

The Great Company Adventures • Book 32 of 50

# COSTCO THE TREASURE WAREHOUSE



seven doors, twelve mental models, and the little plastic card that families happily pay to carry.

*"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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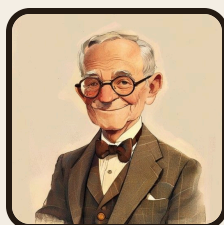
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## ***MEET THE CHARACTERS***



***SIRI***



***BEN***



***WARREN***



***CHARLIE***



***ETTA***

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

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11. Qualcomm — *“The Whisper in the Air”*
12. Ericsson — *“The Towers That Talk”*

## TRANSPORTATION

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14. John Deere — *“The Machine That Feeds the World”*
15. UPS — *“The Promise in a Brown Truck”*

## INFRASTRUCTURE

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17. Schneider Electric — *“The Guardian of the Grid”*

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19. DuPont — *“The Inventors of Almost Everything”*

## SCIENCE & TOOLS

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21. Bosch — *“The Spark in Every Machine”*
22. Honeywell — *“The Dial That Tames the Weather”*

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## THE FINAL DISCOVERY

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



## THE CARD THAT GLOWED AT MIDNIGHT

Midnight. Homework: not happening. Because Grandpa Ben's brass compass just started... trembling.

**TIK-TIK**

It spun. Locked. Pointed straight at the kitchen counter.

**SPIN**

Wait. Seriously?

That morning: Mom and Dad hauling in cartons the size of suitcases. Paper towels stacked like bricks.

Why do we buy **EVERYTHING** giant?

It's never done **THIS** before.





And on the counter, the thing they always take: a plain plastic card. No pictures. No sparkle.



The diary flipped open by itself. Fresh ink.

YOU'RE the next great company?  
You're a CARD.

"Some stores charge money just to walk in, little one. Millions line up anyway. Find out why, and you'll understand almost everything."

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Sit with how odd that is. Every shop on Earth wants you inside — free samples, bright windows, cheerful doors. One store says: **pay first, then you may enter**. And families renew year after year, smiling. Tonight's mystery: **what's worth paying to walk into?**

The card went warm in her hand — and a whirlpool of golden light yanked her in.

WHOOSH



Here we GOOO!



#### SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Biggest mystery yet 📋

- ① Why pay a fee just to SHOP?
- ② Why is everything in there enormous?
- ③ Grandpa says the card built a giant company.

Prove it, compass.



## THE CAVE OF PALLETS

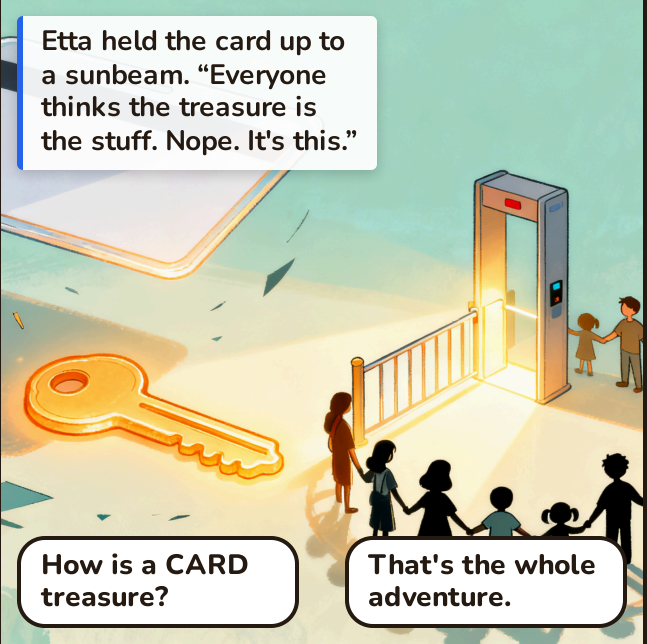


She landed on cold concrete in a cave of steel. Racks climbed until they vanished into golden haze.



A woman in a red vest hopped down from a forklift. "I'm Etta. I run this warehouse. Mind the pallets."

You **DRIVE** that?  
Best job ever.



Etta held the card up to a sunbeam. "Everyone thinks the treasure is the stuff. Nope. It's this."

It's a **CANYON** made  
of boxes!

How is a **CARD**  
treasure?

That's the whole  
adventure.

## ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Look around: no chandeliers, no music, no window displays. Goods sit on the same wooden pallets the truck brought them on, under a bare metal ceiling. Nothing here is decorated. **Everything here is decided.**



Etta unrolled a parchment map across a pallet. Seven glowing doors along a winding canyon path.



Seven secrets. Open them all and you'll know why a card is treasure.

Seven doors. Deal.



#### SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • THE QUEST MAP

- 1 THE BIGNESS — why is everything giant?
- 2 THE COLD — a room that snows?
- 3 THE SHORT LIST — only 4,000 things?
- 4 THE CONCRETE SKY — why so plain?
- 5 THE TREASURE HUNT — a KAYAK in a food aisle?
- 6 THE CLOCK — something about time and money
- 7 THE PEOPLE — who keeps it all going?

Let's GO 🌍



# WHY BIG COSTS LESS

## 3a Door One: the wrapping puzzle

Door one was a wrapping contest. Eight little boxes, or one big box the same size?



"That's geometry, not opinion. Double a box's width: eight times the inside, only four times the skin."



### ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

This one rule explains giant packs, giant ships, giant ovens and giant animals. **Volume grows by cubes; surface grows by squares.** So every big thing carries more goods per scrap of wrapping, per scrap of steel, per scrap of heat. 📦

Siri wrapped one herself, just to be sure. Tape everywhere.  
Science: confirmed.



I have proved it. With my own terrible  
tape.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

And packaging isn't a tiny detail. For cheap everyday things — cereal, water, soap — the box, bottle and label can cost as much as what's inside. Halve the wrapping and you have genuinely made the thing cheaper. Nobody was even robbed.

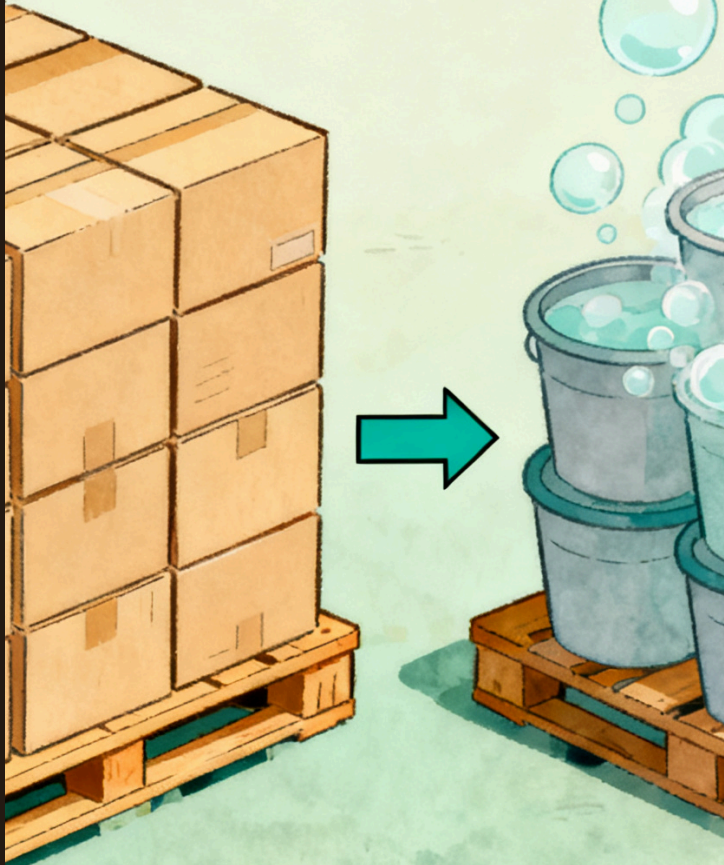
📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • DOOR 1, HALF OPEN

Double the width → 8× inside, 4× skin. Bulk isn't greedy, it's GEOMETRY 📦 Next question: what happens once the giant boxes have to move?



# THE CUBE AND THE TRUCK

"Now stack them." Square cartons: a perfect cube, zero gaps. Round tubs: pockets of nothing.



You'd be paying to ship AIR!

Etta lifted a whole pallet in one smooth motion. A tonne of food, one movement.



