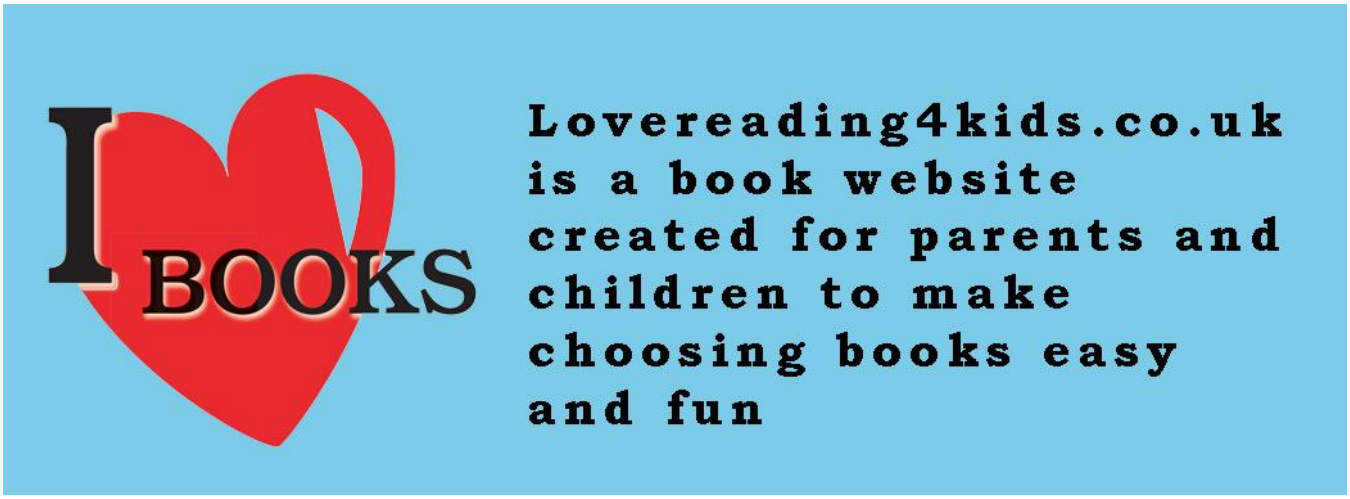


Opening extract from

House of Robots: Robot Revolution

Written by

James Patterson

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You'd think a house full of robots would run like a well-oiled machine.

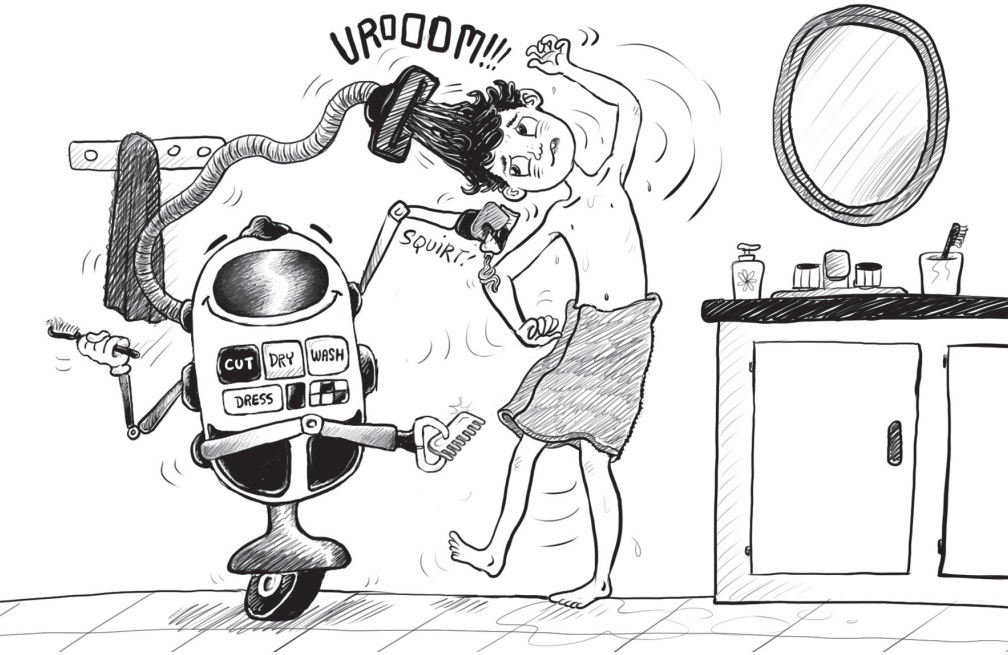
You'd be wrong.

