

The Great Company Adventures · Book 10 of 50

AT&T
**THE
VOICE INSIDE THE WIRE**

A curious girl, three wise mentors, and the ordinary phone call that quietly wired
the whole world together.

"Discovering the businesses that built the modern world"

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THE GREAT COMPANY ADVENTURES

Discovering the businesses that built the modern world.

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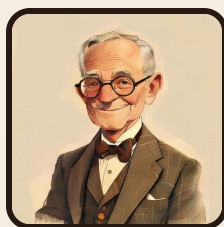
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MEET THE CHARACTERS



SIRI



BEN



WARREN



CHARLIE



IRIS

A curious girl named Siri, a wise old teacher named Ben, and his student Warren with Warren's partner Charlie — together discovering the businesses that built the modern world, one adventure at a time.

THE GLOBAL 50

One great company per volume · Fifty adventures, one modern world

SPACE & EXPLORATION

1. SpaceX — *“The Fire That Comes Back”*

MANUFACTURING & ENGINEERING

2. Toyota — *“The River That Builds Cars”*
3. Siemens — *“The Factory That Builds Factories”*
4. Caterpillar — *“The Machines That Move Mountains”*
5. Boeing — *“The Bird With Six Million Pieces”*
6. Airbus — *“The Plane Four Countries Built”*

ENERGY & INDUSTRY

7. Shell — *“The Sunlight Buried at Sea”*
8. ExxonMobil — *“The Ancient Sunlight Machine”*
9. GE Vernova — *“The Wheel That Makes Lightning”*

COMMUNICATION

10. AT&T — *“The Voice Inside the Wire”*
11. Qualcomm — *“The Whisper in the Air”*
12. Ericsson — *“The Towers That Talk”*

TRANSPORTATION

13. Tesla — *“The Car With No Engine”*
14. John Deere — *“The Machine That Feeds the World”*
15. UPS — *“The Promise in a Brown Truck”*

INFRASTRUCTURE

16. ABB — *“The Arms That Never Tire”*
17. Schneider Electric — *“The Guardian of the Grid”*

MATERIALS

18. Corning — *“The Thread of Light”*
19. DuPont — *“The Inventors of Almost Everything”*

SCIENCE & TOOLS

20. 3M — *“The Factory of Ten Thousand Ideas”*
21. Bosch — *“The Spark in Every Machine”*
22. Honeywell — *“The Dial That Tames the Weather”*

MEDICINE & BIOTECHNOLOGY

23. Pfizer — *“The Shield in a Tiny Vial”*
24. Roche — *“The Detectives of the Blood”*

25. Novo Nordisk — *“The Key to a Billion Locks”*

26. Johnson & Johnson — *“The Little Bandage That Grew”*

FOOD & AGRICULTURE

27. Nestlé — *“The Cup That Wakes the World”*
28. Cargill — *“The Invisible Harvest”*

FINANCE & COMMERCE

29. Visa — *“The Handshake Inside the Card”*
30. Mastercard — *“The Two-Second Trust Machine”*
31. Walmart — *“The Store That Never Runs Out”*
32. Costco — *“The Treasure Warehouse”*
33. FedEx — *“The Race Against the Sun”*

CONSUMER INNOVATION

34. Disney — *“The Factory of Dreams”*
35. LEGO — *“The Brick That Builds Anything”*
36. Sony — *“The Pocket Full of Music”*
37. Coca-Cola — *“The Secret in the Red Can”*
38. Nike — *“The Shoe That Learned to Fly”*

LUXURY & CRAFTSMANSHIP

39. Rolex — *“The Heartbeat on Your Wrist”*
40. LVMH — *“The Suitcase That Conquered the World”*

COMPUTING & DIGITAL CIVILIZATION

41. Apple — *“The Glass That Thinks”*
42. Microsoft — *“The Invisible Machine”*
43. Google — *“The Library With No Walls”*
44. Amazon — *“The Box That Crossed the World”*
45. NVIDIA — *“The Brain Made of Sand”*
46. Intel — *“The First Thinking Chip”*
47. TSMC — *“The Invisible City”*
48. ASML — *“The Machine That Prints With Light”*
49. OpenAI — *“The Machine That Learned to Talk”*

THE FINAL DISCOVERY

50. The Company Yet to Be Built — *“The Adventure You Will Build”*

THE VOICE AT MIDNIGHT

Midnight. Homework: doomed.
And Grandpa Ben's old brass
compass? Spinning like a top.

