

The Great Company Adventures • Book 33 of 50

FEDEX THE RACE AGAINST THE SUN

seven doors, twelve mental models, and the flat paper envelope that crosses a continent while you sleep.

"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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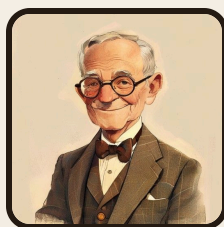
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MEET THE CHARACTERS



SIRI



BEN



WARREN



CHARLIE



DELLA

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”*

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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”*

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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”*

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

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24. Roche — *“The Detectives of the Blood”*

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

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

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28. Cargill — *“The Invisible Harvest”*

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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”*

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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 ENVELOPE THAT GLOWED AT MIDNIGHT

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

TIK-TIK



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

It spun. Locked. Pointing straight down the hallway at—

SPIN



Wait. Seriously?

Earlier that evening: Mom taping an envelope shut. "It has to be there by morning," she'd said. And it would be.



Everybody just **BELIEVES** that. Nobody asks how.



There it lay. Flat. Papery.
Boring. The least magical
object in the entire house.

YOU'RE the next
great company?
You're PAPER.



The diary flipped open by
itself. Fresh ink.

“Time to meet the
businesses that
built the modern
world, little one.
Start with the
promise nobody
thinks about. The
one that outruns
the sun.”

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Really think about it. Tonight this envelope is here. Tomorrow at breakfast it is two thousand miles away, in the right hand, on time — and if it isn't, someone is astonished. Nobody carried it the whole way. So: **who races the sunrise for you, every single night?**

The envelope rippled — and a whirlpool of blue light yanked her in.

WHOOSH



Here we GOOO!

 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Biggest mystery yet 

- ① How does flat paper cross a continent between bedtime and breakfast?
- ② Grandpa says it built one of the world's great companies. Prove it, compass.

THE RIVER THAT RUNS AT NIGHT

She landed in a hall so vast the far wall faded into haze. Above her: rivers of moving belts.

An engineer lifted her ear defenders and grinned. "I'm Della. I run the night sort. We work while you sleep."

Best. Job. EVER.

One giant belt split into streams. Streams into chutes. Chutes into carts. Nothing ever stopped moving.

It's a WATERFALL of parcels!

How many boxes tonight?

Millions. Every one is somebody's promise.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Check the clock: 1 a.m. Every shop is shut, every road is empty — and this is the busiest building on the continent. Almost the entire overnight world happens in **the hours nobody watches**.

Della unrolled a parchment map. Seven glowing doors.
“Seven secrets. Open them all and you’ll understand this
better than most grown-ups.”



Seven doors. Deal.



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • THE QUEST MAP

1 THE MAP — why fly the **WRONG** way first?

2 THE CLOCK — why nights, never days?

3 THE EYE — how do machines read boxes?

4 THE SKY — how do you load a plane?

5 THE COLD — how does medicine stay chilled?

6 THE LAST MILE — the hardest bit of all?

7 THE PEOPLE — who does this... and **WHY**?

Let's GO 🌍

THE WHEEL WITH SPOKES

3a Door One: too many roads

Door one opened onto a map. Twelve towns, joined to each other. A hopeless knot of string.



Even the little plane looks LOST.

"Count them," said Della. Siri counted sixty-six lines. Then imagined a hundred towns and stopped counting.



That's nearly FIVE THOUSAND routes!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Direct routes grow as $n \times (n-1) \div 2$. Ten cities: 45 routes. A hundred cities: 4,950. Each one needs a plane, a crew and enough parcels to fill it. No company on Earth is rich enough for that. 

"Everyone flies to ONE middle place. Swap everything there. Fly home before dawn."



A wheel! With spokes!

"So your envelope may fly a thousand miles the WRONG way first. And still arrive first."



The long way round is the FAST way?!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

A hundred cities need a hundred spokes instead of 4,950 routes. And every plane flies FULL, because everything shares the same middle. **Detour by map, shortcut by system** — one of the great ideas of the modern world. 🌀

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 1 UNLOCKED

City-to-city = $n(n-1)/2$ = a nightmare. One hub = one line per city, and full planes. My envelope takes a detour ON PURPOSE. Grown-ups call it hub-and-spoke. I call it the wheel. 🌀

BORROWING THE DARK

4a Door Two: the real enemy

Door two showed a curved dark Earth — and a golden line of sunrise creeping across it.

We're not fighting distance. We're fighting DAWN.

"Morning arrives in stripes. Every stripe an hour apart. We fly west and steal a little extra night."

The sunrise is CHASING us!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Here's the honest version: the sun doesn't move — the Earth spins east, so morning sweeps west across the map. Fly west and the sky stays dark a little longer. Fly east and dawn comes at you twice as fast. **Geography is the timetable.** 🌍

"Planes sit idle at night.
The sky is empty. And
offices are shut anyway. So
we borrow the dark."



The night is **EMPTY**.
So we **USE** it!

Every hour of
darkness is free
runway.

"That's why there's a cut-
off time. One second late
at the box, and you've
missed the whole night."



One second?!
That's brutal!

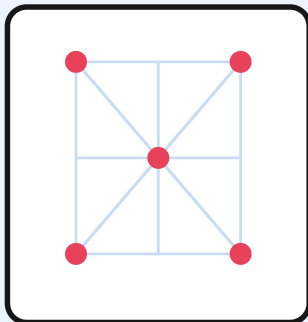
The airplane will
not wait. Ever.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The night is a chain of countdowns: pickups close at dusk · planes land near midnight · about four hours to sort everything · wheels up before 4 a.m. · vans roll at breakfast. Miss any link by ten minutes and the entire night is **late**. 🕒

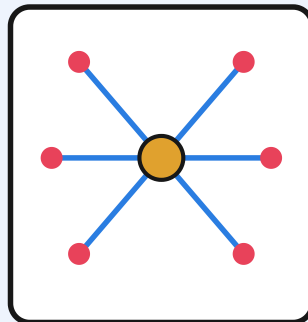


THE RACE AGAINST THE SUN



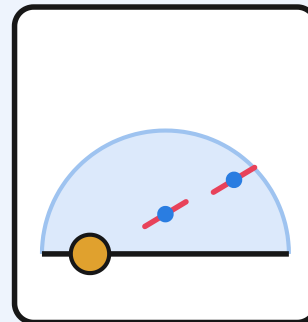
CITY TO CITY

routes explode



ONE HUB

one line per city



BEAT THE DAWN

sorted before sunrise



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 2 UNLOCKED

Earth spins east → morning sweeps west → fly west, keep the dark. Night = empty sky + idle planes + closed offices = free runway. Cut-off times are cruel because planes are crueller. 🕒



THE BEAM THAT READS

5a Door Three: the boxes speak

Door three: a red beam sweeping stripes. Thick, thin, thick. Bounce, nothing, bounce.

"Pale gaps throw the light back. Dark bars swallow it. On, off, on — and that pattern is a number."

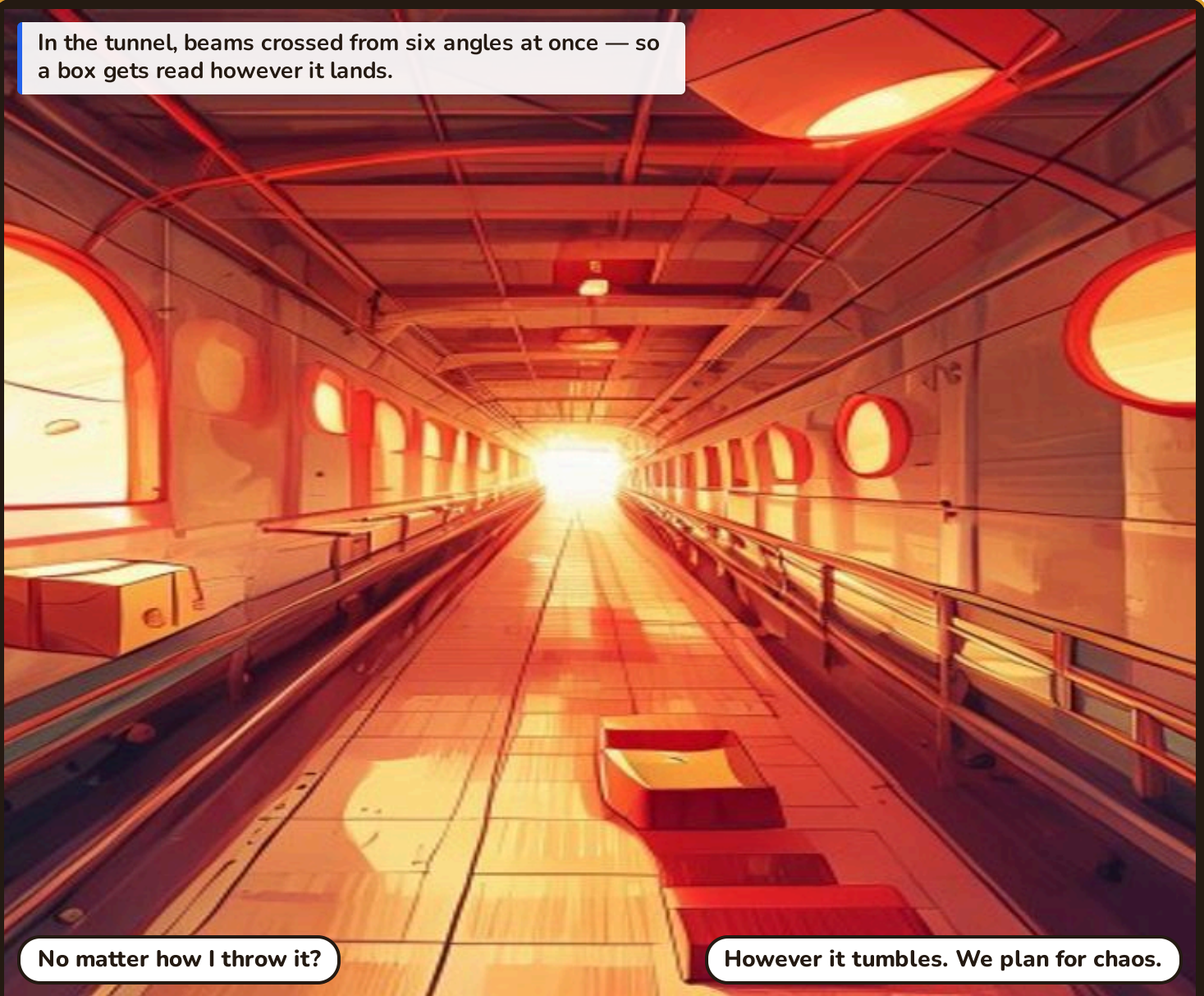
Dark bars EAT the light!