I mean it *used* to run that way. But lately? Everything seems a little out of whack.

Take, for instance, the Groomatron 4000.

It's a high-tech, fully automated robot that's programmed to dry my hair in ten seconds flat. But today, instead of blowing hot air, the Groomatron nearly sucked all the hair off my head! I almost had to go to school bald.

Maybe the Groomatron thinks it's a vacuum cleaner, too.



I need to talk to Mom about that. I'm Sammy Hayes-Rodriguez, and all of the bots in my house were designed and engineered by my mother, Dr. Elizabeth Hayes. She's kind of the absentminded professor/genius type. I'm sure it'll take her all of ten seconds to debug the hair dryer, once she gets around to it.

Meanwhile, at 7:25 a.m., it's off to my sister Maddie's room for breakfast and a quick game of Spine Spinner Trivia, another invention of Mom's that makes it easy to exercise our minds and bodies at the same time.

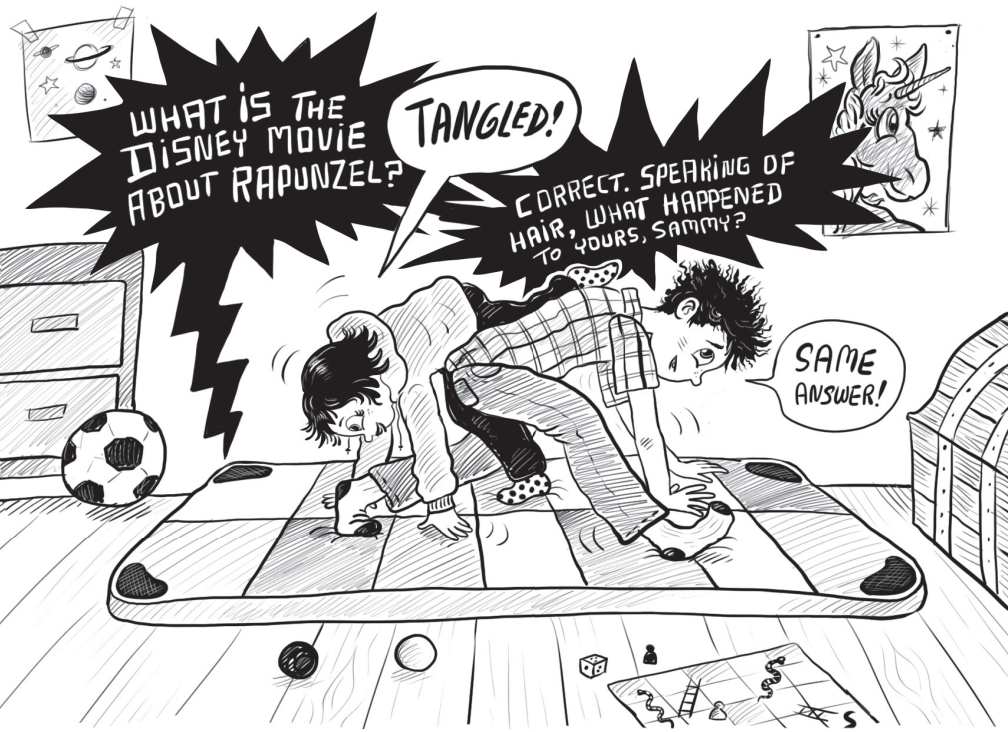
The Breakfastinator whips up today's special: blueberry pancakes with sausage patties, melted butter, and hot maple syrup.



We wolf down our food and really don't pay too much attention to the fact that our blueberries taste like raisins and the melted butter tastes like burnt cheese and the maple syrup smells like onions. Guess the Breakfastinator is on the fritz, too. Doesn't matter. We're too excited about playing Spine Spinner Trivia, where, if you get an answer wrong, you have to twist

your body like a pretzel on a mat decorated with flashing pads of colored light.

Since the mat's a robot (named Matt, of course), it asks the questions, too.



"Maddie, which city is nicknamed the Windy City?" barks Matt's robotic voice, which Mom modeled on my gym teacher, Coach Stringer.