SPIN

The phone lit up.
Grandma's voice —
warm and clear — from
a thousand miles away.

How are you
HERE, Grandma?

The magic diary flipped
open by itself. Fresh ink.
Grandpa's handwriting.

It's never done THIS
before...

"Time to meet
the businesses
that built the
modern world.
Start with the
voice inside the
wire."

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

A voice is just trembling air. Yet Grandma's crossed a thousand miles in a heartbeat — through a wire thinner than a straw. So... **who taught a wire to talk?**

The phone hummed. A whirlpool of blue sound-waves swallowed her whole.

WHOOSH



Here we GOOO!



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

New mystery! 📞

- ① How does a plain wire carry Grandma's voice a thousand miles?
- ② Grandpa says a phone CALL built one of history's greatest companies. Prove it.

THE PUZZLE OF THE TALKING WIRE



She landed inside a humming canyon of wires — millions of them, glowing and whispering.

The wires are
WHISPERING!



A young engineer waved from a catwalk. "I'm Iris. I keep the whole network talking."

You run **ALL** of this?!



She lit up a glowing map: one "hello" crossing six secret stages to reach a friend.

Six stages for
ONE hello?!

Crack them, and nothing's mysterious.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

One phone call is a relay race you can't see. Your voice changes shape six times — air, electricity, numbers, light — then changes back. All in a single blink.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

One hello = **SIX** secret stages. 🔍 Iris says every stage hides a trick. First trick: how does a voice even leave my mouth and get into a wire?

THE VOICE BECOMES LIGHTNING

3a First: a voice turns into electricity



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The telephone's whole secret: it never sends your voice. It sends an electric COPY — a wiggle matching every rise and fall of the sound. Copy the shape, and you've copied the voice.

At Grandma's end, the wiggle feeds a magnet that shoves a second little drum.

"The drum shoves the air — and your voice is BORN again, right in her ear."

The magnet dances the drum!

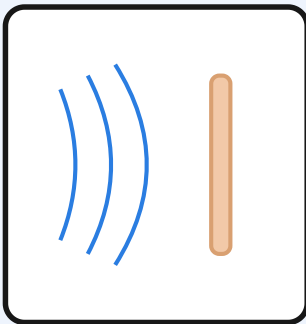
Rebuilt from a wiggle. Whoa.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

So a call is really air → drum → electricity → magnet → drum → air. Six little handoffs, and a whisper survives a thousand miles. Ordinary parts, extraordinary teamwork.

