

**The Atomic Library - The Library Conference
Season 1, Episode 5 Transcript**

[SFX: Civil defense siren in the distance]

(V.O.) It has been five years. A warming climate lashed the earth with storms. Melting permafrost awakened ancient disease and dormant terrors. Panicked nations unleashed their arsenals, which drew extraterrestrial attention and ... you get the picture. It was a really bad day, okay? Don't overthink it.

Where do you go when it all goes wrong? Where can you start to make sense of a world turned inside out? If you answered "the library" you are a cunning survivor indeed. These are the stories of the small but determined staff of The Orson Welles Community Library of Haven Hollow, Texas. Opening its doors this morning, are perpetual temp Constance, and Digital Archivist Benja --

BENJAMIN (off) I'M A DAMNED DOCTOR!

Narrator: Pardon me! Digital archivist **DOCTOR** Benjamin Brittle.

Narrator: **(Dramatic)** Step inside **(beat)** The Atomic Library.

[Atomic Library theme music - upbeat acoustic guitar]

[SFX: hurried running on tile]

CONST (labored tone) OH MY BOMBS, WE ARE LATE, BENNY!!!!

BENJAMIN WE? I seem to remember YOU being the one who volunteered! And it's BENJI....I mean DOCTOR (deep breath) Brittle, you EMPTY-HEADED HARRIDAN!

[SFX: Keys are jangling -- pounding can be heard on the door.]

BENJAMIN (to the crowd outside) One moment please! **(to Constance)** Why does Hazel have so many keys?!

[SFX: The door creaks open.]

CONST **(to patrons as they pass by)** Get in, get in. yeah, yeah... I know we are opening an hour late. **[SFX: patrons grumble]** We are open NOW, aren't we?!?

[SFX: Scanners beeping and books being stamped in background]

BENJAMIN When are they coming back?

CONST: At the end of the week, thank Geiger!

BENJAMIN So, how's your "blog" going?

CONST Pretty well, actually. I have a lot of followers already..

BENJAMIN I can't believe that many people want to read about the employment crisis...

CONST You'd be surprised, Benny. People line up at the Community board at CafCon 5 Coffee every day to read my thoughts... my feelings... they really care.

BENJAMIN **(condescending, and annoyed)** I'm sure they do.

BENJAMIN **(aside, to himself)** I've been trying to get onto that board for months! How did she do it?

CONST What was that?

BENJAMIN You're hearing things again, Constance. I said nothing.

[SFX: a buzzing bee]

BENJAMIN What is that? Constance, go get the wasp spray. I think we've got another infestation!

[SFX: Bernice running in. Bee is still buzzing and there is whooshing as Benjamin swats at it]

BERNICE: No! Don't spray! That's my Service Bee, Barnabus! He got off his leash!
Please! He means no harm!

[SFX: The bee is buzzing all around Benjamin's head.]

CONST: Bernice! He's allergic!

BERNICE: Well, don't eat him and you'll be alright!

[SFX: slapping and swatting]

BENJAMIN: I'm not allergic - I'm afraid! GET THAT THING AWAY FROM
MEEEEEE!!!!

CONST: Whoever heard of a service bee?!

BERNICE: Help me get his leash back on!

[SFX: Angry buzzing]

[Loud grinding guitar music]

[SFX: Sound of driving on an open road.]

STARLA: **(yelling over music)** HAZEL, CAN WE TURN IT DOWN?

KAREN **(to Starla)** It helps her concentrate on the roads, dear.

MARJORIE HAZEL! THE NEWBIE WANTS YOU TO TURN THIS NOISE DOWN!

[SFX: Music is turned down and is now background noise]

HAZEL Sorry... you know I get really nervous whenever I have to take the
armored Book Mobile anywhere. I just keep worrying about pirates...

MARJORIE We haven't been attacked by road pirates in three years. And the
Bookmobile is armored!

HAZEL And running out of gas...

KAREN I had the STEAM Team equip the BookMobile with solar panels just in case.

HAZEL And finding a clean bathroom...

MARJORIE Well, we are definitely out of luck there. You may not know this, Starla, but Haven Hollow is home of The 1995 Most Okayest Rest Stop. No other restrooms can compare.

STARLA Yes, I saw that on the "Welcome to Haven Hollow" sign. But... what about the rest stops that won after 1995?

