



## CHAPTER 1

# INTO THE ARMOUR

“Lucas, you’ll be late for school.”

Lucas didn’t need reminding that he was running late. He didn’t need reminding that he was going to school either. School wasn’t something he could forget about. He knew that for a fact because he had spent enough time trying to forget school. He tried to forget the other students and the way they looked at him. He tried to forget how heavy he felt and how tired he was even by lunchtime.

He tried to forget how much he missed home, how much he missed Mars. He really missed

putting on his spacesuit and walking out onto the surface of Mars and exploring with his parents. He had loved the fact that he was going to places no human had ever been to before. On Earth, everybody had seen everything before.

“Lucas?” His mother’s voice again.

“I’m nearly ready,” Lucas called. And that was nearly true. He was showered and dressed, and he had carefully strapped himself into the Armour. That was the name he had given the mechanical skeleton he had to put on every morning. This time he was wearing it differently. This time he had strapped it *under* his clothes. The Armour was made of reinforced metal rods and panels that ran the length of his arms and legs. It gave them extra strength and it supported Lucas’s spine. The Armour had been designed to go on top of a pair of jeans and a shirt. With the Armour out of sight under his clothes, Lucas smiled. Maybe if he just *looked* normal, things would be easier?