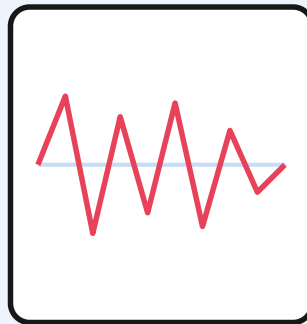


HOW YOUR VOICE TRAVELS A WIRE



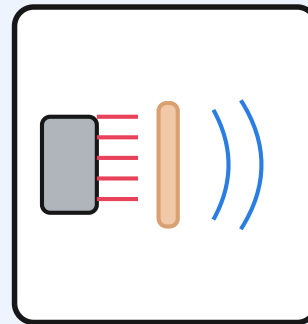
SOUND SHAKES A DRUM

your voice trembles the air



IT BECOMES A WIGGLE

an electric copy of the sound



A MAGNET REBUILDS IT

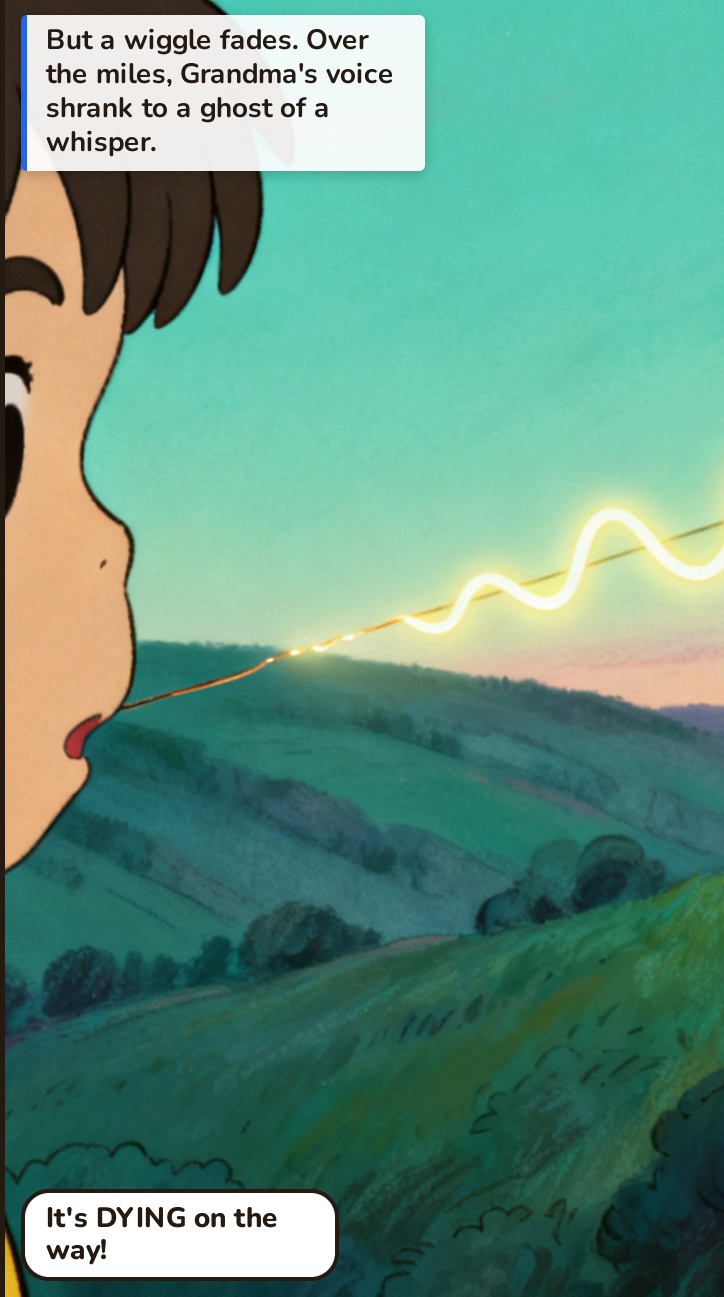
and your voice is born again



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · STAGE 1 CRACKED

Voice = trembling air → tiny drum shivers →
electric wiggle-copy → magnet → drum → voice
again! ⚡ Same idea, run backwards. A phone is
TWO little eardrums with a wire between.

THE WHISPER THAT WOULDN'T DIE



But a wiggle fades. Over the miles, Grandma's voice shrank to a ghost of a whisper.

It's DYING on the way!



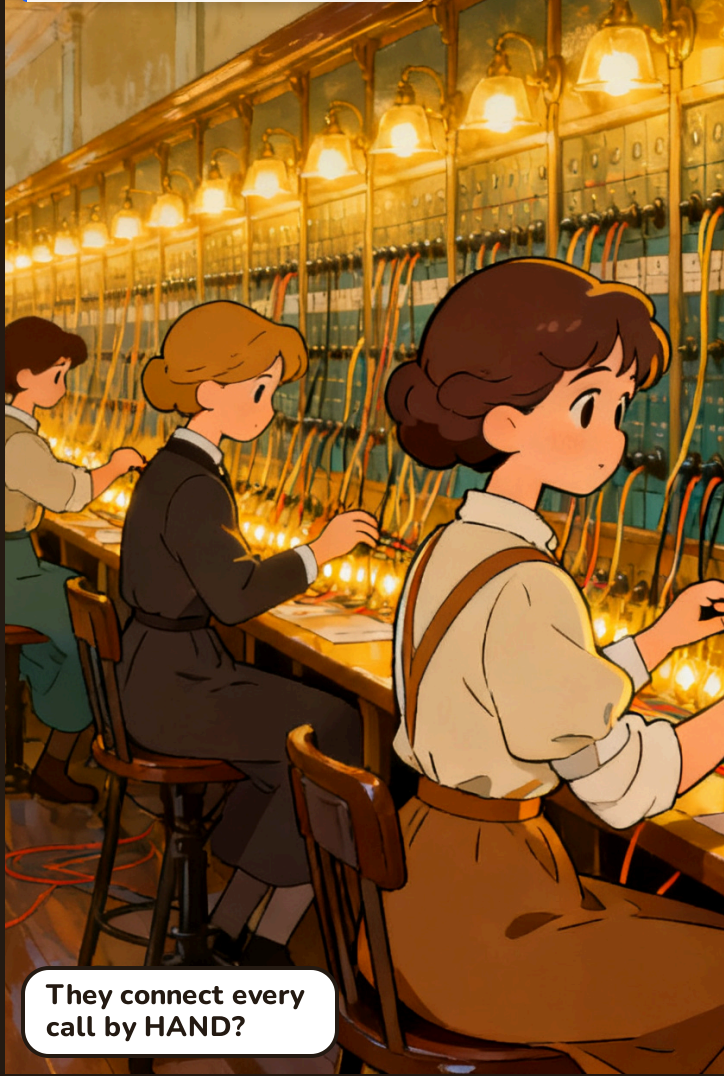
Iris held up a glowing glass tube. "This listens to the faint whisper — and SHOUTS it onward."