How many times do you touch a box?

Truck, forklift, floor. Three.

## ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Most shops touch a carton five or six times: unload, stockroom, unpack, shelf, display, refill. Every touch is a person's minute, and minutes cost more than cardboard. Three touches instead of six is a **price cut hiding as a habit**.



“One truck, one driver, one tank of fuel — full or half empty. So we never send air down the highway.”



Same trip, twice the goods.

At the dock, pallets rolled from trailer to sales floor without ever resting. No stockroom at all.



Wait — the SHELF is the warehouse?!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Notice the pattern: less packaging, no shipped air, full trucks, fewer touches, no stockroom. Not one clever invention — **five stubborn subtractions**. Great businesses are usually built from removals, not additions.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 1 UNLOCKED

Square packs, full trucks, 3 touches, no stockroom. The store IS the warehouse. Cheap isn't a trick — it's five kinds of waste taken out. Door two is behind a very cold steel door... ❄️



## THE COLD RIVER

## 5a Door Two: the room where it snows

Door two was steel and frost. Siri's breath turned to fog. A whole ROOM of winter.

BRRRR

"Cold isn't a thing you add," said Etta. "Heat is. So we catch heat and carry it out to the parking lot."

It's snowing  
INSIDE!

You're... un-heating  
the room?

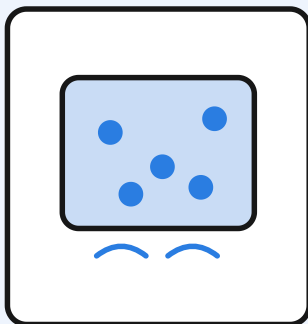
## ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

A fridge is a **heat taxi**. Squeeze a gas and it heats up; let it expand and it turns freezing. So let it expand inside, where it soaks up warmth — then squeeze it outside, where it dumps that warmth. Cold is just heat that left.

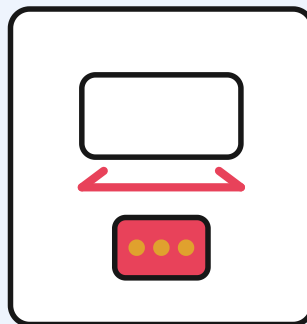




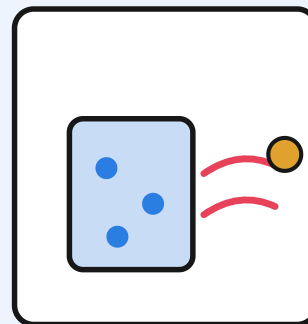
## HOW A FREEZER MAKES WINTER



**GAS SPREADS**  
inside, turns cold



**PUMP SQUEEZES**  
squeezed = hot



**HEAT LEAVES**  
dumped outdoors



"Now the hard part. From farm to freezer to your car, the cold must NEVER break."



One warm hour ruins a whole truck?

An inspector slid a probe into a carton and read the dial like a doctor with a stethoscope.



Nobody's guessing. Everybody's measuring.

Food safety is arithmetic, not luck.

#### ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Why cold works: warmth is bacteria's favourite weather. Chill food and the little troublemakers slow to a crawl; freeze it and they nearly stop. You aren't killing them — you're **boring them into stillness**. 🌡️

#### 📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 2 UNLOCKED

Fridges TAXI heat outside 🚗❄️ Cold slows bacteria to a crawl. Cold chain = farm → truck → freezer → car, never broken, always measured. Also I saw my own breath indoors and it was AMAZING.

# THE SHORT LIST

## 6a Door Three: fewer choices

"Guess how many different items we sell." Siri said a hundred thousand. Etta laughed and shook her head.



About four thousand.

A big supermarket carries thirty times more.

### ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Sell forty ketchups and you buy a little of each. Sell **one great ketchup** and you buy a mountain — a whole factory's run. That's how you earn the best price a supplier will ever give. **Fewer choices, deeper discount.**



In a plain office, a buyer and a grower talked numbers over samples. No shouting. Just enormous orders.



She's not squeezing him. She's promising him.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

A good bargain isn't a beating. The grower gets a huge, steady, predictable order — so he can plan, plant and invest. The store gets a low price. **Both sides win, and both sides come back next year.** That's the only kind of deal that lasts. 🤝



And the cartons moved FAST — through the doors before the wall calendar had barely turned.



It's not a store. It's a RIVER.

 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 3 UNLOCKED

4,000 items, not 120,000. One mountain order beats forty molehills.  
Suppliers get certainty, shoppers get the price. Everything moves fast.  
Something about that speed matters — Etta smiled and said 'Door Six.'



## THE ROASTING ROOM

The smell hit her before the door did. Rows of chickens turning gold behind glass.



Okay. THAT is unfair.

"One giant bowl, one oven, one timer. Twenty small bowls need twenty of everything."



Big kitchens are cheap kitchens!

### ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Scale in one bite: doubling a batch does not double the work. Same recipe, same oven warm-up, same person watching the timer. The extra chicken is nearly free. That's why the roast bird at the door costs less than the raw one down the aisle. 🍗



Next door, dawn in the bakery. A wall of ovens. Trays of loaves. Flour glowing in the light.



Six recipes. Ten thousand loaves.

Master a few things. Repeat them perfectly.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Here's the sly part: the roast chicken and the cheap hot dog are set at prices that barely earn a cent. They're not there to make money. They're there to say **'we are on your side'** — loudly, deliciously, every single day.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Giant batch = same effort, more food 🍔 Six recipes done perfectly beats sixty done okay. And the cheapest food at the door is basically a PROMISE you can eat.



# THE CONCRETE SKY

## 8a Door Four: why so plain?

Door four opened onto... nothing fancy. Bare girders. Exposed ducts. Honest steel bones.

Etta grinned.  
“Chandeliers and carpet are lovely. Somebody pays for them. Guess who.”

Every decoration is on my receipt!

Then the roof did a magic trick: rows of skylights poured daylight down, and the lamps stayed off.

The SUN is doing the lighting!

Did they forget to finish the ceiling?

### ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Sunlight through a skylight is free, and it doesn't heat the building the way old lamps did — so the giant fridges work less too. **One good decision saved money twice.** That happens more often than you'd think. ☀️



“Plain building. Plain shelves. Plain packaging. Every dollar not spent on show is a dollar off the price.”



Ugly on purpose. I respect it.

 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 4 UNLOCKED

Bare ceiling, pallets for shelves, sunshine for lamps ☀️ Nothing here is decorated. Everything is decided. Somebody has to pay for pretty — and it's always the shopper.



# THE TREASURE HUNT

Door five was a joke with a point. Between the cartons of soup: a gleaming kayak.



A KAYAK? In a FOOD aisle?!

Here today. Gone next week.

From above, the floor was a treasure map. A winding path. Little glowing X marks in odd corners.



So nobody ever skips an aisle.

## ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

It's a real strategy with a friendly name: the **treasure hunt**. A handful of surprise bargains — a telescope, a piano, a diamond — makes every visit feel like an expedition. And it works only if the surprises are genuinely good deals. Fake treasure kills a treasure hunt. 💎

A sampling cart sizzled. A tiny paper cup. A very interested child. (Siri had three.)



Research. Purely research.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Notice what the hunt is NOT. It isn't hiding the milk to make you walk. It's putting something wonderful where you didn't expect it. **Delight, not tricks** — because tricks work once and delight works for thirty years.

