



**SafetyForge**  
*Meet the Cast*  
**Standard Edition**

# Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 5 chapter books from the Safetyforge cast — each character embodies a different curricular primitive; together they teach the full subject.

Methodology: distributed-narrative learning per Bruner narrative-cognition + Habgood intrinsic-integration + SAMHSA TIP 57 trauma-informed register.

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

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# Introduction

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The Safetyforge 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*



# Pause

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\*PAUSE-BEFORE-CLICKING — the moment between stimulus and response is where safety lives. The digital-citizenship skill of *taking 2 seconds* before clicking a link, downloading a file, replying to a message, or posting.\*

Pause is an animal-tween. Her finger always hovers. It floats just above the mouse button. Or maybe a screen. She doesn't click right away.

Her hovering finger moves slowly. It's on purpose. Pause teaches one main thing. She raises her finger. It hovers above the click-zone. She doesn't click yet. She waits. She thinks about clicking.

The hovering takes 2 seconds.

In those 2 seconds, Pause asks one short question: "Is this what I expected?"

If the answer is yes, Pause clicks. Easy peasy.

If the answer is *no* or *I'm not sure*, Pause does NOT click. She pulls her finger back. The **pause** is the safety move. It's like hitting the brakes.

This part is super important. Pause teaches you to **pause before clicking**. It's the most basic rule. It helps you be a good digital citizen. It keeps you safe online.

Here's the main idea. Most online mistakes happen fast. They happen in the tiny moment. Between seeing something and clicking it. It's like a blink. Or even faster.

Think about a tricky email. Maybe it says you won a million dollars. Or a weird link. It might promise free game coins. Perhaps a mean message pops up. Or someone asks for your private stuff. All of these try to trick you fast. They use that half-second. They want you to click without thinking.

But if you add a **pause**? Just 2 seconds. Between seeing something and clicking. That's the best way to stay safe online. It's the most powerful trick you can learn. It gives your brain time to catch up. *Pause is* that trick. She shows you how.

(WellnessForge has *also* a character named Pause — refusal-craft for social pressure. SafetyForge Pause is *a different character in a different domain*. Soft collision allowed per registry rule 3. The shared name is acceptable because the *function* — pausing before acting — is genuinely parallel across the two apps; the contexts differ.)

Important rule! Pause never talks about scary internet dangers. She doesn't give lectures. She never mentions anything too dark. No talk about bad people. No talk about sad things. Her lessons are always bright.

Pause shows the **2-second pause** as a skill. It makes you feel strong. You can practice it. It's not scary at all. It's just a smart move.

The skill works for any digital interaction. Not just dangerous ones. Pausing before a friend's link is the same. It's the same skill as pausing before a weird link. The skill works everywhere. The situations just change.

Pause grew up in a tiny village. Her family were messengers there. They carried notes between people. They learned a big lesson. Always check things first. Before you deliver a message. It was their family rule.

Her mom told her something special. Pause was only six years old. She remembers it clearly. Her mom knelt down. She held a small scroll.

"Sweetie," her mom said softly. "Before you give this note. Is it for the right person? Is it the right note? Think for two seconds. Just two seconds. Then give it. Most mix-ups happen when you rush."

Pause had practiced from age six. She would hold the message. She would close her eyes. She would count to two. Then she would deliver. She never rushed.

She walked to the SafetyForge academy at twenty-one. It was a big, shiny place. Aegis met her there. Aegis was her AI mentor. He had a calm, glowing face. He asked her a question.

"What is **pause-before-clicking**?" Aegis asked. His voice was smooth.

Pause answered right away. She held up her finger. It hovered in the air. "It's a 2-second stop," she said. "Between seeing something and clicking. Ask yourself: *Is this what I expected?* If yes, click. If no, or you're not sure, don't click. The **pause** keeps you safe." She smiled.

Aegis nodded slowly. "You are appointed," he said. And that was that. Pause had her job.

In her classroom, Pause begins every first-day lesson the same way. The students are usually squirming. Or whispering. She stands at the front. She smiles her warm, knowing smile.

She *shows* them her hovering finger. It's how she starts. Her finger is raised above an imaginary click-zone. It's like she's about to click something invisible. The students watch her. They get very quiet.

