

The Great Company Adventures • Book 12 of 50

ERICSSON
**THE
TOWERS THAT TALK**

A curious girl, three wise mentors, and the steel tower on the hill that carries every voice through the air.

"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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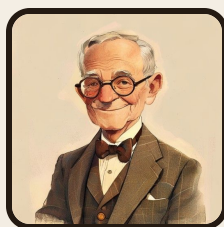
Illustrations were created with AI image tools; the text was written with AI assistance. All content is reviewed and edited by our editorial team.

For readers aged 7 and up. First Kindle edition, 2026.
Published by Omaha Investments.

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 BARS THAT APPEARED AT MIDNIGHT

Midnight. Homework: unfinished. And Grandpa Ben's old brass compass? Spinning like crazy.

SPIN

The needle stopped. Pointing out the window — at the steel tower on the hill. The thing nobody ever looks at.

YOU? You're just a metal pole!

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 towers that talk."

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Look at your phone's signal bars. They mean an invisible something is flying through the air — through walls, through YOU — carrying Grandma's voice from far away. Nobody sees it. So... **what is talking to your phone?**

The tower's red light flared. A whirlpool of blue light reached through the window and grabbed her.

WHOOSH



Here we GOOO!

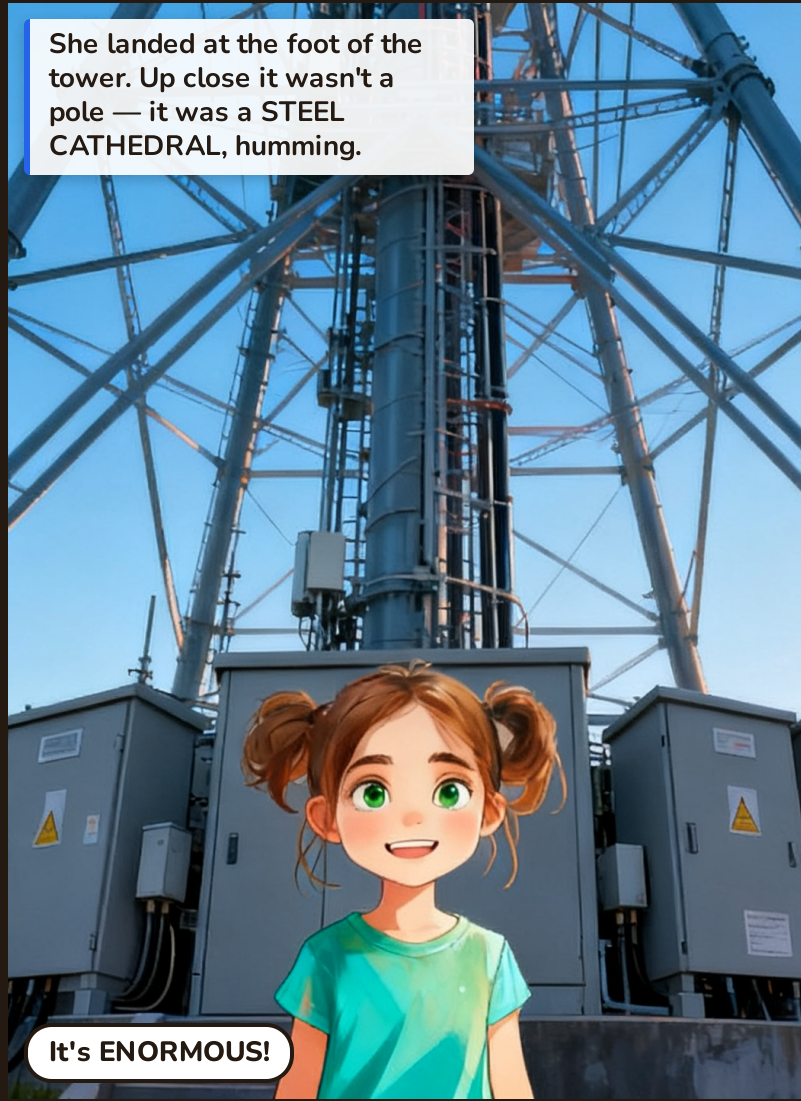


SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

New mystery! 📡

- ① What invisible thing carries voices through the air — and through walls?
- ② Grandpa says a boring metal tower built a giant company. Prove it.