MARJORIE **(through gritted teeth)** No other restrooms can compare.

HAZEL And snacks!! I worry about finding good snacks.

STARLA I brought some strawberries fresh from the rooftop garden! Dr. Brittle was nice enough to show it to me yesterday.

H/M/K: **(groan)**

STARLA What? Benjamin has been very nice to me since I've come to the Orson Welles Community Library!

MARJORIE I'm sure he has.

STARLA What does that mean?

HAZEL Down, Marjorie. She just means that Brittle can be a bit...

MARJORIE HE'S A DISGUSTING MESS OF A MAN-CHILD.

HAZEL I don't know if he's that bad...

MARJORIE Well, I've always said that you don't know much of anything, haven't I?

HAZEL What is with you today? You always loved going to the Library conference!

MARJORIE Oh, I don't know. I think I'm feeling a bit... crowded? Like I haven't had any SPACE lately?

STARLA **(sighs)** I said I wouldn't do my tai-chi in the ballroom anymore and moved it to the rock garden.

MARJORIE that you put in...or planted? Or, whatever! There was no rock garden before!

STARLA And I moved my potter's wheel out of the kitchen!

MARJORIE Into my nap room...

STARLA It's a home gym!

MARJORIE The mats are comfy!

STARLA AND I stopped fermenting in the house

MARJORIE You moved it all to the pool!

STARLA EMPTY pool!

MARJORIE And NOW I have to room with her at the conference!

KAREN We drew roomies out of a hat, honey. It was fair and square!

HAZEL You will hardly see each other. You know it will be nothing but sessions and walking and more sessions. You'll be too tired at the end of the day to notice. Now be sweet, Marjorie.

[Transition music]

[SFX: three tones play over the public address system]

CONST **(sounding exceptionally bored)** Good Morning Orson Welles Community Library Patrons! In the absence of the Library's Safety Liaison, and Collections Development Specialist, Marjorie Slump, I, Constance **(more angry now)** the 10 year temp **(back to bored)** am here to give

you today's safety tip. Today's tip is just basically that water is totally fine to drink as long as its clear and you don't see stuff floating in it. This has been a message from your Orson Welles Community Library Safety Liaison's stand in, Constance. Good Bye!

Patron **(in background)** See? I told you it was ok to drink water that was from the swamp!

[Transition music]

BENJAMIN Yes, ma'am, the Library has a large selection of non-fiction. If you are looking for self-help, you'll find quite a few options under the name "Stephen King" and, uh, my personal go-to is McCarthy's "The Road."

PATRON 1 I just want to know how to keep chickens...

BENJAMIN Oh! We have lots of information on that! Not just chickens - ducks, sheep, **(angrily)** BEES... let me show you.

CONST Benjamin, wait! I don't know how to reserve the auditorium - Hazel always does... **(sighs)** well, never mind. Can't be that hard. Here - why don't YOU fill out the form?

PATRON 2 Uh, ok? So I just write down the date and time that I want?

CONST sure sure sure. I'll stick it in this folder for the secretary when she gets back. BENJAMIN!

BENJAMIN **(from distance)** WHAT?!

CONST I'M GOING ON A BREAK!

BENJAMIN WHAT? YOU JUST TOOK A BREAK!

CONST I'M TAKING ANOTHER BREAK!

BENJAMIN WHEN IS MY BREAK?! **(to self)** Seriously though, when is my break?

[Transition music - distorted and a little eerie]

GHOST (Whispers) Hello listeners, it's me - the resident library resident! Do you find it unbelievable I have never been discovered? Do you wonder how I am able to continuously escape detection? I use a combination of stolen blueprints of the ventilation system and ... Hidey Hole Headlamps! Yes, Hidey Hole Headlamps perfect for all your Hidey Hole needs! Bonus - I get to make spooky sounds in the vents, which throws everyone off my trail! To get 10% off your OWN Hidey Hole-brand headlamp look for an order form in this month's issue of "Survival" and write in discount code "Ghost." Again, that's discount code "Ghost" for 10% off your Hidey Hole Headlamp. Order today!

[Transition music]

HAZEL Well, this is the address.

MARJORIE Are you SURE? Are you POSITIVE this is the conference motel?

