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Respect pentru oameni și cărți

# ROBOTS V HUMANS

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## CHAPTER 1

The metal door slammed shut and Nico found himself in a large high-ceilinged room.

He looked to his right and saw five kids his age: two boys and three girls.

They looked as confused as he felt.

A door at the far end of the room swung open and a tall, slim man with a bald head and sunglasses strode forwards.

When he was a few feet away he stopped and took off his shades. His eyes were a striking emerald green.

‘Welcome!’ he said, smiling and looking at each one of them in turn. ‘I’m delighted you all made it safely.’

Nico and the others frowned, because none of them had any idea where they were or how they’d got there.

‘My name is Jensen Hazard,’ said the man, ‘and I will be your host for the next few days. I am here to look after you and to attend to all of your needs. This is my project and you are here as my guests.’

'I will begin by explaining a little bit about you.'

Nico narrowed his eyes. He tried to remember how he'd got here. Had he walked? Caught a bus? He couldn't remember.

Nor could he remember where he lived, or whether he had any brothers or sisters, or what his favourite music was, or anything else ...

His thoughts were interrupted by Hazard.

'Three of you were frozen at birth and woken up today, on your fifteenth birthday,' explained Hazard.

'You three are in excellent health. In fact you are just like any other human, but you will have absolutely no recall of anything

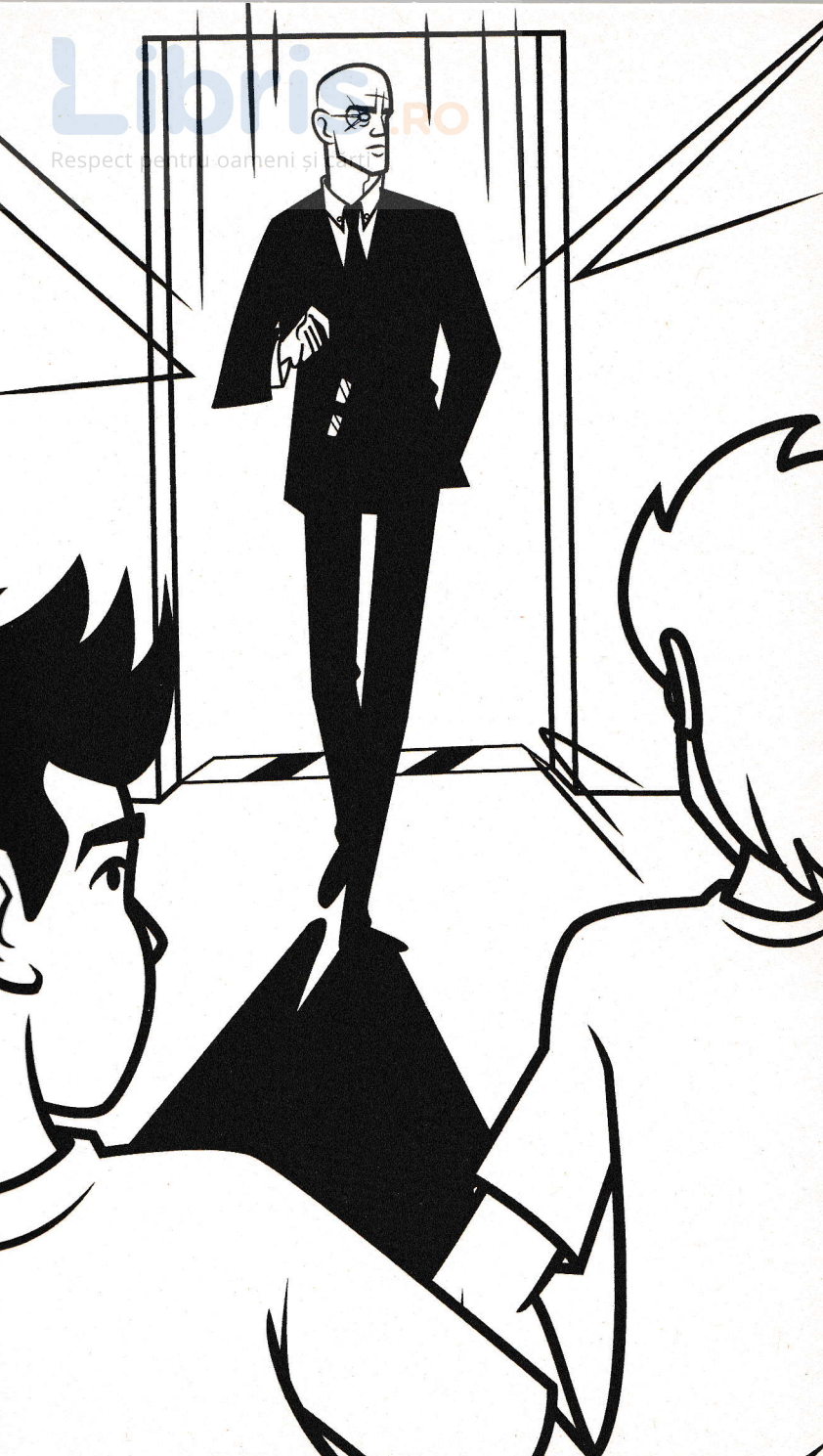
that happened before you walked into this room just now.'

'What about the other three?' asked Nico, his voice sounding strange and unfamiliar, his brain trying to take in what Hazard had just said.

'The other three of you are robots,' replied Hazard. 'You have been made to the most incredibly high standard and, as such, it is impossible to tell you apart from real human beings.'

'Which of us is which?' asked one of the girls, who had bleached-blonde hair and large, royal-blue eyes.

'Ah ha,' beamed Hazard, 'that is where the fun comes in. I will not be telling you – at least, not yet.'



‘You will be living here together this week and carrying out a series of tasks and activities. Some of these tasks will set you against each other; some will see you working as a team.’

‘I will be studying your actions and behaviour very closely, and this will give me a chance to analyse how well the humans perform and how well the robots perform.’

‘So you know which of us is which?’ asked a boy with thick eyebrows and a dimple in his chin.

‘Absolutely,’ nodded Hazard. ‘And when the time is right I will pass this information on to you. But, for the time being, you don’t need to worry about that. And, as I’m sure you are hungry, I suggest you all go and eat.’

A blue panel at the side of the room slid open. Delicious cooking smells wafted out.

‘Eat and enjoy!’ said Hazard, walking in the opposite direction. ‘I will see you in a short while.’

Nico stepped into the dining room with the others, his brain filled with burning questions.

Was he human? Or was he a robot?

He *felt* human, or at least he thought he did, but then Hazard had said that you couldn’t tell robots and humans apart.

Nico couldn’t remember anything before today. Did that mean he was a human, just woken up? Or was he a robot who’d been created in the last few days?