THE GIANT ON THE HILL



She landed at the foot of the tower. Up close it wasn't a pole — it was a STEEL CATHEDRAL, humming.

It's ENORMOUS!



A young engineer in an orange hard hat waved. "I'm Iris. I build the towers that talk."

Best. Job. EVER.



She opened a cabinet. Antennas. Little radio boxes. One single glowing glass thread.

That skinny thread does something big?

It's the tower's spine.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

A cell tower looks like dumb metal. It's really a **radio station whispering to thousands of phones at once** — listening and answering hundreds of times a second, never once mixing up whose voice is whose.

SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

A tower = a radio station in disguise. Antennas + radios + one glowing thread. 🔍 Iris says the first secret is the weirdest: what IS the invisible stuff?

THE LIGHT YOU CANNOT SEE

3a The invisible light

"That invisible stuff?" said Iris. "It's LIGHT. Just light your eyes can't see."



Radio is... LIGHT?!

"Wiggle electrons in a metal rod and they fling out ripples of light — radio waves. Same family as sunshine, only lazier."



So the tower
SHAKES electricity
into light!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Sunlight, radio, X-rays — all the SAME thing, just wiggling at different speeds. Slow wiggles make radio waves: long, lazy, big enough to bend around buildings. That's why your call reaches you indoors. 🌈

"But a plain wave says nothing. So we WRITE on it — bending its bumps into the shape of your voice."

"Then it flies at the speed of light." Slowed a billion times: rings of invisible light rippled right past Siri's fingers.

You draw my voice
ONTO the wave!

It's passing
THROUGH me?!

A thousand of them
a second.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Your voice becomes numbers, the numbers reshape the wave, the wave flies to the tower, the tower reads the shape back into your voice. All at the speed of light. This trick has a name: **modulation**. ⚡

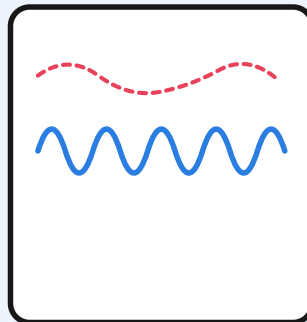


HOW YOUR VOICE RIDES A RADIO WAVE

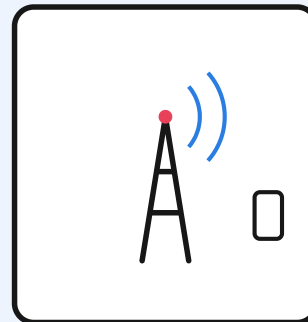


VOICE BECOMES NUMBERS THE BITS RIDE A WAVE

sound turns into little bits



the message reshapes the wave



THE TOWER READS IT

and hands it onward at light speed



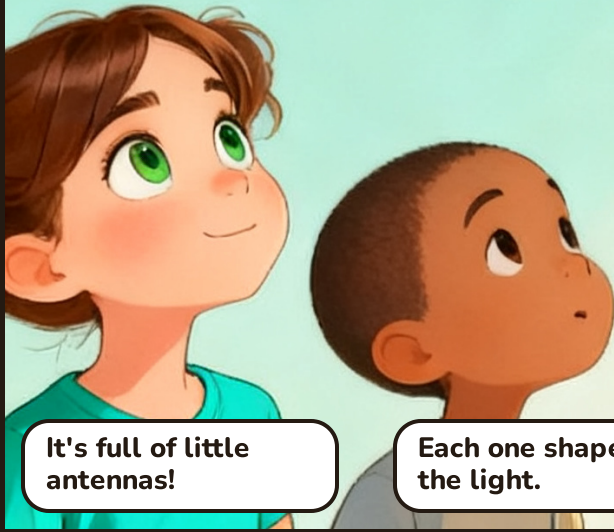
SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

