

The Atomic Library - TITLE

Season 1, Episode X Transcript

CHRISS Hey it's Chriss, and I'm just part of the team behind The Atomic Library. We are just a few episodes away from the end of season 1 and are already hard at work on season 2. If you like what we do there are a few ways you can support The Atomic Library. You can join our Patreon for as little as \$1 a month, we have several tiers to choose from that will give you access to exclusive content and merchandise. Or you can buy us a coffee at Ko-Fi.com. Find links to these in the show notes. You can also rate us, leave us a kind review, or recommend us to a friend. Thank you so much for listening, we hope you enjoy your time in Haven Hollow, and, oh yeah, use your local library.

[SFX: a cassette deck being loaded]

[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. **(in the background Hazel is walking and faintly humming a tune)** These are the stories of the small but determined staff of The Orson Welles Community Library of Haven Hollow, Texas. Opening its doors each morning is loyal secretary Hazel -- **(humming stops abruptly)**

HAZEL **(off)** I'M NOT A DAMNED SECRETARY!

Narrator **(sighs)**... **(sarcastic)** pardon me. Library Operations Specialist Hazel Adams.

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

[Atomic Library theme music - upbeat acoustic guitar]

HAZEL It is SO warm in this Lobby today. I really, REALLY don't want to crawl into the ducts again.

MARJORIE Oh, it wasn't that (blecch)...bad. It wasn't that bad

HAZEL There was an entire family of...

[SFX: door squeals open as patrons rush in]

PATRON 1 WHAT IS HAPPENING?!

CHILD Mommy? Why is the sky blue?

PATRON 2 THE SKY? THE SKY IS....

Hazel and Marjorie push past the patrons exchanging the necessary "excuse me, pardon me" as needed.

HAZEL Marjorie.... It's...

MARJORIE It's...

Starla comes walking up to the front of the Library

STARLA Have you two seen how absolutely BEAUTIFUL it is today? I might have to lay out for a bit of a tan after work!

HAZEL Starla.... Haven Hollow hasn't seen the sunshine since...

[SFX: birds twittering in the background]

MARJORIE I don't know when....

STARLA What? But... That doesn't make any sense at all. What about Brittle's garden on the roof?

HAZEL I would rather not talk about that budgetary nightmare.

STARLA But...what about the solar panels on the Armored Bookmobile...?

MARJORIE It's just Haven Hollow... see... we are a HOLLOW. Once you get out of the HOLLOW part, there's sun everywhere. So, we gas up the book mobile with just enough gas to get us out of the HOLLOW, and then the solar panels help with the rest.

STARLA Why do people stay here?!

MARJORIE Some people stay for the bike trails, others stay for 1995's Most Okayest Restroom. Others...stay because they lost loved ones here.

HAZEL Let's.... Let's just get inside. I have a bad feeling about today.

[Transition music]

[SFX: Books being stamped in background]

CONSTANCE

(on the phone) No, Ma'am we have not received any official news pertaining to the painting of the sky. Yes, it scared me quite a bit, too.

[SFX: unintelligible person on other end of phone line] I suspect it's probably the rapture. **[SFX: phone hangs up]**

STARLA **(talking to patron face to face)** Here are the materials you requested on mushrooms -- this stack is of the psychedelic variety, and this stack is of the culinary variety.

PATRON ! Oh yeah, thanks man!

STARLA Good Afternoon! What can I help you with today?

PATRON 2 I've booked the auditorium for our annual "Disciples of the Mob" celebration at 1 o'clock, and was wondering if I could get in just a little bit early to set up the torches, pitchforks, and finger foods?

STARLA I don't see why not **(grabs auditorium keys)** right this way... (voice fades away with patron)

Another Patron comes to the desk

CONST Hello! What can I do for ya?

PATRON 3 Our “Mothers Against Irradiated Driving” meeting is in the auditorium at 1, and I was wondering if I could get in a little bit early to hang up this MAID banner that I made?

CONST That can't be possible... we have another group in there at 1 today...

PATRON 3 I definitely spoke to a young lady last week. She seemed a little hurried at the time, but her exact words were “I'll just stick ya in there.”

CONST **(muttering to herself)** Well, that does sound like me.....

MARJORIE Excuse me, Constance I have to get on the intercom for just a moment.

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

MARJORIE **(on the intercom)** Good Morning Orson Welles Community Library Patrons! This is the Library's Safety Liaison, and Collections Development Specialist, Marjorie Slump. Here is your safety tip of the day: Even though the sky is (sounds slightly scared) usually dark and gloomy, it is important to always wear sunscreen. I mean that. ALWAYS WEAR SUNSCREEN. This has been a message from your Orson Welles Community Library Safety Liaison, Marjorie Slump. Good Bye!

