

CHAPTER I

# THE CITY

*Our story begins* in a city, with buildings and streets and bridges and parks. Humans were strolling, automobiles were driving, airships were flying, robots were hard at work.

Weaving through the city streets was a delivery truck. The truck knew where to go, and how to get there, all by itself. It pulled up to a construction site and automatically unloaded some crates. A few more turns and it unloaded more crates down at the docks. The truck

zigged

and

zagged

across the city, delivering crates as it went, and then it merged onto a highway.

Cars and buses and trucks were cruising along the highway together. But as the delivery truck continued, the traffic became lighter, the buildings became smaller, and the landscape became greener.

With nothing but open road ahead, the truck accelerated to its top speed. The landscape outside was now just a green blur, occasionally broken by a flicker of gray as a town flew past. On and on the delivery truck went, racing over long bridges, shooting through mountain tunnels, gliding down straight stretches of highway, until it started to slow. It drifted from the fast lane to the



exit lane, and then it rolled down a ramp and into farm country.

Clouds of dust billowed up behind the truck as it drove past fields and fences. In the hazy distance, enormous barns loomed above the plains. The air was thick with the smells of soil and livestock. Robot crews methodically worked the crops and fed the animals and operated the massive farm machines.

A hill gradually climbed into view. The hill was crowned with trees and white buildings. Another farm. But this one was smaller and shabbier than the rest. Out front was a crooked sign that read *Hilltop Farm*.

Wheels crunched on gravel as the delivery truck rolled onto the driveway and up to the top of the hill. It stopped beside the front porch of the farmhouse and dropped its last crate to the ground. Then the truck drove away.



Reader, can you guess what was tightly packed inside that crate? If you guessed a robot, you're correct. But this was no ordinary robot. It was ROZZUM unit 7134. You might remember her old life on a remote, wild island. Well, Roz's new life was just about to begin.



## CHAPTER 2

# THE CRATE

*Woof! Woof! Woof!*

Inside the farmhouse, a dog was barking and scraping at the front door. When the door finally opened, the dog scurried out and bounced down the porch steps. And then a man appeared.

The man walked with a limp, and slowly made his way down to the crate, where his dog was sniffing around. He unlatched the top of the crate and it swung open on its hinges. Packing foam was tossed aside, restraining cords were unfastened, and there was ROZZUM unit 7134. Her lifeless body sparkled in the late-day sun.

The man reached down and pressed an important little button on the back of the robot's head.

*Click.*





## CHAPTER 3

# THE ROBOT

*The robot's computer brain* booted up and her programs began coming online. Then she automatically stood, stepped out of her crate, and started to speak.

“Hello, I am ROZZUM unit 7134, but you may call me Roz. While my robotic systems are activating, I will tell you about myself.

“Once fully activated, I will be able to move and communicate and learn. Simply give me a task and I will complete it. Over time, I will find better ways of completing my tasks. I will become a better robot. When I am not needed, I will stay out of the way and keep myself in good working order.

“Thank you for your time.

“I am now fully activated.”