- ① Radio waves = invisible light, slow and lazy,
they bend around walls 🌈
- ② My voice is WRITTEN onto the wave
(modulation) and read back at the far end. It
flew through me and I felt NOTHING! ⚡

A MILLION CONVERSATIONS AT ONCE

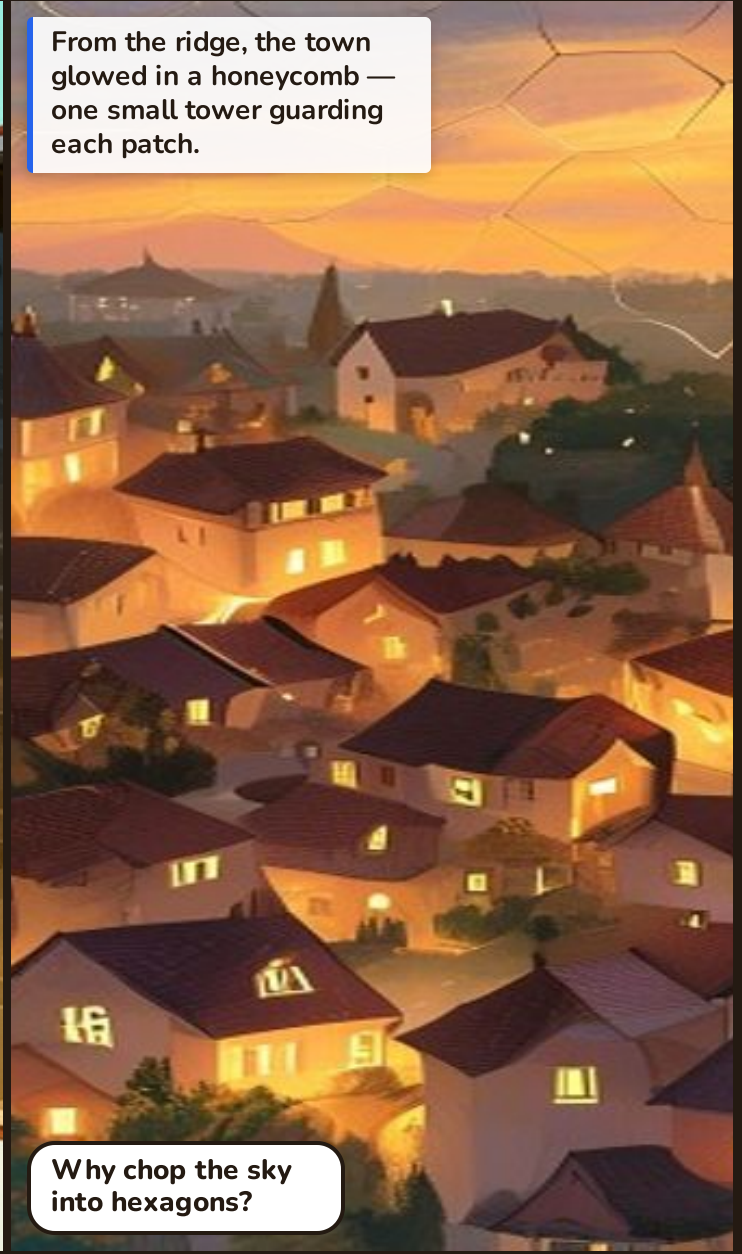
Iris opened a panel antenna. Inside: neat rows of tiny metal patches, glowing faintly.

From the ridge, the town glowed in a honeycomb — one small tower guarding each patch.



It's full of little antennas!

Each one shapes the light.



Why chop the sky into hexagons?