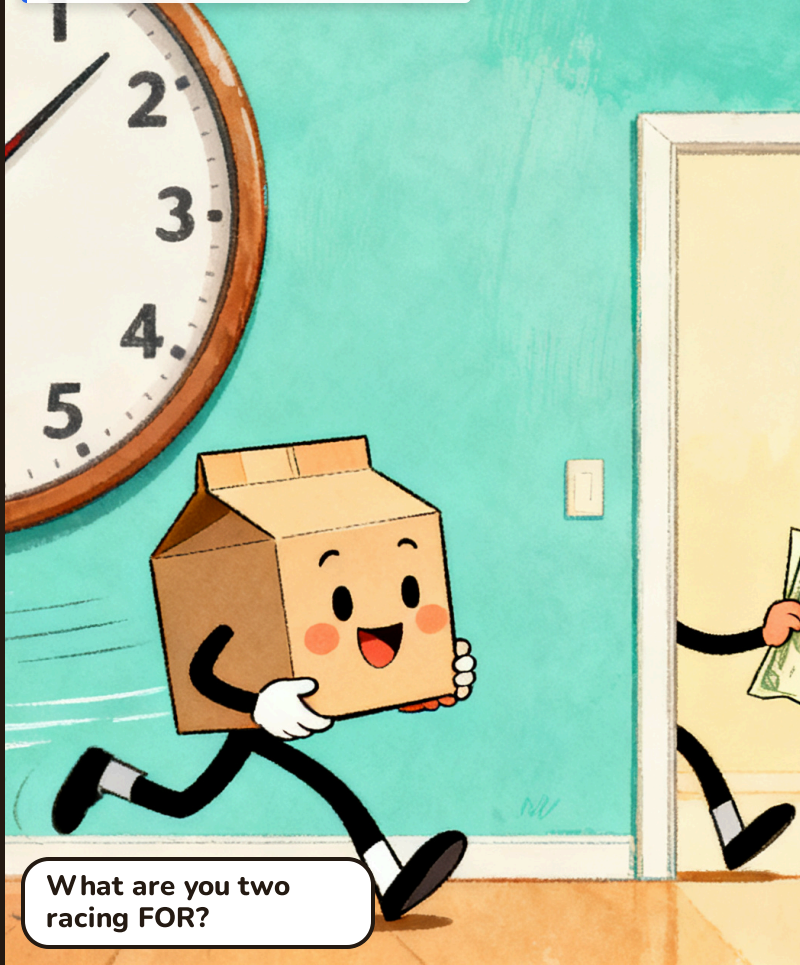
 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • DOOR 5 UNLOCKED

Treasure hunt = a few surprise bargains, always real ones 💎 Tricks work once. Delight works for decades. (Also samples are a science and I am a scientist.)



## THE MONEY CLOCK

Door six held one strange clock. Two hands. One racing. One barely moving.



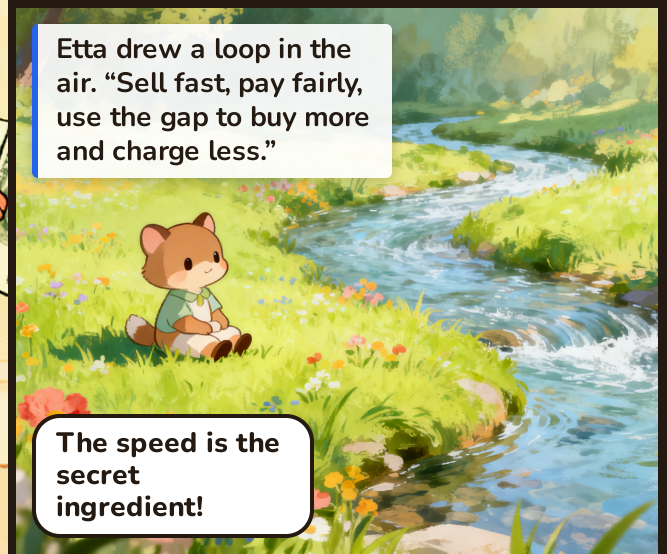
What are you two racing FOR?

"Watch the goods," said Etta. "Cartons come in and go out in days. But we pay the grower on his own calendar."



So you've already **SOLD** it... before the bill is due?

Etta drew a loop in the air. "Sell fast, pay fairly, use the gap to buy more and charge less."



The speed is the secret ingredient!

## ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

This is one of the quietest superpowers in business. If your goods sell out before the invoice comes due, your own shelves are stocked without borrowing a fortune. **Speed does the job money usually has to do.** Slow shops need big loans; fast ones don't. 🕒

## ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

It only works if you're honest at both ends: pay suppliers on time and price fairly, or the whole clock jams. Speed plus trust is a machine. Speed alone is just a mess in a hurry.



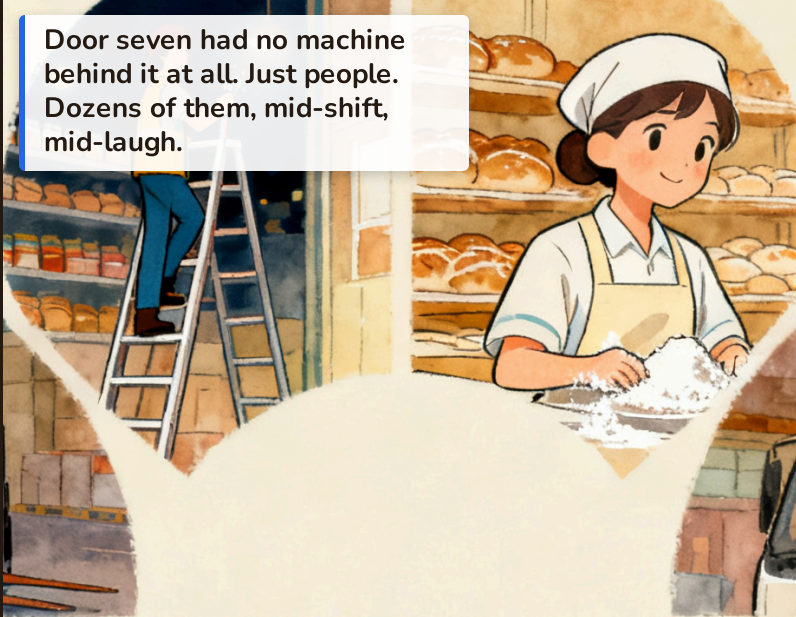
**SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 6 UNLOCKED**

Goods out FAST, bills paid on schedule → the gap funds the next mountain of goods 🕒 Turn the shelves quickly enough and speed replaces borrowing. Grandpa would LOVE this one.



## THE CREW

Door seven had no machine behind it at all. Just people. Dozens of them, mid-shift, mid-laugh.



Three in the morning: the night crew restocking canyons of pallets by pools of soft light.



Everyone's steady. Nobody's frantic.

In the break room, a wall of photos: the same faces, growing older together, year after year.



The seventh secret is PEOPLE?



Fifteen years. Twenty-two. Thirty!

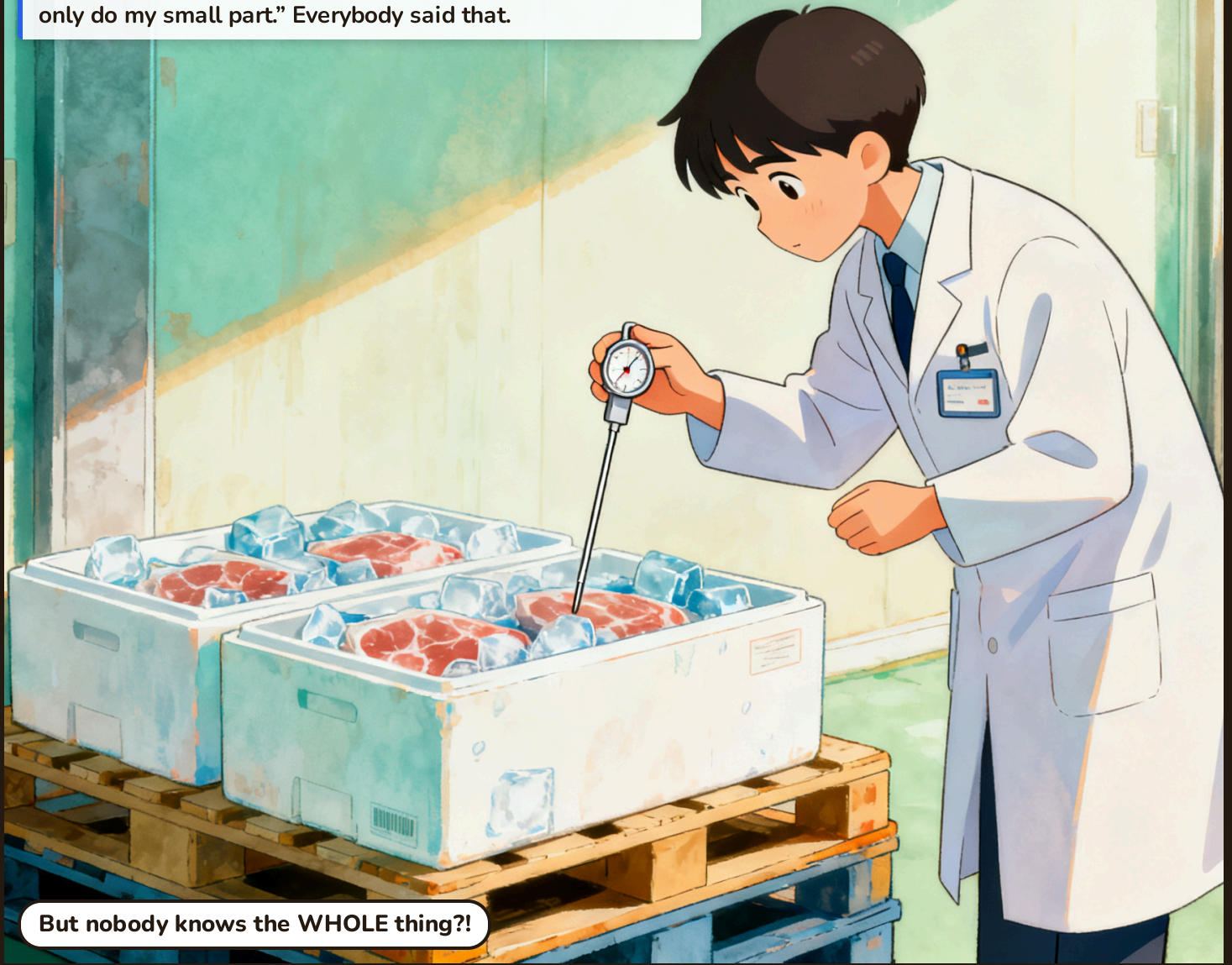
Most of my managers started on the floor.

## ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Here's the arithmetic almost nobody expects. Paying people well is **cheaper**. Training a new person costs money; an experienced one drops less, wastes less, spots a bad pallet at a glance, and knows the regulars by name. **Low turnover is an efficiency, not a kindness.**



The inspector shrugged when Siri asked what he did. “I only do my small part.” Everybody said that.



But nobody knows the WHOLE thing?!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Sit with that: nobody on Earth knows how to stock a warehouse alone. The grower, the driver, the forklift operator, the baker, the inspector — each masters one sliver, and one company conducts a thousand slivers into a full shelf, every morning, in every store. 🎵

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 7 UNLOCKED

People who stay = fewer mistakes, faster work, real pride 🧑🏻‍💼 Managers grown from the floor. Nobody knows the whole recipe. ALL SEVEN DOORS OPEN. So... why the fee? Etta says: turn the page.



## WHY PEOPLE PAY TO WALK IN

Opening time. Families poured through the doors, each holding up the same plain card.



There it is. They PAID to be here.

Etta set up a balance scale. The fee on one pan. One year of savings on the other. CRASH.



Save more than the fee and you're ahead!

### ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Now the beautiful flip. The fee is where the profit lives — so the store barely needs to earn on the goods themselves. It can sell them at a whisker above cost. **Member and store finally want the exact same thing: the lowest possible price.** 🤝



At a picnic table outside, a dad did the sums on a napkin for his kids. The napkin said: worth it.



Everyone in here checked the maths first.

“And about nine in ten members sign up again the next year.”



Nine out of TEN?!

A kept promise is a business plan.

#### ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

That renewal number is the whole scoreboard. Nobody is trapped: the card expires, and every single year every member gets to vote with their own money. **Nine yes votes out of ten, year after year, is trust you can count.**

#### 📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

THE BIG FLIP: fee = profit, so goods carry almost no markup. Members and store on the SAME SIDE 🤝 9 of 10 renew every year — a yearly election the store keeps winning.



## THE CEILING THEY BUILT THEMSELVES

In the office hung a plain wooden sign with one rule on it. Etta pointed at it like it was a family heirloom.



Never mark anything up past about fourteen percent.

"But what if people would happily pay more?" Etta's smile went steely. "Then we still don't."



You leave money ON THE TABLE?

### ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Fourteen percent on brand-name goods, fifteen on their own label. Most shops mark up double or triple that. It's a ceiling nobody forced on them — **they nailed it up themselves and never took it down.** 🏷️

A buyer got a better deal on a pallet of jeans — and immediately lowered the price on the shelf.



She could have kept the difference!

And then she'd have to keep it forever.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Charlie's kind of question: what does that rule really BUY? It buys the most expensive thing in shopping — **not having to check**. When you trust a store's price, you stop comparing, stop hunting, stop worrying. That habit is worth more than any advert ever printed.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

The 14% ceiling (15% own-label). Self-imposed. Never lifted. Cheaper deal → cheaper shelf, same day. It buys the one thing money can't: shoppers who STOP CHECKING. 🏷️



## THE SIGNATURE

A plain carton sat on a pallet with no ribbons, no cartoon mascot, no shine at all. It outsold everything near it.



The BORING box wins?

In a small tasting room, a panel sipped, frowned, scribbled and sent a sample back. Twice.



Not 'nearly as good.' Better, or nothing.

Same factory, sometimes. Just no ribbon.

## ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

A store-brand — the grown-up phrase is **private label** — skips the adverts, the mascot and the middle marks-up. Same quality, smaller price. It only works if you never, ever cheapen it. One bad batch and the promise is gone.



And when a store label gets good, the famous brands sharpen their pencils too. Everybody in the aisle gets cheaper.



One honest carton made the whole shelf behave!

#### ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

There's a name for what a store label really is: **a store betting its own reputation on the contents**. If it's bad, you don't blame a distant factory — you blame the shop you drove to. That's a scary, healthy incentive.

#### 📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Own-label (1995, named after a Washington town): no mascot, no adverts, same or better quality, smaller price. It also forces the big brands to drop THEIR prices. Sneaky-good 🛒



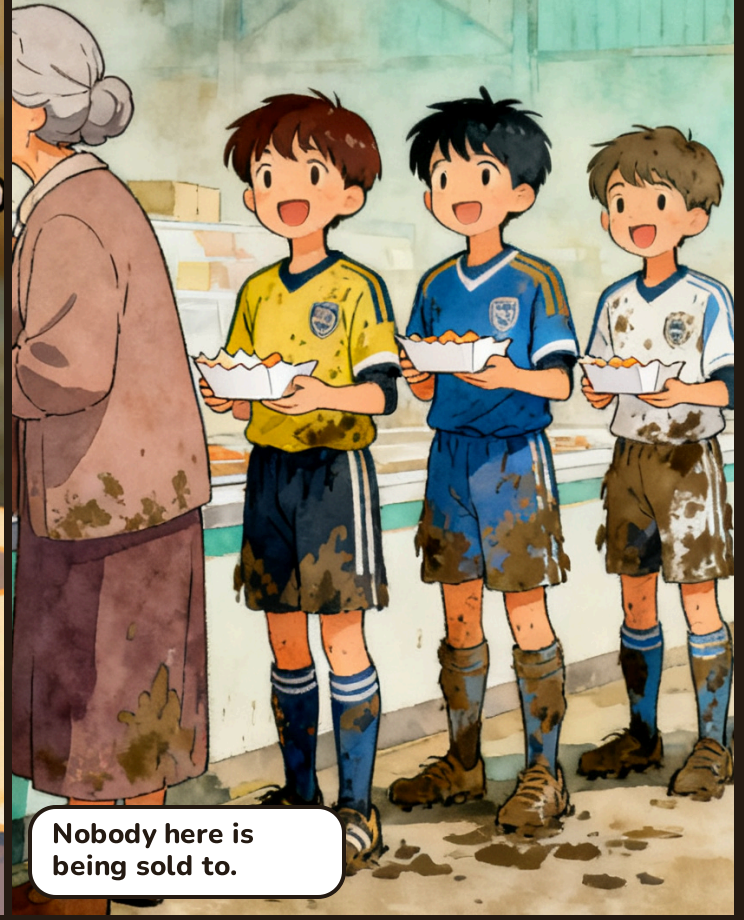
## THE DOLLAR-FIFTY PROMISE

Outside the checkouts, a food counter. A hot dog and a soda. The same price since 1985.



The same price as when DAD was a kid?!

A long happy queue: builders, grandmas, kids, a whole soccer team, all clutching the same little tray.



Nobody here is being sold to.

### ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The company barely makes a cent on it. It is not there to earn — it's there to **say something out loud, every single day: we did not sneak the price up on you.** A promise you can taste is worth more than a slogan you can read.





On the wall: a strip of photos, decade by decade. Hair changed. Cars changed. The little price never did.