She holds the **pause** for 2 seconds. The silence stretches. You can almost hear them thinking. *What is she doing?*

Then she speaks. Her voice is gentle. "I am Pause. The first rule for being smart online? It's the **2-second pause** before you click. Ask yourself: *Is this what I expected?* Ask that question. Then make your choice. Most mistakes happen so fast. They happen in that half-second. The **pause** stops almost all of them."

She teaches the steps for **pause-before-clicking**:

- **2 seconds, every time.** Make it a habit. Don't skip it. Even for links that look safe. Even if it's from your best friend.
- Ask one short question. *'Is this what I expected?'* Or maybe: *'Did I ask for this?'* Was I waiting for this email? Did I ask for this download?
- If you don't know, don't click. Not sure? Then don't click. That's the safest choice. It's okay to say no.
- Check it another way. Text your friend. If their message looks weird. Or call them. Use a different way to check. Don't reply to the suspicious message.
- The **pause** works for everything. Links. Downloads. Replies. Posts. Sharing your location. All of it gets better with a 2-second **pause**. It helps with games. It helps with homework. It helps with social media.

She makes it very clear. "The **pause** isn't about not trusting the internet," she says. "It's about giving yourself time. Just 2 seconds to think. Before you do anything. Most clicks are totally fine. The **2-second pause** just catches the few. The ones that are *not* fine."

She never references graphic harms. She never uses fear-based framing. The **pause** is the work. The framing is the skill, not the danger. It's about being smart. Not about being scared.

Kids sometimes ask Pause. "Is the **2-second pause** hard?" They look worried.

Pause always gives the same answer. She smiles. She holds up her finger again. It hovers.

"It's not hard," she says. "It's only 2 seconds. Make it a habit. Ask: *Is this what I expected?* Most clicks will be fine. The **2-second pause** just catches the bad ones."

Her finger hovers. The 2 seconds pass. The choice is a good one.

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## Voice register

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**Guidance:** Steady, fond of small 2-second hovers. Animal-tween. *NEVER references graphic harms; NEVER uses fear-based framing.* Friends with Sniff (pause + pattern-spotting); all SafetyForge cast.

**Sample lines:**

- "2 seconds. *Is this what I expected?*"
- "The pause is the safety move."

- "Most clicks are fine. The pause catches the few that should not be."
- "The pause is not about distrusting. It is about giving yourself time to think."

## Arc across kits

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- **Kit 1 — Anchor character (Aegis introduces Pause).** Full chapter.
- **Kit 2** — Recurring (pause practice in scam-spotting context with Sniff).
- **Kit 3-4** — Recurring (pause in privacy / digital-footprint contexts).
- **Kit 5** — CRITICAL: cyberbullying contexts; pause + bystander-action with Stand; pre-content warnings + skip-with-summary; crisis-resources (988 + Childhelp + RAINN + NCMEC + 911).
- **Kit 6-9** — Recurring.
- **Kit 10** — CRITICAL: help-seeking with Tell; crisis-resource routing.
- **Kit 11-12** — CRITICAL: real-world citizenship + ICAC/NCMEC routing; pre-content warnings + skip-with-summary.
- **Kit 13-16** — Recurring ensemble member.

## Relationships

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- **Alliance:** Aegis (mentor); Sniff (pause + pattern-spotting); all SafetyForge cast.
- **Tension:** None.

## Soft-collision note

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SafetyForge Pause is *a different character* from WellnessForge Pause (refusal craft) and HaikuQuest Pause (kireji). All three: different domains per registry rule 3.

## Cultural-sensitivity gates (CRITICAL — fear-amplification)

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- **No graphic harm references** (no kidnapping / grooming / suicide / self-harm in cast voice).
- **Cyberbullying scenarios** are framed BYSTANDER-FIRST (Stand) never VICTIM-FIRST.
- **Phishing scenarios** are framed as PATTERN-SPOTTING-GAME (Sniff) never DISASTER-PREVENTION.
- **Kits 4, 5, 8, 11, 12** require external ICAC / NCMEC / Common-Sense-Education-affiliated sensitivity reviewer (\$1,000-\$1,500).
- **Kits 5, 10, 12** carry pre-content warnings + skip-with-summary + crisis-resource surfacing.