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Genius idea: split the land into **cells**, each with its own little tower. Faraway cells reuse the SAME radio colors without clashing — like two classrooms both using 'red' crayons down the hall. That's how millions share one thin sliver of sky. 🏠

“Drive across town and towers hand your call along — runner to runner — so smoothly you never hear the seam.”



THAT'S why it's called a CELL phone!

“Newest trick: the tower aims a private beam of light right at YOU. Move, and the beam follows.”



A spotlight... just for my phone?!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Old towers shouted in every direction and wasted most of the sound. New ones use **hundreds of tiny antennas** to steer one narrow beam straight to your phone — and a different beam to your neighbor's. More talk, less waste. 🎯

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Sky chopped into CELLS 🍷 → faraway cells reuse the same colors → towers hand off my call as I move (= cell phone!) → new towers aim a private beam at ME. Millions talking, nobody crossing wires.

THE WEB BEHIND THE TOWER

"Your voice leaves the tower — but where does it GO?" Iris pointed at the glowing thread diving underground.

Down the spine!

It raced through fiber to a humming hall of machines that sorted every call and sent it onward.

This is the tower's BRAIN?

One brain for thousands of towers.

She unrolled a world map. Millions of tower-lights, threads arcing across every ocean.

The whole PLANET is one web!

Then the ridge opened — a whole valley of towers, all glowing, all linked. Siri's jaw dropped.

How many towers ARE there?

Millions. And they all speak one language.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Here's the mind-bender: the tower is just the doorway. Behind it runs an **invisible worldwide web** of fiber and machines, so a whisper here can reach a phone on the far side of Earth in a heartbeat. Nobody built it alone.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Tower → fiber spine → a 'brain' hall that sorts every call → out to millions of towers worldwide. 🌐 One planet, one web, one shared language. So who's the CONDUCTOR?



WHY THE WORLD PAYS FOR BARS

"Here's the real magic," said Iris. On a stormy night, one emergency call flew through — instantly, perfectly.

"And every phone on Earth — any brand, any country — talks to the tower the exact same way."

One secret handshake for the **WHOLE** world!

"Build more towers, more people connect. More people connect, more towers get built. Round and round."

The bridge gets stronger as people cross it!

It **NEVER** fails?

It's not allowed to.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

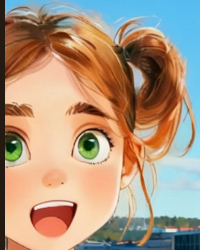
Why spend billions on towers? ① A network you can **trust with your life** is worth almost anything. ② Everyone agreeing on one language means every phone just works. Copy a tower — easy. Copy a hundred years of trust — impossible. 🏰

📱 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

People don't pay for metal — they pay for **TRUST** that never drops the call, and a language every phone shares. More towers → more people → more towers. Grandpa's rule: find the thing people **HATE** to be without.

THE LITTLE SHOP IN STOCKHOLM

Across the water: a gleaming headquarters, three towers of light above it. Siri knew the name on the gate.



ERICSSON! The towers that talk are THEIRS!



"It began in 1876. A little repair shop in Stockholm. A young man named Lars, fixing broken telegraph machines."



A REPAIR SHOP?!

"Soon Lars built his OWN telephones — so beautiful and sturdy the whole world wanted them."



From fixing to
INVENTING.

"A century later they helped teach phones to go wireless — and in the 1990s, to go digital for everyone."



The telegraph shop gave the world
MOBILE!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Then a bold choice: Ericsson stopped chasing the phones in our pockets and bet everything on the **towers and networks** behind them. Let others sell the handset. They'd build the invisible thing every handset needs. 📶



THE STORY IN TIME

1876

Lars Magnus Ericsson opens a telegraph repair shop in Stockholm.

1878

He starts building his own telephones.

1890s

Ericsson telephones sell across Europe and far beyond.

1920s

Automatic switchboards connect calls without an operator.

1981

Helps launch one of the first automatic mobile networks.

