

The Great Company Adventures · Book 17 of 50

SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

THE GUARDIAN OF THE GRID

A curious girl, three wise mentors, and the little wall switch that quietly commands the lightning of the world.

"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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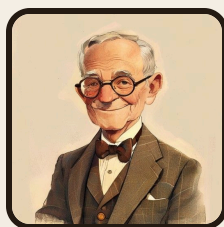
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MEET THE CHARACTERS



SIRI



BEN



WARREN



CHARLIE



LENA

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 SWITCH THAT WOKE AT MIDNIGHT

Midnight. Homework: half-done. Then Grandpa Ben's old brass compass began spinning like a trapped bee.

SPIN

The needle stopped. Pointing at... the little wall switch by the door. The most boring thing alive.

YOU? You just turn on a light!

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 switch that commands lightning."

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Flick a switch and a room fills with light — instantly, every single time. Behind that tiny click hides a caged bolt of lightning and a river of power crossing a whole country. So who taught lightning to obey your fingertip?

The switch sparked. A whirlpool of blue light reached out and pulled her right in.

WHOOSH



Here we GOOO!



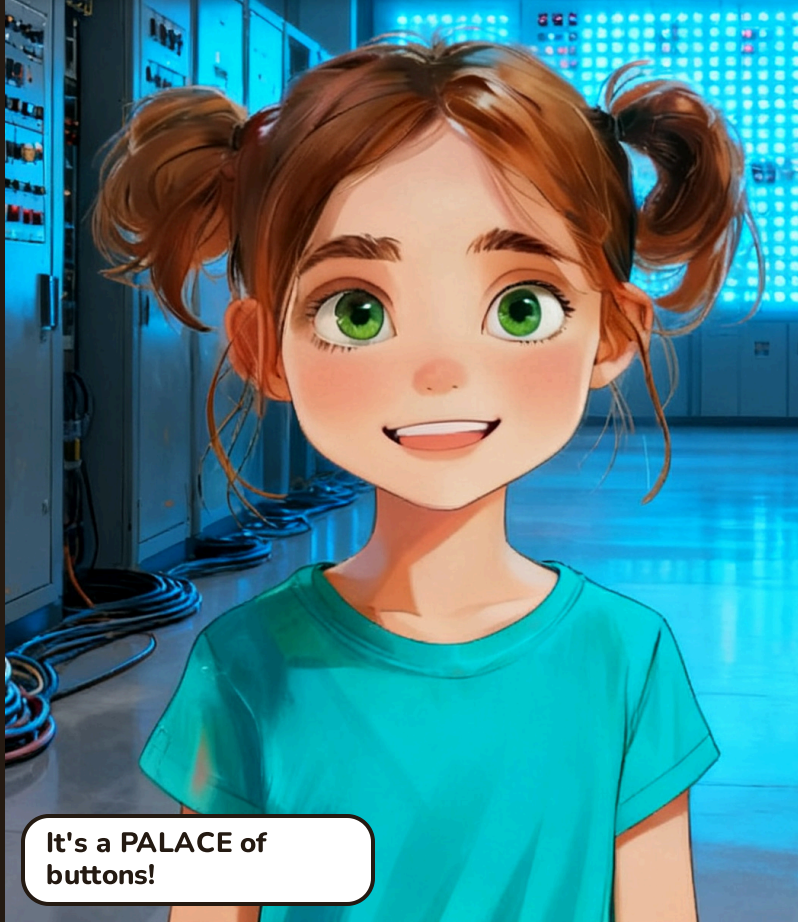
SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

New mystery! 💡

- ① How does one tiny CLICK summon light from far, far away?
- ② Grandpa says a boring switch built a giant company. Prove it.

THE WALL THAT WASN'T EMPTY

She landed in a humming hall of grey steel cabinets, cables thick as snakes, and a whole wall of switches.



It's a PALACE of buttons!

An engineer in an orange vest waved. "I'm Lena. I keep the electricity from misbehaving."



Best. Job. EVER.

She opened a home panel: little switches standing at attention. "Meet the guardians of your house."



They look so calm.

Calm is their whole job.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Every wire in your home is a tamed river of power — thin as a hair, yet fierce as a furnace. One loose spark could start a fire, so tiny guardians watch each wire, ready to cut it off in a blink. You never notice them, and that is exactly the point.

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

A wall of switches, cables like snakes, a guardian for every wire. 🕸 Lena says a switch isn't a button — it's a GATE for lightning. First question: what even IS electricity?

THE TINY LIGHTNING

3a The gate: what a switch really opens

"A wire is packed with electrons — tiny bits, forever jiggling in place," said Lena, freezing a river mid-flow.

So many, just waiting!

"Close the switch and the loop completes. Every electron drifts together — the lamp lights at once."

