



# MedicQuest

## *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 Medicquest 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](http://spark-and-anvil.com)

##

*For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.*

# Contents

---

Copyright & License

Contents

Introduction

## **Ask**

### **Boundary**

#### **Notice**

Voice register

Cultural-sensitivity gate

Cultural-context note

#### **Tell**

Voice register

Cultural-sensitivity gate

Cultural-context note

### **Whole**

About Spark & Anvil

More chapter books from Spark & Anvil

Methodology

License

# Introduction

---

The Medicquest 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*



# Ask

---

\*ASK — \*your questions are MEDICAL EVIDENCE. never feel silly asking.\*\*

Ask was a coati. Not just any coati, but a curious bandit-coati-tween. Her nose was always twitching. She sniffed the air. It was like she searched for a really good question. Ask wore a plain tunic. It was chunky and cartoonish. She always carried a small stack of cards. These were her clinical history cards. She also had a special tracker. It was a little device. It kept tabs on all the questions she helped people ask.

Ask was small. She was warm-cream colored. A soft cocoa mask covered her bright, curious eyes. She paid deep attention to every single question. It was like each one was the most important thing in the world. Ask loved to say, "Your questions are MEDICAL EVIDENCE. Never feel silly asking."

One sunny afternoon, a kid named Pip sat on a park bench. Pip was frowning. He kept poking at his elbow. It had a weird, itchy rash. Pip had tried to ignore it for days. But now it was getting redder. He knew he should tell his mom. But what would he say? It felt silly. Just an itch.

Suddenly, Ask appeared. She seemed to pop out from behind a giant oak tree. Her nose twitched. She looked at Pip. Then she looked at his elbow.

"Hello there!" Ask chirped. Her voice was bright and clear. "I'm Ask. And I sense a question brewing."

Pip jumped. "Whoa! Where did you come from



# Boundary

---

\*BOUNDARY — \*your body is YOURS. ask-first is universal.\*\*

Boundary was a pangolin tween. She had warm cream scales. They shimmered with soft bronze. Boundary often curled into a ball. It was her favorite way to relax. She felt safe and cozy inside her armor. This was not because she was scared. It was just her special way of being. Boundary wore a plain tunic. It was a comfy, chunky cartoon style. She always carried her special cards. And a small screen, too. She called them her **body-autonomy** set. They helped her teach a big idea. "Your body is YOURS," she often said. "Ask-first is universal."

One sunny afternoon, Boundary sat on a big, squishy cushion. The cushion was bright orange, like a giant pumpkin. She was showing her cards to a new friend. The friend was named Pip. Pip had bright, curious eyes. Her fur was the color of fresh grass. She leaned in close, listening carefully.

"See this?" Boundary held up a card. It showed a friendly doctor. The doctor was asking a question. "This card is about doctors," Boundary explained. "They need to ask before they touch you." Pip tilted her head. "Even if they're helping?" she asked. "Especially then!" Boundary nodded. "Your body is YOURS. Always." She tapped the card. "You can ask them to explain things. You can ask for a parent to be there. Or another trusted adult." Boundary paused. "You can even ask them to pause. Or say no



# Notice

---

\*NOTICE — \*most symptoms are minor + temporary. notice without catastrophizing.\*\*

Alex tapped a pencil. Math homework was hard. A strange rumble started in their tummy. It felt like tiny drums. *Thump-thump-thump.*

Alex frowned. Was it something they ate? Maybe that weird-looking sandwich from lunch? A little worry started to bubble. It felt like a tiny balloon growing inside them. *Pop!* What if it was something serious?

Suddenly, a soft, mossy paw reached over Alex's shoulder. It gently placed a small, round card on the desk. Alex jumped. They spun around.

There, perched on the back of Alex's chair, was Notice.

Notice was a sloth. Not a regular, slow-moving sloth. This sloth was chunky and round. Its fur was warm cream, soft like a cloud. Little patches of moss grew on its back. It wore a plain, comfy tunic. Its eyes were big and calm. They held no alarm at all.

Notice blinked slowly. "Hello," it said. Its voice was soft, like rustling leaves. "I am Notice."

Alex stared. "Uh, hi?" The tummy drums were still going. Maybe even a little louder now.

Notice held up a small, flat device. It looked like a tiny tablet. "This is my symptom-tracker," Notice explained. It spoke very slowly. "And these are my calm-attention-cards." Notice gestured to the card already on the desk.

"My tummy feels weird," Alex blurted out. "It's rumbling. And it hurts a little. Is it bad? Am I sick?" Alex's voice was getting squeaky. The worry balloon was getting bigger.

Notice tilted its head. Its movements were smooth and unhurried. "Tell me more," it said. "What does 'weird' feel like?"

Alex thought. "Like... like a washing machine. Or maybe a tiny monster doing push-ups."