Forty years of NOT raising it.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Warren's favourite riddle fits here: **price is what you pay, value is what you get**. When the value side keeps crushing the price side, customers don't feel handled. They feel **grateful**. Gratitude is the cheapest advertising ever invented. 🍷

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

\$1.50 since 1985. Earns nothing. Says everything 🍷 Price is what you pay, value is what you get. And when value wins, people don't just come back — they TELL PEOPLE.



# THE HANGAR IN SAN DIEGO

The compass tugged them outside — to a plain grey box the size of a field, under an evergreen sky. Siri knew the name.

"It starts in 1976, in an old airplane hangar in San Diego. A merchant named Sol Price tried something odd."

A shop inside a HANGAR?

"No decoration. No stockroom. Sell to members only, and keep the markup tiny. People thought he was mad."

He charged people to come in... in 1976?

**COSTCO!** The treasure warehouse is real!

## ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Sol Price's real invention wasn't the warehouse or the pallets. It was the **upside-down deal**: earn from the membership, not the merchandise. Once you do that, being cheap stops being a sacrifice and becomes the whole business model. ↻



Working for him was a young man named Jim Sinegal, learning the trade one pallet at a time.



The apprentice is taking NOTES.

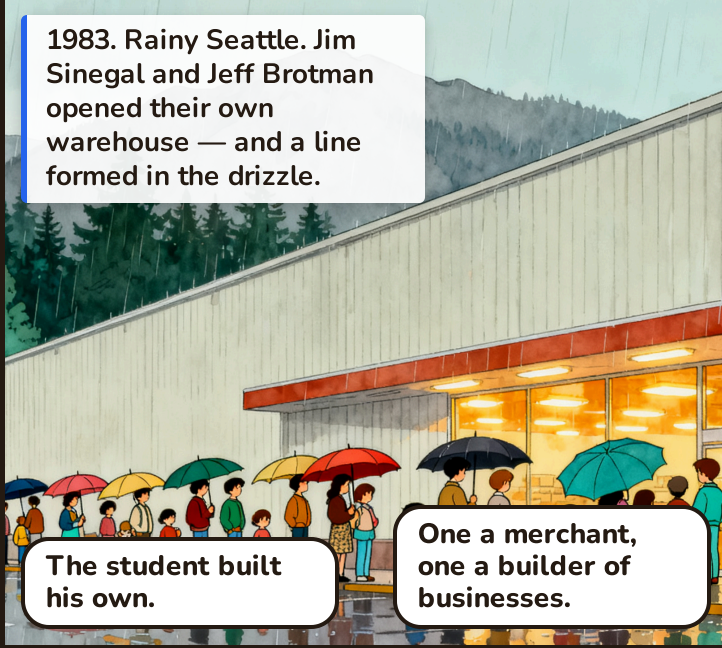
#### SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · THE REVEAL

COSTCO. But it begins with someone else: Sol Price, 1976, an airplane hangar in California. Members-only. Tiny markup. Everyone said it wouldn't work. **TURN THE PAGE.**



## TWO WAREHOUSES BECOME ONE

1983. Rainy Seattle. Jim Sinegal and Jeff Brotman opened their own warehouse — and a line formed in the drizzle.



The student built his own.

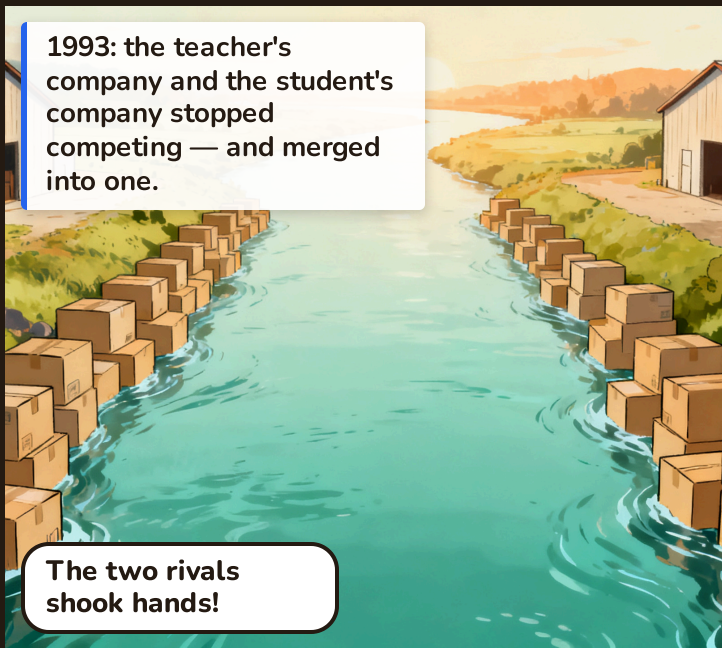
One a merchant, one a builder of businesses.

Warehouse after warehouse, city after city. Same plain ceiling. Same short list. Same small markup.



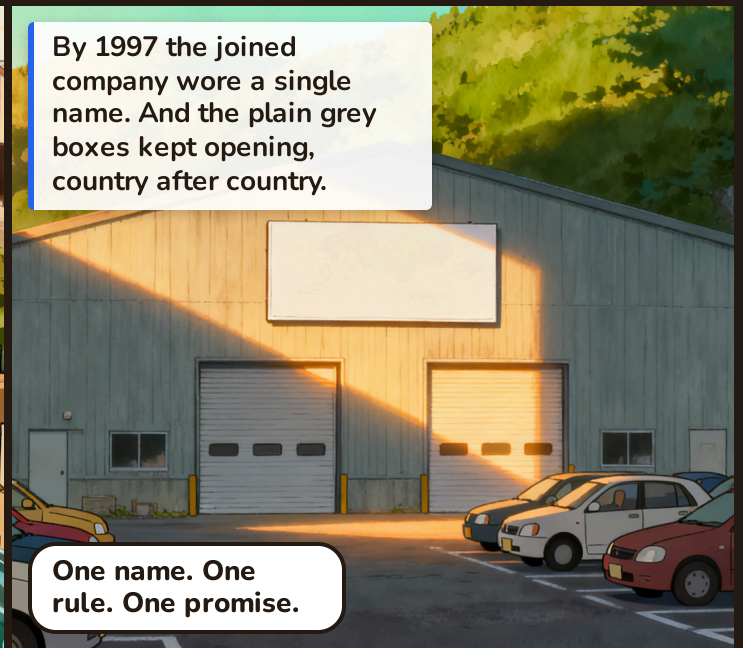
They didn't change the recipe ONCE.

1993: the teacher's company and the student's company stopped competing — and merged into one.



The two rivals shook hands!

By 1997 the joined company wore a single name. And the plain grey boxes kept opening, country after country.



One name. One rule. One promise.

### ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

What's remarkable is what they never did. No sudden makeover. No secret price creep. No chasing whatever was fashionable that year. **Boring, repeated for forty years, turns out to be the rarest thing in business.**



#### THE STORY IN TIME

**1954**

Sol Price opens FedMart and learns to sell plainly and cheaply.

**1976**

Price Club opens in a San Diego airplane hangar — members only.

**1983**

Sinegal and Brotman open the first Costco, in Seattle.

**1985**

The hot dog and soda combo goes on sale for \$1.50.

**1993**

The two rivals merge — teacher and student, one company.

**1995**

Kirkland Signature launches, named for a Washington town.

**1997**

The merged company settles on one name: Costco.

**Today**

Well over a hundred million members, across several continents. 





#### SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

1976 hangar → 1983 Seattle → 1993 merger →  
1995 own label → 1997 one name. Forty years,  
ZERO changes to the core promise. Grandpa  
calls that 'compounding a habit.'

# THE CASTLE OF CONCRETE

A warm glow. A whiff of cherry cola. Warren and Charlie, the partners from Omaha, before a shining castle.

On upturned crates in a sunlit aisle, the two old friends let her lay out the walls, one by one.

The only question that matters for a hundred years: what keeps invaders OUT?

Walls! I've been collecting them ALL BOOK!

Scarier than a school quiz. A hundred times more fun.





## THE CASTLE WALLS • WHY RIVALS CAN'T COPY IT



### Wall One: The Card

Members pay before they shop, and nine in ten renew. Dependable money, plus a powerful reason to drive past three other stores to get here.



### Wall Two: The Mountain Order

Four thousand items instead of a hundred thousand means gigantic orders and the best price a supplier will ever give. A small rival cannot even ask for it.