But they barely moved!

The PUSH races through at light-speed.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Here's the trick: electrons crawl slower than a snail, but the push that shoves them travels almost as fast as light. That's why the bulb lights the instant you flick the switch, even across a long wire. The switch doesn't send the light — it opens the gate for a push already waiting.

“Now OPEN it while power flows.” Electricity leapt the widening gap — a tiny screaming bolt of lightning.

KZZZT

“So we chop the bolt.” Metal fins sliced the arc into slivers until it cooled and quietly died.

The switch is fighting a STORM!

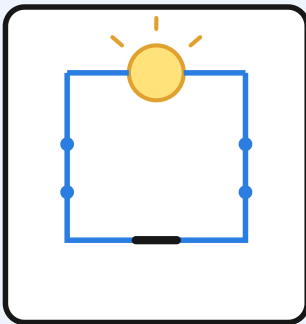
You cut lightning into pieces!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

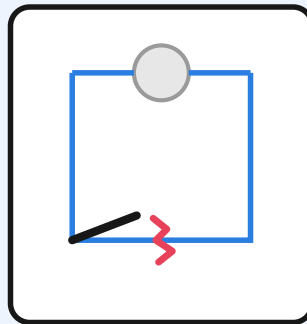
This is the whole secret art of switching: making and breaking that little arc a million times, and never letting it win. Alternating power even helps — it flickers to zero a hundred times a second, giving the switch a perfect moment to snuff the bolt. Tame the arc, and you tame the grid. 🔥



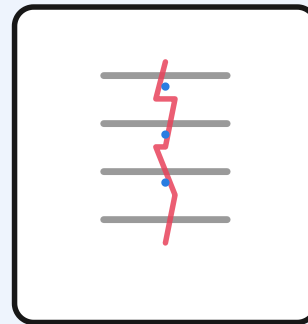
WHAT A SWITCH REALLY DOES



CLOSED: IT FLOWS
the lamp lights



OPEN: AN ARC!
current leaps the gap



SPLIT & COOLED
the switch wins



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

- ① A switch = a gate; the PUSH moves at light-speed, electrons crawl. ⚡
- ② Breaking a live circuit makes a mini-lightning ARC — chop it, cool it, done. 🔥

THE GUARDIAN THAT NEVER SLEEPS

Lena cracked open a circuit breaker. Inside: a coiled spring, a latch, and two metal contacts kissing.



"Too much current heats this metal strip. It bends, frees the latch — SNAP — the contacts fly apart."

SNAP



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

An old fuse dies once to save the wire; a breaker just trips, then resets. Two watchers live inside: a metal strip for slow overloads, and a magnet for the instant a wire touches wrong. The second danger appears, it throws the switch faster than you could gasp. 🛡️

In the big cabinets, brainy boxes sniff the current a thousand times a second, hunting for trouble.

A fault flashed. In a few thousandths of a second the breaker cut the power. Silence. Safe.

Guardians with a nervous system!

Faster than a blink!

Faster than a fire can start.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Why does this matter so much? A short circuit can turn a wire white-hot in a heartbeat and burn a whole building down. The breaker's job is to notice and cut the power before the wire even glows — a hero that wins by making sure nothing happens. ⚡

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Breaker = a switch that trips ITSELF. 🧑‍🔧 Slow overload → bending metal. Sudden short → a magnet yanks it. Trips in milliseconds so wires never catch fire. Best hero = the disaster that never happens.

THE RIVER OF LIGHT

Lena unrolled a glowing map: a power plant, towers, a substation, and finally... Siri's own bedroom lamp.

It's all ONE giant river!

"To travel far, power climbs to sky-high voltage — then steps back down gently near your town."

High voltage loses far less on the road.

Why climb so high?

At each town a substation, full of switches and breakers, splits the river into calm little streams.

A crossroads for lightning!

One thin stream slips into the wall and waits at the switch — patient, ready, for years on end.

One flick and the whole river answers!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Follow one spark home: a spinning generator, a leap to enormous voltage, a hundred miles of humming wire, a substation, your street, your wall. Every junction has a switch to steer it and a guardian to protect it. The grid is the largest machine humans ever built — and it runs on switching. 🌍

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Generator → SKY-HIGH voltage → long wires → substation → my wall. 🌍 High voltage = less waste. Switches steer the river; guardians protect it. The biggest machine ever = a web of switches.

WHY BUILD THE GUARDIANS

"Watch what happens when the guardians fail." A whole city blinked — and dropped into darkness.

Hospitals, trains, phones, fridges, traffic lights — all waiting on power that must never blink.

The switch was NEVER boring.

"From your lamp to a hospital to a giant factory — the same family of guardians, all speaking together."

One system, everywhere!

Everything just... STOPPED.

