Hive Mind
Part One



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TCM Teacher Created Materials

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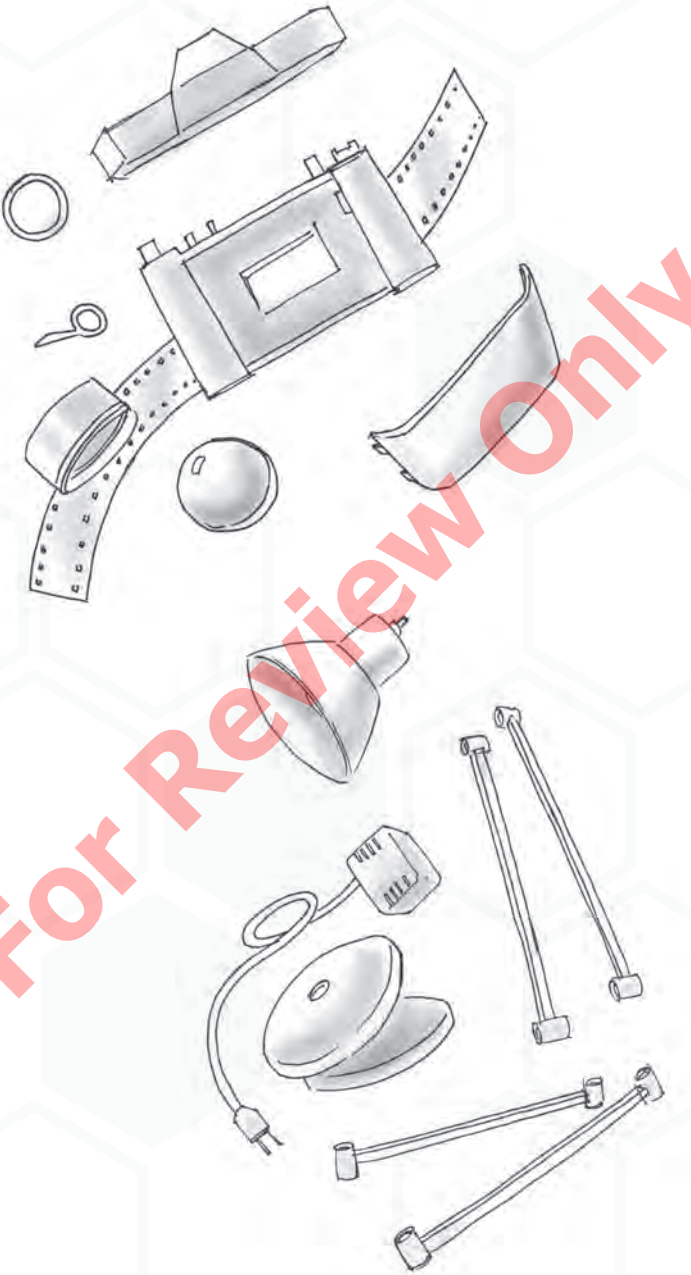
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CHAPTER ONE



Mysterious Mail

A tiny screw, a metal bracket, and a mysterious pulsing wire mocked Sidney from his messy desk. His workspace was littered with nanocircuits, a sonic welder, and other tools.

Leftover parts are never a good thing, 13-year-old Sidney Jamison

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thought. He touched the glossy case of his mom's new voxpod. It should have blinked to life with lights and sound. But nothing happened.

Curious about how the thing worked, he had taken it apart after his mom dozed off. He tried to put it back together before she needed it again. *That's not going to happen now*, he thought.

Sidney glanced around his messy room. There were plenty of places to hide the voxpod until he could figure out the best way to break the news to his mom without getting grounded with no intermaze access.

A pounding knock at the door startled him. The door opened, and his mom stuck her head in. "Sidney, why are you still in your pajamas? We have to get moving or…" She saw the half-assembled device on his desk. "Is that my new voxpod?!"

The doorbell rang and Sidney jumped up, relieved for the escape. "I'll

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get it!" He squeezed past his mom and scrambled for the front door.

Sidney had a long history of taking apart household appliances. He deconstructed everything from his nanobot to the hoverboard that was his ninth birthday present. Successfully putting these objects back together was a different story. He couldn't help himself when he saw his mom's brand-new voxpod. He needed to open the deep red shell to see how it worked. Getting it back together—not so easy.

Now, Sidney activated the door monitor to see who had rung the bell.

A small metal claw rose into view. "Postal Service, delivery for Sidney Jamison."

"For me?" Sid pulled open the door to see a delivery robot that was the height of his chest.

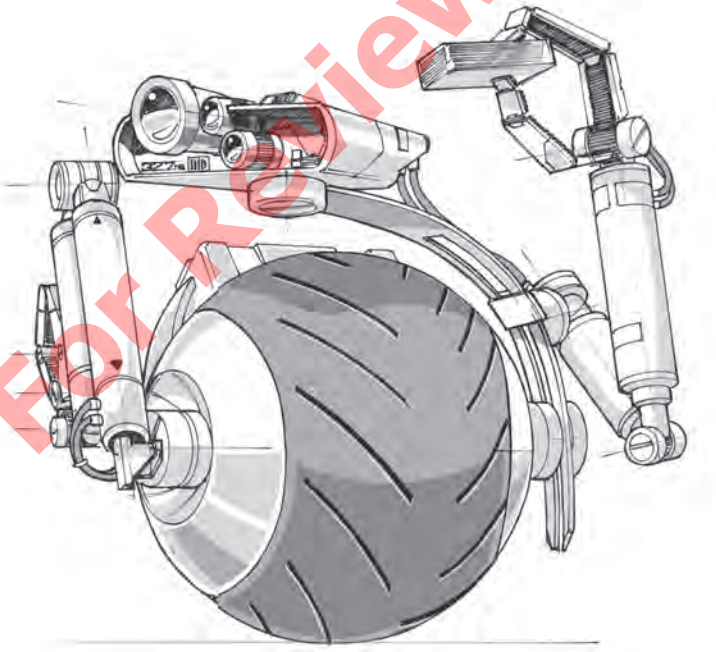
A claw reached up and handed a translucent package to Sid. With a whir, the robot rolled back to the street, speeding off to its next delivery.

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It was a flat box, about the size of a deck of playing cards. The back flap was sealed with a foil sticker embossed with an icon of an atom and the shimmering words *DO NOT OPEN*.

Sid slid back into the house, still studying his delivery.

"Sidney, GET DRESSED!" His mom's voice interrupted his thoughts. "We are leaving in five minutes!"



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CHAPTER TWO



The Outburst

Sidney stared out the window as the hovercar's autodrive carried them toward school. Sid's mom was still simmering about the voxpod. "You know, Sidney, just because we can download the infoplans and have them replicated at home doesn't make them cheap."

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"Aw, Mom. I just wanted to…"

"…see how it worked. I know. We've had this conversation before." She sighed and switched gears. "By the way, who was at the door this morning?"

"Just a digipack," Sid said. "I didn't open it yet. Probably some kind of datatrash."

"Interesting," his mom said. Sid didn't see her grin as she changed the subject. "So, what's going on at school today, kiddo?"

Sid rolled his eyes. "Every class is just repeating stuff we learned years ago, and no one else seems to notice. It's like my brain is sinking in quicksand."

"Well, try not to let your brain get totally sucked in. I have a feeling things will change," his mom replied as they touched down at school.

Sidney followed the other students up the drab stone steps to the tarnished metal doors of Bleaker High School.

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