### Wall Three: The Self-Set Ceiling

A cap on their own markup, held for forty years. Shoppers stop comparing prices anywhere else. That habit outlasts every advertising campaign ever run.



### Wall Four: The Crew That Stays

Pay well, promote from the floor, keep people for decades. Experienced crews break less, lose less, and know the regulars by name.

Charlie tapped his thick glasses. "Turn the telescope around. Don't ask how it wins — ask what would DESTROY it. **Invert, always invert.**"



Find every way to lose... then don't go there!





#### THE CASTLE WALLS • WHY RIVALS CAN'T COPY IT



##### **Crack One: The Doorstep**

If everything can arrive at your door tomorrow, the reason to drive out and load a giant cart gets thinner every year.



##### **Crack Two: The Copycats**

A membership fee is the easiest wall to imitate. Others have tried it — and some will try harder.



##### **Crack Three: Slow Bricks**

Every new warehouse costs a fortune and takes years. You cannot grow in a hurry, even when you'd like to.



##### **Crack Four: The Thin Cushion**

Selling at a whisker above cost means there's almost no margin to absorb a shock in fuel, food or wages.



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Charlie's ruin-it checklist: quietly lift the markup. Let the own-label slip. Squeeze the crew until nobody stays. Fill the aisles with junk that isn't a bargain. Chase fashion and forget the price. Now — **just never do those.** Inversion turns worry into a checklist.



Warren raised his cola. "A business whose own customers cheer for it. Charlie admired this one so much he sat on its board for decades."



The treasure was never the stuff!

#### SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · THE CASTLE

WALLS: the card 📄 mountain orders 🏔️ self-set ceiling 🏠 crew who stay  
👷. CRACKS: doorstep 📦 copycats 🐈 slow bricks 🧱 thin cushion 📊.  
Charlie: INVERT. Warren: buy walls, not warehouses. 🏰

## THE JUDGE'S QUESTIONS

Then Warren built a tiny courtroom between the pallets and put the CARD on the witness stand.

TOK TOK

Siri binged a tiny gavel and fired Warren's five eternal questions at the little plastic witness.



Every business faces a judge someday. The judge is the future. Today, that's you.



Question one, witness: will people still need you in thirty years?

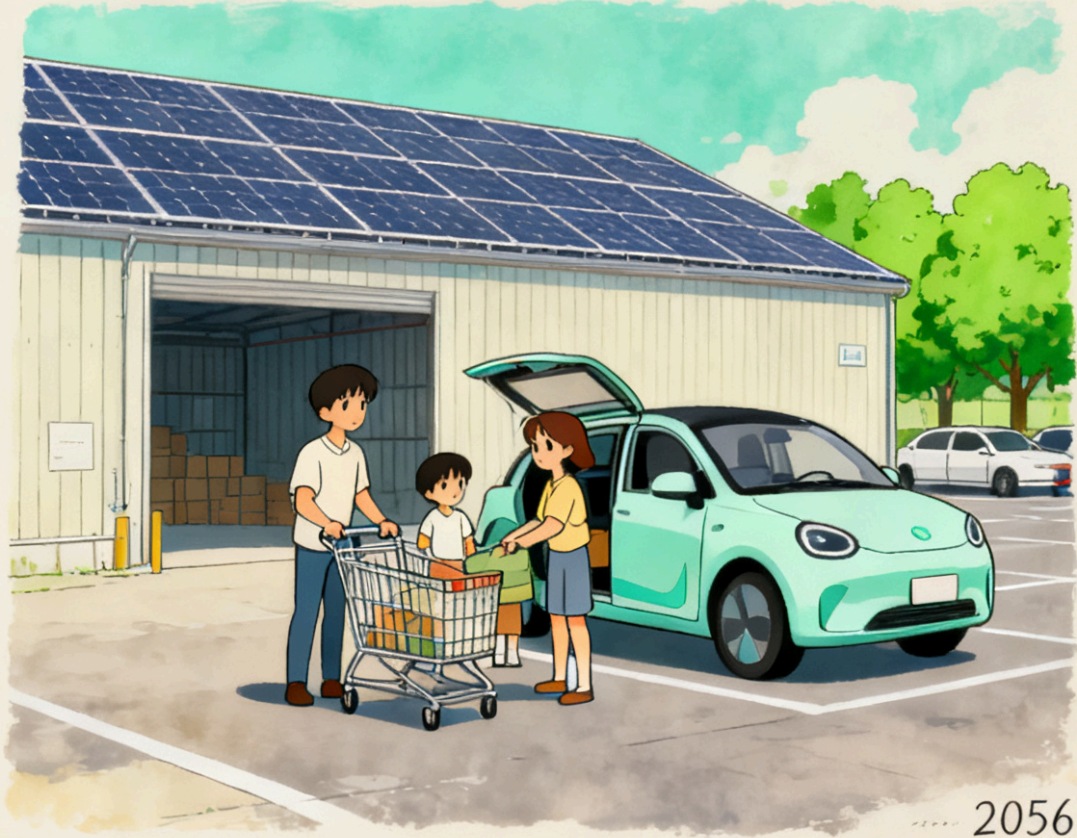




★ WORTH REMEMBERING

**The Owner's Court:**  Enduring need? —  
'Feeding a family for less. Older than money.'   
Trust earned? — 'Nine in ten renew, every year,  
freely.'  Reinvesting wisely? — 'New  
warehouses, better cold, and lower prices  
instead of bigger markups.'  Copyable with  
money? — 'The building, in a year. Forty years of  
a kept ceiling? No.'  What breaks you? —  
'Only my keepers, if they get greedy.' Court  
adjourned for hot dogs.

Last exhibit: a painting of 2056. A family loading a cart. Different cars, different clothes. Same simple errand.



The SHAPE changes. The NEED never does.

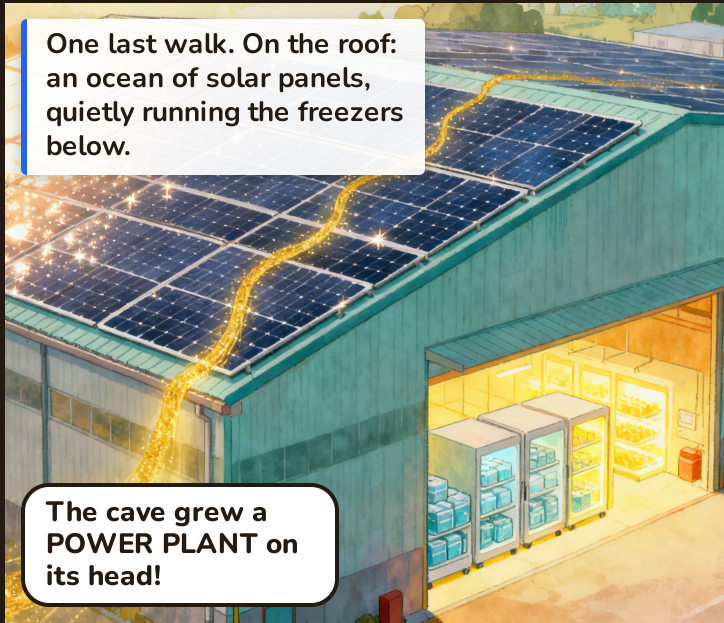
 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • JUDGE ANY BUSINESS

Warren's five: ① enduring need? ② trust earned? ③ reinvests wisely? ④ copyable with mere money? ⑤ what breaks it? Works on warehouses, railways, red fizzy cans — anything. (He never once mentioned a share price. The judge judges the BUSINESS.) ⚖️



## THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS

One last walk. On the roof:  
an ocean of solar panels,  
quietly running the freezers  
below.