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Now Siri's question flipped: why would anyone spend billions making switches and breakers? Because the whole modern world sits on top of them, and it will pay almost anything for power that never fails. Sell trust that must not break, and a billion customers quietly say yes. 💡

📖 SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

People don't pay for a switch — they pay for the lights NEVER going out. ⚡ Hospitals, data centers, trains all lean on it. Boring + invisible + essential = a giant business.

THE IRONWORKS THAT LEARNED NEW TRICKS

Through tall gates: a vast campus of labs and workshops. Siri read the name and gasped.

SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC! The guardians of the grid!

"It began in 1836, in France. Two brothers took over an old iron forge beside a river."

IRON? Not electricity?

"For a century they poured steel — bridges, machines, even some of Europe's first locomotives."

From trains to light switches?!

"Then the world electrified. The old ironmakers followed the current — and became its guardians."

They reinvented themselves!

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Here's the bravest business trick of all: letting your old self die so a new one can live. The steel-and-locomotive giant slowly set down its hammers and picked up the switch. Change what you make, but never change WHY: build the things the world can't run without. 🔧



THE STORY IN TIME

1836

Two brothers take over an old iron forge at Le Creusot, France.

1838

They help build some of France's first steam locomotives.

1800s

Iron, steel, bridges, machines — a heavy-industry giant.

1891

Nearby, Merlin Gerin begins making electrical protection gear.

1900s

The world electrifies — the ironmakers follow the current.

1988

The company gathers great electrical makers under one roof.

1991

Square D of America joins the family.

1999

The old ironworks is renamed Schneider Electric.

2007

It adds the guardians of data centers (APC).

