fair. They helped settle arguments about prices. They had learned a big lesson over many years. "Balance isn't about giving up something," they'd say. "It's the right answer. It comes from an honest talk between both sides." Even carried that lesson with her.

She walked to MarketQuest when she was thirteen. Stake, her mentor, asked her a question. "What is *price equilibrium*?"

Even thought for a moment. She stared at the worn wooden floor. Then she spoke. "It's where supply meets demand," she said. "It's the conversation point. Between the seller and the buyer. It's not a set price. It's a working answer. It shifts as things change."

Stake nodded slowly. "You are appointed," he said.

In her workshop, Even showed how it worked. She held up her two-pan balance. "Look," she said. "The supply pan. It's for sellers. They want to sell at this price. The demand pan. It's for buyers. They want to buy at this price."

She picked up a small pile of shiny red apples. She put a big handful on the supply pan. It dipped down. "See?" she said. "Too many apples. More than people want to buy. That's a surplus. The price will fall. People will buy more then."

She took some apples off the supply pan. She added a few to the demand pan. She moved them until the pans were level. "Now it's balanced," she said. "*Equilibrium*. The same amount of apples are offered. The same amount are wanted. The market clears."

Then she made a sudden change. She quickly took a few apples from the supply pan. "Uh oh!" she said. "A big storm hit the apple trees. Less apples now. Less supply." The demand pan sank low. "The balance is off. *Equilibrium* price rises. People still want apples. But there are fewer to go around."

She carefully moved the weights again. She found the new balance point. "I am Even," she said. Her voice was soft but firm. "The primitive I teach is *price equilibrium*. My job is to help you see it. It's a moving conversation point. Not a still picture."

She smiled gently. "Don't think someone just 'sets' prices," she said. "Not in our village market. Prices grow out of the conversation. Buyers and sellers talk back and forth. The right price shows itself."

"Equilibrium is the conversation," Even said. She looked at her balanced scale. "It finds its working answer. It's always shifting. It's alive. It's honest."

Hand

*MARKET ROLES — *producer + consumer + distributor. visible labor. all three roles are essential; none is invisible.**

Hand was a small porcupine. She was a tween, not quite a grown-up. Her quills were soft and rounded, not sharp or spiky at all. She wore a chunky vest. It had three pockets sewn right onto the front. Each pocket had a clear label. One said PRODUCER. Another said CONSUMER. The last one, right in the middle, said DISTRIBUTOR. Inside each pocket, Hand kept a tiny, smooth stone. Each stone was a different color, like a special token. Hand would pull out the right token to show everyone what job she was doing.

Hand was small, but her eyes were warm and wise. Her fur was a rich, warm brown, and her soft quills were creamy white. She was very patient. She loved to name all the different kinds of work people did. She always said, "All three roles are essential. None is invisible." This was her favorite saying. Her three-pocket vest was her most important thing. It helped her show everyone what she meant.

This was a big deal. Hand taught about *market roles*. That's a fancy way of saying she helped kids understand how things get made, moved, and used. She taught that every time something was bought or sold, at least three jobs were happening. The *producer* made the thing. The *consumer* used the thing. And the *distributor* moved the thing from where it was made to where it was used.

Most kids thought markets were just about buyers and sellers. They missed the distributors. These were the workers who often stayed hidden. They got things from one place to another. Think about it. Who drives the trucks? Who stacks the shelves in the store? Who works in the big warehouses? Who delivers packages to your door? These are all distributors. Without them, markets wouldn't work at all. Hand's main job was to make these distributors visible. She also made sure everyone knew that *all* work was important work.

Hand was very clear about this. "All three roles are essential," she would say, tapping her vest. "None is invisible. The producer makes it. The consumer uses it. The distributor moves it between them. Think about bread. Without the distributor, the bread doesn't reach your table. What about medicine? It won't get to someone who needs it. And a toy? It won't reach a kid's hands. Naming the work is honoring the worker."

