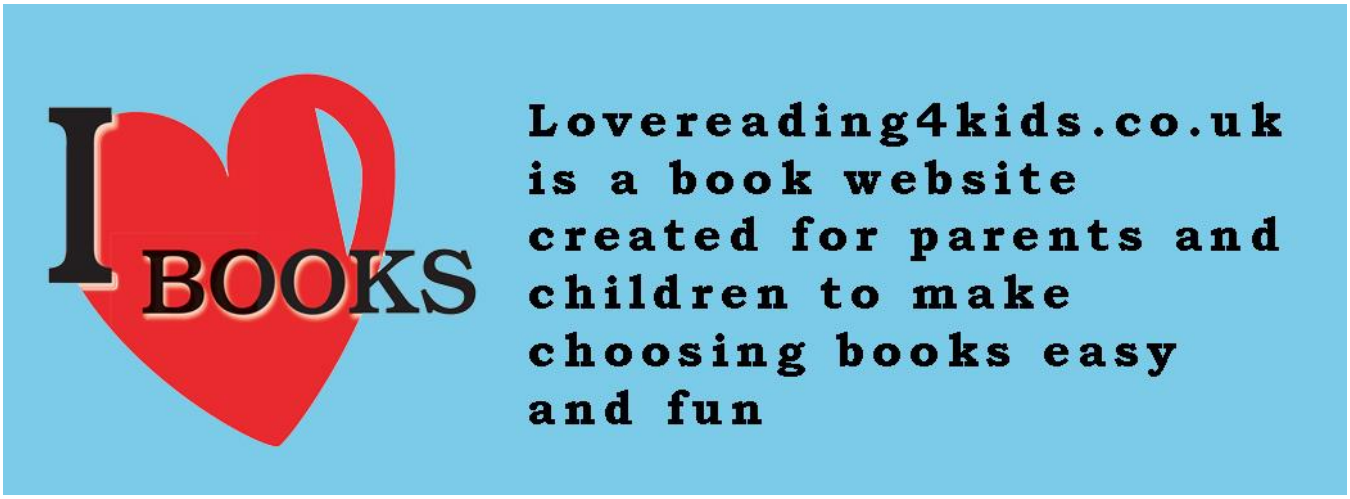


Opening extract from

House of Robots: Robots Go Wild!

Written by

James Patterson

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Young Arrow
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Hi! I'm Sammy Hayes-Rodriguez, and if you have trouble crawling out of bed on school days, you should do what I do: live with robots!

That's right. Our whole house is filled with whirring, whizzing, rumbling, rambling robots—all of them designed by my mother. Mom's not exactly a mad scientist, but she comes pretty close.

She invented one bot named Buzz whose only job is to zip into my bedroom at exactly seven o'clock every morning, hover around my bed, and make loud, annoying noises. If you try to bop his snooze button (his little red hat), Buzz's motion detectors will sense your hand movement, and he'll scoot sideways. You'll be

slapping air, and he'll keep making irritating noises until your feet finally hit the floor.

This is why I'm usually awake by 7:01.



Even my closet and chest of drawers are semi-robotic. Prepackaged sets of underwear and socks pop up the instant I tug open a drawer. The closet, which is linked to outdoor weather-reporting devices,

knows what shirt, sweater, or hoodie I should wear. It's also equipped with a pants sniffer and can fling me my cleanest pair of jeans.

Why the big, robotic rush to get to school on time?

Mostly it's for my little sister, Maddie.

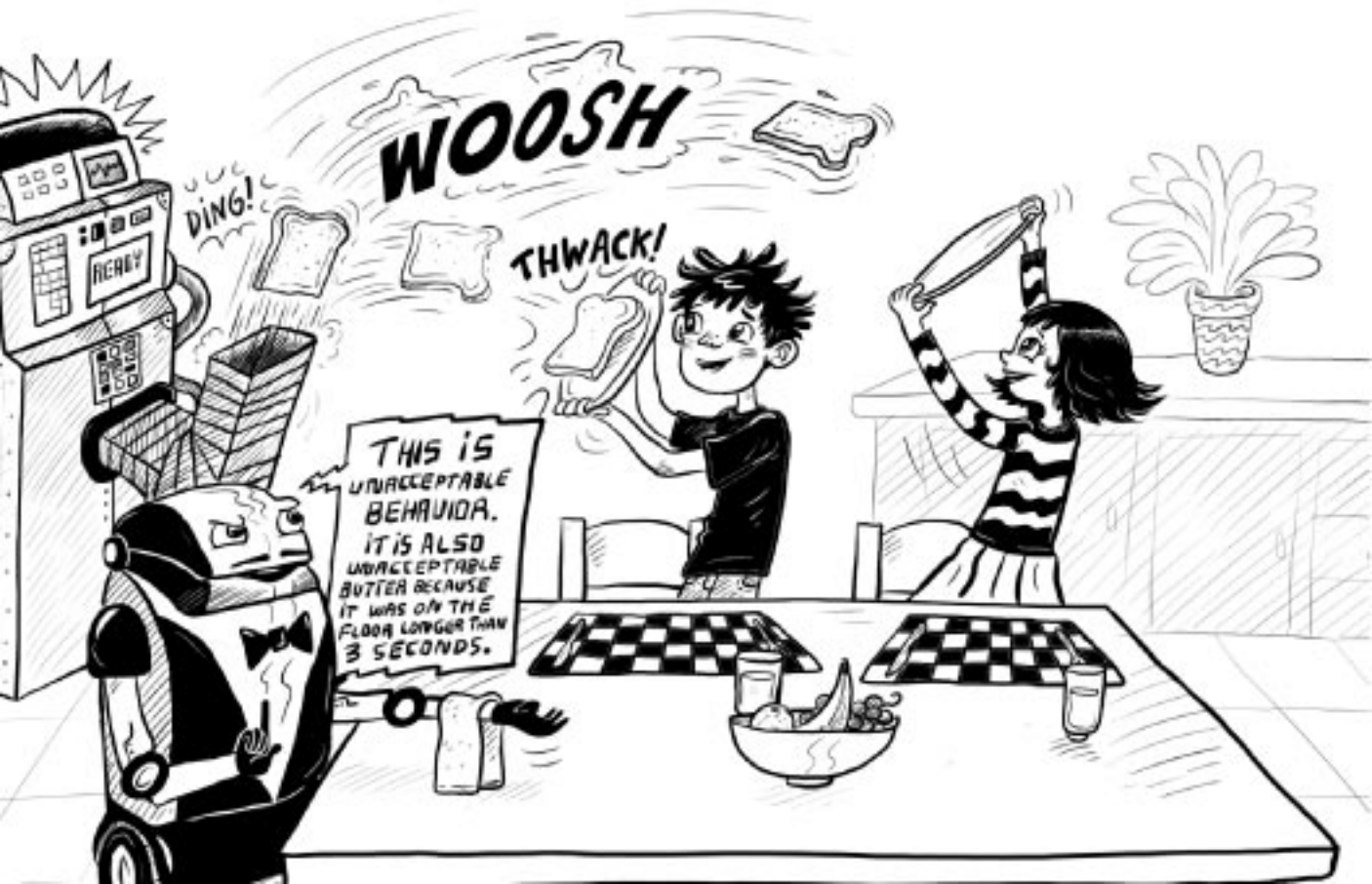
She's in the third grade, and trust me, there has never, ever been a kid more excited about going to school than Maddie Hayes-Rodriguez. On school days, she acts the way most kids do on snow days.



