**I, Robot (1950)**

**Isaac Asimov**

*I, Robot* is a collection of **9 short stories** written by **Isaac Asimov** (a US science-fiction writer born in Russia), where Asimov describes a **future society** in which **human beings and robots** coexist.

The text is considered a fundamental work in the development of **science-fiction literature** mainly for its elaboration of Asimov’s **“Three laws of robotics”.**

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 orders given 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.**

**Runaround** : summary

**Michael Donovan** and **Gregory Powell** are on planet **Mercury**and they have a problem with their power generator, so they need selenium.

They sent out a robot named **Speedy** to get selenium from a pool and Speedy hasn’t come back yet. Which is odd, because he’s quite speedy.

In fact, Speedy is just **circling and circling** the pool of selenium, which is not only odd, but potentially going to lead Powell and Donovan to die. They need that selenium now in order to fix their “photo-cell banks” and, without those photo-cell banks, their Mercury headquarters is just going to burn up.

Why is Speedy stuck? The robot is facing a dilemma: under normal circumstances, Speedy would observe **the second law (obey)**. The selenium source contains unforeseen **danger** to the robot, so Speedy cannot decide whether to obey it or protect himself from danger, following **the third law (self-preservation)**.

The conflicting laws cause a loop which confuses him; the two compulsions are of equal strength, which makes Speedy appear inebriated or drunk.

If Speedy doesn’t come back, Powell and Donovan will be definitely sentenced to death. Therefore, Powell decides to risk his own life by going out in the heat, riding an old robot on its back and running towards Speedy, asking for help.

He hopes that the first law will force Speedy to overcome his dilemma to save Powell’s life. The plan works, Speedy brings Powell back to the station and then he gets the selenium. The team is now able to repair the photo-cell banks.