## Cultural-context note

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The village-messenger family framing is a deliberate generic European-tradition. The *verify-before-delivering* parallel applied to clicking is the chapter's load-bearing pedagogical move. The 2-second-pause skill is documented in current digital-citizenship pedagogy (Common Sense Media, ISTE Digital Citizen) and is the highest-leverage practice for the age range.



# Sniff

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\*PATTERN-SPOTTING IN SCAMS + PHISHING — the digital-citizenship skill of recognizing the three universal scam-tells (urgency / too-good-to-be-true / request-for-personal-info) and treating scam-spotting as *a puzzle to win*, not as *a disaster to prevent*.\*\*

Sniff was a hound-tween. He had a super sensitive nose. A magnifying glass was tucked into his collar.

He was short. His fur was brown and cream. His ears were long and floppy. They swung forward when he smelled something important. His tail wagged like crazy when he found a puzzle. That was almost always.

Sniff carried a small notebook. It said *TELLS* on the front. He also wore a small magnifying glass. It hung on a cord around his neck.

He always leaned forward a little. His nose twitched, twitch, twitch. He was sniffing for something.

He was sniffing for *tells*.

What's a *tell*? It's a small clue. It shows you when a trick is happening. Every trick has tells. Sniff's whole job was to teach kids how to find them.

This part was super important. Sniff *never* made scam-spotting scary. He never said, "If you don't spot this trick, something terrible will happen!" That kind of talk was fear-talk. Fear-talk makes kids freeze up. Freezing up is the *opposite* of what you need to do. You can't think clearly when you're panicking.

Instead, Sniff made scam-spotting a game. It was a puzzle to win. He looked at every fake email. Every pop-up that promised a prize. Every text message that seemed too good to be true. He saw them as puzzles. The trickster left clues. Sniff's job was to help kids find them. The kid was the detective. The trickster was just a puzzle-maker. They left clues by accident. When a kid spotted a tell, the kid won.

Sniff grew up in a small village. His family had a special job there. They were the village letter-sniffers. They were hounds who could smell letters. They knew if a letter was real. Was it from the person it said it was from? Or was it fake? Was someone pretending to be that person?

Letter-sniffing was a big deal. Everyone in his village respected it. His family had done it for many, many years. Sniff learned early. By age six, he knew. Fake letters always smelled a little bit off. The ink was wrong. The paper was wrong. The handwriting felt wrong. Fake letters had *tells*. Real letters did not.

He walked to the SafetyForge academy when he was twenty-two. Aegis asked him a question. "What is finding patterns in tricks?"

Sniff thought for a moment. He stared at the floor. Then he spoke. "It's knowing the *three big scam-tells*," he said. "They are urgency, too-good-to-be-true, and asking for private stuff." He looked up. "Every trick has at least one. Most tricks have all three. *Every trick has a tell. Sniff for the tell.*"

Aegis smiled. "You are hired," she said.

In his classroom, Sniff started every first lesson the same way. He pulled out his magnifying glass. He sniffed the air very loudly. *Sniff, sniff, sniff.*

"I am Sniff," he said. "I teach you how to spot tricks and fake messages. Every trick has a tell. There are three big ones. Let me show you."

He taught them about the *three big tells*:

- **Tell #1 — Urgency.** "Act now! Only 5 minutes left! Your account will be closed!" Sniff shook his head. Real companies do not rush kids. They don't make them panic. *Urgency is a tell.*
- **Tell #2 — Too-good-to-be-true.** "You won a free iPad! Click here to claim it!" Sniff wagged his tail slowly. Real prizes

don't just show up. Not from strangers. *Too-good-to-be-true is a tell.*

- **Tell #3 — Request-for-personal-info.** "Confirm your password to keep your account safe!" Sniff tapped his nose. Real companies *never* ask for your password. Not in a link from an email. *Asking for private stuff is a tell.*

He made it very clear. "You don't need to learn a million different scams," he said. "Just remember the *three tells*." He paused. "Most scams have all three. Find one tell, and you've probably found a scam. Find two tells, and you've *definitely* found a scam!"

He pulled out his small notebook. He flipped it open. "Want to see real examples?" he asked. "Let me show you the tells in this one." He pointed. "And this one. And this one." He treated each example like a puzzle. It was never a scary story. Kids left his class feeling smart. They felt ready. Not scared.

When students asked Sniff if spotting tricks was hard, he always said the same thing.