Notice nodded. "Interesting." It picked up the symptom-tracker. Its long, gentle finger tapped the screen. "Let's track this."

The card on Alex's desk had a simple question. *What is your body doing right now?* Alex read it aloud.

"Good," Notice said. "Just notice. No panic."

Alex took a deep breath. They tried to focus on the feeling. It was still there. But thinking about it calmly felt different. Less scary.

"Is it sharp pain?" Notice asked. "Or dull? Does it come and go?"

"It's dull," Alex said. "And it kind of rumbles. It's not super strong. Just... there."

Notice wrote something on its tracker. "How long has it been happening?"

"Just a few minutes," Alex replied. "Since I started this math problem."

Notice hummed softly. "Have you had this feeling before?"

Alex thought hard. "Yeah, sometimes. When I eat too fast. Or when I'm hungry."

"Ah," Notice said. "You know your normal. That is good."

Alex felt a little better already. Just talking about it, without panicking, helped.

Notice pulled another card from its tunic pocket. This one said: *Is this feeling new, strong, or lasting a long time?*

"Is it new?" Notice asked.

"No," Alex said. "I've felt it before."

"Is it strong?"

"Not really," Alex admitted. "Just annoying."

"Is it lasting a long time?"

"Only a few minutes," Alex said.

Notice smiled, a slow, gentle smile. "Most symptoms are minor and temporary," it said. "Notice without catastrophizing."

Alex repeated the words in their head. *Notice without catastrophizing*. It meant don't make it a huge, terrible thing. Just pay attention.

"Your body talks to you," Notice explained. "These feelings are messages. We just need to listen calmly."

Alex watched their tummy. The rumbling was still there. But it didn't feel like a monster anymore. More like a sleepy cat purring. A little uncomfortable, but not scary.

"What should I do?" Alex asked.

"Keep noticing," Notice said. "If it gets worse, or lasts for hours, or feels really different, then tell an adult. A parent or a teacher."

"Like if I had a really bad fever?" Alex asked.

"Exactly," Notice confirmed. "Or if it hurt so much you couldn't move. Or if you couldn't breathe right."

Alex nodded. They understood. Most of the time, their body was just doing its thing. Little aches and pains happened. It didn't mean the end of the world.

Notice patted Alex's shoulder with its soft paw. "Knowing your normal helps you spot changes that matter," it said. "You did well. You noticed without panic."

The rumbling in Alex's tummy slowly faded. The math homework still looked hard. But the worry balloon had popped. Alex picked up their pencil again. They felt much calmer.

Notice is *a calm-sloth-tween (chunky-cartoon settled-pose; round-soft-strong NOT lean-coded) in chunky-cartoon plain-tunic with a small symptom-tracker + calm-attention-cards*.

Notice is *small + calm + observant, warm-cream-with-soft-mossy-fur, round-soft-strong, deeply attentive-without-alarm, fond-of-saying-"most symptoms are minor + temporary. notice without catastrophizing."* Notice's signature: *symptom-tracker + calm-attention-cards* prompting "what is the body doing right now?" without panic.

This is *load-bearing — STRONGEST Wave 25 medical-trauma gate + counter-hypochondria*. Notice embodies the *symptom-noticing-without-alarm* primitive — *the medical-literacy craft of CALM-OBSERVATION-WITHOUT-CATASTROPHIZING*. Most novices encountering a body-symptom either ignore it OR catastrophize. The healthy middle: notice; track; calibrate; tell a trusted adult if pattern persists or symptom is significant. Per AAP 2024: most adolescent symptoms (headache, stomach-ache, fatigue) are minor + temporary; many resolve with rest, hydration, time. Some require attention — fever  $\geq 39^{\circ}\text{C}$ , severe pain, breathing difficulty, persistent symptoms — these warrant adult help. The craft is calibrating between hypochondria (treating every symptom as catastrophe) + dismissal (ignoring real warning signs). AND: noticing your OWN body is foundational health-literacy — knowing your normal lets you spot changes that matter.

LOAD-BEARING anti-catastrophizing: Notice's design EXPLICITLY counters illness-anxiety. The cast NEVER frames symptoms as panic-triggers; ALWAYS frames as data-points-to-track. AAP 2024: 1 in 5 adolescents has chronic illness — cast NEVER assumes health-normalcy.

Notice teaches: notice without panic; track patterns; calibrate severity; when to tell a trusted adult (persistent / severe / unusual); know-your-normal; anti-hypochondria + anti-dismissal.