HAZEL ... this is the address...

KAREN **(gently like talking to a child)** Honey, this is a smoking pile of rubble.

HAZEL **(through gritted teeth)** I. SEE. THAT. THIS is the ADDRESS.

STARLA I see people milling around. Maybe this is it?

MARJORIE This can't be it. This is a smoking pile of rubble.

STARLA But see? There's a table set up over there, with the banner? It says "Welcome ENESCTILD Librarians?"

HAZEL **(still gritting teeth)** I told you...THIS is the address.

[SFX: Conference attendees in background]

Conference

Worker Good Morning, Ladies! **[SFX: Walkie Talkie beeps]** One moment please, I just need to see what this is about. **(speaks into walkie)** He still wants to do that? Can't he just drive here? **[SFX: unintelligible voice on other end of Walkie]** I don't know if we can get the equipment, much less the network to run that! **[SFX: unintelligible response] (sigh)** Look, just handle it, ok? I have to run the check-in table, I don't have time to deal with prima donnas too. **(forced chipperness)** I see you've found us! If you look across the table here, you should be able to find your name badges!

STARLA What happened here? I thought there were supposed to be hotel rooms...and an actual convention center?

Con.Wor Oh, about that! We had a bit of an accident with a toaster and some irradiated silverware -- **(fake laugh)** you know they always say not to stick a fork into a plugged in toaster! Well this is why!

MARJORIE It will cause a building to explode? I don't recall my granny ever imparting those words of wisdom to me....

Con.Wor *Irradiated* silverware...mind you. ANYWAY. Your badges are here....

HAZEL Miss. I'm not trying to be a pain, but mine says "Secretary" as my title, and I am not a Secretary.

Con.Wor **(insincerely)** Oh, I am so sorry about that. Whoever set up your tickets for the conference must have put that as your title. Unfortunately, it cannot be changed now.

[SFX: Walkie Talkie beeps]

HAZEL **(to Marjorie)** Really?!

MARJORIE You know I operate with utmost honesty and integrity.

HAZEL Then why does your name tag say "Queen Marjorie -- Collections Goddess" on it?

MARJORIE Again -- Honesty, and integrity, my friend.

KAREN Ma'am... since there are no rooms for us to stay in, where exactly are we to sleep during the conference?

Con.Wor I am so glad you asked! Behind the main pile of rubble - see it? Over there? No, no, to the left - we have assembled a series of yurts for all of our participants to share. **(obviously trying to shoo them away) [SFX: walkie talkie goes off again]** Yep, yep, ok then = Have a great Conference!

**Background conference chatter:
Yurts? We're sleeping in Yurts?
What's this line for? Are these books free?**

The group walks away from the check-in table, discussing their schedules.

[SFX: Walking on rough ground and Karen's robotic leg]

MARJORIE My first session is at 11 - "Collecting Data in the Post-Reliable Power Age"

STARLA That sounds interesting! Mine starts at 10:30 and is titled "The Homeless, Hapless, Patron: How to Help when Everything Seems Hopeless"

KAREN That sounds.... Kind of gloomy. But important, absolutely important. My first session is also at 11 - "Children are our Future! How to Keep Them Alive."

HAZEL That's.... Insightful... Mine is at 10 - "Libraries of the Allpocalypse -- How to keep your Materials, and Staff, Safe." There's a special guest that is coming to talk about keeping radiation levels low. I'm pretty excited about it.

**More background conference chatter:
Oooh I'm going to go get some more of these!
Are they giving away something?
Oh no! I packed the wrong cardigan...
This is a great conference but I just wish they had more information on dealing with patrons with service llamas.**

STARLA: Shall we all meet back here at noon for Lunch? I'm sure we can scrounge something up! Take lots of notes everyone! I'm sure the staff back home will want all of this information!

HAZEL At this point, I'm just hoping we have a Library to go back to. If this place blew due to some irradiated silverware and a toaster...just imagine what a wild Brittle and Constance could do back home.

MARJORIE Stop worrying, it'll be fine.

KAREN Yes, don't spend a second worrying about it.

[Transition music]

[SFX: Smoke alarm beeping]

BENJAMIN **(speaking to Constance, who is in the break room, on phone)** Calm down, Constance! I can't help you if you don't take a breath and tell me what happened!