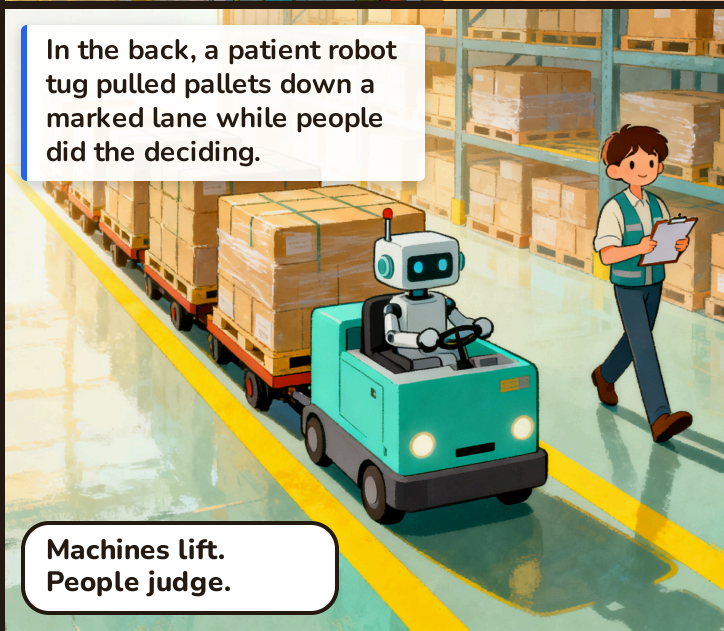
The cave grew a  
**POWER PLANT** on  
its head!

"Next job: refrigerants that  
don't warm the planet if  
they leak, and doors on  
every chilled aisle."



Cold, but kinder.

In the back, a patient robot  
tug pulled pallets down a  
marked lane while people  
did the deciding.



Machines lift.  
People judge.

Out front, silent electric  
vans — because some  
things will always come to  
the door instead.



Meet the crack.  
Then build a bridge  
over it.

## ★ WORTH REMEMBERING

No crystal balls, just visible currents: solar roofs, cleaner cold, robot tugs, quiet delivery, less packaging, less waste. Siri's rooftop rule: **don't bet on the building — bet on the needs.** Feeding a family for less, safely and honestly, is a need with no expiry date. 🌟



On a rooftop at dusk she added the honest last line: cheap is easy for a year. Cheap for forty years is character.



Anyone can hold a price. Almost nobody does.



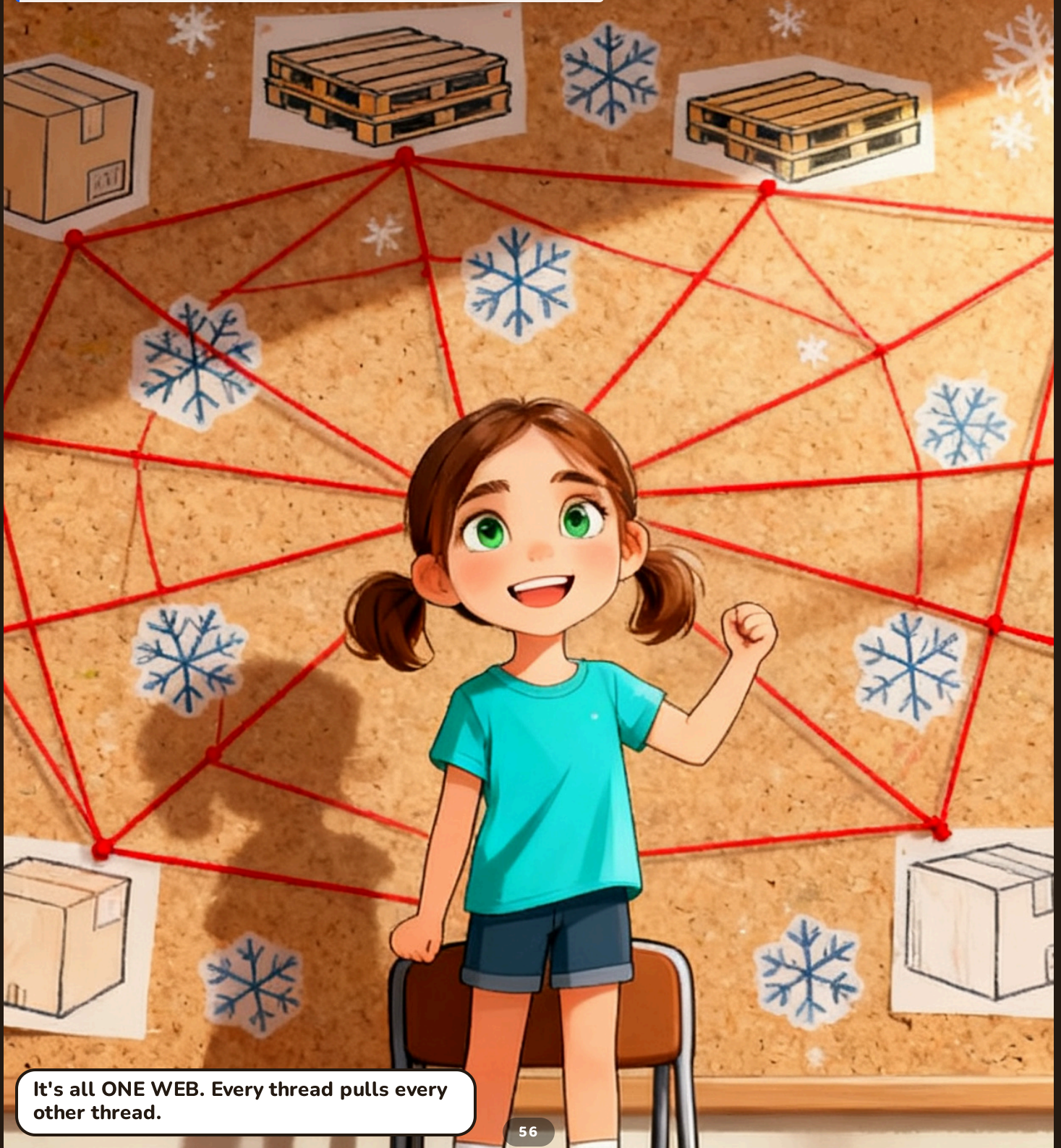
#### SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

2056 watchlist: solar roofs, kinder refrigerants, robot tugs, electric vans, thinner packaging. Rules: bet on needs, not buildings · a promise held for decades IS the product 🌟



# THE SECRET NOTEBOOK

Home stretch. Siri pinned every discovery to her wall and joined them up with red string.



It's all ONE WEB. Every thread pulls every other thread.



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

**The Science Web, one breath:** double a box and the inside grows eight times while the skin grows four → square packs ship no air → full trucks, three touches, no stockroom → fridges taxi heat outside so bacteria slow to a crawl → one giant batch costs barely more than a small one. **Ordinary physics, stacked stubbornly.**





★ WORTH REMEMBERING

**The Business Web, one breath:** fewer items → mountain orders → deep discounts → a self-set ceiling on markup → a fee that IS the profit → members and store on one side → nine in ten renew → fast shelves fund themselves → a crew that stays. All four walls, patrolled by Charlie's inversion and judged in Warren's court.

The real test: she explained the whole thing to her little cousin. With cereal boxes. He got it.



If you can't explain it with cereal, you don't know it yet.





#### SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · THE LATTICEWORK

Charlie's word for my string-wall: a  
LATTICEWORK. Twelve models from ONE card:  
cube-vs-square · subtract-the-waste · heat-taxi  
· cold-chain · fewer-choices-better-price · scale-  
of-one-batch · plain-is-cheap · treasure-hunt ·  
speed-instead-of-borrowing · fee-is-the-profit ·  
self-set-ceiling · invert 

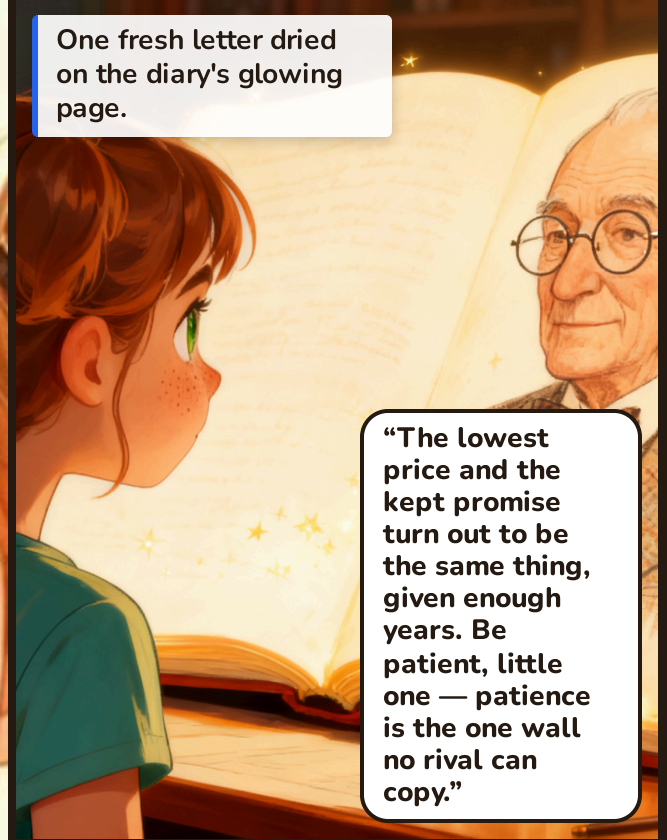
## COMING HOME

Her own bed. Morning. The compass: quiet. The house: lit differently, somehow.