"Chicago!" answers Maddie.

"Correct. Sammy? According to the rhyme, who picked a peck of pickled peppers?"

"Peter Piper!"

"Sorry. The correct answer is Peter Pan."

"Um, no it's not," says Maddie.

"Yes it is," insists the robo-mat. "Left hand to red square, Sammy."

"But…"

"Drop and give me ten!"

"Ten dollars?"

"Ten push-ups!"

All righty-o. Need to talk to Mom about the glitch in Matt's operating system, too. But not right now, because it's time to head to school.

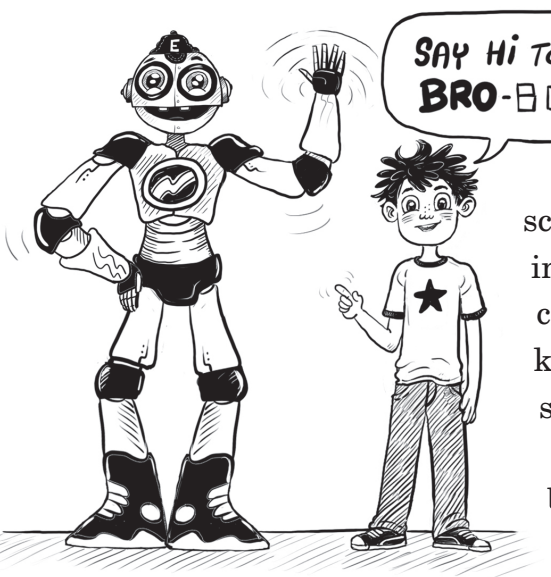
"C'mon, Sammy!" hollers Dad from downstairs. "C'mon, E. You guys will miss the bus!"

Who's E? My bro-bot. And if he's late for school, Maddie will be, too!

CHAPTER 2

Meet E, short for Egghead.

Mom named him that because he's super intelligent.



He's also my little sister Maddie's eyes, ears, and nose at school. If they're serving beef burritos in the cafeteria, E will let her know how awesome they smell.

"Sorry," I say when I bound down the stairs

to the kitchen. "I was sort of tied up in Maddie's room."

"We don't want to be tardy, Samuel," says E, who still sounds a little robot-y when he talks. (Don't worry. We're working on it.)

"¡El tiempo no espera a nadie!" adds my dad. His name is Noah Rodriguez. His family came to America from Mexico. Living with my dad is like living with my own Spanish tutor.

"Time waits for no man," I translate.

"¡Sí! ¡Perfecto!"

"El tiempo también espera a ningún robot," adds E, who, with his newly installed system updates, now understands and speaks Spanish, French, Mandarin, Farsi, and Third-Grade Girl (because Maddie's in the third grade, so E has to know what to squeal at and what to giggle about). "We must make haste, fly like the wind, and shake our tail feathers."

E also has a very extensive built-in vocabulary generator.

Why does Maddie need E to go to school for her?

Well, my sister has something called SCID. That doesn't mean she has a South Carolina ID, like a driver's license or something. SCID is short for *severe combined immunodeficiency.* Basically, it means

Maddie's body has a hard time fighting off any kind of germs. If somebody coughs near her, she'll wind up with a major infection.

Maddie may only be eight, but she's already spent a couple of *years* in hospitals.



That's why she has to stay home, inside her sterile bedroom, while E goes to school for her.

Yep, Maddie can never leave the house. Actually,

she hardly ever leaves her room. For an eight-year-old who loves to do *everything,* that's really tough.

"It's no biggie," is what Maddie always says when anybody asks her about her condition. But if it were me, if I had to be a boy in a bubble, trust me: it'd be bigger than a biggie. It'd be a *huge*-ie.

"Cross-referencing my internal GPS monitor and available real-time performance data from the South Bend, Indiana, public school system," reports E, "we should immediately arrange for an alternate mode of transportation to Creekside Elementary."

In other words, we missed the bus. (Like I said, I still need to work with E. Get him to stop using twenty words when four will do.)

"No problem," says Dad. "I'll drive you guys to school this morning in our brand-new electric SUV!"

"Cool," I say.

And it really is, because my mother just invented the most awesome, unbelievably amazing, technologically slick ride in the world! It's like a huge smartphone with wheels.

Trust me: this is going to blow you away.