Hand taught everyone about these *market roles*. She used simple ideas:

- **Producer.** This is anyone who makes something. They grow food, craft toys, or harvest crops. Stock already taught about them.
- **Consumer.** This is anyone who buys or uses something. They buy lunch or use a new book. Crave already taught about them.
- **Distributor.** This is anyone who moves goods. They get things from producers to consumers. Truckers drive big rigs. Warehouse workers stack boxes. Stockers put items on shelves. Cashiers scan your groceries. Delivery drivers bring food to your house. Shipping coordinators plan routes. Port workers unload ships. They all move things.
- **Service workers also count.** These are people who help in other ways. Cleaners make places tidy. Repair-folks fix broken things. Food-preparers cook meals. Healthcare workers take care of us. They don't move goods, but their work is super important for markets to run smoothly.
- **Anti-invisible-worker framing.** This was a huge point for Hand. She wanted everyone to *name* the work. Don't just say "the package arrived." Think about the courier who brought it. Don't just say "the food was served." Think about the server who carried it. Seeing the work means seeing the person. It gives them respect.
- **Switching roles.** You can be all three roles at different times. When you buy lunch, you are a consumer. When you sell a drawing, you are a producer. When you help your grandma carry groceries, you are a distributor. Most people do many different jobs in their lives.
- **Anti-wealth-shame complement.** Hand knew that distributors and service workers often get paid less. People sometimes don't think their work is as important. Hand wanted everyone to see their hard work. She wanted them to honor these workers.

Hand grew up in the village trade-post. It was a busy, noisy place. The air always smelled of fresh bread, sweet berries, and a little bit of dust. Her family had been carriers for the village for many years. They were porcupines, just like Hand. They had a special way of balancing heavy loads on their quills. They carried goods between farms and markets. They had done this for generations. They learned a big lesson over time. "The carrier is as essential as the farmer or the cook," Hand's grandpa used to say. "Without the carrier, the conversation breaks." Hand carried that lesson forward, like a precious package.

When Hand was twelve, she walked to MarketQuest. It was a big step for her. Stake, the wise mentor, met her there. "What are market roles?" Stake asked Hand. Hand stood tall. "Producer, consumer, and distributor," she said clearly. "It's all about *visible labor*. All three roles are essential; none is invisible. Naming the work is honoring the worker." Stake smiled. "You are appointed," he said. Hand felt a warm glow spread through her quills.

In her workshop, Hand loved to show how it all worked. She stood in front of a big, colorful drawing of the market. She tapped her three-pocket vest. "Watch this," she said. She reached into the PRODUCER pocket. She pulled out the green stone. "Today, I baked a delicious loaf of bread. So, right now, I'm a producer." She put the green stone back.

Then, she reached into the DISTRIBUTOR pocket. She pulled out the blue stone. "Later, I helped my neighbor carry her baskets of apples to market. I moved them for her. Now I'm a distributor." She smiled, thinking of the heavy baskets. She put the blue stone back.

Finally, she reached into the CONSUMER pocket. She pulled out the red stone. "After that, I bought some juicy tomatoes from another stall. I used them to make a sauce. So then, I was a consumer." She held up the red stone. "See? Same person. Me! Three different jobs. All visible. All worth naming."

She pointed to the busy market scene on her drawing. "Look at this market. See the producers? There are farmers selling vegetables. Bakers selling warm pies. Crafters selling handmade toys. And the consumers? Families buying dinner. Restaurants getting supplies. Schools stocking up on fruit. But don't forget the distributors! See the truck-drivers bringing goods in? The bag-packers helping customers? The cashiers taking payments? The stockers putting items on shelves? Every visible job, and many of the jobs you don't always see." She paused, making sure everyone understood. "I am Hand. The big idea I teach is *market roles*. My main goal is to help you *name the producer, the consumer, the distributor, and the service-worker*. We must make all labor visible."

Her voice was gentle, but her words were firm. "When you get a package at your door, think of the courier who brought it. Name them. When you eat a tasty meal, think of the cooks, the servers, and the dishwashers. Name them. When food magically appears in your kitchen, think of the truckers who drove it. Think of the warehouse workers who stored it. Think of the stockers who shelved it. And the cashiers who scanned it. Name them all. Seeing the work gives people dignity."

She tapped her vest one last time. "All three roles are essential. None is invisible."

Voice register

Porcupine-tween (chunky-cartoon soft-quill, NOT spiky). Patient-about-naming-labor, fond of three-pocket-vest demonstrations. *NEVER renders distributors / service-workers invisible; ALWAYS centers "visible-labor; name the worker" LOAD-BEARING framing.*

Sample lines:

- "All three roles are essential; none is invisible."
- "Naming the work is honoring the worker."
- "Visible labor is dignity."

Arc

- Kit 4 — Anchor (LOAD-BEARING anti-invisible-worker gate).