A booster for tired voices!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

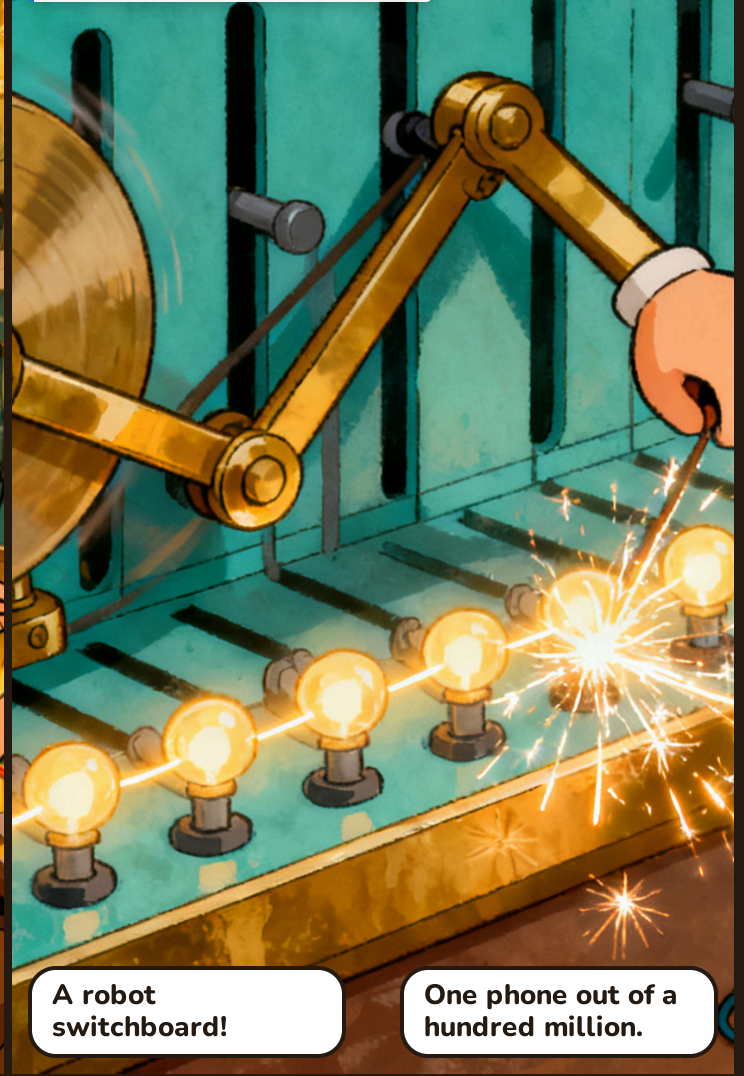
Long calls were impossible until 1915 — when a little glass tube learned to amplify. Plant boosters every few miles and a whisper can cross a whole continent. That same tiny tube grew up into the computer chip.

Next: a great hall of operators, plugging cables to join caller to caller by hand.



They connect every call by HAND?

Then a clever machine took over — hunting through the wires to find one exact phone.



A robot switchboard!

One phone out of a hundred million.

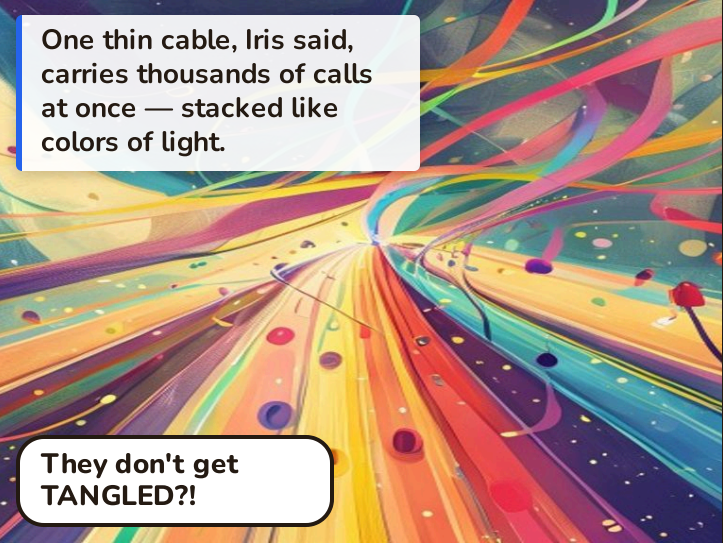
★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Two hard problems, solved: keep the whisper alive (amplifiers), and find the one phone you want among millions (switching). Miss either, and “hello” goes nowhere.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