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

Starla comes back to the desk

STARLA Ok, they are all set up in the auditorium.

CONST **(sounds a little guilty)** Hey Boss-Lady, it seems like we have a little bit of a problem. It seems like the DOM and the MAID were both booked for the auditorium at the same time...

STARLA **(a little panicky)** Okay. That's okay! We can work with this! What about the Makerspace upstairs? We can place MAID in there...if that's okay with you of course (talking to patron)

The patron mutters about that being "fine I guess"

PATRON 4 Excuse me (talking to Constance) I've booked the auditorium for 1 o'clock today...

STARLA CONSTANCE HAVE YOU GOT... **(regains composure)** what did you do while I was gone last week!?

CONST I did the best that I could, Ma'am. I'm just a TEMP, remember?

STARLA I can honestly see why, with that kind of attitude. Constance, you are not acting like a team player at all.

CONSTANCE is huffing furiously.

STARLA Ever since I've started working at this library you have done everything you can to make my job so much more difficult than it needs to be. I don't understand why you feel the need to act out.

CONST Well, I've been a temp for ages. I've applied for every single job that has opened, and have never even been given a chance. The director insisted a quiet room be built FOR ME. I'm not a team player because THERE IS NO TEAM. I have been the only one working this department for weeks -- since Clyde went off on his bike ride. AND, my boyfriend flirts with you every chance he gets! SO PLEASE excuse me if I'm having a hard time warming up to you!

STARLA **(centering breath)** I'm sorry that you've been a temp for so long, Constance. You are a hard worker, and you deserve better. I will get with the Director, well, Hazel, I suppose... about hiring more people for our team. I agree with you -- we definitely need help. We definitely need to find Clyde. AND, I'm not sure I understand what you mean about the boyfriend thing.... I can't think of anyone here that has been awfully flirty...

CONST Well... he's not really my boyfriend...per se...

STARLA Wait. .. You think I have a thing for Dr. Brittle? Not only would that be terribly unprofessional of me.... **(she pauses awkwardly)** I don't typically date...men.

Momentary pause

CONST Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhh. **(sincerely)** I'm sorry, Starla.

STARLA You know what? That's okay. Change can be hard on everyone.

[SFX: Phone ringing]

[Transition music - distorted and a little eerie]

GHOST On days when I am feeling really ghastly, I like to reach for my "Victor Void's Voice Modulator." Whether you're looking for a ghoulish glissando, a girlish giggle or a gravelly grating gowl -- Victor Void's Voice Modulator has you covered. I hear the director of this very establishment relies on their Victor Void's Voice Modulator to cover their voice every day. With a user that grand, you really can't go wrong. Get yours today by standing in the middle of the City's rose gardens while singing "Ave Maria" in a very high pitched tone followed immediately by a very deep tone. One will fall from a nearby Eastern Bluebird's nest. If you are not completely satisfied with your Victor Void's Voice Modulator, go back to the rose garden and sing "Ave Marie" backward in a low tone followed by a high tone.

[Transition music]

Hazel is sitting at her desk, rifling through blueprints of the duct system in the building

HAZEL **(muttering to self)** Am I missing some blueprints? Where is the 2nd floor? **(rustles pages)** huh... there is a tunnel directly under...?

DIREC **(speaking from the intercom on Hazel's desk)** ADAMS.

Hazel is obviously startled, sending papers flying.

HAZEL Uh.... Yes...Yes, how can I help you today?

DIREC The City Manager's goons are here.

HAZEL What? How? I thought I told him to wait until next month!

DIREC Go downstairs and tell them to leave. They are **(disgusted tone)** measuring things. And talking about things. And.... drinking coffee out of...metal cups. Blech.

HAZEL **(drinking coffee out of a metal cup...tries to hide it in her desk drawer)**

DIREC I saw that.

HAZEL I happen to like my mug. It keeps my coffee warm for....

DIREC THEY RUST AND THAT IS DISGUSTING.

HAZEL Sometimes I think you might need to tone it down on the security.

DIREC Sometimes I think I need a new secretary....