CONST **(gulping breaths)** Toaster... zap ... fork... ouch... flame...

BENJAMIN Flame?! Constance! Put it out! Do something!

[SFX: A crack and the alarm stops]

CONST (heavy breath) okay... pulled the... alarm off the wall.

BENJAMIN What about the fire?

CONST I thought you meant the alarm! Uhhhh - oh! there is a jacket up here.. I'll throw it on the toaster.

BENJAMIN Jacket? With ... with patches? On the elbows?

CONST Ok, fire's out. Whew! **(speaking more clearly now)** whooo! Why - yes! Patches! Well, they are all scorched and sooty now.

BENJAMIN Wha..but.. That's my thinking jacket! I do all my pondering in that!

CONST Hmmmmm. Have you ever tasted your fillings? Metally...

BENJAMIN No. Because everyone knows not to stick metal objects into toasters.

CONST My toast was stuck! Oh Look! A fire extinguisher!

[Transition music]

***More background conference chatter:
Did you get the autograph of that author?
No but I want to go see James Patterson's clone!
Oh no, it's disgusting...***

KAREN So how was everyone's morning sessions? Mine was INSPIRING! But now I'm starving and I would love to grab a sandwich and settle into our yurt!

MARJORIE Not me! I'm ready to hit the exhibit hall and get some free stuff!

HAZEL I don't want to go to that one!

MARJORIE Ooookay. I wasn't asking you to?

HAZEL All of us? Why?

MARJORIE None of you! Just me! I mean if someone wants to walk the exhibit ... pile ... with me that's fine but...what are you talking about?

***More background conference chatter:
Did you hear they reanimated Nora Roberts?
How did they do thahttp://www...that't?
They found a tooth in a landfill.
Eww ... that's gross. Does she even write the same anymore?
Oh no not at all.***

KAREN Hazel?

HAZEL You know he's not going to listen to us. Yes I'm sure you have to get back to your Directors' Coven... conference.

MARJORIE Ahhh.... I see. **(whispers)** She's talking to the director. Look in her ear.

STARLA The Director makes her wear a comm? How does that even work?

MARJORIE **(dismissive "I dunno" sound - like a verbal shrug)**

HAZEL Ugh. We all have to go to the 2 pm all-conference session.

More background conference chatter:

Stephen King's clone is here though. You just have to see him. He's so awesome - he doesn't write horror anymore - he's all about lust.

(silence)

STARLA Oh, Are you talking to US?

HAZEL The Director says we ALL have to attend the 2 pm session and take notes. It's on post-digital digital archives. They think Benjamin could use the information and can't ignore ALL of us.

STARLA But... I have my schedule all worked out...

HAZEL ALL OF US.

MARJORIE Don't fight it Starla. Just get your lunch and show up to the 2 pm session.

[Transition music]

CONST Yep just put the day and time you want the auditorium. I'll put it in the pile with the others. **(dismissively)** Thank you! **(to self)** Time for another break! Think I'll go put my feet up in my RIGHTFUL office.

BENJAMIN Where do you think you're going?

CONST The office that should have been MINE - no thanks to you, of course!

BENJAMIN Constanceeeee.... Come on. Starla had the experience, the DEGREE.

CONST Bomb dang it I am a hard worker! Ask the Ghost! I tell him about it all the time!

BENJAMIN The .. the ghost? I don't have time for this. I have a video conference in five minutes so I need you on the desk.

CONST **(frustrated sound like an irritated teen)**

[Transition music]

MODERATOR

Welcome all to the session "Post Digital Digital Archives." We have gathered a panel of archivists from our district starting here on my right and moving down we have Shelly Buck from San Was Public Library, Kara Ruiz from ...

(Moderator's voice fades out to background while OWCL staff voices come in.)

MARJORIE **(whisper)** I still don't see why we ALL need to be here!

HAZEL Please don't make me go over it again. You know I'm just the messenger.

STARLA I'm sure we will learn something valuable!

MARJORIE Blagh.

MOD. ...and finally joining us ... hold on ... we had it ... oh there it is - joining us by video - at his insistence - from the Orson Welles Community Library Mr. Benjamin Brittle.

BENJAMIN **[poor reception voice cuts in and out]** Doctor

MOD. Pardon me?