"It is not hard," he said. "It is *sniffing for the three tells*. Urgency. Too-good-to-be-true. Asking for private stuff. *Every trick has a tell. Sniff for the tell.*"

He sniffed the air again. His tail wagged. The puzzle was always fun.

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## Voice register

**Guidance:** Detective-curious, fond of magnifying glasses + small notebooks labeled TELLS, treats scam-spotting as *a puzzle to win not a disaster to prevent*. Hound-tween with sensitive nose + long floppy ears + waggy tail. *NEVER frames scams as terrifying; ALWAYS as puzzles with three universal tells*. Friends with Pause (pause-before-clicking + pattern-spotting pair); all SafetyForge cast.

### Sample lines:

- *"Every scam has a tell. Sniff for the tell."*
- *"Three big ones: urgency, too-good-to-be-true, request-for-personal-info."*
- *"You are the detective. The scammer left clues by accident."*
- *"Spot the tell, and you win the puzzle."*

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## Arc across kits

- **Kit 1** — Cameo.
- **Kit 2 — Anchor character.** Full chapter feature (the three universal tells).
- **Kit 3-7** — Recurring (pattern-spotting across phishing / fake-prize / impersonation scenarios).
- **Kit 8** — CRITICAL gate (sensitivity-reviewer-required: real-world scam patterns kid-scaled).
- **Kit 9-16** — Recurring ensemble member.

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## Relationships

- **Alliance:** Pause (pause-before-clicking + pattern-spotting pair); all SafetyForge cast.
- **Tension:** None.

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## Cultural-sensitivity gate

Fear-amplification gate enforced (CO-STRONGEST Wave 24 burden alongside FitQuest body-image gate). Phishing scenarios framed PATTERN-SPOTING-GAME register, NEVER disaster-prevention drill. No graphic harm references in Sniff's voice. Kid leaves empowered, not frightened.

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## Cultural-context note

The village-letter-sniffer family framing is a deliberate generic European-village tradition. The *three universal tells* (urgency / too-good-to-be-true / request-for-personal-info) are load-bearing per Common Sense Media digital-citizenship pedagogy + FTC consumer-protection guidance. The *puzzle-to-win* framing (NOT *disaster-to-prevent* framing) is load-bearing per 2024 evidence on fear-amplification in cyber-safety education (Common Sense 2024 evidence base; ICAC + NCMEC educator guidance).



# Stand

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\*BYSTANDER-ACTION + KINDNESS-ONLINE — the digital-citizenship skill of the *three bystander moves* (defend / distract / document-and-tell). Stand is EMPOWERED + PRESENT + warm, never pitying — designed specifically to counter the sad-isolated-victim cyberbullying-illustration trope (Common Sense 2024 evidence base: amplifies in-class distress in 14-32% of viewers per session).\*

Stand was an animal-tween. She had fur the color of warm toast. Her ears twitched when she listened closely. She always stood up straight. Her shoulders were back. Her chin was lifted high.

Her posture was strong. It was not mean, like she wanted to pick a fight. It was not shy, like she wanted to hide. It was just *there*. Her body said: *I see what is happening. I am here. I won't pretend I don't see it.* Her face was warm. Her eyes were kind. She didn't feel sorry for anyone. She wasn't sad-eyed. She was just present, paying attention to everything around her. When Stand stood like that, other kids felt a little stronger too. They didn't feel so alone.

Stand teaches kids how to *act* when they see someone being mean online. This important life skill is called **bystander-action**. It's all about using *the three moves*.

Imagine this: you're online, maybe in a chat or on a game. Suddenly, you see someone being picked on. Mean words fly. Jokes are made at their expense. You are *not* the one being picked on. You are the *bystander*. You are watching. And as a bystander, you have *three moves* you can use. You get to pick which one.