[Transition music]

STARLA **(on the phone)** So, you say you've been stuck on the bike trail for four weeks? **[SFX: muffled screaming on phone]**

STARLA Sir! Sir! Please calm down! I will do my best to help you navigate your... **(screaming intensifies)** Can you explain where you are right now? What do you see? **(panic and mumbling speech on the other line)**

CONST IS THAT CLYDE McBRIDE!?! LET ME TALK TO HIM! **(Grabs phone from Starla)** CLYDE, you son of a gun! Haven't seen you in weeks! I have some ILL's waiting for you! **(screaming turns into crying on the phone)** Yeah... Okay! I've heard that those trails can be IN-SANE. **(talking on the other line intensifies)** Ok! Alright! buh-bye! I'll talk to you the next time you get cell service **(Screaming intensifies and fades as Constance hangs up on him)**

STARLA Why didn't you try to help him? He is obviously in need of help! He says he's an employee here? We need to help him!

[SFX: Phone ringing]

CONST The Bike Trails are not exactly numbered, nor are they mapped out anywhere. Finding him would be fairly impossible at this point. Poor Guy -- I think he's going in circles. The City Manager didn't want to number the trails because he says it "aides in the Spirit of Adventure". Clyde will find his way back eventually. There are bike trail soup kitchens spread across the way. Besides, it's not like it's my job to help people.

STARLA That is EXACTLY what your job is.

CONST I would love to see that in writing.

STARLA I'm sure Dr. Brittle has your job description somewhere in the archives.

Constance starts sniffing.

CONST I'm sure he does... **(trying not to cry)** If you would please excuse me for a moment... **(Constance runs off crying)**

STARLA Oh, Constance! Please come back!!! (normal tone) I really need your help...

[SFX: Ringing Phone]

STARLA Orson Welles Community Library, Starla speaking... (muffled speaking can be heard) Yes, we have one copy of "The Girl in the Dog-Skin Yoga Pants" currently available...would you like me to put that on hold for you?

[Transition music]

STARLA I don't really know who else to talk to.

KAREN Oh, please, sit, sit. New jobs can be stressful.

STARLA It's just... Marjorie hates me.

KAREN She's not very good at sharing, but she isn't a hateful person....

STARLA And Dr. Brittle won't stop asking me on strange little dates...within the Library...to the rooftop garden...to some tree out on the courtyard.

KAREN Yes. He hasn't seen a new, intelligent woman in quite a while. He's a silly little boy in a man's body. I wouldn't worry about him.

STARLA And Constance... **(starts crying)** I don't even know what to do about CONSTANCE.

KAREN Well... **(she sighs deeply)** None of us really know what to do about Constance.

STARLA **(through sniffles)** and what is Hazel's deal?

KAREN **(gently)** losing both of your children has a way of changing you, dear.

STARLA But, we've all lost so much...

KAREN True. But, we've also found each other. It's not ideal, but this is the closest thing we have to family. And, we might be dysfunctional... but we are together.

[Transition music]

PARENT Excuse me? Ma'am? Can you help me find a book for my daughter? I can't remember the title she wants!

MARJORIE Ahhh, I can but the reference desk has access to some good Reader's Advisory materials - they can help you really drill down to what you are looking for.

PARENT Well I was waiting to be helped and suddenly everyone left!

MARJORIE Ah. I see. Sure - I'm happy to help. Tell me what your daughter is looking for.

PARENT Oh, you know kids today - lost in their grim little fantasy worlds: pre-apocalyptic this, utopian that. I don't know if she will ever get her head out of the clouds!

MARJORIE I wouldn't worry - YA-focused literature helps teens cope and grow in a safe space that speaks to their unique concerns and circumstances. So... is her book part of a series?

PARENT Nah - my daughter and her friends, they just want the stand-alone stuff! Why in my day, authors could really wring out a concept!

MARJORIE **(laughs)** You've got that right! Well, let's see - do you remember ANYTHING about the title?

PARENT All I remember is it is "A something of something and something."

MARJORIE It's a start. Issss itttt.... A Feast of Light and Rainbows?

PARENT Hmmmm, no.

MARJORIE An Abundance of Security and Warmth?

PARENT Nope.

MARJORIE A Gathering of Kindness and Plenty?

PARENT Nope.

MARJORIE An Island of Cake and Revels?

PARENT Nope. But I think we are getting close with the food!

MARJORIE **(SNAPS FINGERS)** I've got it! Is it "A Phalanx of Bread and Romance"?

PARENT That's it!!

We hear Hazel in the background

HAZEL What are you doing here? You aren't supposed to be here today!

MARJORIE Oh no. I have to go. I'm glad we found your book!

PARENT Wait! Who wrote it?

[Transition music fades into Hazel's angry metal music]

HAZEL PUT THAT TAPE MEASURE DOWN RIGHT THIS INSTANT!