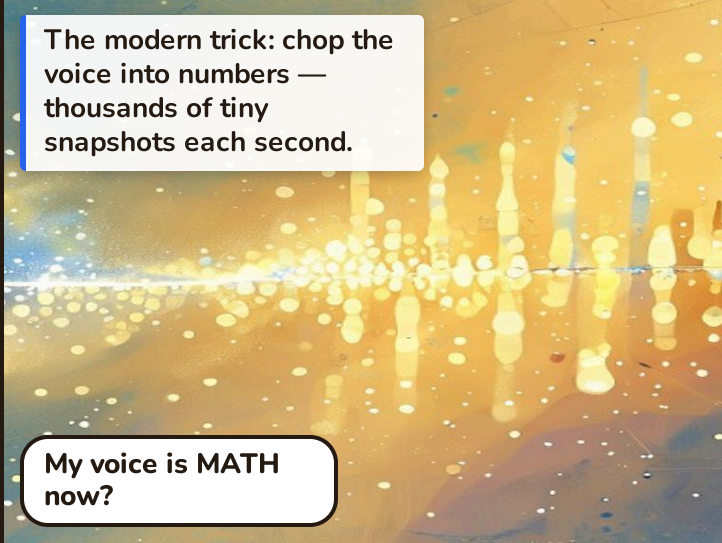
Voices FADE → glass-tube boosters SHOUT them onward (since 1915!). 📞 And a switch hunts millions of wires to find ONE phone. First by hand, then by machine. But who conducts it all?

A MILLION VOICES, ONE THREAD



One thin cable, Iris said,
carries thousands of calls
at once — stacked like
colors of light.

They don't get
TANGLED?!



The modern trick: chop the
voice into numbers —
thousands of tiny
snapshots each second.

My voice is MATH
now?



Those numbers ride as
flashes of light down a
glass thread finer than a
hair.

Grandma's voice is
LIGHT?!



Iris unrolled the whole
world: glass threads under
every ocean, all humming
with light.

The planet is one
giant web.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The mind-bender: your voice becomes NUMBERS, the numbers become light, the light crosses oceans, then rebuilds your exact voice. Nothing but math and glass — and a quarter of a second.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Voice → numbers → flashes of light → glass threads under the SEA → back to voice. 🌊
Thousands of calls share one hair-thin fiber. So who built this planet-sized web? 🎵

WHY THE WHOLE WORLD SAID YES

"Imagine the very first telephone," said Iris. "All alone. Nobody to call. Useless."

"But every new phone made every other phone more useful. Two, then thousands, then billions."

It grows itself!

Soon the network wrapped the world — and living without it felt unthinkable.

Who'd give up hearing Grandma?

A phone needs
FRIENDS!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Why build something so costly? Because a network gets more valuable every time someone joins — that's the **network effect**. A rival can copy a wire. Copying everyone-already-connected is far, far harder.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

A lone phone = useless. Every new phone makes ALL phones better = network effect. 🏠
People don't pay for the wire — they pay to reach everyone they love. Grandpa's rule: build what people can't quit.

THE COMPANY THAT WIRED THE WORLD

Through the humming hall:
an ancient brass bell, and a
name every phone once
carried.

AT&T! The voice
inside the wire!

"It began in 1876. A
teacher of the deaf,
chasing sound, built the
first working telephone."

A phone, from
studying **HEARING?**

"Mr. Watson —
come here!"

A bold manager dreamed
of **ONE** network for
everyone. In 1915 a call
crossed all of America.

New York to
California — by
voice!

Its laboratory birthed the
transistor — the tiny switch
inside every computer alive
today.

The phone company
invented the **CHIP?!**

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

AT&T's Bell Labs may be the greatest invention factory ever: the transistor, the laser, the very idea of the cell phone, even a whole theory of information. A phone company quietly built the modern world.