Today

Its switches and breakers guard buildings in 100+ countries. ⚡

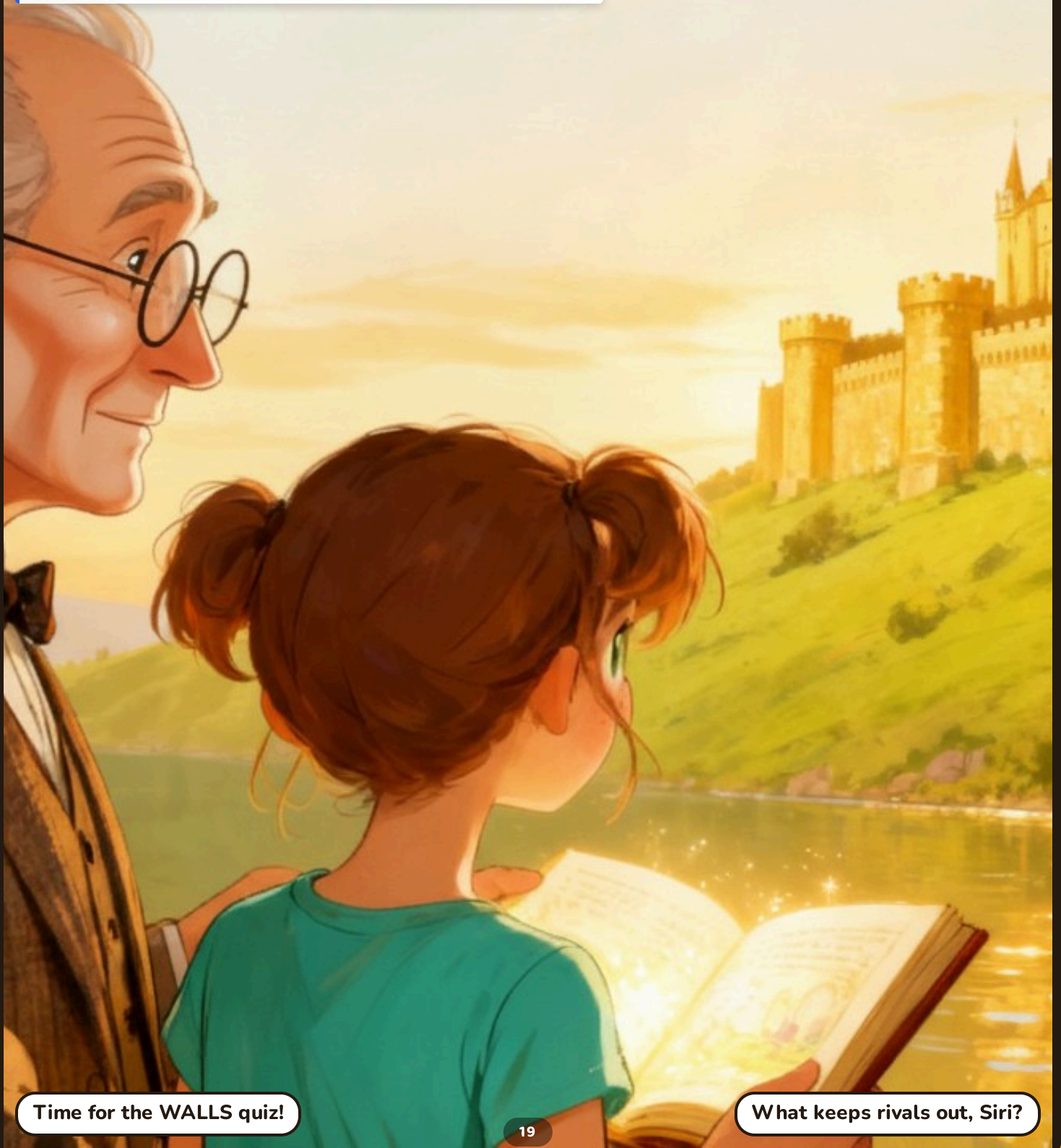


SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC. Started 1836 as an
IRON FORGE in France (!!). Steel → locomotives
→ then followed the world into electricity. Rule:
change what you build, keep **WHY** you build. ⚡

THE CASTLE OF COPPER

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



Time for the WALLS quiz!

What keeps rivals out, Siri?



THE CASTLE WALLS · WHY RIVALS CAN'T COPY IT



Wall One: A Century of Trust

A breaker may sit unused for thirty years, then must work perfectly the one second it is needed. Nobody gambles a home or a hospital on a cheap unknown name.



Wall Two: Already in the Walls

Millions of panels are already installed. New parts, spares and upgrades must match what's there — so people keep buying the same family. Ripping it all out is unthinkable.



Wall Three: From Lamp to Factory

One connected family of gear runs from a bedroom switch to a data center to a power plant. Buyers want the whole system speaking together, not one lonely part.



Wall Four: The Rulebook

Every product must pass years of brutal safety tests and earn certificates in dozens of countries. A newcomer starts at zero while the veteran already holds the stamps.



The Cracks in the Copper

Cheaper makers copy the simplest parts. The whole planet is electrifying faster than anyone can build. And software newcomers want in — so the guardians must keep reinventing, or the trust quietly rusts.

Charlie tapped his glasses. “My trick: don't ask how to WIN. Ask what would DESTROY it — then never do that. **Invert, always invert.**”



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

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Charlie's checklist for ruining a guardian-maker: ship one breaker that fails and burns a home — trust gone in a single night. Or stop improving, and let a hungry rival leap the walls. Turn every worry into a rule you never break.



Warren raised his cola. "A business the world would grind to a halt without. Buy such a castle at a fair price, and you'd want to hold it forever."



So the treasure isn't the switch. It's the TRUST.

SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

Walls: century of trust  + already-in-the-walls  + lamp-to-factory system  + the rulebook . Cracks: cheap copies, the electrifying rush, software rivals. Charlie: INVERT. Warren: buy trust, not gadgets. 

THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS

"Last question," said Lena.
"What does this become in
thirty years?" A street of
tomorrow glowed awake.



The grid is
WAKING UP!

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



Bet on the NEED,
not the gadget.



★ WORTH REMEMBERING

The deep currents: electric cars everywhere, rooftops making their own sunlight-power, tiny neighborhood grids that heal themselves, and software shuffling energy like a wise conductor. More electricity means more switching, more guardians, more trust. Shapes change — but the need for safe, unfailing power only grows. 🌟



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK

2056 watchlist: electric cars, solar roofs, self-healing mini-grids, smarter switches. More power everywhere = more guardians needed. Rule: bet on needs, not shapes. (Also: I want a self-healing house 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 wall switch waited by the door. Caged lightning. A river of power. A silent guardian.

You're the calmest hero in the whole house.

She hugged the diary tight. Somewhere far away, a hall of guardians hummed quietly in the dark.

Show me the next one, Grandpa. 💛

★ WORTH REMEMBERING

Feel the next unlock: a fingertip closing a gate on a push that moves at light-speed, a tamed bolt of lightning, a river of power crossing a country, a guardian trained to trip in a blink. A switch is no longer just a switch.

Nothing, from now on, is just anything.



SIRI'S SECRET NOTEBOOK • WHAT I LEARNED

- ① A switch is a gate; the push moves at light-speed.
- ② Breaking power makes a tiny arc — tame it.
- ③ Breakers trip themselves to stop fires.
- ④ The grid is one giant river of switches.
- ⑤ Trust + installed base + the rulebook = a castle.
- ⑥ Let your old self die to build the new.
- ⑦ Bet on needs, not shapes. 🧡



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 tamed the switch that commands lightning. But the compass is twitching again — toward a windowsill, where a hair-thin thread of glass glints in the sun. Somehow whole libraries and faraway voices race through it at the speed of light. How?

NEXT ADVENTURE · The Thread of Light →