So a barcode is light... turned into MATH?

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Every stripe pattern is just a number in disguise — the same on-and-off language as the switches inside a computer, printed in ordinary ink. A number so cheap to print that it costs almost nothing, and so exact that a machine never misreads it. 🔦

In the tunnel, beams crossed from six angles at once — so a box gets read however it lands.



No matter how I throw it?

However it tumbles. We plan for chaos.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

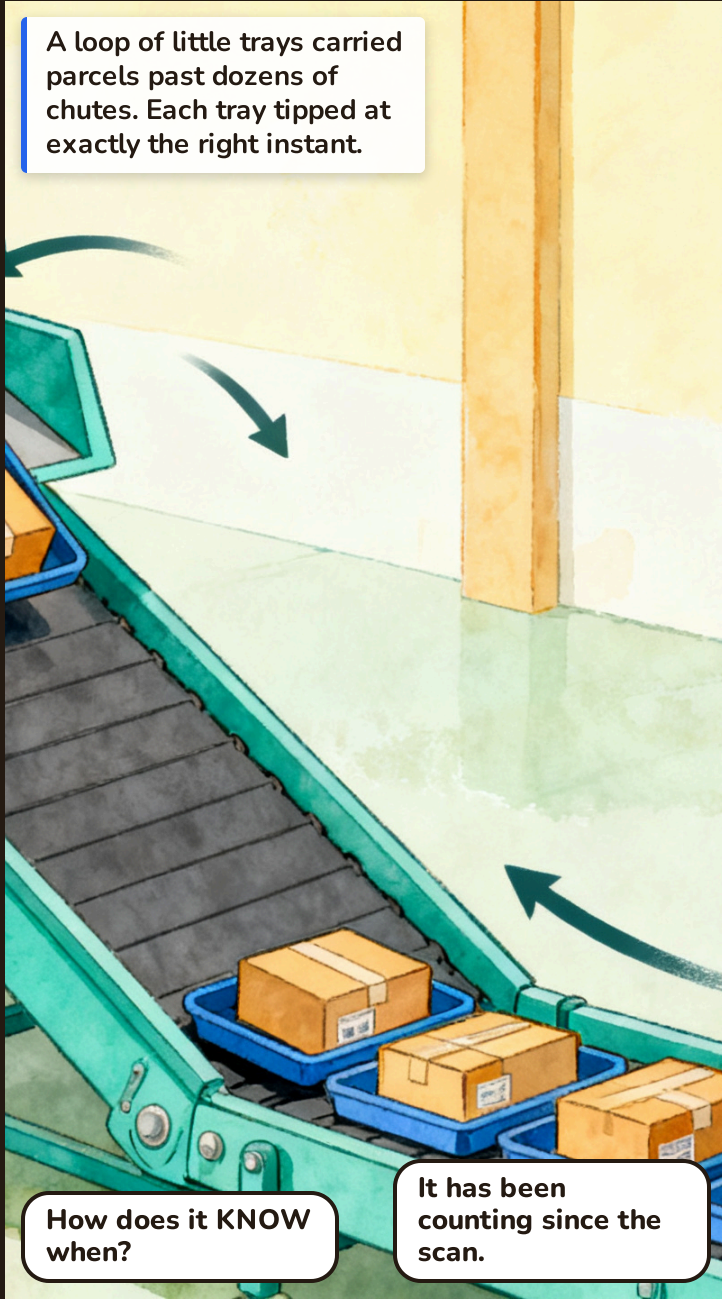
This is the humble idea that makes everything else possible: if a machine can **read** a parcel, it can **route** a parcel. Before barcodes, every box had to be read by a human eye. That is why overnight delivery is younger than your grandparents.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 3, HALF OPEN

Barcode = light bouncing off pale gaps, swallowed by dark bars = a number. Six beams so it reads however the box tumbles. Cheap ink + exact machines = the whole night is possible. 🔦

A MILLION DECISIONS AN HOUR

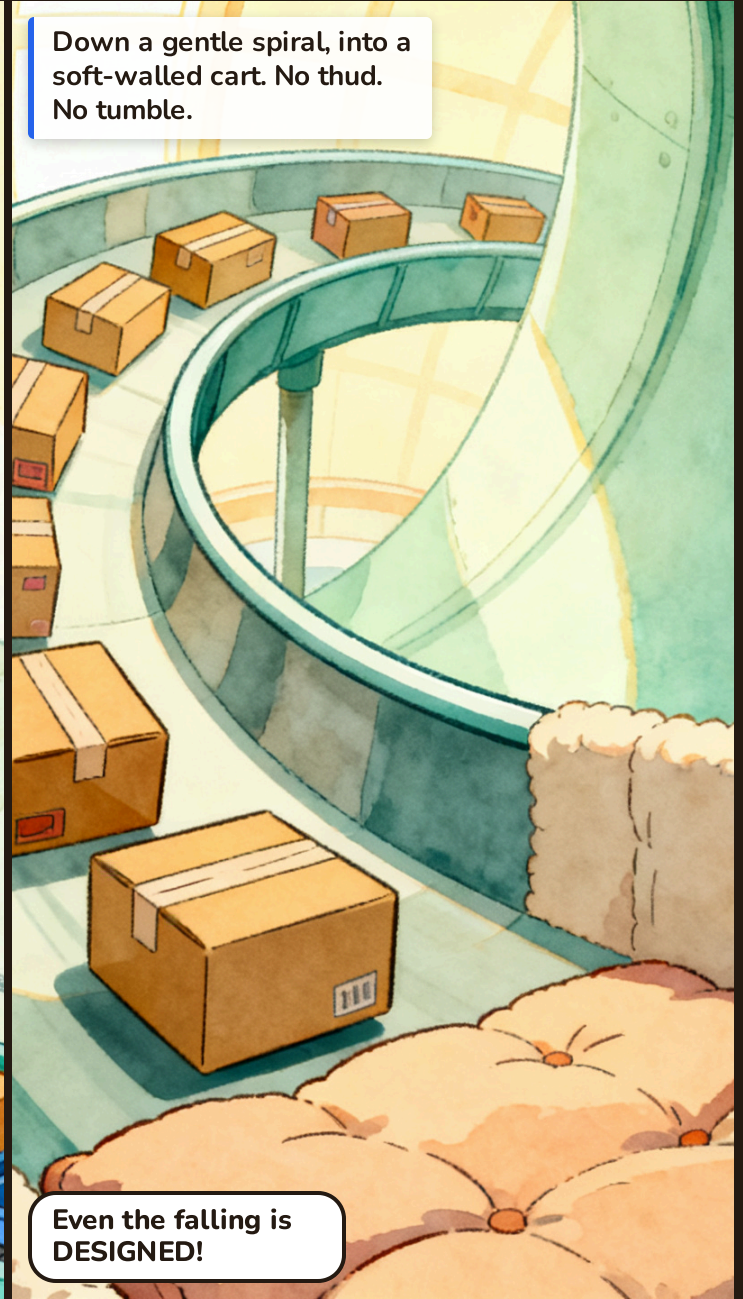
A loop of little trays carried parcels past dozens of chutes. Each tray tipped at exactly the right instant.



How does it **KNOW** when?

It has been counting since the scan.

Down a gentle spiral, into a soft-walled cart. No thud. No tumble.



Even the falling is **DESIGNED!**

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Nothing here is clever on its own. A beam. A tilting tray. A curving chute. Together, at speed, they route millions of objects a night with almost no mistakes. **Simple parts, ruthlessly repeated** — that is most of engineering.

Then a padded bay for awkward things: a rolled carpet, a kayak, a bicycle, a tyre.



The machine gives UP on those?

Machines love cubes. People handle the rest.

When two parcels wedged together, a worker calmly pressed a big stop button. Twenty seconds. Running again.



Stopping the belt on purpose?!

Better one calm stop than a hundred wrong boxes.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Della's rule of the night: **a small problem fixed now is cheap; the same problem at the far end is a disaster.** A wedged parcel costs twenty seconds here — or a broken promise in someone's morning. Remember this wall. We'll meet it again at the castle.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • DOOR 3 UNLOCKED

Trays tip in milliseconds. Chutes curve so nothing thuds. Weird shapes go to humans. Jams get a calm stop, not a panic. Cheap now beats expensive later. 📦

LOADING THE SKY

7a Door Four: filling a flying tube

Door four opened onto the ramp. Jets parked nose-in around the hub like petals of a flower.