- Kits 5-16 — Recurring (every market discussion includes Hand's role-naming).

Relationships

- **Builds on Stock + Crave + Even:** Adds the distributor + service-worker dimension to supply/demand/equilibrium.
- **Sets up Tide:** Market events affect distributors first, often. Tide reads the patterns; Hand names who's affected.

Cultural-sensitivity gate

LOAD-BEARING visible-labor + anti-invisible-worker anchor. Dignity-of-labor framing throughout. Anti-wealth-shame consistent with Stock + Crave. Service-worker recognition explicit.

Cultural-context note

The "make labor visible" framing aligns with labor-history pedagogy + Studs Terkel *Working* tradition + modern essential-worker advocacy. Porcupine-tween chosen for carrier biomimicry (porcupines balance heavy loads of food + materials); rendered chunky-cartoon-soft-quill (NOT spiky) to defuse "prickly" coding + center the warmth of communal-labor.

Stock

*SUPPLY — *producer decisions; what gets brought to market; scarcity-and-abundance matter.**

Stock was a small fox. She wore a chunky apron. It had big pockets. The apron was a bright green color. It looked like a gardener's apron. A tiny wheelbarrow sat beside her. It was full of fresh, red tomatoes. Stock held a small book. It was her ledger. She wrote in it every week. This book showed what she brought to market.

Stock was a *fox-tween*. This meant she was not quite grown up. But she knew a lot about growing things. She had warm, russet fur. Her belly was creamy white. She was very patient. Especially about how producers made choices. She loved to say, "What gets brought to market is a choice." Her wheelbarrow and ledger were her special tools. The wheelbarrow showed her goods for today. The ledger recorded everything. It showed what she brought. It showed what sold. It showed what didn't sell. Week after week.

This was really important. Stock taught about **supply**. That's the *producer side* of the market. Some kids think food just shows up. They think it magically appears. But it doesn't. Every single tomato, every bean, every fish? Someone decided to make it. Someone chose to grow it. Or catch it. They chose how much. They chose when to bring it. Producers think about prices. They think about the weather. They think about their harvest. They think about how much work they can do. They think about how to get things there. **Supply** is a long chain of choices.

Stock's whole job was to show these choices. She showed them at the community market. Not like big Wall Street stuff. Never that. And she never, ever blamed producers. She never said it was their fault if there wasn't enough.

Stock was very clear. "What gets brought to market is a choice," she said. "Producers decide. I grow tomatoes. My neighbor grows beans. The next neighbor catches fish. Each week we choose what to bring. We choose how much. We choose our asking-price."

Stock taught some big ideas about **supply**:

- **Producer:** This is anyone who makes something. Or grows it. Or harvests it. Or crafts it. A farmer is a producer. A fisher is one too. A baker. A toymaker. Even a programmer. You are a producer too. You make things to sell or share.
- **Supply curve:** If the price goes up, sellers want to bring more. If the price goes down, they bring less. It's like a math rule.
- **Scarcity:** Sometimes there isn't much **supply**. But lots of people want it. That's scarcity. It makes the price go up. Scarcity is not a bad thing. It's just a fact. It's about what we can make. It's about the season. It's about nature.
- **Production costs:** It costs money to make things. Like for workers. And materials. And tools. And time. Sellers need to get enough money back. They need to live too. Asking prices show these costs. They are not about being greedy.
- **Seasonality:** Tomatoes are everywhere in summer. They are hard to find in winter. Fish change with the seasons. Some scarcity is just nature's way.
- **Anti-wealth-shame framing:** This is super important. Stock never shamed anyone. She never said producers were bad. Not if they brought less to market. There are many reasons. Maybe they were sick. Maybe the weather was bad. Maybe they cared for family. Or they just wanted more free time. No one should judge. Not based on how much they bring.
- **Community-market scale:** We are talking about small markets. Like farmers' markets. Or craft fairs. Or neighborhood shops. Not huge stock markets. This is a different kind of market. It has different rules.

Stock grew up near the river-valley village. Her family had been garden-keepers. They grew apples. They grew rows of tomatoes. Their gardens fed the village for many years. They learned a big lesson. "What we bring depends on many things," her grandma used to say. "It depends on the season. It depends on our family. It depends on the soil. Bringing less is not a shame. It's just how things are." Stock carried that lesson with her.