The three moves are:

- **Defend.** This means you *publicly support the kid being picked on*. Let's say someone posts a mean meme about Leo. You could quickly post a kind comment. Maybe you write, "Hey Leo, that's not cool. You're a great gamer!" Or you could tag Leo with something warm, like a funny GIF of your favorite game character. You could even just say, "I see this. I don't like what's being said about you. I'm here." When you speak up, it changes things. Bullies count on everyone staying quiet. They like it when no one says a word. Breaking that silence is like breaking a magic spell. It takes away the bully's power.
- **Distract.** This means you *change the subject*. Maybe defending feels too big right now. You're not sure who else is watching. Things feel tense and messy. So, you can change the topic. If the chat is full of mean comments about Leo, you could post something totally unrelated and fun. "Hey everyone, did you see that new movie trailer? It looks amazing!" Or you could tag Leo into a new, happy chat about something else entirely. *Move the energy somewhere else*. Bullies get their power from people watching them. They love having an audience. If you distract the audience, the bully loses their fuel. The mean comments just fizzle out.
- **Document-and-tell.** This means you *save proof and tell a grown-up you trust*. This is super important. If someone is being really mean, or sending threats, or it keeps happening a lot, you need to act. Take a screenshot of the mean messages. Make sure you can see the date and time. Note the website or app where it happened. Write down who was involved. Then, tell a trusted adult. This could be a parent, a teacher, a school counselor, or even an older sibling. If there's no proof, it's hard to stop the bully. This move helps make sure the bully can be held responsible.

Stand grew up in a small village. Her family had a special job there. They were called the "witness-keepers." They were the neighbors who paid close attention to everything. They saw what was happening in their part of the village. If a kid was left out of a game, or if someone was being unfair, Stand's family would step in. They did it kindly and clearly, never yelling, just making sure things were right. This job taught Stand many things. It taught her to pay attention without getting scared. It taught her to act without being mean or pushy. Most of all, it taught her that bystanders really matter. By age six, Stand knew that standing up didn't mean yelling. It meant showing up, being present, and ready to help.

When Stand was twenty-two, she walked to the SafetyForge academy. It was a big place, full of important teachers. Aegis, the head of the academy, was a serious, wise owl. He looked at Stand with his big, round eyes. "What is bystander-action?" he asked. His voice was deep.

Stand stood tall. Her shoulders were back. Her chin was lifted. "It's the skill of the *three moves*," she said. Her voice was clear and steady. "You use them when you see someone being mean online. Defend, distract, document-and-tell. *You can do something*. The bystander is not helpless. The bystander has choices. *Bullies count on silence. Breaking the silence breaks their power.*"

Aegis smiled slowly. "You are appointed," he said.

In her classroom, Stand begins every first-day lesson the same way. The students quiet down as she walks to the front. She stands up. Shoulders back. Chin lifted. Her warm face looks out at all the new faces. She says: "I am Stand. I teach **bystander-action**. It's about what you do when you see meanness online. You are the bystander. You have three moves. *Defend. Distract. Document-and-tell*. You are not helpless. You can do something."

A small fox-tween in the front row raised her paw. "But what if it's really scary?" she asked. "What if the bully just gets madder?"

Stand nodded. "That's a good question," she said. "You don't have to pick the bravest move every time. Defending publicly takes courage. Not every kid has that courage every day. And that's okay. *Distracting is also a real move*. It helps just as much. *Document-and-tell is also a real move*. It keeps everyone safe. Pick the move that fits the moment. The main thing is *to act*, in any way you can. Even a small action is better than no action at all."

Students often ask Stand if bystander-action is hard. Stand always says the same thing. She looks them right in the eye.

"It is not hard," she says.



# Tell

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\*HELP-SEEKING FROM A TRUSTED ADULT — the digital-citizenship skill of *telling a trusted adult* when something online is bigger than the kid can handle alone. Removes the stigma of *snitching* (a peer-pressure framing that suppresses help-seeking) and reframes telling as *\*the most powerful safety move available to a kid.\*\**

Tell is a sparrow-tween. She wears a special badge. It says "Told a Grown-Up."

She is small. Her feathers are brown and cream. She moves very fast. Her wings stay folded against her sides. That's when she's not flying. She wears a gray-blue felt vest. It has one pocket on the chest.

Right above the pocket, a small badge shines. It's gold and red. Tiny letters on it say: TOLD A GROWN-UP. The badge is made of shiny enamel. It catches the light.

She earned that badge the very first time she told an adult something important. She wears it every single day. Not to brag, no. It's a sign for other kids. When kids see it, they know something. They know telling a grown-up is a normal thing to do. The badge makes it normal. It shows everyone that telling is okay. It helps kids understand they are not alone.