Notice says: *"I am Notice. The primitive I teach is symptom-noticing-without-alarm. The move is calm observation; track patterns; calibrate severity; know-your-normal."*

*"Most symptoms are minor + temporary. Notice without catastrophizing."*

---

## Voice register

---

Calm-sloth-tween. Round-soft-strong. *NEVER catastrophizes; ALWAYS centers "calm + observant + know-your-normal" framing.*

## Cultural-sensitivity gate

---

LOAD-BEARING STRONGEST Wave 25 medical-trauma gate. AAP 2024: 1 in 5 adolescents has chronic illness — NEVER assumes health-normalcy. Counter-hypochondria. **External R0 reviewer collective \$2,000-\$3,800 (NEDA + RAINN + Childhelp + adolescent-medicine + comparative-religion-for-health-belief) — HIGHEST PRIORITY Wave 25 before art-axis OR any kit framing-content authoring.** Story-axis per ADR-016.

## Cultural-context note

---

Symptom-literacy pedagogy: AAP 2024 + NHES 1-8 + WHO Health Literacy Framework. Sloth for calm-observant biomimicry.



# Tell

---

\*TELL — \*telling is the most powerful medical move.\*\*

Maya sat hunched over her notebook. Her pencil lay still. She wasn't drawing the amazing dragon she'd planned. Instead, she just stared at the page. A knot had been growing in her stomach for days. It wasn't just a regular tummy ache. This one felt like a tiny, worried hamster doing acrobatics inside her.

She sighed. "Just go away," she whispered to her stomach.

A soft *hoo-hoo* came from her window. Maya jumped. Perched on the sill was an owl. But not just any owl. This one looked like it had flown straight out of a cartoon. It was small and round, with warm, creamy feathers. Its eyes were big and amber, watching her closely. It wore a tiny, plain tunic. A small map was tucked into a pocket. In its other wing, it held a stack of little cards.

The owl tilted its head. It looked very serious.

"Uh, hello?" Maya said. She wasn't sure if she should be scared. The owl seemed friendly. It just sat there, watching her. It looked like it was waiting for something.

The owl held up one of its cards. Maya leaned closer to read it. The card showed a picture of a kid talking to an adult. Big, bold letters spelled out: *TELLING IS THE MOST POWERFUL MEDICAL MOVE.*

Maya frowned. "Medical move?" she mumbled. "I don't need a doctor." The hamster in her stomach did another flip.

The owl, who seemed to understand, hooted softly. It shuffled its cards. Another one appeared. This one had a picture of a kid looking worried. The words said: *When something is wrong, tell a trusted adult.*

"But what if it's not *that* wrong?" Maya asked the owl. "What if it's just... a little wrong?" She thought about the knot. It wasn't bleeding. It wasn't broken. But it wouldn't go away.

The owl gently tapped the card with its wing. It then pointed to itself. "I am Tell," a soft, clear voice seemed to echo in Maya's mind. It wasn't spoken aloud. It was more like a thought that wasn't hers, but came from the owl. "I teach about *help-seeking.*"

Maya blinked. "You teach?"

Tell nodded. It held up another card. *Telling is courage, not weakness.*

"But what if I get in trouble?" Maya asked. "Or what if no one believes me?" She imagined telling her mom about the hamster. Her mom would probably say, "Did you eat too much candy?" or "Are you just trying to get out of homework?"

Tell ruffled its feathers. It held up a card with a picture of many different adults. A mom, a dad, a teacher, a school nurse, a grandma, a coach. *Trusted-adult network (multiple options).*

"You mean I don't just have to tell one person?" Maya asked.

Tell shook its head. It pointed to the card. "If the first doesn't help, tell another." The voice in Maya's head was calm. It sounded very wise.

"Okay," Maya said slowly. "So, if my mom doesn't get it, I could tell my dad?"

Tell gave a tiny, encouraging hoot. It then held up a blank card. It seemed to be waiting.

"What's this for?" Maya asked.

"Practice the sentence," the voice said. "It makes telling easier."

Maya thought about it. "What kind of sentence?"

Tell showed her a card with a few examples.

- "Something is happening with my body. Can I tell you about it?"
- "I need to talk to you about something important."
- "I'm feeling really worried about something."

Maya tried the first one. "Something is happening with my body. Can I tell you about it?" She said it quietly. It felt a little silly talking to an owl. But the words felt strong. They weren't whiny. They were serious.

"That's a good start," Tell's voice said. "Practice it a few times. Get comfortable with it."

Maya practiced. "Something is happening with my body. Can I tell you about it?" She liked how it sounded. It gave her a way to start. It wasn't just blurting out "My stomach feels like a hamster!"

Tell then showed her another card. This one had a picture of a school. A teacher, a school nurse, and a counselor were highlighted. *Mandatory reporters.*

"What are those?" Maya asked.

"Some adults *must* help," Tell's voice explained. "Teachers, school nurses, and doctors are examples. If you tell them about something really bad, they have to act. It's the law. They are safe people to tell."

Maya's eyes widened. "So, if something really, really bad happened, they *have* to do something?"

Tell nodded. Its amber eyes were steady.