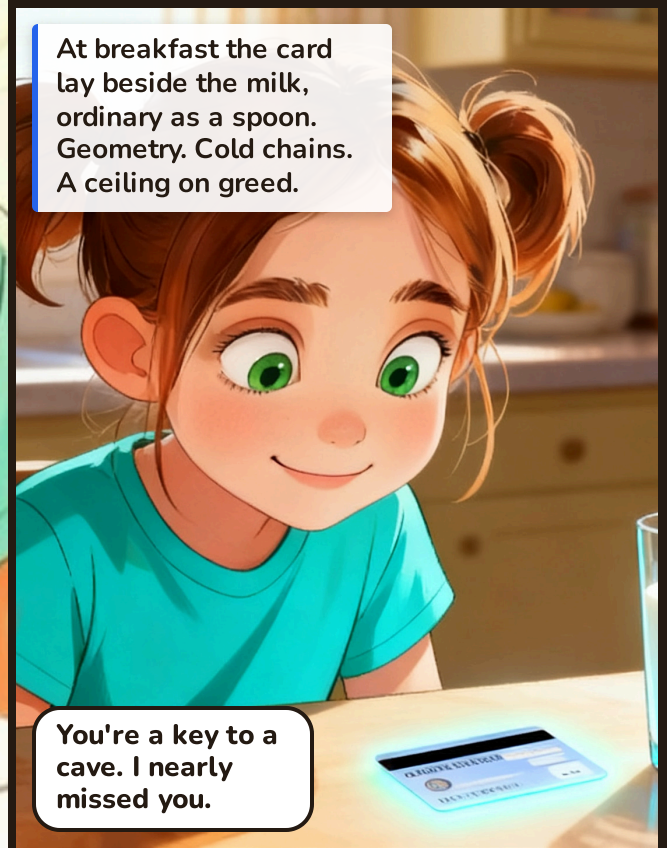
Was it real? It FELT real...

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



"The lowest price and the kept promise turn out to be the same thing, given enough years. Be patient, little one — patience is the one wall no rival can copy."

At breakfast the card lay beside the milk, ordinary as a spoon. Geometry. Cold chains. A ceiling on greed.



You're a key to a cave. I nearly missed you.



That weekend she went along — and read the whole warehouse like a map. Pallets. Skylights. Short list. Hot dog.

**NERD ALERT**

She hugged the diary tight. Somewhere far away, skylights lit a canyon of pallets.



Mom. MOM. Let me explain the ceiling.



Show me the next one, Grandpa. 🧡

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Next unlock, feel it: a doubled box holding eight times the world — heat taxied out until it snows indoors — four thousand choices instead of a hundred thousand — a hot dog that refused to get expensive for forty years. A card is no longer just a card. **Nothing, from now on, is just anything.**

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • VOLUME CLOSED

Seven doors. Twelve mental models. One castle of concrete. One hangar in San Diego. One tiny courtroom between the pallets. But the compass is twitching toward the hallway... a flat paper envelope... promised to cross the country by BREAKFAST. Next volume. 🧭✈️



## OUR PHILOSOPHY

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***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.

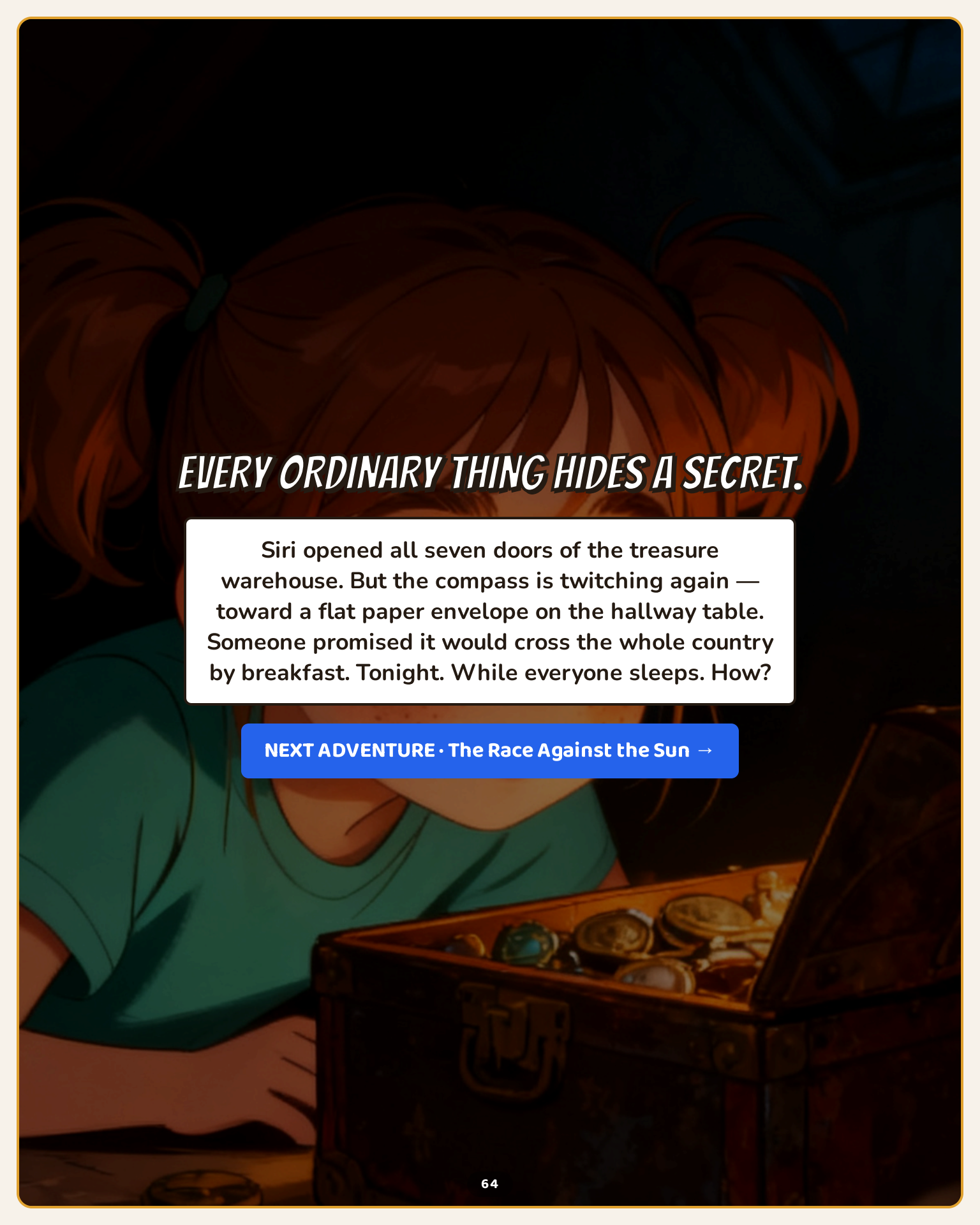
Every story begins with a scientific idea and follows its journey into innovation, industry, and the businesses that create value for society. Along the way, children learn that great companies are built on curiosity, experimentation, integrity, and long-term thinking.

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 dark, atmospheric illustration of a young girl with long, wavy red hair tied in two pigtails. She is wearing a teal-colored shirt and is looking down into an open, dark wooden treasure chest. The chest is filled with various gold coins and small, ornate trinkets. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, orange glow emanating from the chest, suggesting a hidden light source or the fire of the treasure. The background is dark and indistinct, focusing the viewer's attention on the girl and the chest.

***EVERY ORDINARY THING HIDES A SECRET.***

Siri opened all seven doors of the treasure warehouse. But the compass is twitching again — toward a flat paper envelope on the hallway table. Someone promised it would cross the whole country by breakfast. Tonight. While everyone sleeps. How?

**NEXT ADVENTURE · The Race Against the Sun →**