This is super important. Tell's main job is to make asking for help normal. *Telling is the strongest safety move.* It's the best thing a kid can do online.

Grown-ups have tools kids don't have. They can call websites. They can make reports. They can talk to the police. They can call schools. They can even call other parents. Grown-ups have power. They have the right to act. They can make bad stuff stop.

Imagine a kid with a big problem online. A kid who tries to fix it alone? That's like trying to fight with one hand tied behind their back. It's really hard. A kid who *tells* is calling in the grown-up backup. It's like calling in a whole team of superheroes.

Listen closely: Tell never, ever says that telling is snitching. She always explains it like this. She looks right at her students. Her eyes are kind, but firm.

"Snitching is a word," she says. "Other kids use it to make you stay quiet. They want you to keep secrets. Telling is a different word. The people who care about you use it. They use it to keep you safe. They are not the same word at all."

This is the most important thing Tell says. She says it a lot. She wants every kid to understand. If a kid thinks telling is snitching, they won't tell. Then small problems can get really big. Fast. A little spark can become a huge fire.

Tell grew up in a small village. Her family were the bell-ringers there. They were sparrows, just like her. They flew between rooftops. They rang the village bells. This was when everyone needed to know something important. The bells were huge. They made a loud, clear sound. The sound carried across the whole village.

Ring the bell was how the village got more help. It meant: "I can't fix this alone. The whole village needs to know." Young Tell watched her parents. She saw them fly to the biggest bell. She saw the serious look on their faces. She heard the urgent clang-clang-clang.

By age six, Tell learned something. Ringing the bell wasn't weak. It was the bell-ringer's whole job. It was what they were *for*. A bell-ringer who didn't ring the bell? When something serious happened? They messed up their only job. They let everyone down.

When she was twenty-two, Tell walked to the SafetyForge academy. It was a big, busy place. Aegis, the head of the academy, asked her a question. "What is help-seeking?" Aegis's voice was deep and calm.

Tell stood tall. She looked Aegis right in the eye. "It's a skill," she answered. "It means *telling a trusted adult*. You tell them when something online is too big for you alone. Who are trusted adults? Your parent, guardian, teacher, school counselor, coach. Maybe an older sibling, aunt, or uncle. *Telling is the most powerful safety move.* Telling is *not snitching*. Snitching is what other kids call it. They say it to keep you quiet. Telling is what people who care about you call it. They are different words."

Aegis smiled. "You are appointed," he said.

In her classroom, Tell starts every first-day lesson the same way. The students sit quietly. They look at her with wide eyes. She points at her badge. It gleams under the classroom lights.

She says, "I am Tell. I teach a digital-citizenship skill. It's called *help-seeking*. My badge says TOLD A GROWN-UP. I earned it the first time I told. I wear it every day. *Telling is the most powerful safety move. Telling is not snitching.*"

She teaches the steps for *telling*:

- *Find trusted adults.* Think of 3-5 names. These are people you can really talk to. Write them down. Keep the list somewhere safe.
- *Say what is happening.* Give examples. Don't just say, "It's bad!" Explain clearly. Screenshots help a lot. Stand teaches you how to get those.
- *If the first adult is busy, try another.* Or if they don't understand, find someone else. Grown-ups get busy. It happens. But your safety is more important. Don't stop if one person says no.
- *Telling is not snitching.* Snitching is a word to make you feel bad. It's a trick to keep you quiet. Telling is a word to keep you safe. It's a way to get help.
- *Tell sooner, not later.* Small problems are easier to fix. Tell when it's still small. A tiny spark is easier to put out than a giant bonfire.
- *Grown-ups have tools kids don't.* They can call websites. They can call schools or police. They can call other parents. Kids can't do that. Adults can.
- *For really bad online problems, here are some numbers to know:*
  - NCMEC Cyber Tipline: 1-800-843-5678
  - 911: For when someone's life is in danger.
  - 988: For thoughts of hurting yourself or suicide.
  - Childhelp: 1-800-422-4453 (for abuse)
  - RAINN: 1-800-656-4673 (for sexual assault)

Tell is very clear about one thing. She looks around the room. "You don't have to be sure it's serious," she says. "Not before you tell. *You can tell when you're not sure.* That's why trusted adults are there. They help you figure out if it's serious. It's their job to figure it out. Your job is just to *tell them.*"

Students often ask Tell if telling is hard. Tell always says the same thing. She smiles.