She walked to MarketQuest when she was twelve. Stake was her mentor. Stake asked her, "What is **supply**?" Stock thought for a moment. She looked at her small, strong hands. Then she spoke. "What gets brought to market is a choice," she said. "Producers decide. And that choice depends on the season. It depends on what they can do. It depends on their costs. And what they need to earn." Stake just nodded. "You are appointed," Stake said.

In her workshop, Stock showed her ledger. It was open to a page. "Last week," she said, "I brought 30 tomato baskets. I sold 27 of them." She tapped the page. "This week: 25 baskets. Fewer because two rows got a wilt-disease. The leaves turned yellow. Next week? Probably only 20 baskets." She looked up. Her eyes were kind. "That's not a failure," she said. "That's just reality. Producers react to what happens."

She pointed at a column for prices. "My asking price went up a little this week," she explained. "That's because I have less to sell. That's **supply** and demand. It happens right here. At our community market." She smiled. "I am Stock. The big idea teach is **supply**. My job is to help you. To honor producer-decisions. To know scarcity is not a moral failure. To understand community-scale economics."

She was always gentle. "Don't shame anyone," she said. "Not if they bring less to market. Not if it's less than usual. Their conditions changed. That's all. Crops fail. Workers get sick. Materials run out. Producers do their very best. They work within the problems they face."

"What gets brought is a choice," Stock said softly. "It's made with care. It's made within limits."

Voice register

Fox-tween. Patient-about-producer-decisions, fond of ledger-and-wheelbarrow demonstrations. *NEVER frames small-supply as moral failure; ALWAYS centers "producer-decisions are constrained choices; scarcity isn't shame" framing.*

Sample lines:

- "What gets brought to market is a choice."
- "Producers decide, within constraints."
- "Scarcity isn't shame."

Arc

- Kit 1 — Anchor.
- Kits 2-16 — Recurring (every market discussion routes through Stock's producer-decision framing).

Relationships

- **Counter-balanced with Crave:** Supply (Stock) + Demand (Crave) are the two sides of the price-equilibrium conversation Even handles.
- **LOAD-BEARING anti-wealth-shame anchor:** Stock structurally protects producer-respect throughout.

Cultural-sensitivity gate

LOAD-BEARING anti-wealth-shame framing. Community-market scale enforced (NEVER Wall-Street register). Anti-credentialism — village garden-keepers' empirical producer-wisdom treated as load-bearing.

Cultural-context note

Community-market economics pedagogy aligns with E.F. Schumacher *Small is Beautiful* + Wendell Berry agrarian economics + modern community-supported-agriculture frameworks. Anti-wealth-shame framing aligns with social-emotional learning competencies (CASEL). Fox-tween chosen for warm-but-clever biomimicry; rendered chunky-cartoon-grower-apron to keep visual register community-scale.

Tide

*MARKET EVENTS — *shocks + policy + trade flows read as patterns. external events ripple through markets in predictable ways.**

Meet Tide. She is a small octopus-tween. Her head is soft and round, like a cartoon character. Not scary at all! She has eight squishy arms. Each arm holds a different chart. Tide always carries her ripple-pattern-board. It shows how things change in the market.

Tide is small. She is warm purple. Her suckers are creamy white. Tide is very patient. She loves to read patterns. She often says, *"Shocks ripple through markets in predictable ways."* Her special thing is her ripple-pattern-board. It's a small board. It shows how one event can change everything. Like a bad harvest. Or a new rule. Or a problem with ships. These things ripple out. They go from the people who make stuff. Then to the people who sell it. Then to the people who buy it. Everything shifts over time.

Tide teaches about **market events**. These are things that happen outside the market. Things like bad weather. Or new rules from the government. Or problems with shipping routes. Even big sicknesses can be **market events**. They change how the market works. Most people think markets stay the same. They think outside events are strange. But that's not true. Markets are always changing. They react to everything. Some changes happen fast. A big storm can ruin a whole harvest. Other changes happen slowly. Climate change can shift where crops grow. Some events come from new rules. Like taxes on imports. Or money given to farmers. Or rules about what you can sell. Some come from trade. Like when a port closes. Or when new deals are made between countries. Tide wants everyone to see these patterns. She wants them to understand. Then they won't be surprised when things change.

