



The Runaway Robot

Lester del Rey

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"We're returning to earth," Paul's father tells him. Paul is wildly excited, for all human beings on the planet Ganymede dream of going back to Earth some day. Then Paul finds out that he cannot take his robot Rex with him. Rex has been his constant companion for sixteen years. Leave him behind? Never!

So begins a series of breathtaking adventures in space as Paul and his robot Rex attempt to outwit the forces that seek to separate them.

The Runaway Robot Details

Date : Published July 28th 1985 by Scholastic (first published 1965)

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Author : Lester del Rey

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From Reader Review The Runaway Robot for online ebook

Jim Razinha says

This is *THE* book...the one that set me on a Year of Nostalgic Re-reads, and the one that prompted a nine-year old boy to declare unequivocally that Lester del Rey was the "best science fiction writer ever!" Okay, so he wasn't...but del Rey was a pretty savvy editor and publisher. I finally got this from openlibrary.org (they had some issues with their waiting list code), and thoroughly enjoyed reading it again after 43 years. Dated, and clearly aimed at a juvenile audience, del Rey snuck in a few elements of wisdom not lost on my young mind.

This is the first science fiction book I owned. My mother reminded me that "the librarian would almost always have you and her son read any of the science fiction books first to make sure they were all right." Strangely, despite my pretty good memory, I did not recall that.

Cheryl says

I was lucky enough to inherit this from a thrift store, but you should be able to find it online at Open Library (www.openlibrary.org). Somewhat dated, but lots of fun, and thought-provoking as well. Though the boy is 16, he's been rather sheltered & isolated, so it's not surprising that he sometimes acts more like 12... and I believe the book would appeal most to youngsters 9-12.

Proper classic SF for kids is too rare. If you don't want fantasy, dystopia, weirdness, or the problematic Heinlein juveniles, you're left with this, *The Forgotten Door*, and some of the books by William Sleator. Please comment if you know any others.

Matt says

I like science fiction, and a lot people ask me to recommend science fiction novels for kids. The problem is there is not a lot good stuff out there. I read this one as a kid and I really liked it.

Unfortunately, this is a hopelessly dated because of the life found on other planets of our solar system, but if you keep an open mind it could take place in an alternate universe. This is also long out of print, so you'll be lucky to get a copy at a book sale or the Internet, or at your local library.

It's a simple story about a boy who tries to get back and save his hopelessly out dated robot after it takes off in order to escape the possibility of being sent to the scrap heap.

It's a very touching story, when you are 11 years old.

Foad says

[illegible]

Mark Bondurant says

This was one of, if not the first SF book I ever read, and it's as good as I remember. A boy and his caretaker robot, as told from the robot's point of view, run away when the father sells the robot to save on shipping, when they move back to Earth from Ganymede, Jupiter. It's pure kid stuff, with no real bad guys, concluding in the inevitable, slightly improbable, happy ending. But don't let this dissuade you. This isn't dumb fluff. This is real, old school SF story, from back when SF was a vehicle for intellectual challenge. This is how we should tax our kid's brains. I wish we could see more of this on the shelves today.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Runaway Robot, Lester del Rey

The robot named Rex had been bought as a companion for Paul when the Simpsons decided to pioneer on Ganymede, a moon of Jupiter ... a rough, dangerous satellite where a small boy needed a strong, intelligent robot to protect him. By the time Paul is sixteen, they are inseparable.

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[illegible]

Nastaran says

[illegible]

Red says

The first SF book I ever read. Loved it, grabbed me hook line & sinker, started my love of SF that has yet to

wane.

Jerry says

A Quickie Review

Though George Lucas' space opera is easily the best-known science fiction work, intergalactic tales were alive and well before *Star Wars*, and *The Runaway Robot* is an excellent example. Narrated from the android's perspective, it's a well-written, fun, and cute story of a 'bot who doesn't want to lose his best mate. The book may prove hard to find, given its age and "out of print" status, but I'm sure any young science fiction fan would adore it.

Score: 4/5

Linda says

A great science fiction novel for youth and adults who still think like kids. That's me.

Manuel says

fun and astronomy-factual AI-bot-ventures.

this is pure guessing, of course, but i bet this is 'the' story from which: 1) Futurama-people got Bender (and how he'll never get up if fallen on his/its back); and 2) IBM-people came up with Deep-Blue :D

Allison Tebo says

DNF. Not a bad book - it had cute elements, it was just a little blah.

Melki says

After all, I was only a robot. I wasn't a human even if I did feel like one sometimes. At least I thought that what I felt must have been somewhat the same as human emotions.

Sixteen-year-old Paul grew up on Ganymede. He lives in a colony where they grow herbs and fungus for the people of Earth. (Yeah - just go with it.) He's known Rex, a robot purchased to be his companion, almost his entire life. Now, Paul's family is returning to their home planet and they can't afford to take Rex along. So, the robot is sold to a farmer and Paul prepares to fly back to Earth. And that is where things start to go awry .

..

I hate to use the words sweet and cute to describe something that was meant to be a boys' adventure story, but Rex's devotion to Paul is pretty adorable. There are fun and exciting times galore, and I love that the book is told from the robot's point of view. For a chunk of metal, and some tubes and wires, Rex has quite a personality. Just like us, he even likes to read.

They had taken my pants away, wouldn't give me a magazine to read, and there was no one to talk to.

And he's obviously mastered the human art of complaining.

Originally published in 1965, this book is incredibly dated, but still offers some treats for today's kids. I found my copy at an antique store, but there are plenty of used versions available on Amazon. Keep your eyes open at charity shops and yard sales.

Lester del Rey wrote dozens of science fiction books and short stories, and once posed for possibly *the best* author photo EVER -

Stephen says

I know this is primarily a kids book, but I still enjoy it now after several years of first reading it. It's not only a fascinating story of a very well-thought out universe of the future, but a very interesting moral and spiritual investigation of "conscious machines" like robots. Rex is a very good and sometimes funny narrator, and, as a robot, he has a unique point of view. I must admit I never thought of many sci-fi space stories from the intelligent robot's point of view: it's quite fascinating. There were part when I laughed out loud, and towards the end, after Rex has been cornered by the police after deciding to give up his life for his master, I almost cried. (When I was 10) :) This one really does need to be read to be appreciated.

Dave Lefevre says

I remember seeing this book, with its classic cover of a running, boxy robot, on the shelf in one my classes in grade school. For some reason I've always remembered it when I thought of Asimov's "I, Robot." There is no relation there except for the robot, though. I don't think I ever read it in grade school. After it came to my mind once again while I read some Asimov novels I decided that I needed to read it. I'm glad I did. It isn't that deep, but it is nonetheless a classic.

By the way, Wikipedia says that this is **not** a Lester del Rey book, but that it was ghost written using a story outline he wrote. Another interesting fact about a book that probably was on many a grade school shelf.