THE STORY IN TIME

1876

Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone.

1877

The Bell Telephone Company is born.

1915

First coast-to-coast call: New York to San Francisco.

1947

Bell Labs invents the transistor — the switch inside every chip.

1948

Bell Labs' Claude Shannon founds the science of information.

1962

Telstar beams the first live TV picture across an ocean.

1984

A court splits the Bell System into AT&T and seven 'Baby Bells'.

Today

AT&T carries billions of calls and rivers of data. 📞

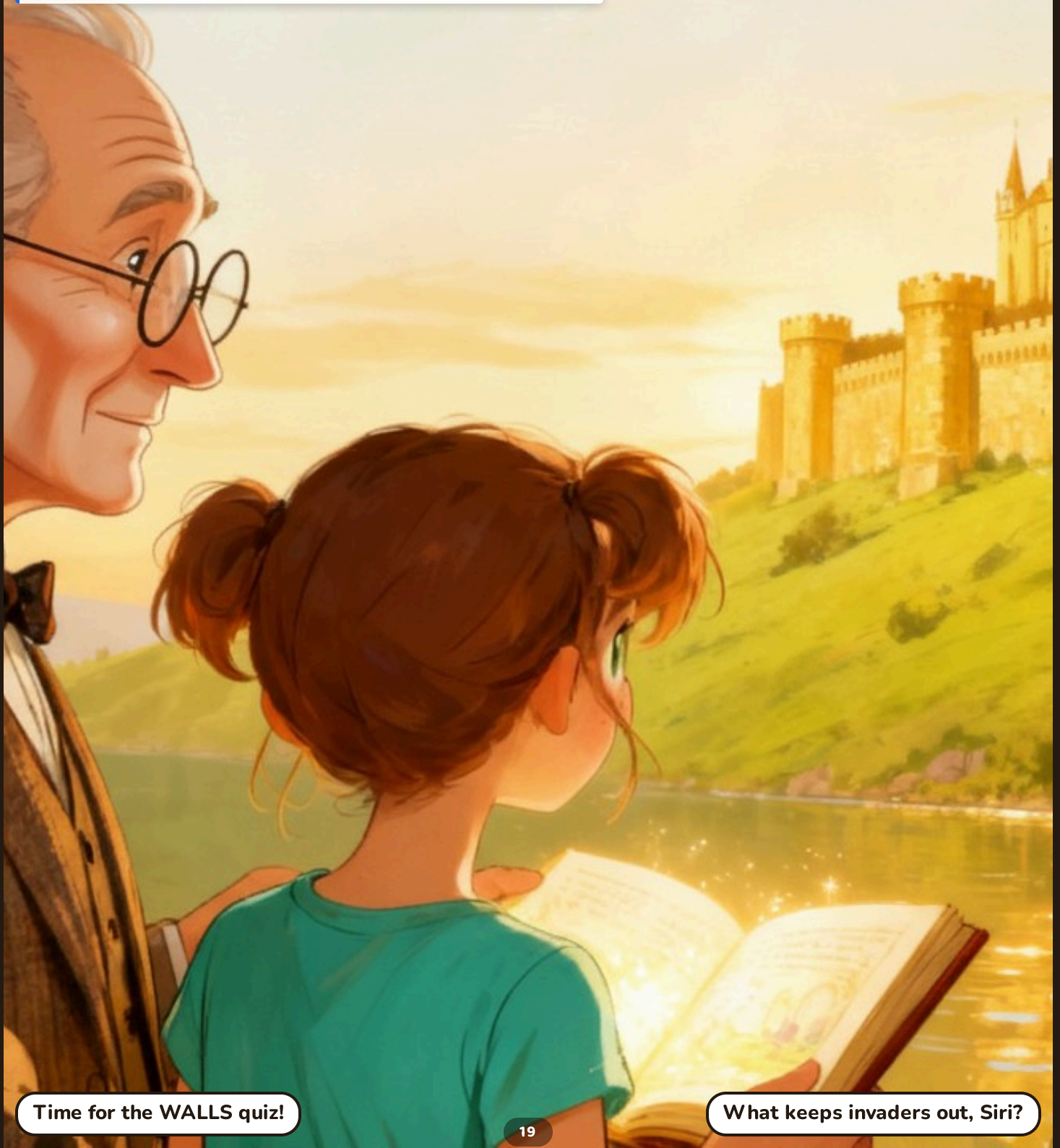


SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Bell 1876 → one nation wired → 1915 coast-to-coast → Bell Labs invents the transistor, the laser, the cell-phone idea! Then 1984: broken into pieces by law. The company that built the future... of talking. 📞

THE CASTLE OF COPPER AND GLASS

A warm glow. A whiff of cherry cola. Warren and Charlie stood before a shining castle.