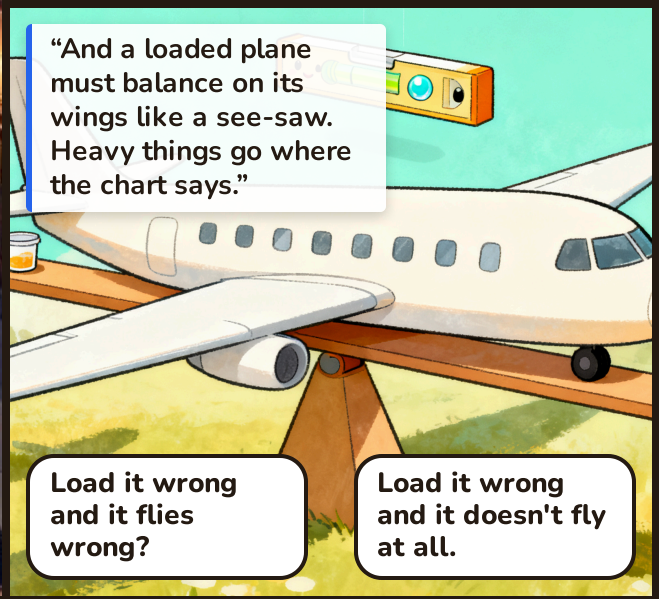
It's a FLOWER made of airplanes!

"A plane is a tube. So our containers have slanted corners — they hug the curve. Wasted air is wasted money."



Boxes shaped like the PLANE!

"And a loaded plane must balance on its wings like a see-saw. Heavy things go where the chart says."



Load it wrong and it flies wrong?

Load it wrong and it doesn't fly at all.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Aircraft physics is unforgiving: every extra kilogram burns extra fuel for the whole flight, and every kilogram in the wrong place shifts the balance point. That's why loading is a calculation, not a shove. **Physics accepts no excuses.**



Della tapped a container. “Every box aboard costs fuel. But the plane is flying anyway.”



So one MORE box is nearly free!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Tuck that away — it's the business hiding inside the physics. The flight costs what it costs whether it is half empty or packed. So the network with the **most parcels per plane** can charge less and still earn more. Scale, in one sentence. 

 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • DOOR 4 UNLOCKED

Slant-cornered containers hug the tube. Balance on the wings like a see-saw. Every kilo burns fuel — but the plane flies anyway, so a FULL plane is the whole trick. 

WEATHER, AND THE EMPTY PLANE

Upstairs: a calm room, storms spinning on the wall maps, one dispatcher redrawing a route with a finger.



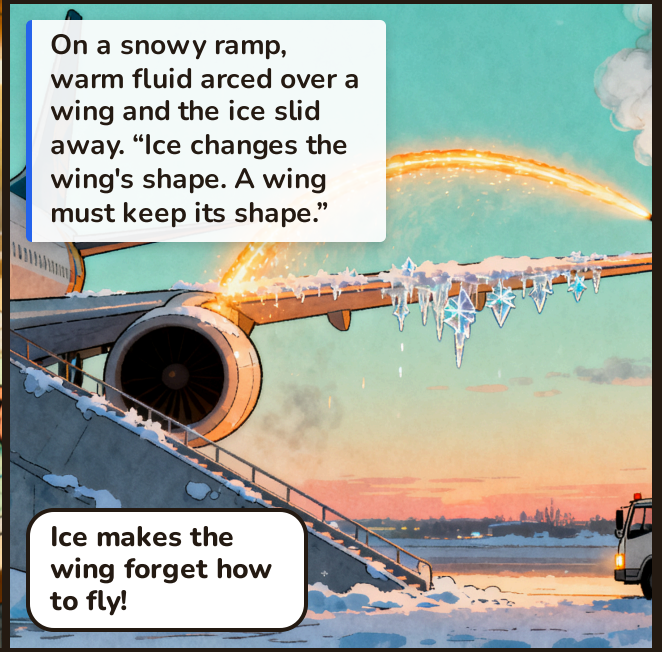
Nobody's shouting. Why is nobody SHOUTING?

A thunderstorm towered over the plain. The little plane threaded a wide, patient gap around its edge.



You don't fight the storm. You go AROUND.

On a snowy ramp, warm fluid arced over a wing and the ice slid away. "Ice changes the wing's shape. A wing must keep its shape."



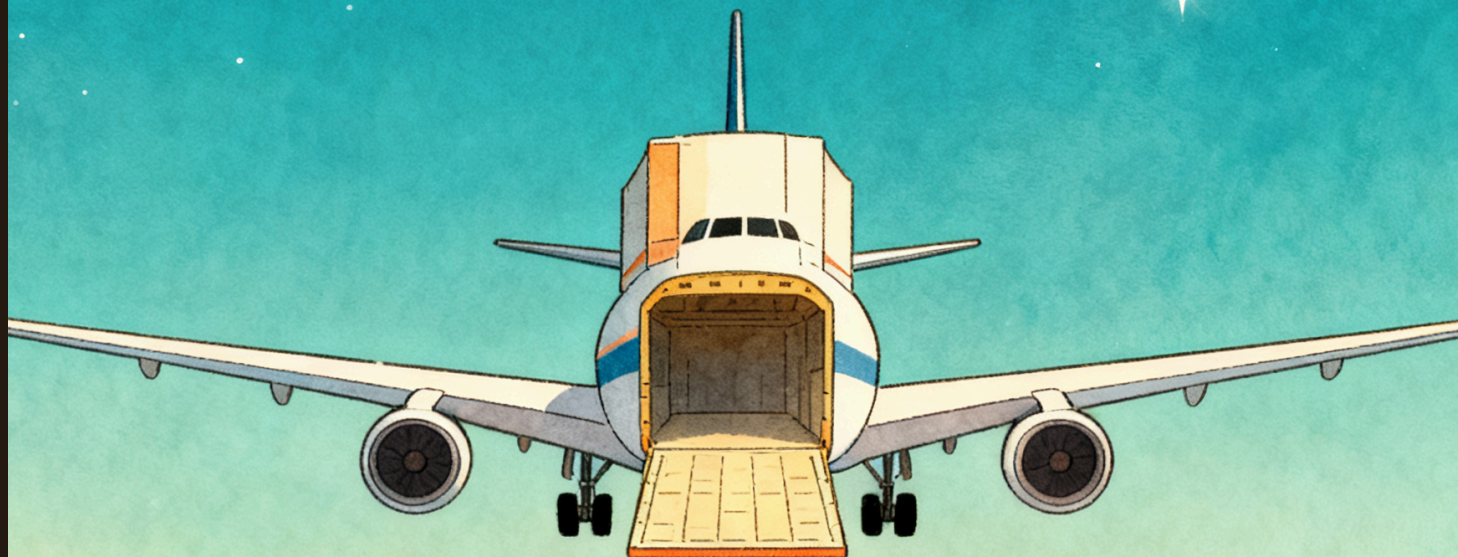
Ice makes the wing forget how to fly!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Wings work by their **curve**: air over the top travels farther and faster, pressure drops, lift appears. A skin of rough ice ruins the curve — the same wing, the same speed, far less lift. So: no ice. Ever. ❄️

Then Della showed her the strangest thing yet. A spare jet, flying tonight with an entirely empty hold.

WROOOOM



You fly an EMPTY plane?!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

That empty jet is the whole business in one picture. It costs a fortune and usually carries nothing. It exists so a promise made to a stranger is **never** broken. Reliability isn't luck, and it isn't hope. It is **paid for, in advance**. 💛

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Storms: fly around, calmly. Ice: ruins the wing's curve, so scrub it off. And somewhere above me tonight, an empty airplane is flying just in case. I keep thinking about that one.



THE COLD THAT CANNOT BREAK

9a Door Five: the fragile cargo

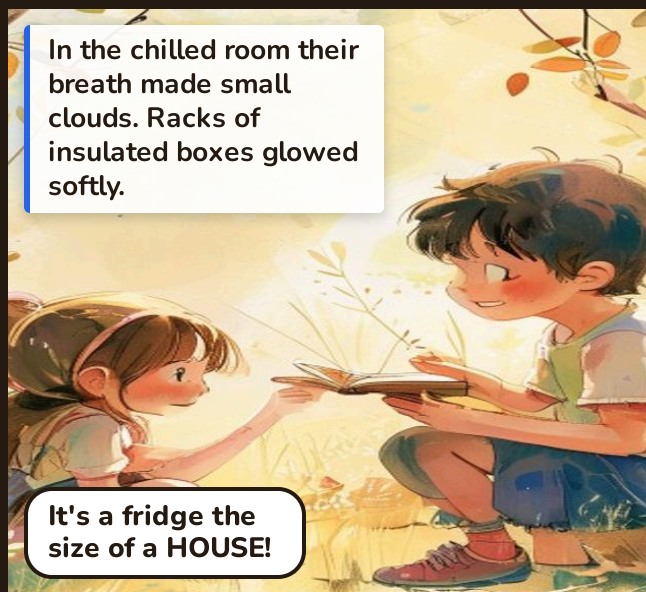
Door five was chilly. Inside: a tiny glass vial in a foam cradle, packed like a jewel.



One little bottle. All this fuss?