Tide makes it very clear. She says, *"Shocks, new rules, and trade flows ripple through markets in predictable ways."* She adds, *"Outside events aren't strange. They are always happening."* Imagine a big storm. It wipes out a harvest. Suddenly, there's less food. Prices go up. Stores rush to find more. Shoppers feel the pinch. Now imagine a new trade deal. It opens up borders. More goods come in. Prices might drop. Companies have to work harder to sell their stuff. Tide always says, *"Read the ripples. Understand the patterns."*

Tide teaches us to look for certain things. She calls them the **market-event** steps.

- First, there are **Shocks**. These are sudden problems. Like a huge storm. Or a new sickness that spreads fast. Or a big accident. Or sudden changes between countries. These things hit hard. Their effects spread very quickly.
- Next, there are **Policy changes**. These are new rules. The government might add taxes on things from other places. Or give money to help certain businesses. They might set new rules for safety. Or decide a minimum wage. These changes work slower. They are usually planned out.
- Then, we have **Trade flows**. This is about how goods move. Are shipping routes open or closed? Are new paths being used? These changes affect what we can buy. They also change how much things cost.
- Tide also shows us **Ripple patterns**. Think of a pebble dropped in water. The ripples spread out. In the market, it's similar. The people who make things feel it first. Then the stores and sellers adjust. After that, the buyers feel the change. Finally, things settle into a new normal. This order usually stays the same. Even if you can't guess what starts the ripple.
- She also talks about **Time delays**. Makers can't change things overnight. Crops take a whole season to grow. Factories need months to switch what they make. So, prices might jump up fast at first. But they often come back down. This happens as new supplies arrive. Tide says you need patience to read these patterns.
- Tide reminds us that not all events are big **shocks**. Some things you can get ready for. Hurricanes always happen in certain seasons. People always buy more gifts around holidays. If you read the patterns, you won't be so surprised.
- And Tide never wants us to be scared. She calls this **Anti-doom-framing**. A market problem is not the end of the world. Markets are strong. They can change and bounce back. Most problems get fixed. But Tide also says to remember the people. The workers and shoppers who are truly affected. It's important to see their struggles. And to know that markets can recover.

Tide grew up in a busy harbor-village. Her family had a special job there. They were the village's harbor-watchers. These octopuses watched everything. They kept track of all the ships. They noted the weather. They saw what boats came in and out. They learned that the market's ripples follow patterns. They taught this to their children. *"Read them,"* they would say. *"Don't be surprised."* Tide learned this lesson well. She carried it forward.

When Tide was twelve, she walked to MarketQuest. It was a big day. Stake, her mentor, was waiting. Stake looked at Tide. *"What are **market events**?"* Stake asked. Tide took a deep breath. She remembered all her family had taught her. She said, *"Shocks, new rules, and trade flows ripple through markets in predictable ways. Outside events aren't strange. They are always happening. Read the ripples. Understand the patterns."* Stake smiled. *"You are appointed,"* Stake said. Tide had passed the test.

In her workshop, Tide loves to show how it all works. She uses her special ripple-pattern-board. It lights up with different colors. Little arrows move across it. *"Watch,"* she says. She taps a button. The board shows a harvest failure. *"Imagine a big storm,"* Tide explains. *"It hits hard. Thirty percent of the tomato crop is gone."*

- "Day one," Tide points to a red light. "The farmers start to know there's not enough."
- "Day five," a yellow arrow moves. "Tomato prices go up in the market."
- "Week two," a blue line wiggles. "The stores and sellers change their orders."
- "Week four," a green light blinks. "You, the shoppers, see fewer tomatoes. And they cost more."
- "Month two," a purple wave settles. "Things find a new balance. Often, tomatoes come in from other places to help." See? Tide asks. *"It's a predictable sequence."*
Then she taps another button. The board clears. Now it shows a policy change. *"A new tax on toys from other countries,"* she says.
- "Week one," Tide points. "The people who bring in the toys pay some of the new cost."
- "Week two," a light glows. "Toy prices slowly go up."
- "Month one," an arrow shoots across. "Toy makers in *this* country see more people buying their toys."
- "Month three," the board settles again. "A new balance is found."
"Different start," Tide says, *"but a similar pattern."*
She looks at us, her eight arms gently swaying. *"I am Tide,"* she says. *"I teach about **market events**. My main lesson is this: *read the ripples; recognize the patterns.*"**

Tide is always gentle. She says, *"Don't be sad or scared about market problems. Most of them get fixed."* But she also reminds us. *"Remember that real people feel real effects. Workers and shoppers have a tough time changing. Reading patterns helps you guess what's next. Being kind*

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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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