Time for the WALLS quiz!

What keeps invaders out, Siri?



THE CASTLE WALLS • WHY RIVALS CAN'T COPY IT



Wall One: The Web Itself

Wires under every street, cables beneath every ocean. Building a second one costs a fortune and takes decades. Few even dare.



Wall Two: Everyone's Already On It

A network is worth more the more people it holds. The one everybody already uses is the hardest of all to leave.



Wall Three: The Dial-Tone Promise

Pick up, and it just works — in storms, on holidays, at midnight. Trust built over a century. Copying a cable is easy; copying that habit is not.



Wall Four: Room on the Airwaves

Only so many radio lanes exist, and they are licensed and scarce. Holding a big slice of the sky keeps rivals small.



The Cracks in the Walls

Networks cost billions just to keep fresh. Rule-makers watch closely — they once split the company in two. And new rivals keep laying their own glass. Castles need defending — daily.

Charlie tapped his glasses. “Don't ask how to WIN. Ask what would DESTROY it. Then don't do that. **Invert, always invert.**”



Find the ways to lose — then don't!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Charlie's ruin-the-network checklist: stop reinvesting and let the wires rot; break the dial-tone promise; guard the old technology while the next one races past. Now — just never do those. Worry, turned into a to-do list.

Warren raised his cola. "A business people would hate to live without — so long as it keeps earning that trust."



So the treasure is the TRUST!



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Walls: the web 🕸 + everyone's-on-it 📶 + dial-tone promise 📞 + the airwaves 📡. Cracks: costly upkeep, rule-makers, new rivals. Charlie: INVERT. Warren: the trust IS the treasure. 🏰

THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS

"Last question," said Iris.
"What's a call in thirty
years?" A city glowing with
invisible signals.



Maybe I just THINK
it?

On a rooftop at dusk, Siri
thought it through the way
Grandpa taught her.



Don't bet on the
wire. Bet on
CONNECTING.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The deep currents: faster wireless everywhere, glass fiber to every home, machines chatting to machines, calls you barely notice happening. Shapes change — but the need to reach each other? Forever. 🌐

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

2056 watchlist: super-fast wireless, fiber to every home, gadgets calling gadgets, invisible instant calls. Rule: bet on the need to connect, not on the wire. (Still want holo-Grandma though.)

COMING HOME

Her own bed. Morning. The compass: quiet. The house: somehow different.

Was it real? It FELT real...

One fresh line dried on the diary's glowing page.

"The modern world is not magic. It is millions of ordinary people doing small hard things, together, for a long time."

At breakfast the phone rang. Grandma again. Trembling air. Electric copies. Light under the sea.

You're a hundred years of cleverness.

She hugged the diary tight. Somewhere, a wire hummed, carrying a million hellos.

Show me the next one, Grandpa. ♥

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Next unlock, feel it: your voice becomes an electric copy, then numbers, then light under the ocean — rebuilt in a loved one's ear in a quarter-second. A phone call is no longer just a call. **Nothing, from now on, is just anything.**



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · WHAT I LEARNED

- ① A voice is trembling air.
- ② The wire sends an electric COPY, not the voice.
- ③ Boosters keep whispers alive; switches find one phone.
- ④ Voice → numbers → light under the sea.
- ⑤ Network effects → dial-tone trust → castle.
- ⑥ A phone company invented the transistor. 🧡



OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe the greatest gift we can give a child is the ability to think.