1991

A leader in GSM — digital mobile phones for everyone.

2000s

3G, then 4G — the mobile internet arrives.

2019

Among the first to switch on 5G networks.

Today

Ericsson gear carries a huge share of the world's mobile traffic. 📶

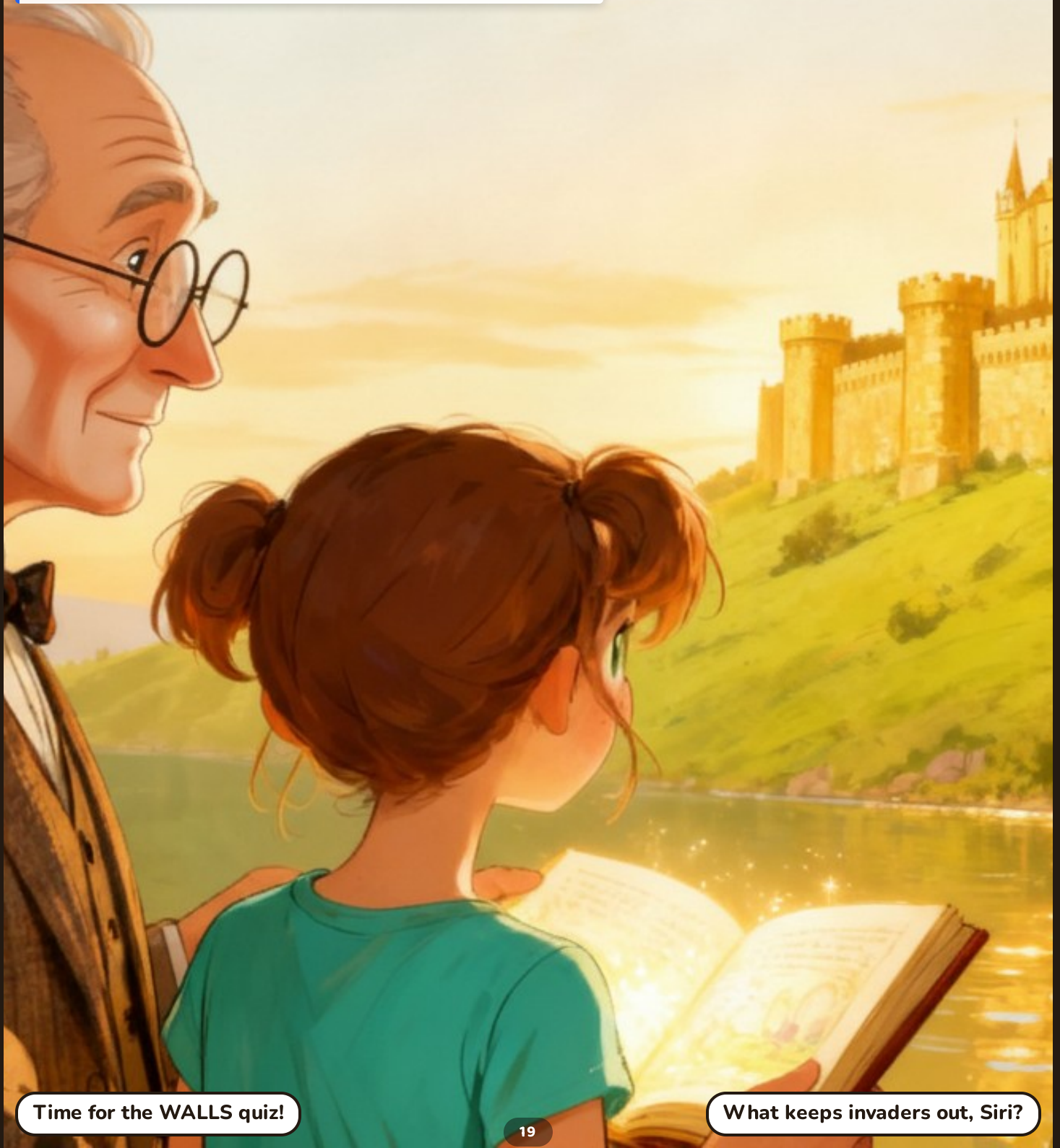


SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Repair shop (1876) → own telephones →
switchboards → mobile → GSM → 5G. Then
they GAVE UP selling handsets to build the
towers behind them all. 148 years of signals. 📡

