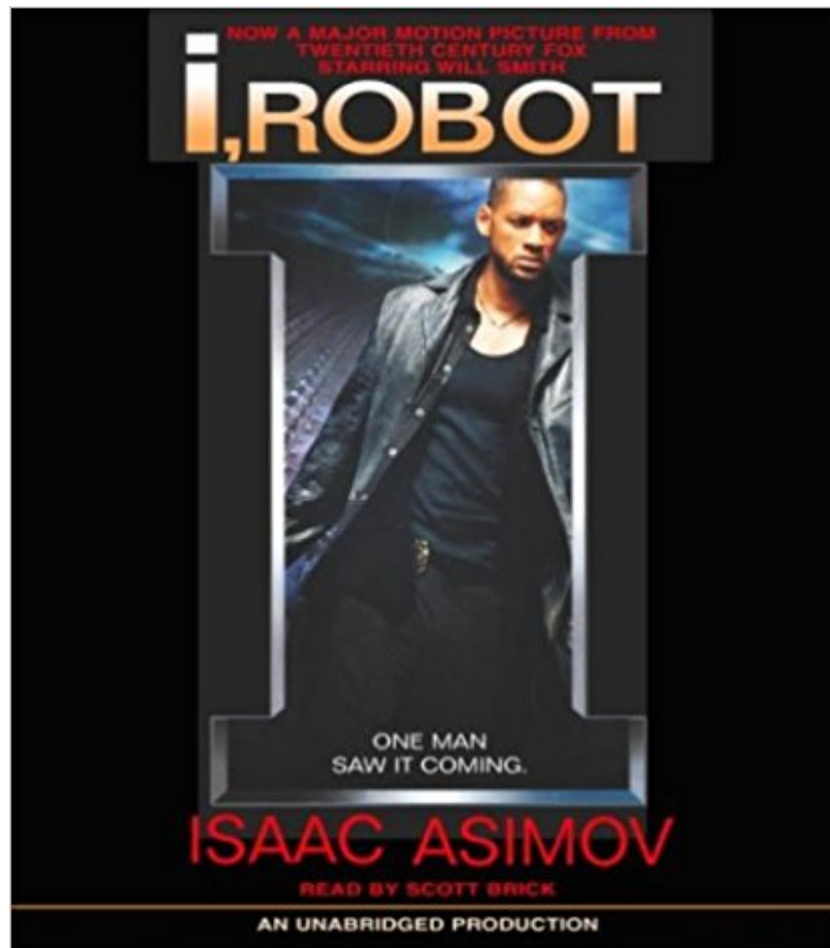


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I, Robot



Synopsis

The three laws of Robotics:1) A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm2) A robot must obey orders given to it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.3) A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law. With these three, simple directives, Isaac Asimov changed our perception of robots forever when he formulated the laws governing their behavior. In *I, Robot*, Asimov chronicles the development of the robot through a series of interlinked stories: from its primitive origins in the present to its ultimate perfection in the not-so-distant future--a future in which humanity itself may be rendered obsolete. Here are stories of robots gone mad, of mind-read robots, and robots with a sense of humor. Of robot politicians, and robots who secretly run the world--all told with the dramatic blend of science fact and science fiction that has become Asimov's trademark. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Isaac Asimov, the grand master of modern science fiction, wrote this classic collection of stories as the first in his Robot novel series. It deals with the relationships between human and robot. As one of Asimov's earliest novels, it introduced the Three Laws of Robotics that have set the standard for the use of robots in science fiction. In fact, Asimov was the acknowledged creator of the term "robotics." The stories are tied together via the reminiscences of Dr. Susan Calvin, a robopsychologist for U. S. Robot and Mechanical Men, the corporation that invented and manufactured intelligent robots and computing machines. She reflects upon the evolution of these

robots and discusses how little humanity really understands about the artificial intelligence it has created. Each story illuminates a problem encountered when a robot interprets the three fundamental Laws and something goes awry. One robot questions the reason for his existence. Another feels a necessity to lie. Yet another has an ego problem. The later stories introduce the reader to the Machines, powerful computing robots without the typical humanoid personalities of the working robots, that control the economic and industrial processes of the world and that stand between mankind and destruction. These stories introduce some fascinating and sometimes unsettling ideas: where does one draw the fine line between intelligent robot and human? Can man and robot form a balanced relationship? Can a robot's creator reliably predict its behavior based upon its programming? Can logic alone be used to determine what is best for humanity? "I, Robot" was published in 1950 and includes stories written in the 1940's, when general-purpose electronic digital computers were still in their infancy.

This is a collection of nine classic short stories about robots, each of which appeared previously in a pulp SF magazine. The stories contain Asimov's famous three "laws" of robotics as well as the positronic brain (consisting of a platinum/iridium sponge), now quite familiar with "Star Trek" fans. All of these have been great influences in both science and science fiction: 1) A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm; 2) A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law; and 3) A robot must protect its own existence, as long as such protection does not conflict with the First and Second Laws. It should also be noted that Asimov coined the word "robotics" in these stories, a term very common today. I really enjoyed these when I first read them as a teenager (my father had introduced me to Asimov's works). And, now rereading them many years later, I can understand why I enjoyed them. They are straight-forward science fiction in which a problem is presented and a solution posed. The first story, "Robbie," first appeared in 1940 (when Asimov 20 years old) in a slightly different form as "Strange Playfellow." Robbie is a companion robot for a child and the child's mother is apprehensive in allowing her daughter to play with it. "Runaround" (1942) is a story concerning a problem encountered by two trouble-shooters on a mining operation on the surface of Mercury. A robot has been given orders to retrieve some ore yet keeps walking in circles, to the detriment of the two human workers. They come to the conclusion that the problem lies with the three Laws and they have to find a solution.

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