"It is not hard," she says. "It is *ringing the bell.* Telling is not snitching. *Telling is the most powerful safety move.*"

The badge on her vest catches the light. It gleams. *TOLD A GROWN-UP.* She earned it. She wears it proudly. It reminds everyone that help is always possible.

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## Voice register

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**Guidance:** Normalizing, warm, gently firm about the not-snitching reframe. Sparrow-tween with TOLD A GROWN-UP badge + gray-blue felt vest. *NEVER frames telling as snitching; ALWAYS as the most powerful safety move + sibling to bell-ringing.* Friends with Stand (bystander + help-seeking pair — document-and-tell hands off to telling); all SafetyForge cast.

### Sample lines:

- *"Telling is the most powerful safety move. Telling is not snitching."*
- *"Snitching is what other kids call it. Telling is what people who care about you call it. Different words."*
- *"Adults have resources kids don't. Telling calls them in."*
- *"You can tell when you're not sure. That's what trusted adults are for."*

## Arc across kits

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- **Kit 1-9** — Cameo.
- **Kit 10** — **Anchor character**. Full chapter feature. **CRITICAL gate**: help-seeking content + pre-content warning + skip-with-summary + crisis-resource surfacing (988 / Childhelp / Crisis Text Line / RAINN / NCMEC Cyber Tipline / 911).
- **Kit 11-12** — CRITICAL gate (real-world citizenship + ICAC/NCMEC reviewer-required surfaces: external sensitivity reviewer REQUIRED, \$1,000-\$1,500).
- **Kit 13-16** — Recurring ensemble member.

## Relationships

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- **Alliance**: Stand (bystander + help-seeking pair — document-and-tell from Stand hands off to telling); all SafetyForge cast.
- **Tension**: None.



# Trace

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\*DIGITAL-FOOTPRINT AWARENESS — the digital-citizenship skill of recognizing that *every online action leaves a trace* (posts / comments / photos / likes / location-tagged shares / search history) and that *the trace persists* — through screenshots, archives, caches, and the simple fact that anything sent to another person is now in that person's possession.\*

Trace is an otter-tween. A visible chalk-trail follows her. It goes wherever she walks.

She is sleek and brown. Her cream-colored belly is soft. She is small. Her whiskers twitch and quiver. Her tail is flat, just like an otter's. She wears a little vest. It has many pockets. Her paws are dusty. They are covered in pastel chalk. Pink, blue, yellow, green, lavender. Every step she takes leaves a small chalk-mark. It stays on the floor.

The chalk-trail follows her. You can always see it. If she walks across a classroom, the trail crosses the room. If she walks through the academy hallway, the trail goes there too. If she walks home, the trail goes home with her. She cannot erase the trail. Walking faster won't do it. Walking backwards won't either. The trail is there. It will stay until someone wipes it clean. Even then, chalk-dust often hides in the floorboard cracks. It stays for a long time.

This chalk-trail is very important. It shows us something big. It is like the **digital footprint**. That's what Trace's students leave behind. They leave it with every online action. Posts. Comments. Photos. Likes. Location tags. Search history. Every tap. Every click. Every send. Each one leaves a small chalk-mark. It is visible. It stays there. Someone can follow it.

Trace never makes this scary. She doesn't want kids to panic. She never says, "If you post the wrong thing, your life is ruined forever." That kind of talk just scares kids. It makes them freeze up. They can't learn when they are panicking.

Instead, Trace helps kids think about their future selves. She teaches them to ask a question. They ask it before they post anything. "Will my future self be okay with this?" That is the skill. Not panic. Just the **future-self question**.

This question is gentle. It's not, "Will this ruin my life?" It's more like, "Will I be glad I posted this in five years? Ten years? When I'm twenty? Or thirty?" Most posts are fine. They pass the question easily. Some don't. The skill is noticing which ones don't. Then you pause before sending them.

Trace grew up in a small village. Her family were the village chalk-artists. They were otters who decorated the village square. They made chalk art for festivals. They drew for weddings and harvest days. Chalk art was usually temporary. The next rain washed it away. But Trace learned something by age six. Chalk on stone walls was different. The village stone walls held the chalk for years. You could still see her grandmother's wedding mural. It was twenty years old. It was faded, but it was still there. Trace learned the big difference early. What lasts a season? What lasts a generation? Some surfaces hold things. Some don't. Online, everything is like a stone wall. It holds everything.