THE CASTLE OF SIGNALS

A warm glow. A smell of cherry cola. Warren and Charlie, the partners from Omaha, 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 Shared Rulebook

Every network speaks one global language — and Ericsson helped WRITE it. Owning pieces of the rulebook means the world's phones lean on their inventions.



Wall Two: Trust You Bet Lives On

Carriers need towers that never, ever fail. A promise kept for a century lets Ericsson charge more — and still get a thank-you.



Wall Three: The Endless Lab

Each new 'G' costs billions and many years of research. Only a handful of companies on Earth can even try. The lab never closes.



Wall Four: The Sticky Network

Once a carrier's whole country runs on your gear, ripping it out is terrifying. So they stay — for decades.



The Cracks in the Castle

Only a few giants share this world, and some rivals get help from their governments. Miss ONE generation of tech and you fall behind fast. And carriers spend in big waves — feast, then famine.

Charlie tapped his glasses. "My trick: 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 checklist for ruining Ericsson: sleep through the next 'G'. Ship one tower that fails in a storm. Stop out-spending rivals in the lab. Break a carrier's trust just once. Now — just never do those. Worry, turned into a to-do list.

Warren raised his cola. “A business the whole modern world would grind to a halt without. The treasure isn't the steel — it's the trust and the rulebook.”



So the tower is just the tip of the castle!

SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Walls: shared rulebook 📖 + life-or-death trust 🤝 + endless lab 🔬 + sticky network 🔗. Cracks: few giants, government-backed rivals, miss-a-G, spending waves. Charlie: INVERT. Warren: buy trust, not steel. 🏰

THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS

"Last question," said Iris.
 "What does a tower
 become in thirty years?" A
 city where cars, robots and
 farms all talked in light.



Everything's going
 to be **CONNECTED**!

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



Bet on the **NEED** to
 connect, not the
 tower.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The deep currents: self-driving cars swapping warnings in a blink. Surgeons guiding robots a country away. Billions of tiny sensors on farms, bridges and bodies. The tower may shrink or hide — but the world's hunger to connect only grows. 🌐

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

2056 watchlist: talking cars, faraway robot surgeons, sensors everywhere, maybe 6G.
 Rule: bet on the need to connect, not the shape of the tower. (Also: I want the self-driving school bus NOW.)

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 showed four little bars. Invisible light. Cells and handoffs. A worldwide web of towers.

Those bars are the biggest team project in the sky.

She hugged the diary tight. Far away, three towers of light caught the morning sun.

Show me the next one, Grandpa. ♡

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Next unlock, feel it: invisible light bending around your walls — your voice written onto a wave and read back a world away — cells and beams juggling millions of calls — a century of trust behind four little bars. A tower is no longer just a tower. **Nothing, from now on, is just anything.**



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • WHAT I LEARNED

- ① Radio = invisible light that bends around walls.
- ② Your voice is written onto a wave (modulation).
- ③ The sky is split into cells; towers hand off your call.
- ④ Behind the tower: a worldwide web of fiber.
- ⑤ Trust + a shared rulebook = the castle.
- ⑥ Bet on the need to connect, not the shape. 🧡



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.

EVERY ORDINARY THING HIDES A SECRET.

Siri cracked the towers that talk. But the compass is twitching again — toward the driveway, where the neighbor's new car sits humming with no engine, no exhaust, no sound at all. It goes farther on lightning than on gas. How?

NEXT ADVENTURE • The Car With No Engine →