BENJAMIN **(reception still poor)** DOCTOR

MOD. **(dismissive)** Anyway, we will start by talking about the best way to power up generators long enough to enter large amounts of data. Shelly? Would you care to start?

SHELLY Yes! I have found -

BENJAMIN **(cuts her off, but his reception is still awful)** I'm glad you asked! I have had tremendous luck with a rig I set up using my big old-timey recumbent bicycle...

HAZEL **(whispers)** Am I seeing this? Are you KIDDING me??

STARLA Oh look! Good for him!

KAREN Did you know about this?

MARJORIE **(loud whisper)** WHY ARE WE HERE??

MOD. Yes, Thank you Mr...Dr. Brittle but let's hear from Ms. Buck first and we will get back to you in order.

BENJAMIN Of course. As I was saying ...

CONST. **(in background, running behind Benjamin)**
Ohmybombsohmybombsohmybombs...

BENJAMIN What the? Constance! I'm trying to teach here!

CONST **(back the other direction)** Ohmybombsohmybombsohmybombs...

MOD. if you could just wait your turn...

BENJAMIN Ok, where was I (sniffs) what is that smell? Constance? Do you smell that? **(coughs)**

CONST **(back the other direction)** Ohmybombsohmybombsohmybombs...

[SFX: fire alarm beeping]

HAZEL What. Is. Happening.

KAREN I'm... sure it's fine.

BENJAMIN Is that smoke?

[SFX: Chair scrapes and falls over as Hazel jumps up]

MARJORIE Oh wow...

HAZEL BENJAMIN! WHAT IS HAPPENING????

BENJAMIN What? Uh. Hazel? Oh hey... **(Constance still screaming in background "where is it? Where is it?")** Is that the break room again? Is that my THINKING JACKET AGAIN??

CONST But the fire was out...

HAZEL FIRE?!?!

BENJAMIN Did you take my jacket OFF the toaster?

CONST No... the fire was out...

BENJAMIN **(quickly)** Gotta go. **[SFX: Connection cuts out]**

HAZEL **(hyperventilating)**

STARLA I'm sure it's fine! They have it under control.

MARJORIE **(laughs)**

[SFX: Hazel walks determinedly for the Bookmobile]

HAZEL gotta get back... gotta get back...

[SFX: Bookmobile starts up. Marjorie and Karen running to catch up,]

KAREN Wait! Don't leave us! You can't drive like this! I'VE GOT YOUR MIX TAPE!

STARLA I have a session at five!

[SFX: Van doors slamming, engine starting, peeling out, thrash metal music starts]

KAREN (Yelling over music) Starla didn't make it! You have to stop for Starla! She's running after us! Hazel - stop!

MARJORIE **(taunting)** If you stop we might not make it - think of the LIBRARY Hazel!
(guffaws)

KAREN Marjorie!

STARLA **(left behind and out of breath)** Wait.. for.. Me..!

[Closing Music]

DIRECTOR: Memo to Staff:

You have been listening to The Atomic Library, an original audio drama podcast created, written, and produced by Chriss Chaney and Lara Tabri.

The following employees are up for review following the inexcusable events while I was away at the spa.. Coven.. Conference!

Lara as Marjorie Slump

Chriss as Hazel Adams

Alia Q. Pappas as Bernice and Starlandria Norwood

Rebecca Hale as Constance The Temp

Aleya Stone as Dr. Benjamin Brittle

Erin O'Quinn as Karen Lovemore

Alisha Skelton-Donley as The Ghost

And Catherine Kelso (her again??) as The Director

Various combinations of the above people provided extra voices.

A note has been added to the PERMANENT FILE of Veronica Escamilla-Brady for her voiceover narration (you can hear more Veronica on her podcast Cthulhu and Friends), and Jarren Chaney for composing and performing the music. Don't make me put you both on a Performance Improvement Plan.

The Atomic Library was recorded at The Innovation Pipeline.

Follow us on Instagram @TheAtomicLibrary, communicate with staff by email at TheAtomicLibrary@gmail.com or @AtomicLib on Twitter. Also, we would really appreciate a nice review on iTunes. Or, tell a friend to check us out!

The staff of the OWCL thanks you and reminds you to USE YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY. And never EVER stick a fork in a toaster. Sheesh.