[SFX: Hazel slaps the tape measure out of the worker's hands]

WORKER 1 Hey! Miss, we have been sent here by the City Manager to finalize our plans for next week's demolition.

HAZEL NEXT WEEK? NEXT....WEEK? The City Manager wants to demolish MY LIBRARY NEXT WEEK?

WORKER 2 Technically, this is the people's Library.... I spent a lot of time here when I was a kid...

HAZEL So, you know how important this place is. **(fighting back tears)** You cannot do this to our Library.

WORKER 1 I'm sorry, but we have jobs to do. We have families to feed.

HAZEL A lot of people have families to feed. Cutting this Library in two will ensure that many people don't get the services and information that they are searching for!

MARJORIE I don't want to believe that he is actually going through with this! He is one handsoevil man.

HAZEL **(sniffles)**

MARJORIE **(SEETHING)** YOU!

WORKER 1 Me? What? What did I do?

MARJORIE Besides making a nice lady cry? When I began working at the Orson Welles 17 years ago, **(Hazel mutters to self “17 years? Is that even possible?)** I NEVER thought that we would be treated in such a manner. This Library is the heart of this city, and it always has been. We are one of the only establishments left since...

WORKER 2 I know, Miss. I love it here. But, with the world going to hell, as it did.... More people are biking. Having a bike trail to the Library would bring more people here.

HAZEL **(ANGRY CRYING VOICE)** THROUGH the Library, not TO the Library. The City Manager’s plans will ensure that people are passing THROUGH the Library, with no way to even stop! And why should they? If half of the materials are completely unattainable due to a **(voice is becoming shakingly angry)** BOMB DAMNED GLASS TUBE.

WORKER 2 Hey, Lady! No need to poke a guy in the chest!

HAZEL GET OUT. get out. GET OUT. GET OUT GET OUT!

Workers Sheesh! We don’t get paid enough for this! **(complaining -- voices fading out as they go to leave.)**

MARJORIE **(calling after them)** Joke's on you! We barely get paid at all!

You can hear Hazel breathing in and out very deeply.

MARJORIE I have some really great Scotch back at my house. I bet we could get Starla to find us some clean ice and make us a nice meal.

HAZEL **(Takes in one deep breath)** I’m going to need that ice to be REALLY clean.

MARJORIE Rich lady dress-up? **(sing-songy)** I found her stash of back-up tiaras...

HAZEL NOW, you’re talking.

[Transition music]

[SFX: a cassette deck ejecting a tape]

GUITAR

GUY So, uh, that's MY idea for a podcast. Whadda you think about it?

HAZEL Guitar Guy. How many times do I have to tell you that you can NOT just walk around the library, recording personal conversations. Get out of here.

GG Yes you do, yes you do. Do you feel this? Cuz I feel this...

HAZEL Get outta here, Guitar Guy. Get outta here.

[SFX: Intercom clicks on]

HAZEL **(over intercom)** Security? Security? Come and get Guitar Guy. **[grinding metal guitar starts playing]** Ugh. Guitar Guy is at it again.

[SFX: Intercom click. Music continues]

DIRECTOR Hazel, we need to strategize. I can't have all those ... workers... with their NOISE and METAL CUPS **(gagging sound)**

First - are you writing this down? We make sure they know they have been listening to The Atomic Library, an original audio drama podcast created, written, and produced by Chriss Chaney and Lara Tabri.

THEN we hit them with the cast list - like this -

Marjorie Slump is Lara

Hazel Adams is Chriss

Benjamin Brittle **(Benjamin interrupts with "Doctor!")** is Aleya Sone

Karen Lovemore is Erin O'Quinn

Constance The Temp is Rebecca Hale

Starlandria Norwood is Alia Q Pppas

The Director is Catherine Kelso

The Ghost is Alisha Skelton-Donnelly

And finally, the City Manager is Ashley Taylor

Various combinations of the above people provided extra voices.

We'll add in that the Opening Narration is Veronica Escamilla-Brady, who can also be heard on her podcast Cthulhu and Friends, and music was composed and performed by Jarren Chaney,

Don't forget to mention The Atomic Library was recorded at The Innovation Pipeline. And that they can communicate with staff by email at TheAtomicLibrary@gmail.com, follow them on Instagram @TheAtomicLibrary, or on Twitter @AtomicLib. Also, that we would really appreciate a nice review on iTunes. Or, tell a friend to check us out!

THEN - the coup de grâce - we remind them to USE THEIR LOCAL LIBRARY.

THAT should take care of them!

Music concludes