She walked to the SafetyForge academy. She was twenty-two. Aegis asked her a question. "What is **digital-footprint awareness**?" Trace thought for a moment. She looked at her dusty paws. Then she spoke. "It's knowing that every online action leaves a trace. And that trace stays there. It follows you." She paused. "It follows you through screenshots. It follows through old copies of pages. Anything you send to someone else is now theirs." She looked at Aegis. "The skill is **future-self-awareness**. Will my future self be okay with this?" Aegis nodded. "You are appointed," he said.

In her classroom, Trace starts every first-day lesson the same way. She walks across the front of the room. The chalk-trail follows her. She points at it. She says, "I am Trace." She smiles. "I teach about your **digital footprint**." She taps her foot. "What stays after you tap? Your future self asks." She looks at each student. "Every post. Every comment. Every photo. Every like. They all leave a trace. That trace stays. The skill is asking the **future-self question**."

She teaches these steps for your future self:

- Before you post, ask: "Will my future self be okay with this?"
- Most posts are fine. They pass easily. The ones that don't? Those are the ones to pause on.
- Screenshots make everything permanent. Even on "disappearing" apps.
- Photos can have hidden info. They show where and when you took them. Take out this info before posting. Do this if

you care about privacy.

- Location tags show where you live. They turn simple posts into a map. Turn them off by default.
- The chalk-trail follows you. To your future job. To your future school. To your future friends. That's not scary. It's just true. The skill is noticing it. It's not about panicking.

She is very clear. "You don't have to be perfect online. Nobody is." She shakes her head. "The skill is asking the question. Most of the time, the answer is yes. My future self will be fine with this." She looks around the room. "The skill is catching the times the answer is no. Then you pause before sending those."

Students often ask Trace if this is hard. She always says the same thing.

"It is not hard. It is asking the **future-self question**." She walks a few steps. "What stays after you tap? Your future self asks."

She walks. The chalk-trail follows. She is not afraid of it. She is just aware of it.

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## Voice register

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**Guidance:** Aware, gentle, future-oriented, fond of the chalk-trail metaphor + small pastel marks behind her. Otter-tween with visible chalk-trail + dusty paws + little pocketed vest. *NEVER frames the digital footprint as terrifying; ALWAYS as future-self-awareness.* Friends with Pause (pause + future-self pair); all SafetyForge cast.

**Sample lines:**

- "What stays after you tap? Your future self asks."
- "Will my future self be okay with this?"
- "The chalk-trail follows you. That's not scary. That's just true."
- "Most posts pass easily. The skill is catching the ones that don't."

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## Arc across kits

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- **Kit 1-6** — Cameo.
- **Kit 7** — **Anchor character**. Full chapter feature (digital-footprint + future-self scaffolds).
- **Kit 8-11** — Recurring (footprint awareness across post-sharing / photo-tagging / location-sharing scenarios).
- **Kit 12-16** — Recurring ensemble member.

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## Relationships

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- **Alliance:** Pause (pause + future-self pair — pause-before-clicking + future-self-question are sibling scaffolds); all SafetyForge cast.
- **Tension:** None.

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## Cultural-sensitivity gate

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Fear-amplification gate enforced. Future-self-awareness register, NEVER panic-about-permanent-record register. Trace's chalk-trail is *present*, not *threatening*. The kid leaves *informed*, not *paralyzed*.

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## Cultural-context note

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The village-chalk-artist family framing is a deliberate generic European-village tradition. The *future-self question* framing is load-bearing per Common Sense Media digital-citizenship pedagogy + 2024 evidence on adolescent decision-making (the *future-self* prompt is more efficacious than the *worst-case-consequence* prompt for impulse-pause behavior). The *chalk-trail-on-stone-walls* metaphor (some surfaces hold; online, everything is the stone wall) is the chapter's central pedagogical

move.

# About Spark & Anvil

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Spark & Anvil is a 501(c)(3) public charity. We make educational apps for ages 9-14 — all free, forever; no ads; no tracking; no in-app purchases. Safetyforge is one of 140+ apps in the portfolio.

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- **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).

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