

## **Isaac and the Robot**

Do you know Isaac? I do. He's a boy, who's not too big or too small and he lives with his mother in the city of Prague. What Isaac likes most in the world is to play.

He can do all kinds of tricks with a ball. When he plays video games, he turns into Captain Invincible, the Martian Hunter. He's also the king of the dinosaurs, and if a Tyrannosaurus Rex tries to scare him by growling at him, Isaac chases him into a corner with an even more terrifying roar! When he plays with his toy soldiers, he makes them run hilarious races. He's sure they could enter the Olympics if they weren't such featherbrains. "Hey, it's this way!" Isaac could spend his whole life playing, but just when he's in the middle of an exciting adventure... he hears the horrible voice that always spoils his fun.

"Isaac, shall we set the table? We can put out the coloured paper place mats!"

"Not now, Mum! I'm playing!"

"Then we won't be able to have lunch. And don't forget to put away your toys and pick up the clothes you've left on the floor!"

"Oh..." Isaac would grumble, every time he heard all those orders – it's as if he were a robot!

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But no matter how much he complained, Isaac had no choice but to clean up his room every day. But he did it his own way: he'd tidy up a few things over here, a few things over there and in the end, when everything was stacked up in a pile, one thing on top of the other, he'd always kick something accidentally and send it flying off into a corner.

And so the days went by and Isaac - or Captain Invincible - was back to ridding the universe of Martians, when he heard that sound again:

"Isaac, we have to wash the dishes. If we do it quickly and finish nice and early, we can go out for a walk."

Brilliant, just when he was about to get his best score ever.

Isaac thought that if he stayed completely still and didn't move a muscle, maybe he could pretend he hadn't heard her and go on playing.

"Isaac, I saw some really nice T-shirts at the market. If you tidy away your clothes, we could go out shopping together," said his mother.

She just wouldn't let him concentrate. Isaac couldn't care less whether his clothes were crumpled, the dishes dirty or his toys scattered all over the place. All he wanted to do was play. But his mum didn't understand and in the end, Isaac had to tidy everything up. What a drag, tidying up every single day!

He wished he had someone he could order about to do his jobs for him!

One fine day, one of his uncles came to town, back from a trip to China, and he brought Isaac a present.

"What is it? What is it?" asked Isaac, beside himself with curiosity.

It took him less than 30 seconds to open the parcel, and when he did, he couldn't believe his eyes: R, B ... O, O ... T. A robot! Isaac couldn't have been happier. It was the best thing that had ever happened to him. He finally had someone to play with and do all those boring jobs for him.

He took his robot Martian hunting straight away, and it turned out that the robot was even better at it than he was. (05:08) It was amazing! Now there were two Captain Invincibles. What fun!

From then on, whenever he heard the horrible voice shouting, "Isaac, it's time to wash the dishes!" he would send the robot.

The robot washed and tidied up, and while he did, he had time to chat with Isaac's mother and show her which buttons to press to get the washing machine going again. He was the best robot in the world, and since the day he arrived, Isaac hadn't even had to pick up his clothes or clean up his room.

The days went by, and Isaac's mother no longer bothered to call for him when she needed something. She called the robot. Isaac could finally spend as much time playing as he wanted to.

But one day, he heard something strange. It was his mother and the robot, laughing and talking as they set the table with coloured paper place mats, and made plans to take a walk and stop by the market to buy a T-shirt.

Hearing that made Isaac really angry. So he ordered the robot to put away all his toys immediately. When the uncle who had come back from China dropped in for another visit, he asked how things were going with the robot.

"Great!" said Isaac's mother "And look at the delicious lunch he's made for us."

They were so busy praising the robot that no one remembered that Isaac wasn't at the table. They hadn't even called him to have lunch. That was when he realized, very sadly, that little by little, they were forgetting about him.

"Shall we play?" asked the robot after he had finished all his chores.

But playing no longer made Isaac happy.

He just wanted to get his place in the family back again. So he decided that he had to find a solution.

"You're a robot, right, and you have to do everything I tell you to do, don't you? Well I order you to leave and not to come back until you've cleaned every house in the whole city."

The robot disappeared in a flash.

All of a sudden, when his mother asked for some help with something, Isaac came running. That voice didn't sound so horrible to him any more.

"I'll do it, Mum. But can we go out to the park afterwards?"

"Of course we can," she said happily.

Isaac got down to work washing the dishes, and had lots of fun, when his mum suggested setting up an army of spoon soldiers to fight an army of fork soldiers. He had a great time putting his clothes away in the drawers as if it were a jigsaw, and he still had time to put all his toys away in the basket.

It was so much fun tidying up with his mum. Why had he never done it before? Soon afterwards, his uncle who had been in China, stopped by for lunch again. But this time, Isaac offered to cook and the food he made was so delicious that they were all left licking their fingers.

"Where's the robot?" asked the uncle, who couldn't see it anywhere.

"He left," answered Isaac. "I'm sure there are other houses that need him, but we don't need him anymore." Isaac and his mum smiled at each other.

They say that the robot is still travelling from house to house on the streets of Prague.

And I didn't tell you this, but that's where the word "robot" comes from. In Czech it means "one who has to serve others." / Oh, and watch out: if you open the door one day and find a robot with a green head and a "T" on its nose, think very carefully before you let it in.

Script: Carme Aymerich