Like me, all the robots bopping around our house absolutely adore Maddie and treat her like a princess. Especially Geoffrey, the brand-new butler-bot. Mom gave him a British accent, so he sounds a little snooty.

"Good morning, children," he says to Maddie and me. "Breakfast is served."

The second he says that, the Breakfastinator—one of Mom's wackiest automated cooking contraptions—hurls a few slices of French toast at us like it's making a serve in volleyball. The machine also tosses over a couple tubs of syrup and chucks us some butter pats. You do not want to be here when the Breakfastinator serves up biscuits and gravy.



If Maddie needs anything—anything at all—Mom's robots spring into action.

If her pencil needs sharpening, McFetch, the robotic dog, will gnaw it down to a perfect point.

If she needs help with her homework, Tootles the tut-bot—a retro, rolling tutor computer—will point her in the right direction.

If she needs an after-school snack, the Breakfastinator will fling fruit at her.

As you can probably tell, my little sister is different from most kids her age.

For one thing, she's awesome.

For another, even though she's in the third grade, she only started going to school for the first time a month ago, after the school year had already started for most kids.

I'll explain later. Promise.

But first, you've got to meet E.

He's my bro-bot.

CHAPTER 2

This is E.

When Mom first created him and said I had to take a robot to school with me every day, I thought E stood for *Error*—as in the biggest, hugest, most colossal mistake ever made. And, at first, he *did* make my life at school pretty nutso.

But then I found out why E had such enormous blue eyes.



Oh, right. Duh. The drawing is in black and white. But trust me, E's eyes are Blizzard Blue. The exact same color as Maddie's.

See, Mom created E (she says the E stands for *Egghead*) to be Maddie's eyes, ears, and voice in Ms. Tracey's third-grade classroom at Creekside Elementary.

Why doesn't Maddie just go to school herself?

She can't. Not without getting really sick.

Now, I know a lot kids say going to school makes them sick. Especially on days when the cafeteria special is the beefy-cheesy nacho surprise.

But just going to school and breathing the air and being near other kids and all their germs could make my little sister seriously ill, because Maddie suffers from SCID, which is short for *severe combined immunodeficiency*. Basically, it means Maddie's body has a really hard time fighting off any kind of infection. If somebody coughs and forgets to cover their mouth, she could wind up in the hospital.

So what does it all mean? Well, Maddie hardly ever leaves home. In fact, she hardly ever leaves her room. That's why our family pet is a germ-free robot dog.

Why Mr. Moppenshine, the multiarmed multitasker, is constantly cleaning and disinfecting everything.

It's also why the only way for Maddie to actually go to school is for E to go there for her.

"You'd better hurry up, you guys! You don't want to be late."



That's my dad. Noah Rodriguez, the world-famous graphic novelist. He works from home, so he's never late.

"Your father is correct," says E. "We must not tarry."

Yep. E still sounds a little robot-ish. But he can't help it. Mom made him that way. Guess what she's making next? I'm not 100 percent sure, but I think it'll help Mr. Moppenshine scrub the toilets.



"Let's go, Sammy."

That's Maddie, speaking through E, just like she'll do at school. When the first bell rings, Maddie will run E from the nifty control pod set up in her room.


ON'T WORRY
E HAPPY!
MATH AND SCIENCE ARE SO MUCH MORE EXCITING THAN MINECRAFT!
6-8=-2
5+4=9
6-5=1
12-8=
3X2=
INSECTS

I just hope she doesn't make E do something super girly, like scream about boy bands or spin like a ballerina.

At least, not while I'm around.