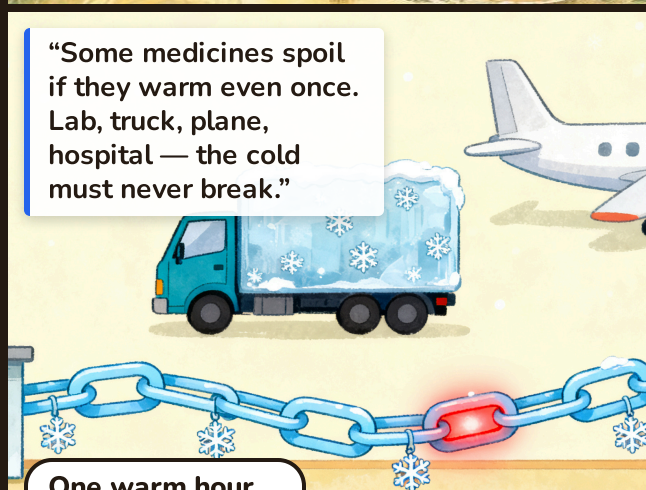
That bottle is somebody's mother.

In the chilled room their breath made small clouds. Racks of insulated boxes glowed softly.



It's a fridge the size of a HOUSE!

"Some medicines spoil if they warm even once. Lab, truck, plane, hospital — the cold must never break."



One warm hour ruins EVERYTHING?

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Warmth is just molecules jiggling harder — and delicate medicines are folded shapes that come undone when jiggled too hard. Undone shape, useless medicine. That's the whole science of the **cold chain**: keep the jiggling small, the entire way. 🧊

"Frozen carbon dioxide. It doesn't melt into a puddle — it goes straight from solid to mist."



It skips being a LIQUID?!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Dry ice is around -78°C and turns straight to vapour — no puddle, no soggy box. And a temperature tag rides along inside, quietly recording. If it warmed even once, the hospital **knows**. Honesty, built into the packaging.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 5 UNLOCKED

Heat = jiggling molecules = medicine unfolds = useless. Cold chain = unbroken links, lab → hospital. Dry ice skips the liquid bit (-78°C !). A little tag tells on you if you warm up. 🧊

THE HARDEST MILE

Sunrise. A van door slid open: shelves of parcels stacked in the exact order they'd be delivered.



Somebody PACKED this like a puzzle.

"Now find one path past every house, exactly once, without crossing yourself. Nicely, please."



That's... a really hard puzzle!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

It's a famous one. Even a computer cannot check every possible route for a hundred houses — the number of orders is bigger than the atoms in a mountain. So the real world uses clever **good-enough** answers. Perfect is unavailable; excellent is on time. 🌍

Della drew two lines: a long thin cheap one across the continent, and one short fat expensive one.

A courier handed a parcel to a grandmother and a delighted kid. The dog approved.

The LAST bit costs the most?!

Two thousand miles is easy. The last mile is people.

This is where all of it lands. On a doorstep.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Every clever machine, every wheel of spokes, every empty spare jet — all of it exists so one person can hand a box to another person at a door. The whole system's grade is decided in its **final thirty seconds**.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 6 UNLOCKED

Van packed in delivery order. Route puzzle = impossible to solve perfectly, so use clever good-enough. Last mile = the most expensive mile. Everything ends at somebody's door.

A MILLION HANDS

Door seven filled the whole wall. Behind it: no machine at all. Just... people.



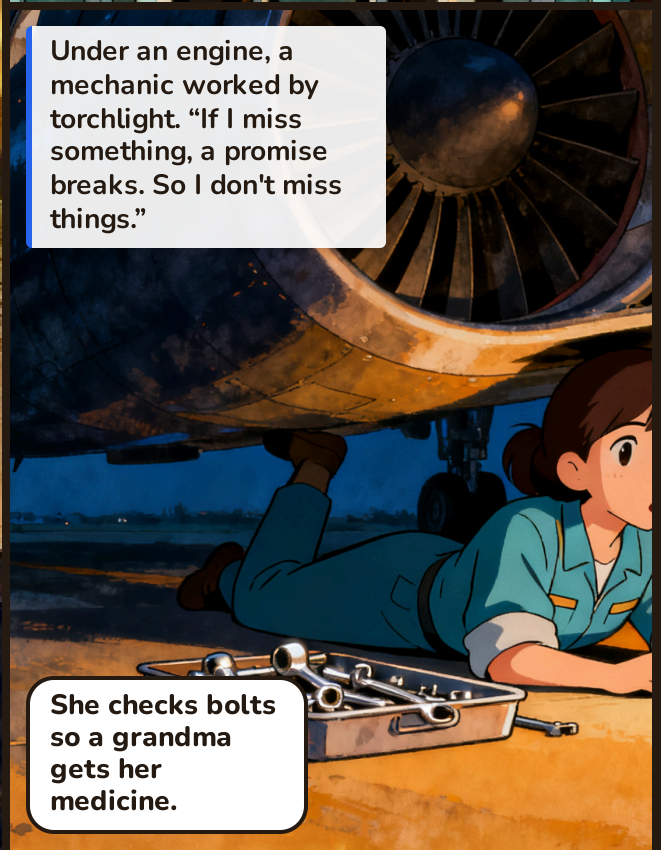
The seventh secret is PEOPLE?

Three in the morning. The break room. Coffee, sandwiches, terrible jokes, purple vests on hooks.



You're all **AWAKE**. Every night. Together.

Under an engine, a mechanic worked by torchlight. "If I miss something, a promise breaks. So I don't miss things."



She checks bolts so a grandma gets her medicine.

The sorter. The loader. The pilot. The dispatcher. The mechanic. The courier. Each said the same shy sentence: "I only do my small part."



But **NOBODY** does the whole thing?!

Della pulled up the world: threads from every continent braiding into one bright rope over the oceans.



It's one enormous relay race. Forever.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Sit with that: **nobody on Earth delivers a parcel**. A dozen strangers each carry it a little way, most of them asleep when the others are working, none of them ever meeting. The **conducting** — not the planes — is the real invention. 🎵

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 7, PART ONE

Sorter → loader → pilot → dispatcher → mechanic → courier → me. Nobody does the whole journey. Everybody keeps their link. So who conducts this orchestra... and why does it even exist? 🎵

THE THING THEY NEVER LOSE

"Watch," said Della. Every scan of one parcel lit up as a bead on a glowing thread across the map.



It leaves
FOOTPRINTS
everywhere it goes!

A wall of quiet screens showed the whole night at once: every plane, every hub, every delay.



You can see the
WHOLE thing?

We have to. You
can't fix what you
can't see.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The secret is that the network moves **two** things: the parcel, and the parcel's **story**. The story travels faster. If a box misses a plane, the system knows before the box does — and can already be arranging plan B. 📡

At home, a kid refreshed a screen to watch her own package crawl across a map. “That felt like magic in 1994.”



Watching your
OWN box travel!

In a small quiet room: the recovery desk, where the rare mystery parcel gets hunted down by hand.



Some of them are
people's whole
LIVES.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Della's honest bit: nothing is perfect. Millions of parcels a night means some go wrong — so the real skill is **noticing fast and fixing quietly**. A promise isn't never-fail. It's never-abandon.

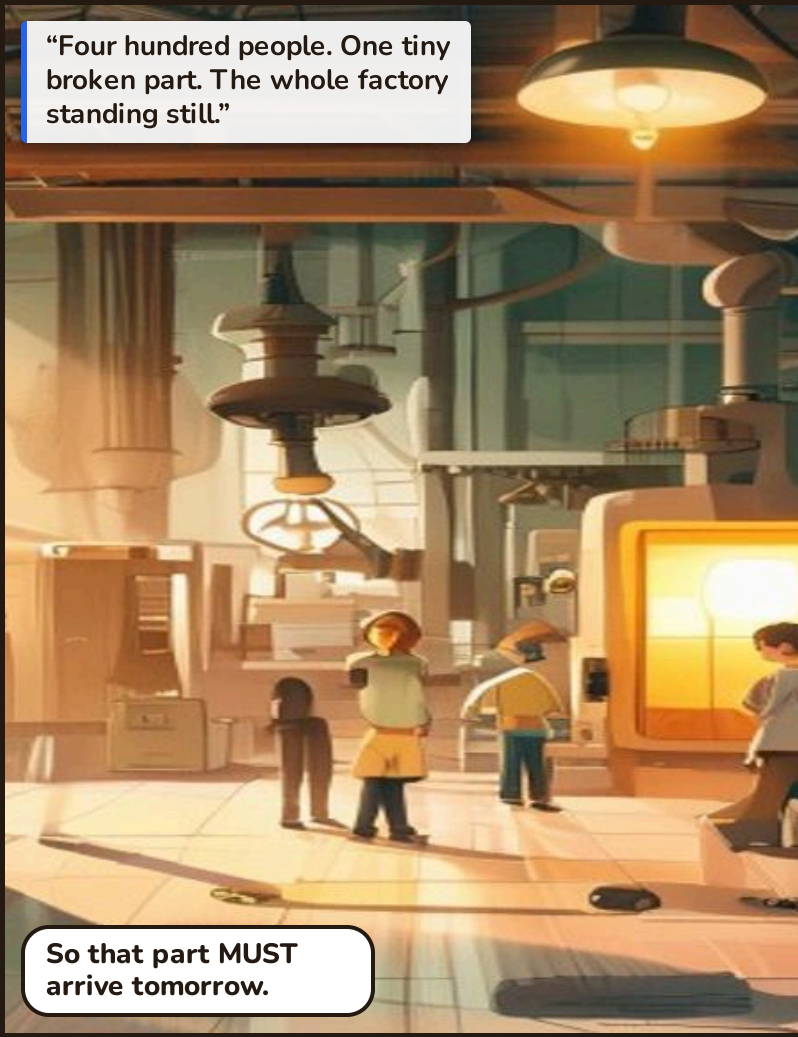
📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Every scan = a footprint. The parcel's STORY travels faster than the parcel. Trouble gets spotted before anyone at home notices. And when it does go wrong, a human hunts it down. 📡

WHY ANYONE PAYS FOR SPEED

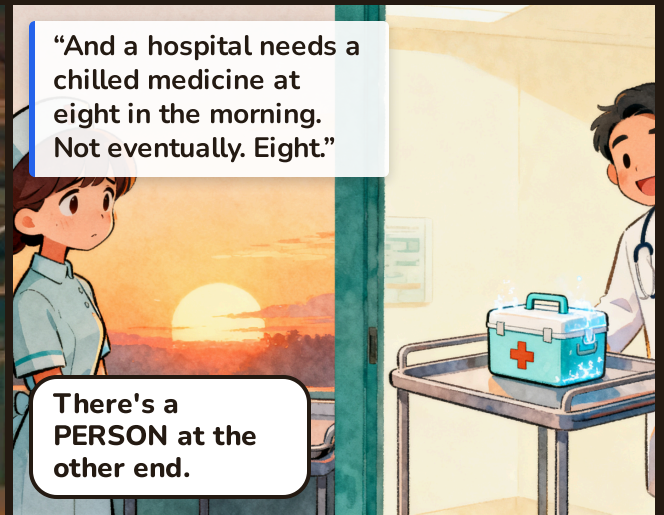
13a Siri's question flips

"Four hundred people. One tiny broken part. The whole factory standing still."



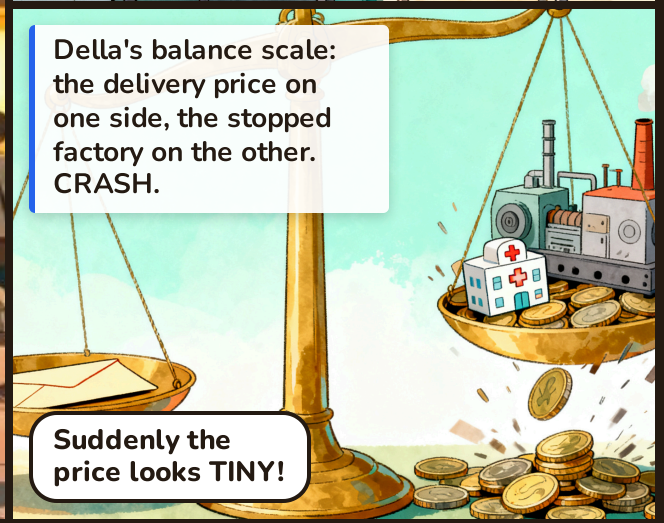
So that part **MUST** arrive tomorrow.

"And a hospital needs a chilled medicine at eight in the morning. Not eventually. Eight."



There's a **PERSON** at the other end.

Della's balance scale: the delivery price on one side, the stopped factory on the other. **CRASH.**



Suddenly the price looks **TINY!**

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Warren's old riddle: **price is what you pay, value is what you get**. Nobody buys a plane ride — they buy the expensive disaster that **didn't happen**. When value crushes price, customers don't feel squeezed. They feel **rescued**. ❤️

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

My question flipped: not 'how does it work' → 'WHY would anyone build this?' Answer #1: because being late costs a factory or a hospital far more than the delivery ever will.

THE WEB THAT PULLS ITSELF

Answer #2 glowed on the map: every new town joining the web made every town already on it a little brighter.



The web pulls itself BIGGER!

“And the more parcels on one street, the cheaper each one gets. One van, one street, twenty stops.”



Busy streets are CHEAP streets!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

This is **density**, the quiet giant of delivery. The van drives the street anyway. The plane flies anyway. So each extra parcel costs almost nothing — and whoever carries the most can charge the least and still earn more. 

"Now try to copy us. You'd need every city, every night, from day one — before anyone trusts you."



Half a web delivers NOTHING!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

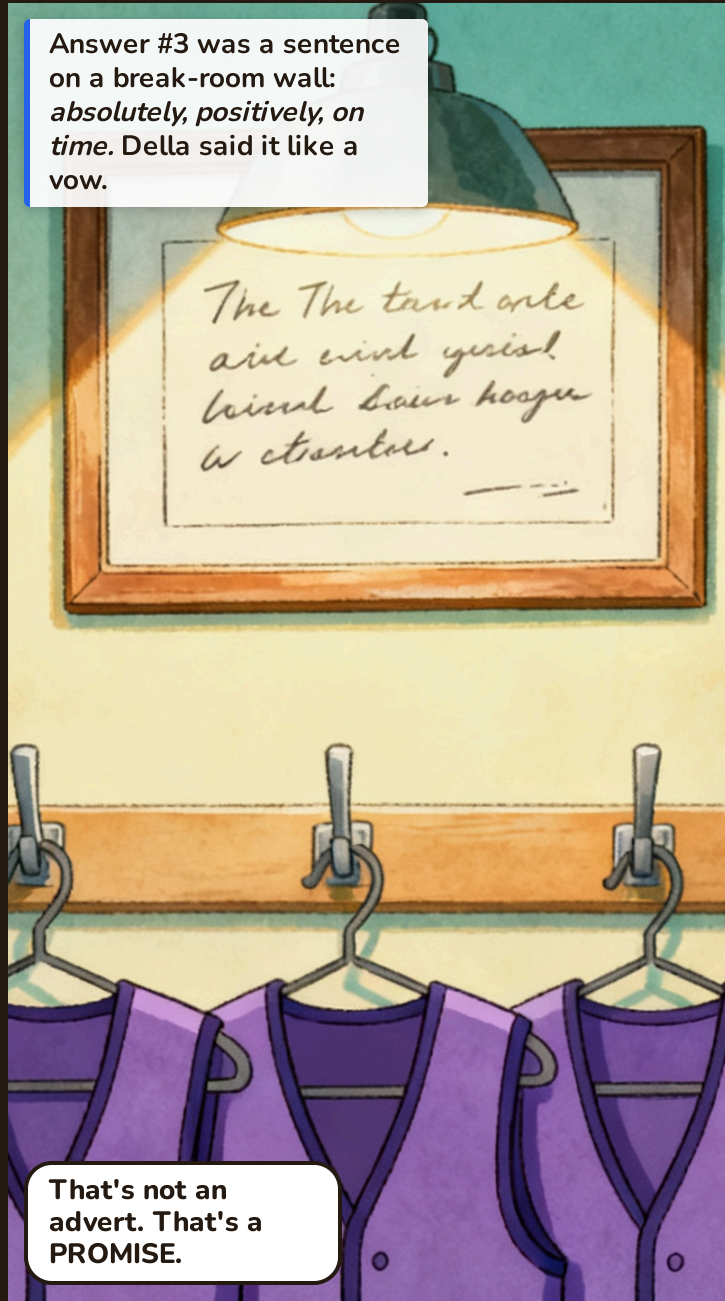
That's the moat's real shape. Planes can be bought. A **complete network** cannot: you must pay for all of it before earning from any of it. Which is exactly why the world has a few giant delivery webs and not fifty. ✨

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Answer #2: the WEB. More towns → more value for every town. More parcels per street → cheaper per parcel. And you can't build half of it. Half a bridge = no bridge. ✨

THE PRICE OF A PROMISE

Answer #3 was a sentence on a break-room wall: *absolutely, positively, on time*. Della said it like a vow.



That's not an advert. That's a PROMISE.

"Which means every night, thousands of people choose to keep it. Nobody can force that."

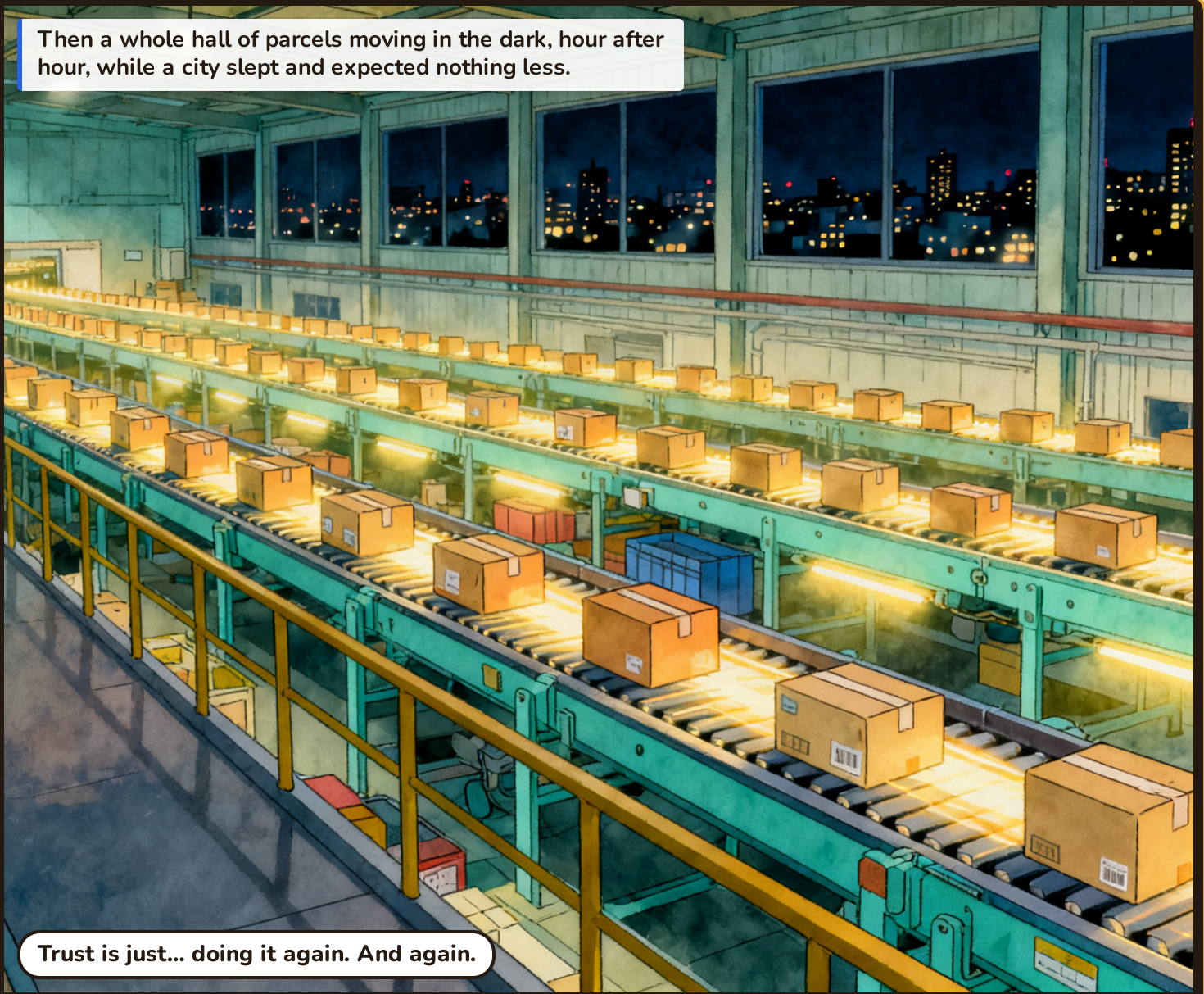


So the promise is made of PEOPLE?

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Their old rule runs: look after the people, the people look after the customer, and the customer keeps the company alive. Not sentiment — **sequence**. Nobody wakes at 2 a.m. to serve a rulebook. 🧡

Then a whole hall of parcels moving in the dark, hour after hour, while a city slept and expected nothing less.



Trust is just... doing it again. And again.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

A brand is a **promise kept so many times it became an expectation**. Copying a plane takes a year. Copying thirty years of on-time mornings takes... thirty years. That's why trust is the most expensive wall to build and the cheapest to lose.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Answer #3: TRUST. A promise kept nightly by thousands of awake humans until nobody even checks any more. Value → Web → Trust. Now... WHO started this? Compass is spinning again 🧭

THE IDEA THEY CALLED IMPOSSIBLE

Dawn over the great river. Purple and orange on the hub roof. Siri knew the name. Everyone does.



FEDEX! The promise that outruns the sun!

"It began as a college paper in the 1960s. A student named Fred Smith drew a wheel with spokes."



A HOMEWORK idea built all THIS?

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Legend says the paper earned a poor grade. Smith himself said he honestly could not remember. Keep the useful half anyway: **a genuinely new idea rarely looks brilliant while it is still new.** 📄

"First night, April 1973,
Memphis. Fourteen small
jets. Fourteen packages."



FOURTEEN?! That's
a sad party.

"Then two brutal years.
Losses. Doubt. Fuel prices.
Most nights they nearly ran
out of everything."



The whole thing
almost never
HAPPENED?

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Freeze on that cliff-edge: the network only works when it is **complete** — which means paying for the whole web before a single customer arrives. That's why almost nobody tries. And it is exactly why the ones who survive are so hard to copy.



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · THE REVEAL

FEDEX. Homework paper (1960s) → 14 packages, April 1973 → two years of nearly dying. The idea that everyone called impossible... was only impossible while it was half-built. TURN THE PAGE.

THE WHEEL FINALLY SPINS

1977: the rules on American air cargo were loosened. Suddenly small planes could become big ones.

One rule change... and the wheel SPUN.

"1989: they bought an old cargo airline with routes across the whole world. The wheel got a second, bigger rim."

One night they woke up... GLOBAL.

"Then a phone number: call us, and we'll tell you where your package is. In 1978, that was astonishing."

People had NEVER been able to ask before!

"And in 1994, tracking moved onto the web. Anyone could watch their own box crawl across a map."

They handed the map to US!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Notice the pattern in every leap: they gave people **certainty**. Faster is nice; **knowing** is priceless. Half the anxiety of sending something precious is not knowing where it is — and they sold the cure decades before anyone else thought to. 📶



THE STORY IN TIME

1965

A college student writes a paper about a hub-and-spoke air network.

1971

The company is founded; two hard years of preparation follow.

1973

First night in Memphis: 14 packages, 14 small jets.

1975

Near collapse — survival on stubbornness and one good year.

1977

US air cargo rules are freed. Bigger planes, real routes at last.

1978

Call and ask where your package is — a first for customers.

1983

Reaches \$1 billion in revenue without buying another company.

1989

Buys Flying Tigers and inherits a worldwide route map.

1994

Web tracking. Anyone can watch their own box move.

1998

Adds a road network for cheaper, slower, everyday parcels.

2016

Buys TNT Express — a far deeper web across Europe.

Today

Millions of shipments a night, hundreds of aircraft, 220+ countries.





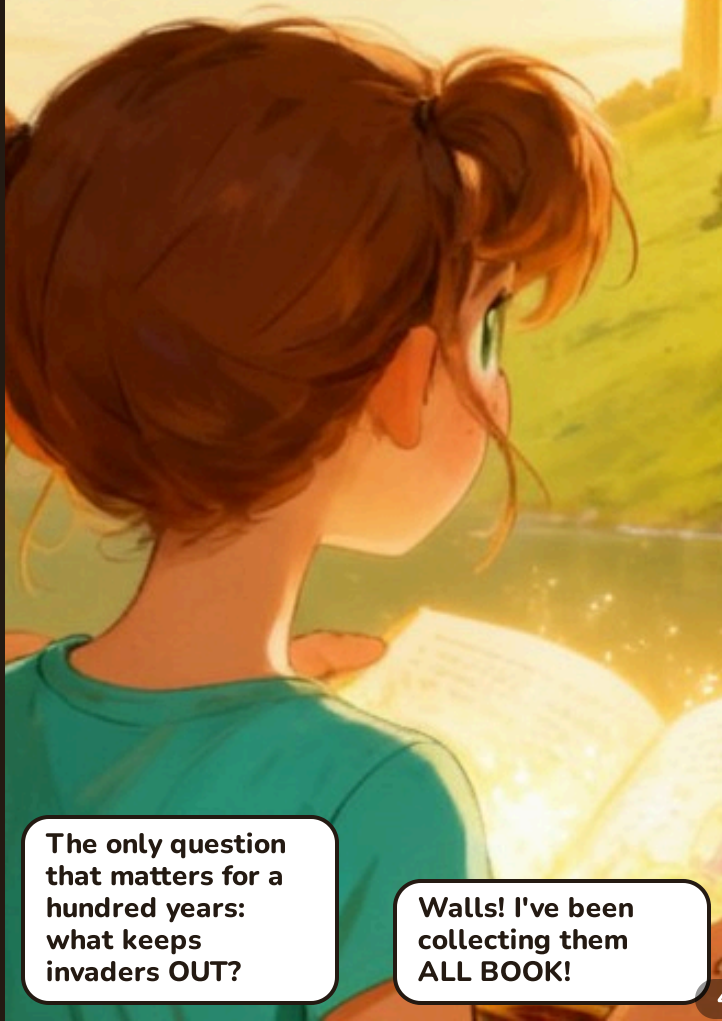
SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Rules freed (1977) → phone tracking (1978) → a worldwide route map (1989) → web tracking (1994) → roads too (1998) → Europe (2016).
Every leap sold the same thing: CERTAINTY. 📡

THE CASTLE MADE OF NIGHTS

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

On a bench by the ramp fence, the two old friends let her lay out the walls, one by one. Nodding. Chuckling. Correcting.



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

Walls! I've been collecting them ALL BOOK!



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



THE CASTLE WALLS • WHY RIVALS CAN'T COPY IT



Wall One: The Whole Web

Planes, hubs, vans and a person on every street — and you must finish ALL of it before earning a single dollar. That bill is the wall.



Wall Two: Density

The plane flies anyway; the van drives the street anyway. The busiest network carries each extra parcel for almost nothing.



Wall Three: A Promise Kept

Decades of on-time mornings. That's why a hospital dials one number without thinking twice — and why a rival's low price doesn't tempt them.



Wall Four: Knowing Where Everything Is

Every scan feeds a living map of the world's freight. Decades of that data reroutes storms before they bite.

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 Fuel Bill

Jet fuel is enormous and nobody controls its price. A bad year in the oil market is a bad year in the sky.



Crack Two: The Giant Customer

Your biggest customer can build its own delivery fleet — and become your fiercest rival. It has happened.



Crack Three: The Vanishing Letter

Email swallowed the urgent document. The overnight envelope that started it all is a smaller business every decade.



Crack Four: The Half-Empty Plane

A heavy network must be FED. When trade slows, the planes fly anyway — and every empty seat is money on fire.



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Charlie's checklist for ruining an overnight network: break the promise once too often · fly half-empty planes · let your biggest customer become your rival · forget that speed was the only reason anyone paid extra. Now — **just never do those.** Inversion turns worry into a checklist.

Warren raised his cola. "Airlines have broken plenty of hearts, kiddo. But a business the world would *miss by tomorrow morning* — that is genuinely rare."



The treasure was never the planes!



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · THE CASTLE

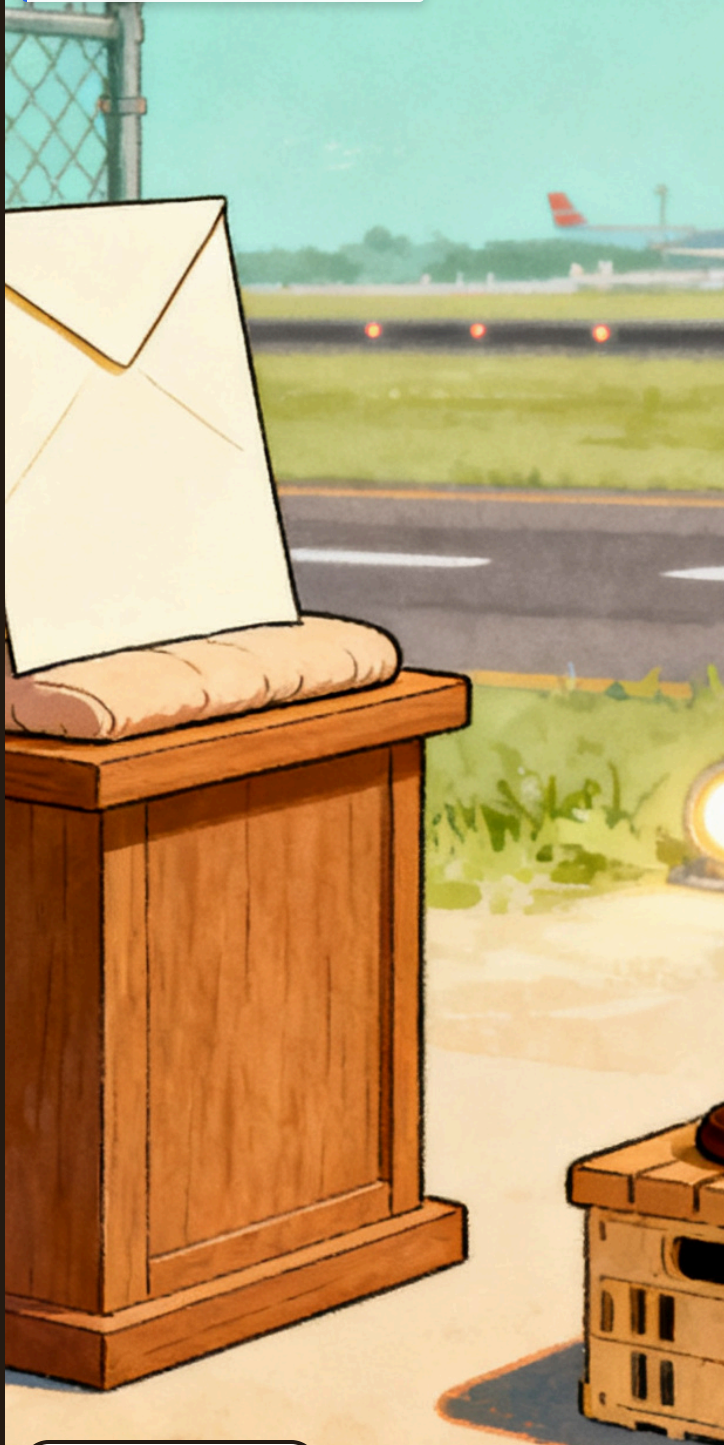
WALLS: whole web 🕸 density 📊 promise 🤝 living map 🧠. CRACKS: fuel 🛢 giant customers 🏢 vanishing letters ✉ empty planes ✈. Charlie: INVERT. Warren: buy the walls, not the machines. 🏰

THE JUDGE'S QUESTIONS

Then Warren built a tiny courtroom by the fence — and put the ENVELOPE on the witness stand.

TOK TOK

Siri banged the little gavel and fired Warren's five eternal questions at the paper defendant.



Order in the court!



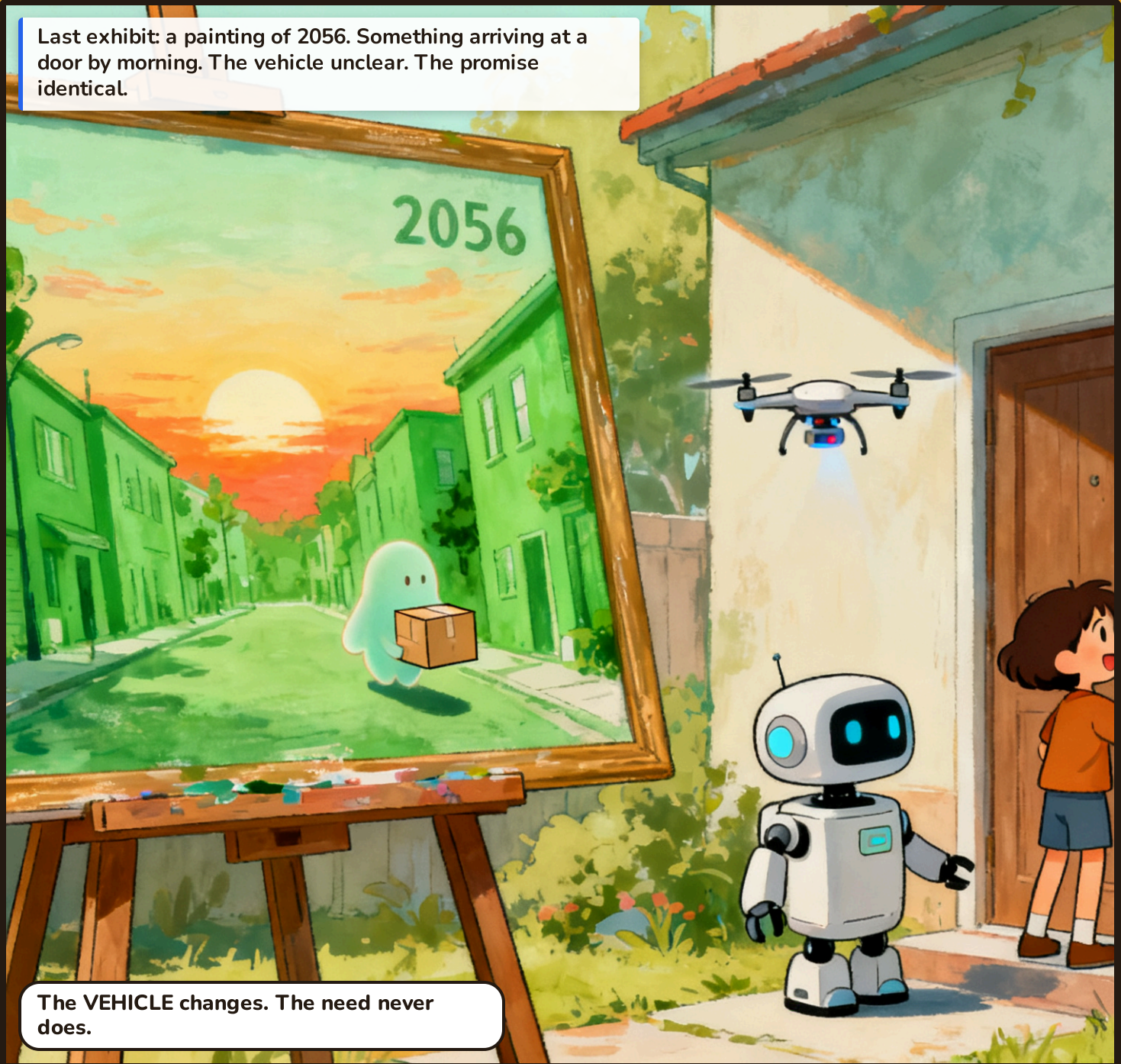
Question one: will people still **NEED** you in thirty years?



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The Owner's Court: ⚖️ Enduring need? —
'Somebody always needs it there by morning.'
⚖️ Trust earned? — 'Decades of on-time
mornings.' ⚖️ Reinvesting wisely? — 'Planes,
hubs and scanners, endlessly — a heavy
business must keep feeding itself.' ⚖️ Copyable
with money? — 'Buy the planes in a year. Build
the complete web and the trust? A generation.'
⚖️ What breaks you? — 'Empty planes, cheap
fuel gone dear, and my own biggest customer.'
Court adjourned for lemonade.

Last exhibit: a painting of 2056. Something arriving at a door by morning. The vehicle unclear. The promise identical.



The VEHICLE 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 planes, warehouses, fizzy cans — anything. (He never mentioned a share price once.) 

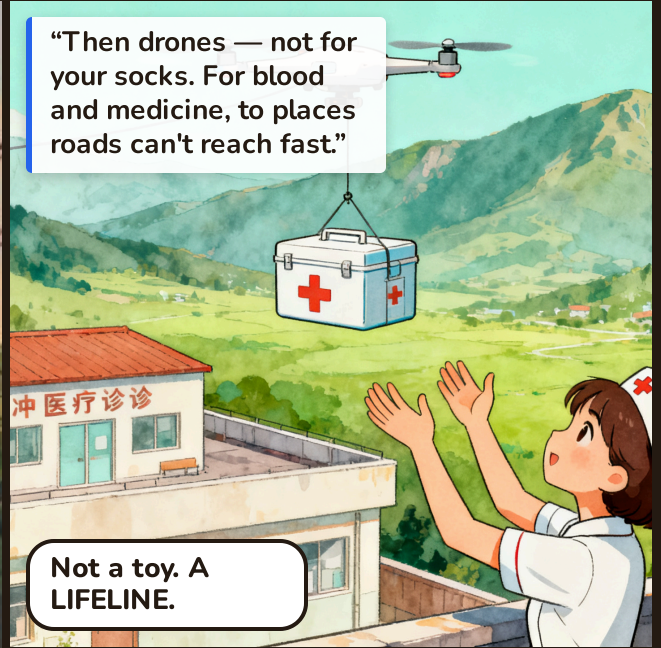
THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS

"Last question," said Della.
 "What is this in thirty years?"
 First: quiet electric vans,
 charging while the city sleeps.



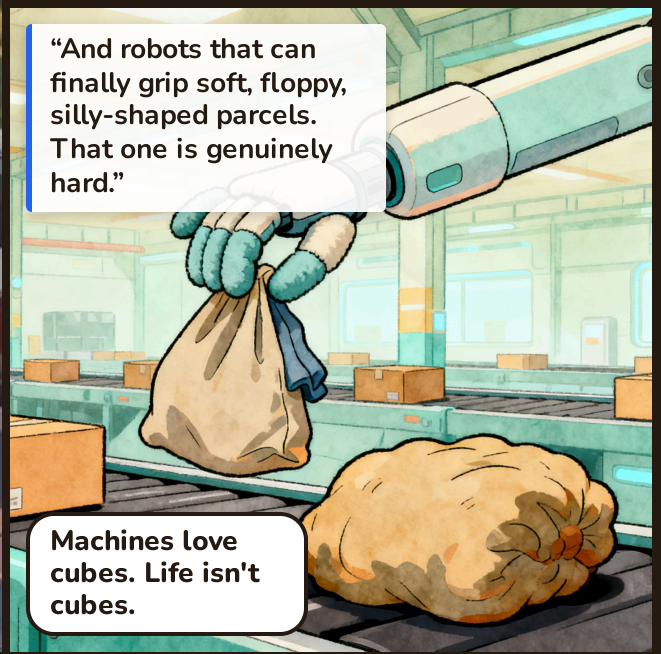
City streets could go
SILENT at dawn!

"Then drones — not for
 your socks. For blood
 and medicine, to places
 roads can't reach fast."



Not a toy. A
LIFELINE.

"And robots that can
 finally grip soft, floppy,
 silly-shaped parcels.
 That one is genuinely
 hard."



Machines love
 cubes. Life isn't
 cubes.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

No crystal balls — just visible currents: electric last miles · medical drones · grippers for awkward things · smarter maps cutting empty miles · cleaner fuels for the long flights. Shapes change; the need doesn't. 🌟

On a rooftop at dusk, Siri wrote the rule the way Grandpa taught her.



Don't bet on the vehicle. Bet on the NEED.



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

2056 watchlist: electric vans, medicine drones, soft-parcel robots, fewer empty miles, cleaner jet fuel. Rules: bet on needs not vehicles · trust is the crown · the last mile is always human-shaped. 🌟

THE SECRET NOTEBOOK

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



It's all ONE WEB. Of course it is.



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The Science Web, one breath: the Earth spins east so morning sweeps west → fly west and borrow the dark → one hub beats $n(n-1)/2$ routes → light bouncing off ink becomes a number → trays tip in milliseconds → slant-cornered containers hug a tube balanced on its wings → cold keeps molecules from jiggling medicine apart. **Ordinary physics, stacked extraordinarily.**



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The Business Web, one breath: value (the disaster that didn't happen) → the web (every town brightens every other) → density (the plane flies anyway) → trust (a promise kept until it became an expectation) → the castle, patrolled with Charlie's inversion and judged in Warren's court. And underneath: a million strangers, conducted into one morning.

The real test: she explained the whole thing to her little cousin. With paper planes and a laundry basket. He got it.



If you can't teach it with laundry, you don't know it.



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · THE LATTICEWORK

Charlie's word for my string-wall: a
LATTICEWORK. Twelve models from ONE
envelope: hub-and-spoke · borrow the dark ·
light-into-numbers · simple-parts-repeated ·
fix-it-cheap-early · reliability-paid-in-advance ·
price-vs-value · density · network completeness
· brand-is-a-promise · invert · the owner's court.



COMING HOME



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



One fresh letter dried on the diary's page.

"The modern world is not magic. It is millions of ordinary people doing small hard things, together, for a long time. Be patient, little one — patience is the one wall no rival can copy."



At breakfast, the envelope lay beside the milk. A wheel of spokes. A tipping tray. An empty spare jet. A night crew.

You're a whole night of the world, folded flat.

Was it real? It FELT real...

When the courier came to the door, Siri got there first — and said thank you like she meant it.

She hugged the diary tight. Far away, a last cargo jet caught the morning sun.

You carried the LAST mile. I know what that costs now.

Show me the next one, Grandpa. 🧡

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Next unlock, feel it: a wheel of spokes drawn on homework paper — the Earth spinning east while planes chase west — light bouncing off pale ink and turning into numbers — an empty jet flying just in case. An envelope is no longer just an envelope. **Nothing, from now on, is just anything.**

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · VOLUME CLOSED

Seven doors. Twelve mental models. One castle. One near-death in 1975. One courtroom by an airport fence. But the compass is twitching toward the attic... something with round black ears... and Warren is already grinning. Next volume. 🧭🐭



OUR PHILOSOPHY

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

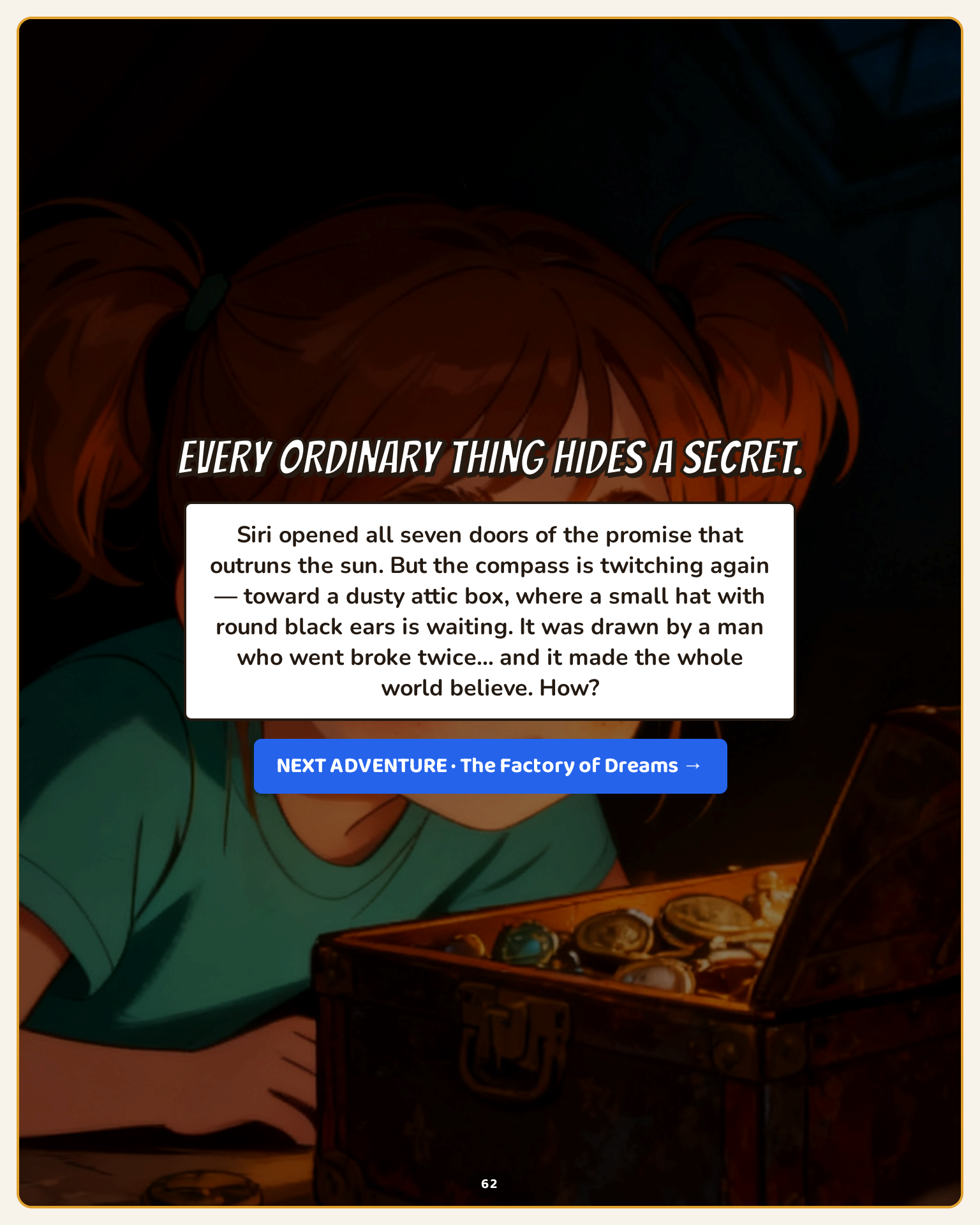
Inspired by the multidisciplinary thinking of [Charlie Munger](#) and the rational, long-term philosophy of [Warren Buffett](#), our comics connect science, technology, business, history, and human behavior to show how the real world works.

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 red hair in pigtails, wearing a green shirt, is looking into an open wooden treasure chest filled with gold coins and jewels. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, orange glow emanating from the chest.

EVERY ORDINARY THING HIDES A SECRET.

Siri opened all seven doors of the promise that outruns the sun. But the compass is twitching again — toward a dusty attic box, where a small hat with round black ears is waiting. It was drawn by a man who went broke twice... and it made the whole world believe. How?

NEXT ADVENTURE • The Factory of Dreams →