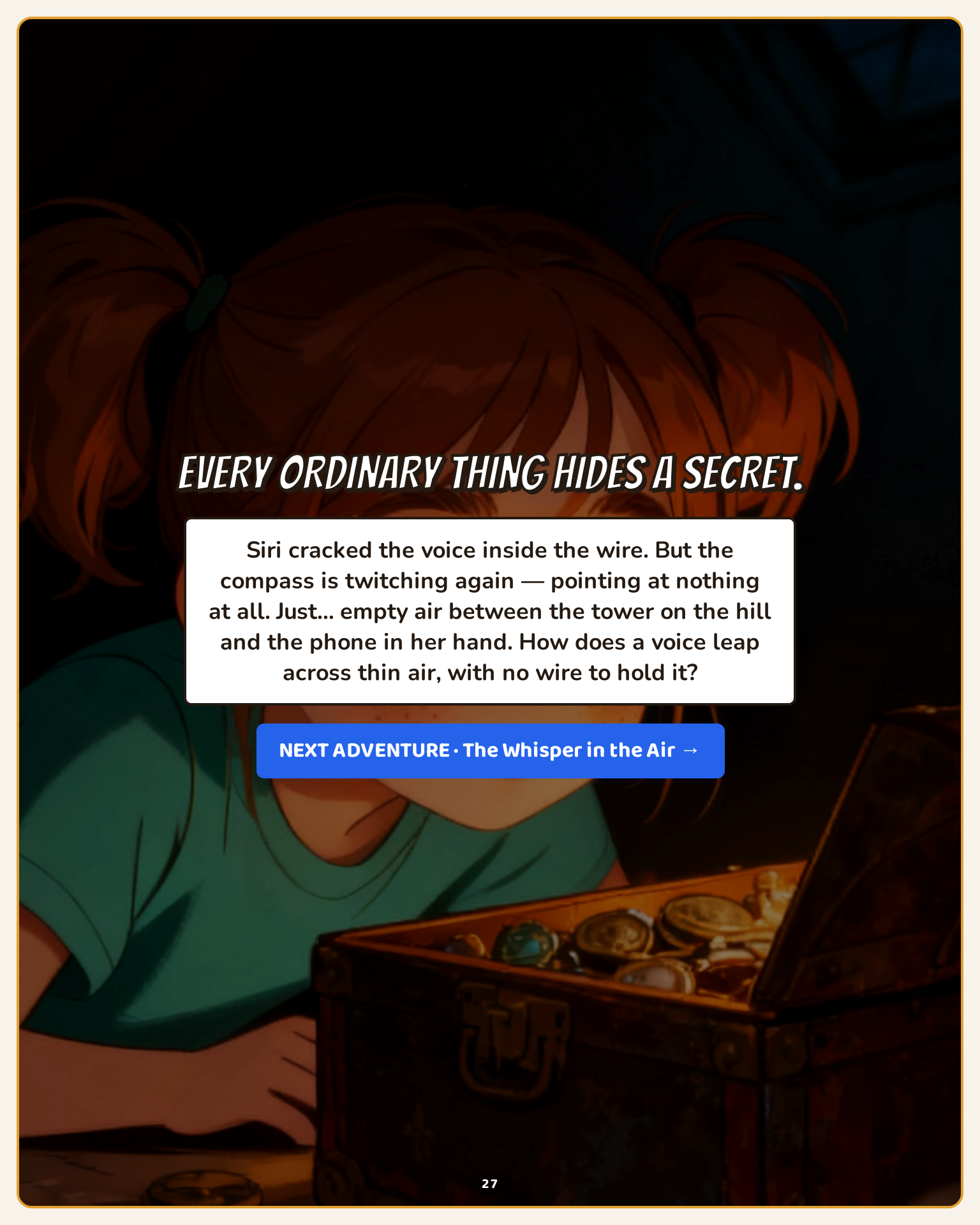
Inspired by the multidisciplinary thinking of [Charlie Munger](#) and the rational, long-term philosophy of [Warren Buffett](#), our comics connect science, technology, business, history, and human behavior to show how the real world works.

Every story begins with a scientific idea and follows its journey into innovation, industry, and the businesses that create value for society. Along the way, children learn that great companies are built on curiosity, experimentation, integrity, and long-term thinking.

Our goal is not to teach children how to invest, but to help them build the mental models needed to understand the world, ask better questions, and think independently.

The companies featured in *The Great Company Adventures* are educational case studies—not investment recommendations. They show how knowledge, innovation, and perseverance turn ideas into products, services, and enduring businesses.

LEARN THE SCIENCE. • UNDERSTAND THE BUSINESS. • THINK FOR LIFE.

A girl with brown hair in pigtails is looking down into an open treasure chest. The chest is filled with gold coins and jewelry. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, golden glow emanating from the chest.

EVERY ORDINARY THING HIDES A SECRET.

Siri cracked the voice inside the wire. But the compass is twitching again — pointing at nothing at all. Just... empty air between the tower on the hill and the phone in her hand. How does a voice leap across thin air, with no wire to hold it?

NEXT ADVENTURE • The Whisper in the Air →