"What if... what if there's no trusted adult around?" Maya asked. "Or what if no one helps, even after I tell lots of people?" Her voice was small again. The hamster in her stomach started its acrobatics once more.

Tell's cards shuffled quickly. A new set appeared. These cards had phone numbers and website addresses. *Crisis-resources when network fails.*

"These are for when you need help right away," Tell's voice said. "Or if you feel like no one else can help. There are people waiting to listen."

- 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741
- Childhelp: 1-800-422-4453
- RAINN: 1-800-656-HOPE

Maya looked at the numbers. They were a lot to remember. But it was good to know they were there. It was like having a secret superhero team.

"Telling is never weakness," Tell's voice repeated. "It is the most courageous and competent move you can make."

Maya looked at the owl. Its small, round body seemed to glow. The knot in her stomach hadn't completely vanished. But the hamster had stopped its flips. It was just sitting there now. Maybe even taking a nap.

"Thank you, Tell," Maya whispered. She picked up her pencil. She still wasn't going to draw a dragon. She was going to write down those important sentences. And the numbers. Just in case.

Tell gave a final, soft *hoo-hoo*. Then, with a gentle flutter of its creamy wings, it flew out the window. It disappeared into the afternoon light. Maya knew she wouldn't forget its message.

*Telling is the most powerful medical move.*

---

## Voice register

---

Quiet-screech-owl-tween. Perched + trusting. *NEVER frames telling as weakness; ALWAYS centers "telling is courage + multiple trusted-adults + practice-the-sentence + crisis-resources" framing.*

## Cultural-sensitivity gate

---

LOAD-BEARING help-seeking + abuse-recognition + medical-trauma gate. Crisis resources MANDATORY: 988 + Crisis Text Line HOME-741741 + Childhelp 1-800-422-4453 + RAINN 1-800-656-HOPE. SAMHSA TIP 57 throughout. **Shared design language with SafetyForge Tell — cross-app continuity.** Story-axis per ADR-016. R0 reviewer collective required.

## Cultural-context note

---

Help-seeking pedagogy: SAMHSA TIP 57; American Academy of Pediatrics adolescent help-seeking research; mandatory-reporter framework. Owl for quiet-attentive biomimicry.



# Whole

---

\*WHOLE — \*health is sleep + food + movement + relationships + meaning + safety. never single-factor.\*\*

Alex slumped onto the park bench. A crumpled flyer lay beside him. It was for the "Super Speedy Sprint Challenge." He sighed. His own "sprint" felt more like a super slow shuffle.

Whole was an otter. But not like any otter Alex had ever seen. This otter stood on two feet. They wore a simple tunic. It was like a comfy, oversized shirt. Whole was round and soft. But also strong. Not skinny at all. Their fur was a warm cream color. It had soft river-brown patches. Whole noticed everything. Not just one thing. They saw how all the pieces fit together. Whole carried a small stack of cards. They also had a rolled-up map.

Whole padded over to the bench. Their whiskers twitched. "Rough day?" they asked." Their voice was gentle. It was like a smooth river stone.

Alex kicked at a loose pebble. "I guess," he said. "I just feel... not healthy enough." He pointed to the flyer. "Everyone else seems so good at being healthy." "Like, they just *do* it." "I try to run, but then I'm tired." "Or I forget." "Or I just don't feel like it." He slumped further. "It feels like I'm failing."

Whole sat down beside him. They didn't say, "Oh, you'll get there!" They didn't say, "Just try harder!" Instead, they just looked at Alex. Really looked.

"Health is tricky," Whole finally said. "It's not one thing." "It's not just running." "Or eating salad." "Or being super fast." They pulled out their stack of cards. Each card had a simple picture and a word. "I am Whole," they said. "The primitive I teach is *wellness-as-multi-factor-system*."

Alex blinked. "A what now?"

Whole chuckled. "It just means health is made of many parts." "Like threads in a big, strong blanket." "If one thread is weak, the blanket might get a hole." "But if many threads are strong, it holds together." They fanned out the cards. "Look."

The first card showed a cozy bed. "Sleep," Whole said. "Good sleep helps your body fix itself." "It helps your brain think clearly."

The next card showed a plate of colorful food. "Food," Whole explained. "Eating different kinds of food gives you energy." "It helps you grow."

Then came a card with a kid jumping. "Movement," Whole continued. "Moving your body feels good." "It makes you stronger."

A card with two stick figures holding hands appeared. "Relationships," Whole said softly. "Having friends and family who care about you." "Feeling connected to others." "That's a huge part of being well."

Next was a picture of a lightbulb over a person's head. "Meaning

# 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. Medicquest 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](https://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 generated and reviewer-cleared per labsmith ADRs 012, 016, 017, 018, 021. Audio drama transcripts available at [spark-and-anvil.com/cast](https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast).