

NIKE THE SHOE THAT LEARNED TO FLY

seven doors, twelve mental models, and the ordinary sneaker that turns a footstep into a bounce.

"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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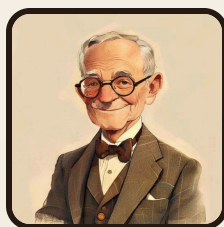
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MEET THE CHARACTERS



SIRI



BEN



WARREN



CHARLIE



BEA

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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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”*

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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

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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 SHOE THAT WOULDN'T SIT STILL

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

TIK-TIK

It spun. Locked. Pointing straight at—

SPIN

Wait. Seriously?

Down the hall: the shoe rack. Running shoes, school shoes, tiny sneakers, one very muddy pair.

We own EIGHT pairs. And I've never once asked what's inside one.

It's never done THIS before.



Her own sneaker. On its side in the moonlight. Scuffed. Ordinary. Silent.



The diary flipped open by itself. Fresh ink.

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

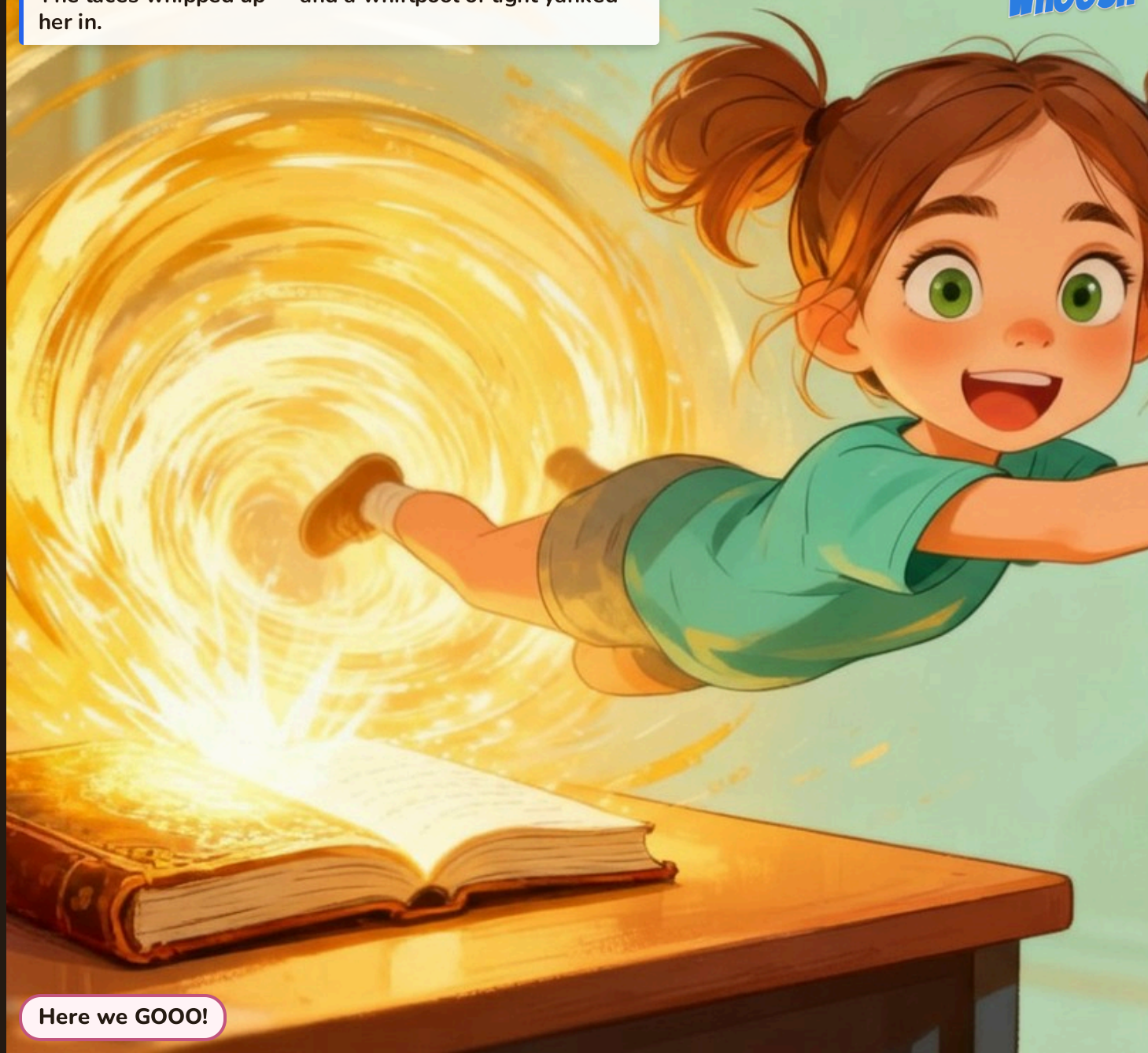
"Time to meet the businesses that built the modern world, little one. Start with the one waiting by your own front door. The shoe that learned to fly."

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Really look at a sneaker. Cloth, foam, rubber. Yet the right pair lets a runner go **faster on the same breath**, and a whole industry argues about whether that's fair. Tonight's mystery: **can a shoe truly give energy back?**

The laces whipped up — and a whirlpool of light yanked her in.

WHOOSH



Here we GOOO!



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Biggest mystery yet 🦋

- ① How can foam and rubber make a person FASTER?
- ② Grandpa says a sneaker built one of the world's most famous companies. Prove it, compass.

THE PUZZLE OF FORTY PIECES

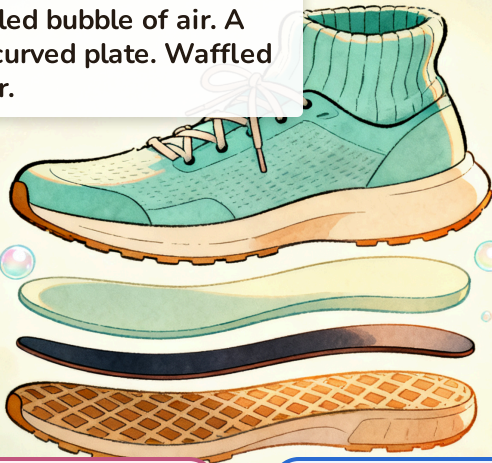
She landed in a lab where a shoe floated in pieces. Dozens of pieces. A frozen explosion.

It's a GALAXY of shoe bits!

An engineer plucked a slice of foam out of the air. *"I'm Bea. I study how humans run, for a living."*

Best. Job. EVER.

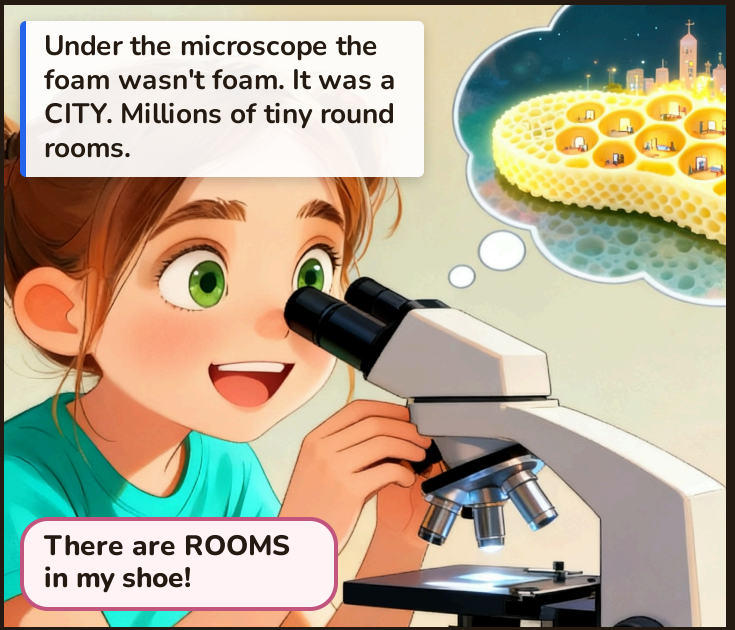
A knitted sock. Foam slabs. A sealed bubble of air. A dark curved plate. Waffled rubber.



How many pieces IS this?

Around forty. From a dozen countries.

Under the microscope the foam wasn't foam. It was a CITY. Millions of tiny round rooms.



There are ROOMS in my shoe!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

A running shoe is a **machine you wear**. Every part fights the same enemy: your foot strikes the ground with two to three times your body weight, roughly **1,000 times per mile**. Do that for a year and it's millions of small collisions.

Bea unrolled a parchment map. Seven glowing doors along a running track. *"Seven secrets. Open them all and you'll understand this thing better than most grown-ups."*



Seven doors. Deal.



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • THE QUEST MAP

1 THE SPRING — what's already inside my foot?

2 THE HAMMER — how hard do I actually hit?

3 THE FOAM — bubbles that bounce?

4 THE BUBBLE — air that never tires?

5 THE GRIP — why waffles?!

6 THE PLATE — stiff makes you FASTER?

7 THE HANDS — who builds it... and WHY?

Let's GO 🌍

THE SPRING YOU WERE BORN WITH

3a Door One: the machine inside your foot

Door one opened onto... a foot. Twenty-six bones, arched like a stone bridge.

Twenty-six?! In each one?

"The arch flattens when you land, and springs up when you lift. It's a bow, and you string it every step."

My foot is a BOW?

"And this thick cord behind your heel stretches like a rubber band — then snaps back and throws you forward."

So my leg is a CATAPULT!

Bea made her hop in place beside a kangaroo poster. Bounce. Bounce. Barely tiring.

Kangaroos figured this out first?

Every good runner is part kangaroo.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Running isn't pushing — it's **bouncing**. Your tendons and arch store energy on landing and give a big share of it back on lift-off. That's why hopping is easier than jumping from a standstill. You have springs. You just never got the manual. 🦘

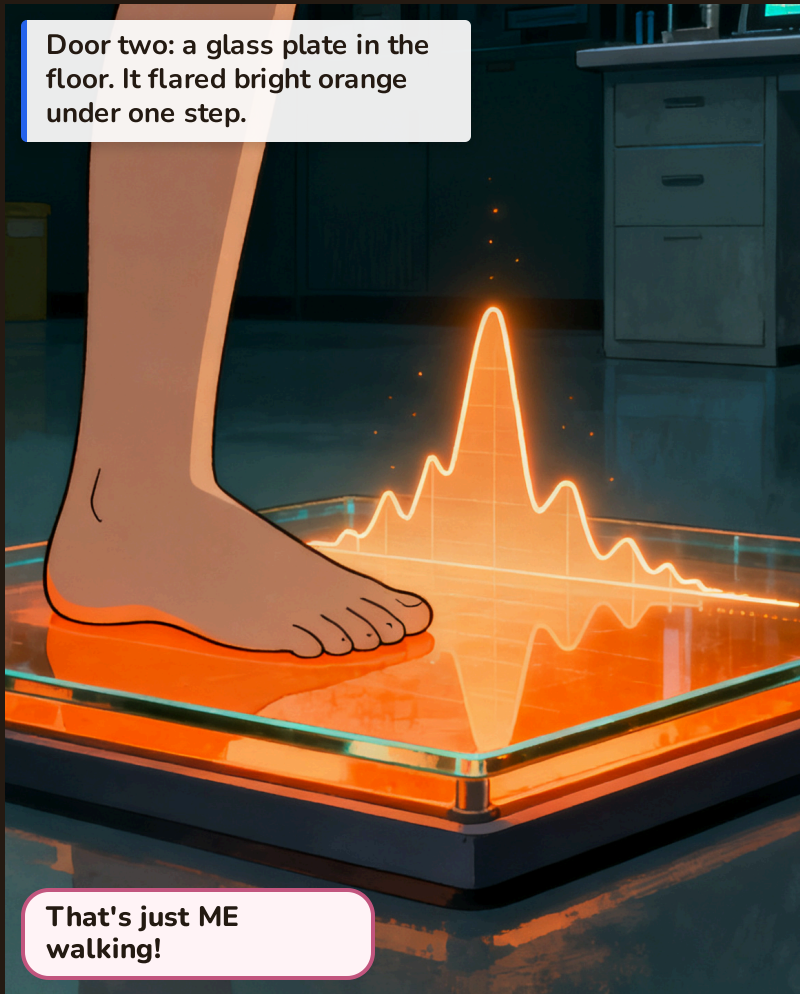
📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 1, HALF OPEN

26 bones arched into a bridge + a heel cord that works like a rubber band = free bounce. Running = controlled falling and springing. My body was doing physics without telling me.

THE HAMMER OF EVERY STEP

4a Door Two: how hard do you actually hit?

Door two: a glass plate in the floor. It flared bright orange under one step.



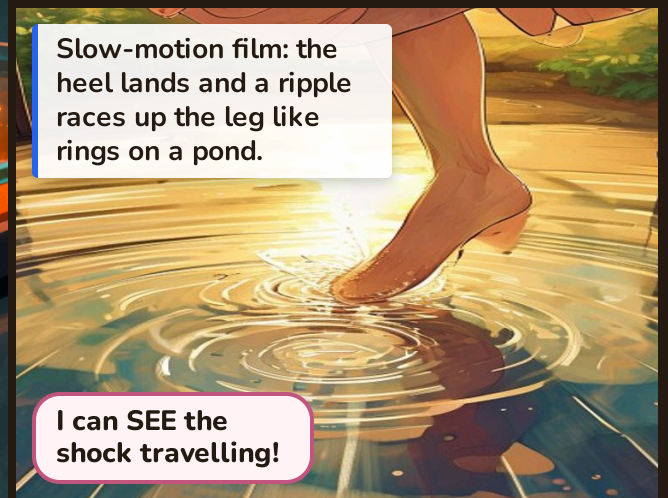
That's just ME walking!

On the treadmill, the plate flashed with every stride. Squash. Rebound. A thousand times a mile.



And every flash is a small crash?

Slow-motion film: the heel lands and a ripple races up the leg like rings on a pond.



I can SEE the shock travelling!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Landing force is about **two to three times your body weight** when you run. A shoe can't delete that force — physics won't allow it. What it CAN do is **stretch the collision over more time**. Same total push, spread thinner. That's what cushioning really means.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Careful, though — the honest science. More cushioning does NOT automatically mean fewer injuries; runners quietly change how they land. The best shoe is the one that suits **your** legs and your training, not the one with the thickest sole. 🧠



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 2 UNLOCKED

2–3× my weight, ~1,000 times a mile.

Cushioning = spreading the crash over more time, NOT deleting it. And thicker ≠ safer.

Science says 'it depends' more often than adverts do.

A CITY MADE OF BUBBLES

5a Door Three: what foam really is

Door three: foam. Up close, a honeycomb of tiny rooms with springy walls.

"Blow gas into hot plastic and it sets full of bubbles. Light as a cloud, and springy."

Millions of little trampolines!

It's mostly...
NOTHING?

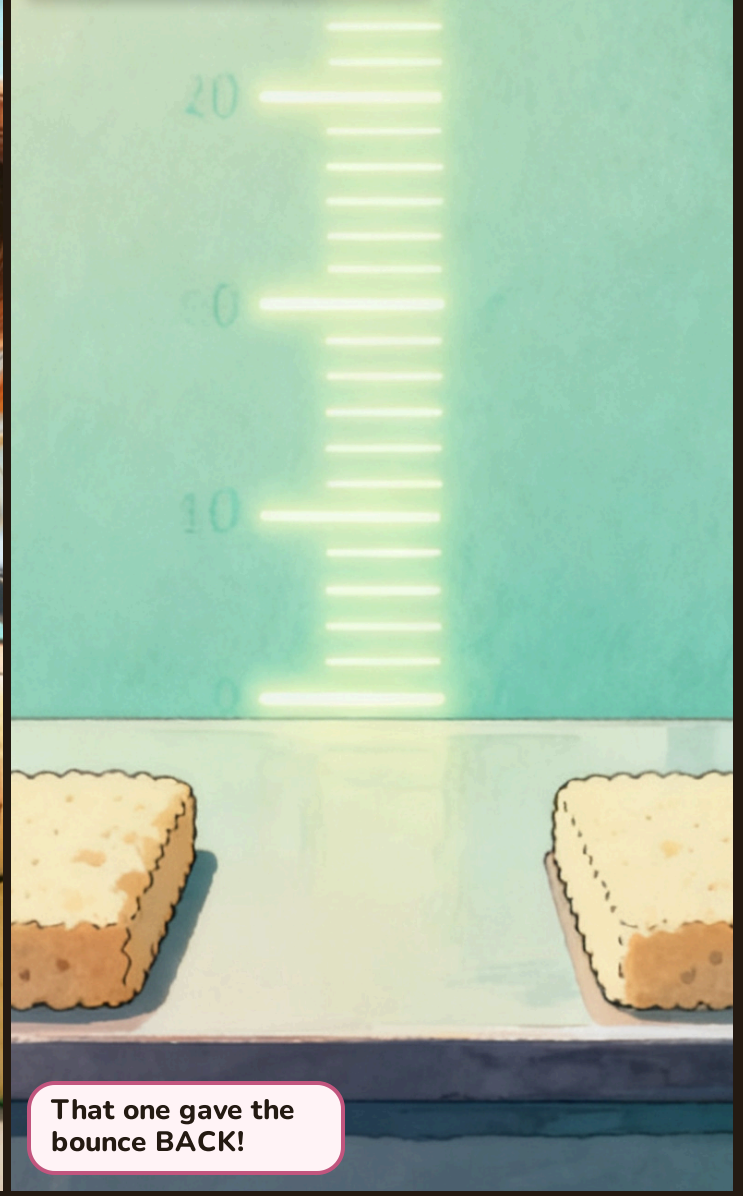
Mostly gas. That's the whole trick.

Test one: two foam blocks.
The left stayed squashed and sulky. The right leapt back instantly.



Same size,
TOTALLY different
personality!

Test two: drop a steel ball
on each. Left: a sad little
hop. Right: it flew.



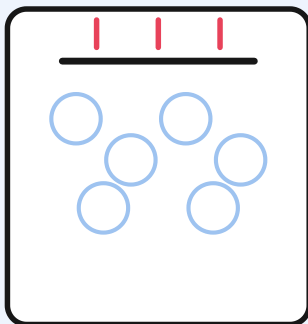
That one gave the
bounce BACK!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

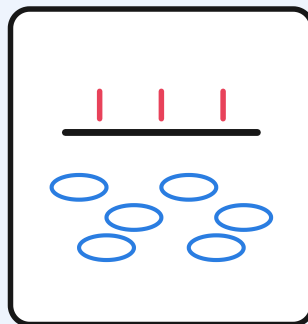
Foam has two jobs. **Soften** the collision — and **return** the squash. Everything a foam fails to return leaks away as **heat**. Cheap foam warms your sole; the best racing foams give back roughly **eight bounces out of ten**. Warm shoe = wasted running. 🔥



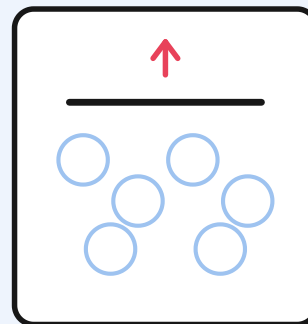
HOW A SHOE GIVES ENERGY BACK



SQUISH IN
bubbles squash



STORE ENERGY
foam holds it



PUSH BACK
most returns



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 3 UNLOCKED

Foam = plastic + gas = a bubble city. Two jobs:
soften + return. Bad foam turns my bounce into
HEAT. Tested both blocks myself — the
difference is IN MY HANDS. ⚡

THE BUBBLE THAT WOULDN'T POP

6a Door Four: the bounce that never tires

Door four: a sealed pouch of gas, glowing on the bench. Squash it. It shoves back. Every time.



A pillow of AIR,
living inside a shoe!

"Look closer. Billions of gas particles, bouncing off the walls a billion times a second. That drumming IS the pressure."



The push is just...
bouncing atoms?

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Here's the whole idea of a gas spring: gas particles fly about and **hammer the walls** from inside. Squeeze the pouch smaller and they hit more often, so it pushes back harder. Nothing bends, nothing tires — which is why sealed gas keeps bouncing long after ordinary foam has gone flat. 🎈

In the factory, soft film puffed between heated moulds into a perfect cushion, sealed shut forever.



Like blowing the world's toughest bubble!

Bea pressed the cushion onto glass so Siri could watch it squash and spring from underneath.



It's breathing!

It'll still be breathing in five hundred miles.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The idea arrived in **1979** from an aerospace engineer who had worked on spacesuits and helicopter parts — he thought a shoe was just a very small pressure vessel. Great ideas often walk in from the **wrong industry**. Remember that one. 🚀

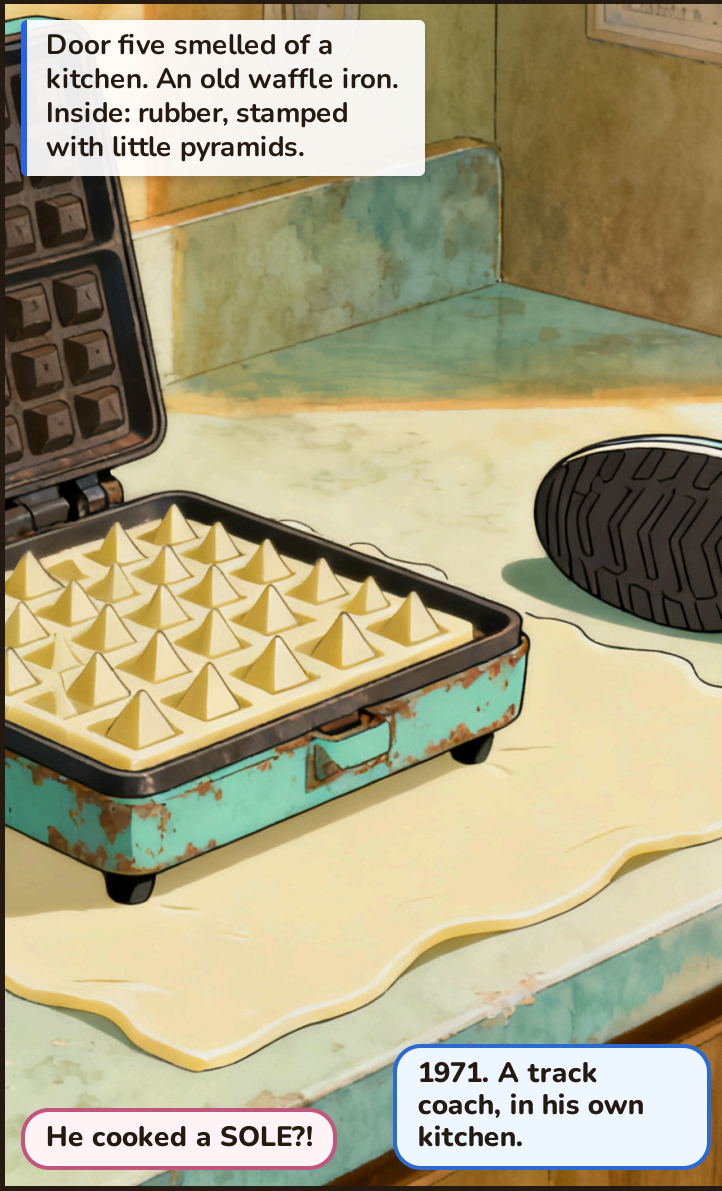
📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 4 UNLOCKED

Gas pressure = billions of particles drumming the walls. Squeeze = harder drumming = stronger push. Foam gets tired, gas doesn't. And the inventor came from SPACESUITS. Best fact today. 🎈

THE WAFFLE AND THE GRIP

7a Door Five: why a breakfast machine?

Door five smelled of a kitchen. An old waffle iron. Inside: rubber, stamped with little pyramids.



He cooked a SOLE?!

1971. A track coach, in his own kitchen.

"Grip is friction. Soft rubber flows down into the tiny valleys of the road and holds on."



The rubber HUGS the road!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Two things make grip. **Roughness** — surfaces catching on each other — and **stickiness**, rubber flowing into microscopic dents like warm dough. Softer rubber grips better but wears out faster. Every sole is a bargain between grip and life. ⚖️

Four soles on the bench: a waffle grid, deep mud studs, a smooth track sole, and one cut with rain channels.



Different grounds,
different teeth!

On the muddy trail the studs bit in, and the mud sprayed away in a bright arc.



Studs for soft
ground — they DIG,
not hug!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

On mud you need **studs** that sink in and shear the ground. On wet pavement you need **channels** so water escapes — otherwise you float on a film of water, exactly like a car in a puddle. Same physics, smaller vehicle. 🚗

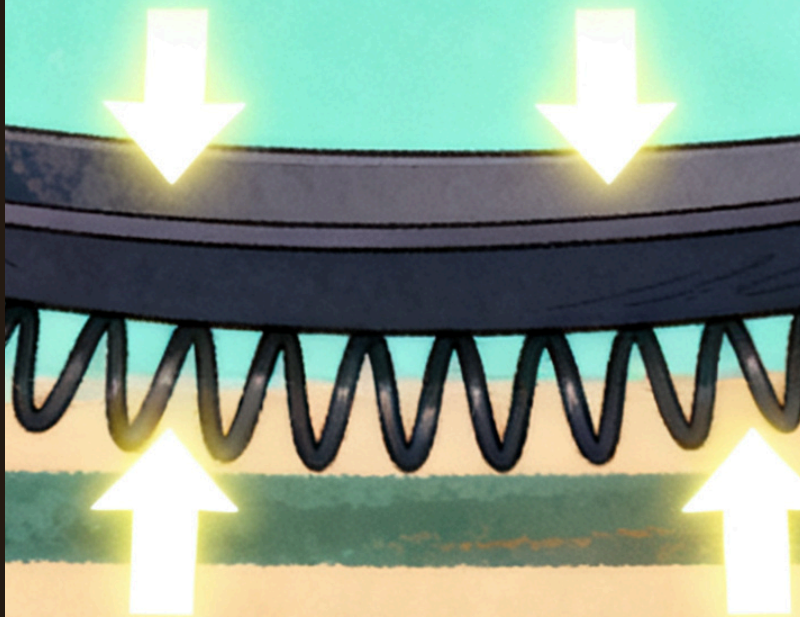
📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • DOOR 5 UNLOCKED

Grip = roughness + stickiness. Soft rubber = more grip, shorter life. Studs dig into soft ground; channels chase water off hard ground. Also: the first sole was BAKED. 🍞

THE STIFF LITTLE PLATE

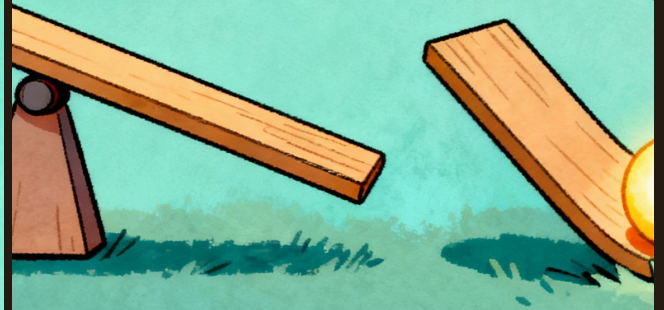
8a Door Six: how stiffness makes you faster

Door six: a slim dark plate, curved like a shallow boat, sleeping between two foam slabs.



But stiff means **UNCOMFY**. How is that fast?

Bea rolled a ball along a stiff plank, then a floppy one. The floppy plank swallowed it.



The bendy one **EATS** the energy!

"Same in your foot. At push-off your toes bend far back, and energy leaks away there. The plate keeps that joint gentle."



So it stops the **LEAK** — it doesn't add a push!



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The honest explanation: a stiff curved plate **reduces the energy lost at your toe joint** and helps you roll forward, while thick springy foam returns most of your bounce. Neither alone does much. Together, in careful lab tests, they made racing shoes about **4% easier** to run in. Same runner. Same effort. Less fuel.

Down the hall, smoke ribbons curled around a shoe in a wind tunnel. Even the air gets studied.



You measure the WIND around a shoe?!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Four percent sounds tiny. In a marathon it is **enormous** — enough that the sport's referees wrote new rules about sole thickness and plates, so that races stay contests between **people**. When engineering changes a sport, the rulebook always answers. ⚖️

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 6 UNLOCKED

Floppy = energy eaten. Stiff curved plate = less leaked at the toes + roll forward. Plate + foam $\approx$ 4% easier. It got so good the RULE-MAKERS stepped in. That's how you know it worked. 🚀

THE SOCK THAT LEARNED TO FIT

9a Door Seven begins: the part you actually feel

Door seven: a machine knitting an entire shoe-top from ONE strand of yarn.

Tight dense zones where your foot needs holding. Airy open zones where it needs to breathe. All in one weave.

It's knitting a shoe. Like a grandma with superpowers!

Two fabrics... made of the SAME thread?

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Old shoe-tops were cut from big sheets and stitched from many pieces — lots of seams to rub, and heaps of offcuts thrown away. **Knitting to shape**, from 2012 onward, changed the maths: fewer seams, less waste, and stiffness that varies exactly where the foot wants it. 🧦

Bea showed her the old cutting bench: a snowdrift of crescent-shaped offcuts. Then the new bench. Almost bare.



All that used to be BIN?

"And laces aren't decoration. They pull little cords around your arch so the shoe holds you without squeezing."



A shoe should hug, not grab. Got it.

 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 7, PART ONE

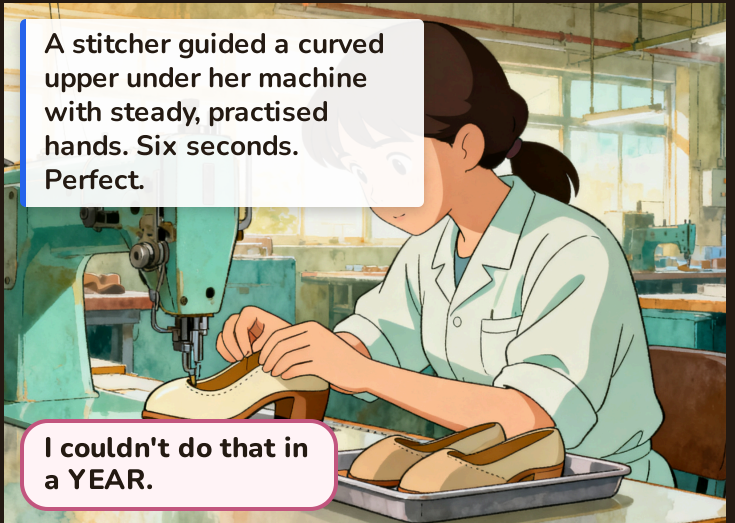
One thread → whole upper. Tight zones + airy zones from the same yarn. Fewer seams, way less waste. Laces = an adjustable hug. My shoe is a KNITTED MACHINE. 🧦

A THOUSAND HANDS



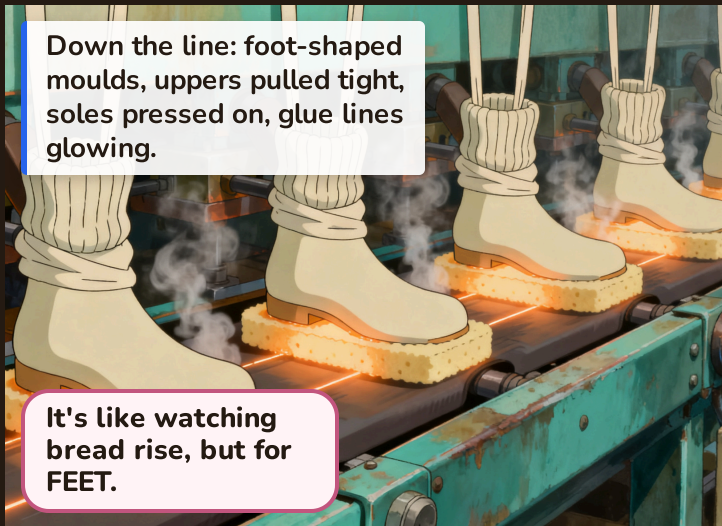
Golden threads from Vietnam, Indonesia, China, Japan and North America — arcing to one little shoe.

The whole planet is holding hands.



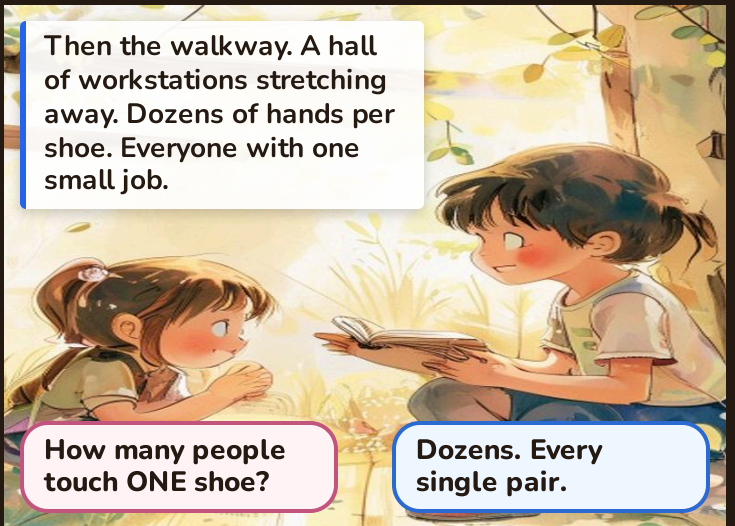
A stitcher guided a curved upper under her machine with steady, practised hands. Six seconds. Perfect.

I couldn't do that in a YEAR.



Down the line: foot-shaped moulds, uppers pulled tight, soles pressed on, glue lines glowing.

It's like watching bread rise, but for FEET.



Then the walkway. A hall of workstations stretching away. Dozens of hands per shoe. Everyone with one small job.

How many people touch ONE shoe?

Dozens. Every single pair.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Here's the surprise: this company owns **almost no factories**. Independent partner factories build; the company designs, tests and tells the story. That's fast and flexible — and it means its promises must travel into buildings it does not own. Hold that thought until the castle. 🏰

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • DOOR 7, PART TWO

Yarn → knit → last → press → box → ship. Dozens of hands per pair. And the company doesn't OWN the factories?! Filing that under 'ask Warren and Charlie'. 🤔

TEN THOUSAND TEST MILES

Last stop before the money questions: the torture room. Machines flexing shoes forever. Soles rubbed on spinning drums. Rain chambers.

You BULLY shoes all day?!

Better us than a runner at mile twenty.

A wall of worn test shoes, pinned in a grid. Each sole worn differently. Each one a story.

You can READ a person from their sole?

And back on the treadmill: real runners, glowing dots, force plates. Numbers, not opinions.

Feelings lie. Force plates don't.

The chemist. The yarn spinner. The stitcher. The robot-tender. The pilot. The shop assistant. Each said the same shy sentence: *"I only do my small part."*

But NOBODY does the whole thing?!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Sit with that: **nobody on Earth knows how to make a running shoe alone.** Each person masters one sliver — rubber chemistry, yarn, glue, moulds, logistics — and one company conducts a thousand slivers into a single object. The conducting is the real invention. 🎵

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · DOOR 7 UNLOCKED

Torture room = trust insurance. Worn soles = evidence. Real runners = the only honest test. Nobody knows the whole recipe. So WHO'S THE CONDUCTOR? ...I think I'm about to find out. 🎵

THE RIVER OF SHOES

At the end of the line: boxes.
Stacked into walls. Walls
stacked into canyons.



How many pairs leave
here in a DAY?

Then the port. Steel
containers swallowing
the canyons whole,
cranes moving like slow
herons.



A whole ship... of
SHOES.

Four weeks later, a
shop wall on another
continent. Twelve sizes.
Every colour. Waiting
for feet.

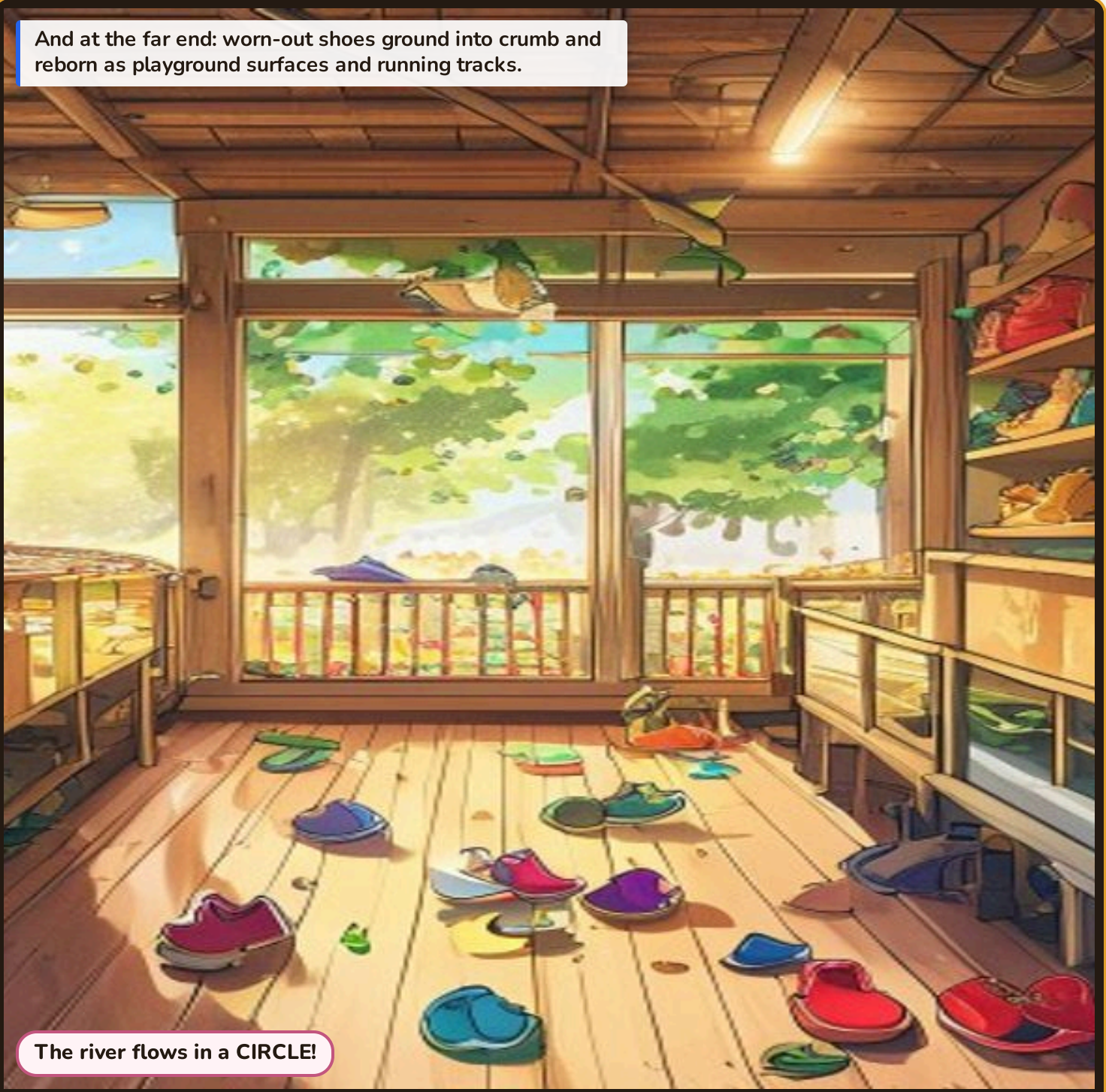


Getting the right
SIZE to the right
SHOP is its own
puzzle!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The invisible skill: **guessing right**. Order too many and they sit unsold and get marked down. Order too few and a customer shrugs and buys a rival. Shoe companies live or die on that guess — which is why they now watch what actually sells, day by day. 📦

And at the far end: worn-out shoes ground into crumb and reborn as playground surfaces and running tracks.



The river flows in a CIRCLE!

SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Line → box → container → ship → shop → foot → ground up → playground.
The hardest part isn't making shoes. It's guessing how many, in which size, where. 📦

WHY A BILLION PEOPLE SAY YES

13a Siri's question Flips

Bea walked her past a park at dusk. Runners. Walkers. A basketball game. A toddler learning to sprint.



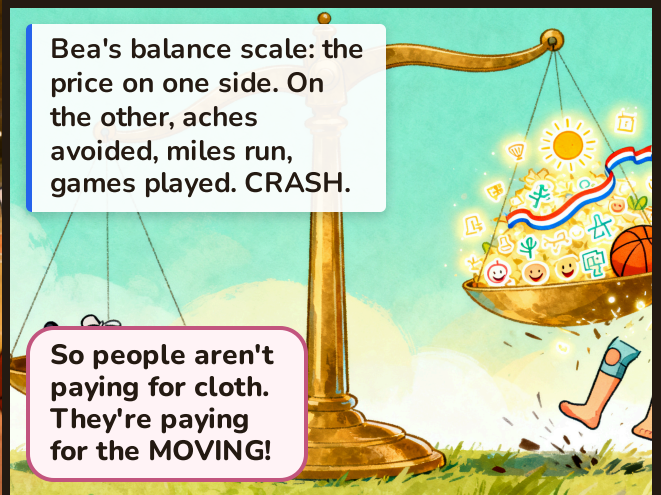
Everybody out here is wearing... the same idea.

A wall of sneakers, lit like treasure. Kids weighing colours like jewellers.



Nobody chooses a shoe casually. Ever noticed?

Bea's balance scale: the price on one side. On the other, aches avoided, miles run, games played. CRASH.



So people aren't paying for cloth. They're paying for the MOVING!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Warren's favourite riddle: **price is what you pay, value is what you get**. A shoe that lets you run pain-free four times a week isn't cloth and foam. It's four good mornings a week. When value crushes price, customers don't feel tricked — they feel **grateful**. ❤️

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

My question flipped: not 'how does it work' → 'WHY would anyone spend billions?'
Answer #1: it turns a body into an athlete's body for a few hours a week. That's worth real money.

THE STORY ON YOUR FEET

Answer #2 walked onto a track at dusk. A runner crossed the line — and a child in the stands looked down at her own shoes.

A wall of posters: a sprinter mid-flight, a climber, an old man in running shoes at dawn. Effort, framed like art.

They don't sell shoes. They sell TRYING.

"In 1988 they wrote three words. Not about shoes at all. About starting."

Now SHE wants to run tomorrow.

Three words that outlived every product they ever made.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

This is a **flywheel**: the best athletes test and wear the shoes → children see them win → children buy → the money funds better labs → better shoes attract better athletes. Round and round. A rival can copy the foam. Copying **forty years of that loop** is much harder. 🔄

On a cracked playground court, four kids played until dark. Same swoosh. Four different dreams.



It's a story you can put ON. That's... clever and a bit scary.

SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Answer #2: the STORY. Athletes prove it works → kids dream → money → better labs → better athletes. A flywheel. (Also noting: a story that strong can sell you things you don't need. Stay awake, Siri. 🤖)

THE PRICE OF TRUST

Answer #3 had its own building: a shop like a small stadium. Treadmills. Cameras. A track down the middle.



You can RUN in the shop?!

Siri ran twenty steps while a camera watched her ankles. Out came a shoe. It fit like it had been waiting.



Nobody guessed. They MEASURED.

That's the whole promise, kiddo.

At the counter, a man returned a pair that hadn't suited him. No argument. New pair. He'll be back in a year.



They lost a sale and gained a customer!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Answer #3: **trust, built on purpose**. Shoes wear out — so every customer decides again, roughly every year. A brand is simply the memory of how the last decision went. That's why a cheerful refund can be worth more than the shoe. 🍷

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Answer #3: TRUST. Shoes die in a year → you choose again → the brand is just your MEMORY of last time. Value → Story → Trust. Now: WHO built all this? Compass is spinning again 🌀

THE TRACK IN THE FIR TREES

The compass dragged them through Oregon mist — to a running track ringed by firs. Siri knew the swoosh on the gate. Everyone does.

"1964. A university track coach who cobbled shoes for his own runners — and one of his runners, who turned out to love selling."

A coach and his OWN athlete started it?

"Fifty dollars each. Imported Japanese running shoes, sold from a car boot at track meets."

NIKE! The shoe that learned to fly!

From a CAR BOOT to the world?!

"For years it was a tiny company. Borrowed money. Late payments. Shoes stored in a friend's spare room."



"In 1971 they went out on their own — and the coach poured rubber into a waffle iron to make a lighter, grippier sole."



He BAKED the future!

"They needed a name and a mark. A colleague dreamt of Nike, the Greek goddess of victory. A design student drew the swoosh for thirty-five dollars."



THIRTY-FIVE DOLLARS?!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Freeze on that: the most recognised mark in sport cost **\$35** in 1971. The company later thanked the designer properly — but the lesson isn't the bargain. It's that **a symbol is worth nothing until decades of deeds fill it up.** 🖋️

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · THE REVEAL

NIKE. Coach + runner, 1964 → car boot → borrowed money → 1971: own shoes, waffle sole, a \$35 swoosh, a goddess's name. The mark was empty at birth. They spent fifty years filling it.

THE LONG CLIMB – AND THE HARD LESSON

"1984. They bet big on one young basketball player. Everyone said it was too much money for a rookie."

And a whole new kind of shoe was born.

And?

Suddenly shoes weren't only for running. They were for playing, for school, for standing at the bus stop looking unstoppable.

A sports shoe became... everyday clothes.

"Then the 1990s. Reporters found bad conditions in factories making their shoes. The world was furious. Rightly."

But they don't OWN the factories...

That defence didn't work. Nor should it have.

"So they changed. Codes of conduct. Outside inspectors. Publishing the factory list — something rivals hid for years."

They had to become the grown-up in the room.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The most useful page in this book: **a great company is not one that never fails — it's one that repairs.** Nike's reputation crisis forced open the whole industry's factory doors. The repair took years, is still argued over, and cost far more than doing it right the first time. 🛠️

"And in 2019, in Vienna, a runner covered the marathon distance in under two hours. In their plated shoes."



Humans can DO that?!



THE STORY IN TIME

1964

A track coach and his former runner start selling imported running shoes.

1971

Own shoes. The name Nike. The swoosh, drawn for \$35. The waffle sole.

1979

Sealed air arrives in a sole, from an aerospace engineer's idea.

1984

A rookie basketball player signs. Sport shoes become everyday shoes.

1988

"Just Do It." Three words that outlive every product.

1990s

Factory-conditions scandal. Public anger. Painful, lasting reform.

1999

Independent monitoring; the factory list is eventually published.

2012

Whole shoe-tops knitted in one piece by machine.

2017

Plated racing shoes; the sport's rulebook has to be rewritten.

2019

Under two hours for the marathon distance.

Today

Sold in around 190 countries — and still owns almost no factories. 🏃



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Climb: one rookie 🏀 → three words → everyday shoes. Fall: 1990s factories, and 'we don't own them' was NOT an answer. Repair: inspectors, published lists, years of work. Then: sub-two-hours. Write the fall down too. 🔧

THE CASTLE OF CLOTH

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

On a bench beside the track, 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. And a hundred times more fun.



THE CASTLE WALLS • WHY RIVALS CAN'T COPY IT



Wall One: The Story

Fifty years of courage, sweat and three-word slogans poured into one curved mark. Copy a sole in a year; a meaning takes a generation.



Wall Two: The Flywheel

Best athletes wear it → children dream → sales fund better labs → better shoes attract better athletes. Round and round, since the 1970s.



Wall Three: The Lab

Force plates, wind tunnels, millions of test miles. Tiny gains, compounded for fifty years, until a rulebook had to change.



Wall Four: Scale

Hundreds of millions of pairs a year makes every pair cheaper to design, test, make and ship than any newcomer can match.

Charlie tapped his thick glasses. *"Turn the telescope around. Don't ask how it wins — ask what would DESTROY it. Then check they're not doing 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: Fashion Is Fickle

Cool is borrowed, never owned. Taste can move to a rival in two seasons, and shoes are half fashion.



Crack Two: The Upstarts

Small, focused newcomers keep appearing with one brilliant foam and a devoted following. Giants are slow.



Crack Three: Other People's Factories

It owns almost none of them. Someone else's bad week becomes its shame — as history already proved once.



Crack Four: The Copied Plate

Springy plates and super-foams are everywhere now. Every advantage in materials eventually becomes ordinary.



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Charlie's ruin-a-shoe-company checklist: chase every fad. Coast on the logo and stop inventing. Look away from the factories. Bore the children who look up to you. Squeeze the shops until they cheer for rivals. Now — **just never do those.** Inversion turns worry into a checklist.

Warren raised his cola. *"What I admire is simple: a thing people replace every year, and choose the same maker again. That's trust, earned one pair at a time — and it's a wall no factory can build for you."*



The treasure was never the shoe!

 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · THE CASTLE

WALLS: story 🍷 flywheel 🔄 lab 🧪 scale 🌍. CRACKS: fashion 👗
upstarts 🐰 other people's factories 🏭 copied plates 🍷. Charlie: INVERT.
Warren: trust, one pair at a time. 🏰

THE JUDGE'S QUESTIONS

Then Warren built a tiny courtroom beside the track — and put the SNEAKER on the witness stand. *“Every business answers a judge someday. The judge is the future. Today, that's you.”*

TOK TOK

Siri banged the tiny gavel and fired Warren's five eternal questions.

Order in the court!

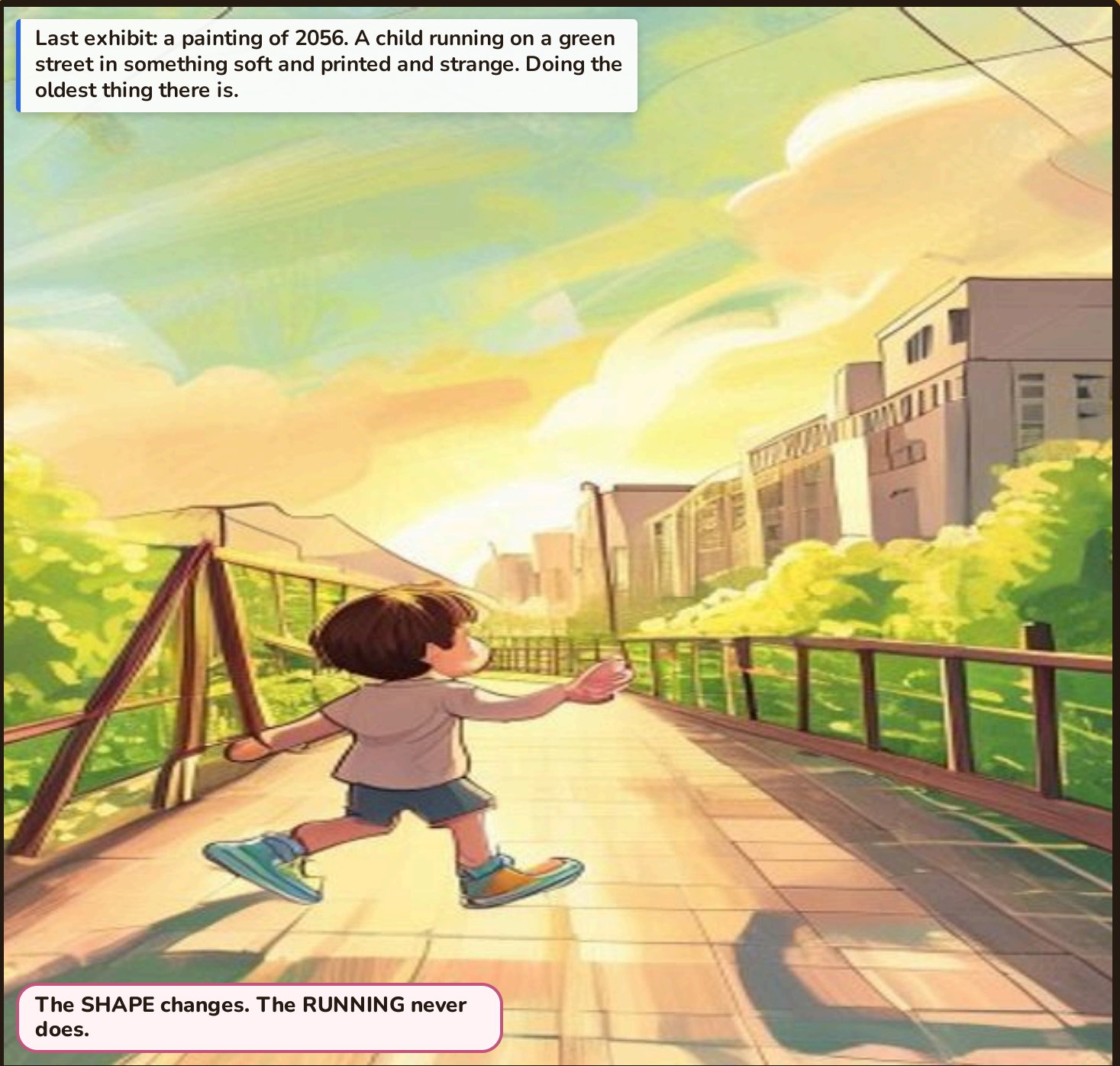
Question one, witness: will people still NEED you in thirty years?



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The Owner's Court: ⚖️ Enduring need? — 'Feet. Older than farming.' ⚖️ Trust earned? — 'Chosen again every year by hundreds of millions.' ⚖️ Reinvesting wisely? — 'Billions a year into labs, athletes and materials.' ⚖️ Copyable with money? — 'My foam, in a year. My fifty-year flywheel? No.' ⚖️ What breaks you? — 'Fashion turning, or forgetting whose hands build me.' Court adjourned for lemonade.

Last exhibit: a painting of 2056. A child running on a green street in something soft and printed and strange. Doing the oldest thing there is.



The SHAPE changes. The RUNNING 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 shoes, soap, railways, fizzy cans. (He never once mentioned a share price. The judge judges the BUSINESS.) ⚖️

THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS

One last walk: a street of tomorrow. Shoes that tighten themselves. Soles printed to order in a corner kiosk.

"Scan a foot, print a lattice sole — soft under the heel, stiff under the arch, all in one piece."

A shoe made for MY foot only?

One material, a hundred different springs!

"And tiny sensors in the sole that count your steps and warn you when your stride goes crooked and tired."

"And the material river is bending into a circle: old shoes ground up, remade, run again."

A coach living in my SHOE.

Shoes born from shoes!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

No crystal balls — just visible currents: printed made-to-measure soles, foams grown from plants instead of oil, stride sensors, and shoes recycled into shoes. Siri's rooftop rule: **don't bet on the sneaker — bet on the need.** Feet, and the wish to move, outlast every design. 🌐

On the rooftop at dusk she added the honest last line: a shoe helps. A shoe is not the runner.



The best gear can't buy the miles. Rude, but true.

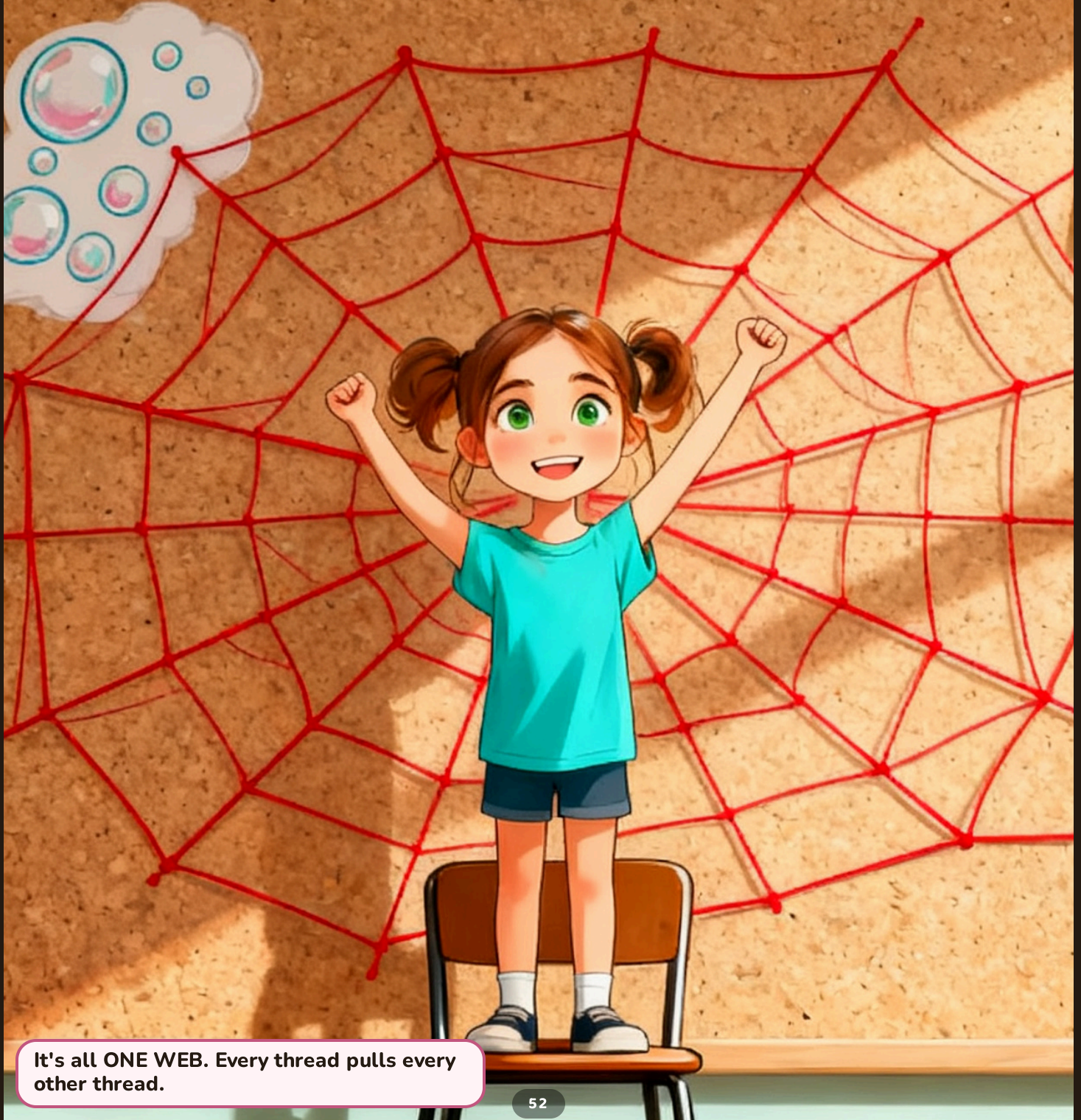


SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

2056 watchlist: printed soles, plant foam, stride sensors, circular shoes.
Rules: bet on needs, not shapes · trust is the crown · the shoe helps, the runner runs. 🌀

THE SECRET NOTEBOOK

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



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



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The Science Web, one breath: my arch and heel cord are springs → each step lands with two to three times my weight → foam spreads that crash over time and returns most of it → sealed gas never tires → rubber grips by flowing into tiny valleys → a stiff curved plate stops energy leaking at the toes → one thread knits a whole upper. **Ordinary physics, stacked extraordinarily.**



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The Business Web, one breath: value (a body that can move) → story (athletes prove, children dream) → trust (chosen again every single year) → castle (story + flywheel + lab + scale), patrolled with Charlie's inversion, judged by Warren's court — and repaired, publicly, when it broke. Underneath: a thousand strangers, conducted into one object.

The true test: she retold the **WHOLE** thing to her little cousin. With a sock and a rubber band. He got it.



If you can't explain it with a sock, you don't really know it yet.



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK · THE LATTICEWORK

Charlie's word for my string-wall: a
LATTICEWORK of mental models. Twelve from
ONE sneaker: springs-not-pushing · spread-the-
crash · return-vs-heat · gas-never-tires · grip-is-
a-bargain · stop-the-leak · nobody-knows-the-
recipe · price-vs-value · the-flywheel ·
brand=memory · invert · repair-beats-excuses.



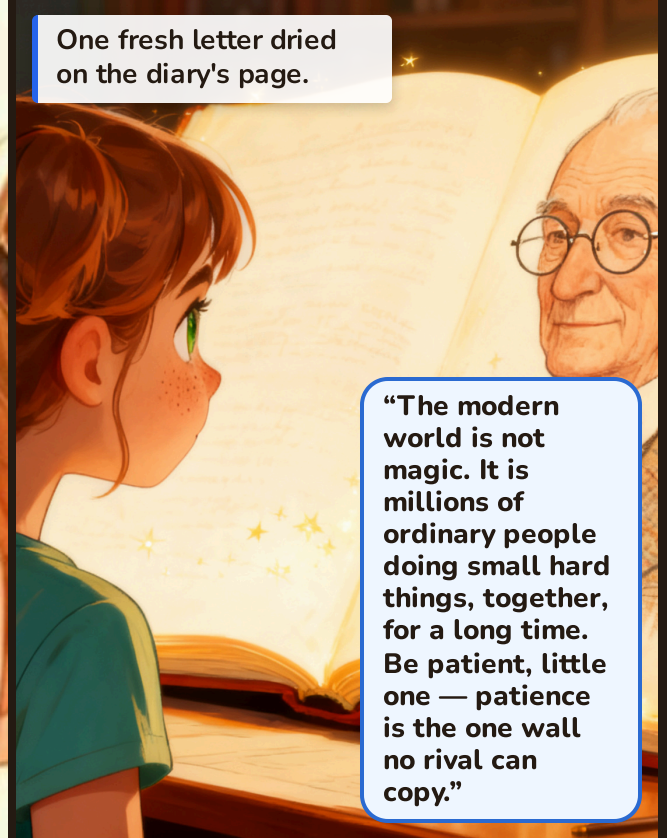
COMING HOME

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



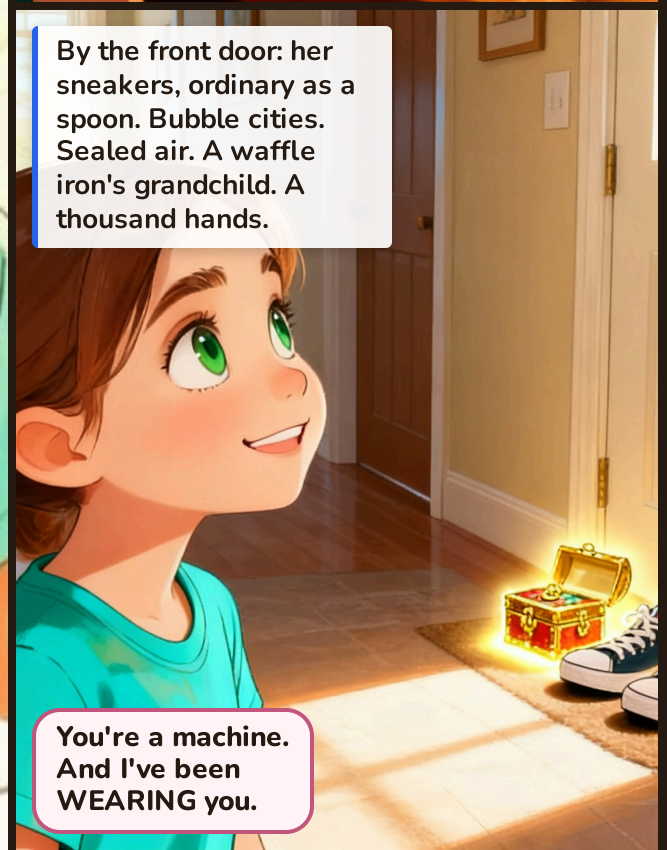
Was it real? It FELT real...

One fresh letter dried on the diary's 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."

By the front door: her sneakers, ordinary as a spoon. Bubble cities. Sealed air. A waffle iron's grandchild. A thousand hands.



You're a machine. And I've been WEARING you.

So she laced them and went out into the cold bright morning, just to feel the springs work.

TAP TAP TAP

She hugged the diary tight. Somewhere far away, a track curved through the morning mist.

Arch. Heel cord. Foam. Bounce. I can FEEL all four!

Show me the next one, Grandpa. 🧡

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Next run, feel it: your arch flattening and springing, your heel cord snapping back, millions of bubbles returning your bounce instead of burning it, rubber flowing into the tiny valleys of the road. **Nothing, from now on, is just anything.**

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • VOLUME CLOSED

Seven doors. Twelve mental models. One castle. One ugly chapter, honestly repaired. One sub-two-hour marathon. But the compass is twitching toward the dresser... something small... something TICKING... and Charlie is already smiling. Next volume. 🧭





OUR PHILOSOPHY

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

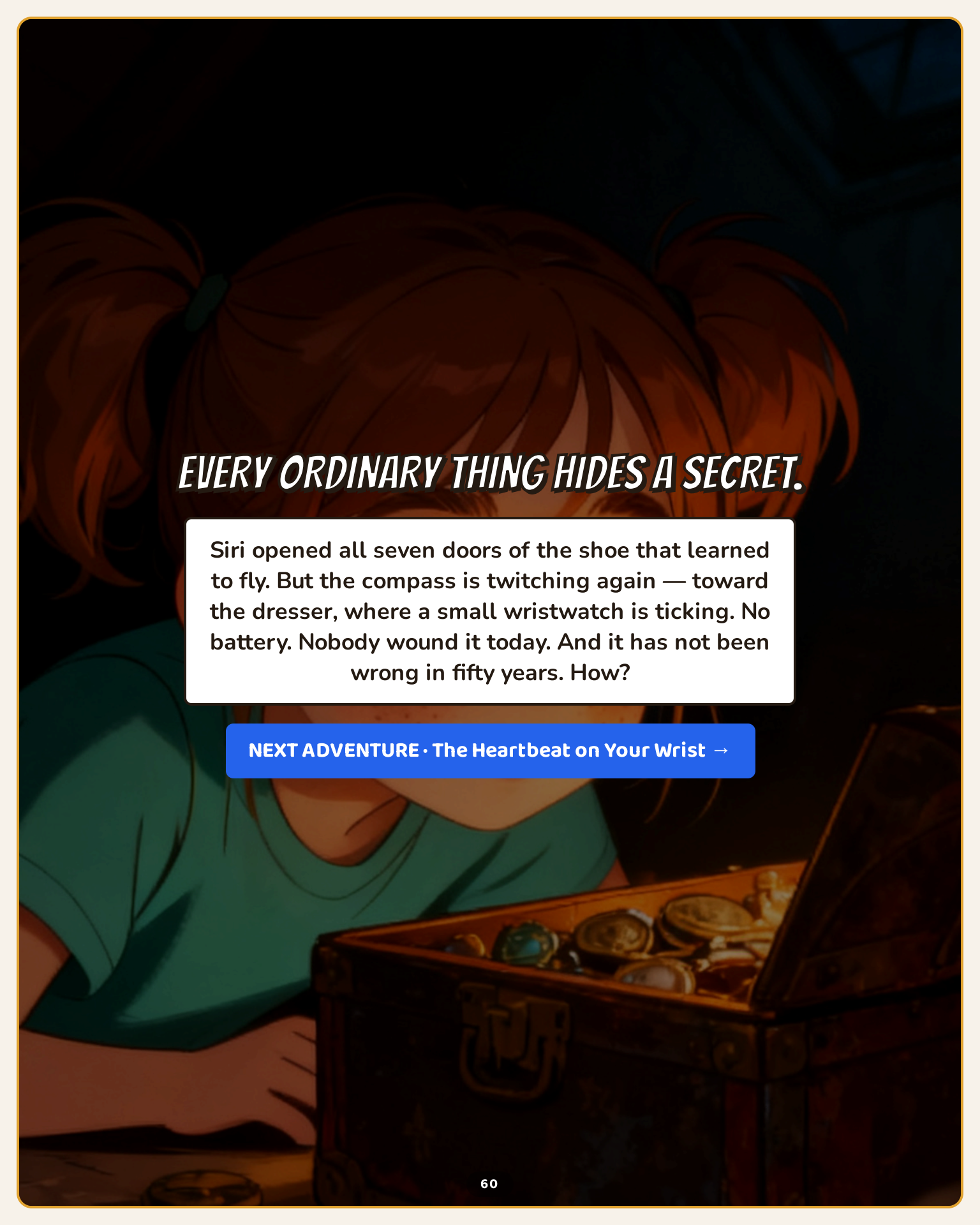
Inspired by the multidisciplinary thinking of [Charlie Munger](#) and the rational, long-term philosophy of [Warren Buffett](#), our comics connect science, technology, business, history, and human behavior to show how the real world works.

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 from the chest's contents. The background is dark and indistinct.

EVERY ORDINARY THING HIDES A SECRET.

Siri opened all seven doors of the shoe that learned to fly. But the compass is twitching again — toward the dresser, where a small wristwatch is ticking. No battery. Nobody wound it today. And it has not been wrong in fifty years. How?

NEXT ADVENTURE • The Heartbeat on Your Wrist →