



A Robot Instead

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Reading Level: 2–3

Interest Level: Adult

Book Summary

Buzz, click. Buzz, click. “Sometimes I get real tired of this same old job,” says Sonny.

Sonny works on a line in a machine shop. All day long he drills holes into engine blocks. He doesn’t love his job, but it feeds his family. Then Sonny gets bad news. He is laid off. His job is taken over by a robot. Sonny is angry at the company. He feels alone. He feels like nothing at all.

Does Sonny give up hope? Or does he find a way to get his life back?

Chapter 1

1. What do you think are some reasons why Sonny doesn’t like his job?
2. What would you do if you didn’t like your job?
3. What do you think the workers will hear at the meeting?

Chapter 2

1. How would you feel if a machine took over your job?
2. What are some reasons workers get laid off? Has it ever happened to you?
3. What are some ways to cut down on spending?
4. What is the ray of hope in what the man told the workers?

Chapter 3

1. Why does Sonny feel so bad?
2. Why are Nora's words a comfort to Sonny?
3. How do people get through hard times?
4. What do you think will come next for Sonny and Nora?

Chapter 4

1. How does Sonny feel about himself while waiting in the office?
2. What is your idea of a handout?
3. Are there times when people need to take a handout?

Chapter 5

1. How is Sonny acting? Why do you think he is acting this way?
2. Have you ever had too much time on your hands? What did you do?
3. Why do people sometimes feel sorry for themselves? Does it do any good?
4. What do you do when you're not feeling good about yourself?

Chapter 6

1. When Sonny caught the fish, he seemed also "to catch hold of himself." What do you think this means?
2. Have you ever had an eye-opener like this?
3. Would you ever march in and ask for a job? Why or why not?
4. What are some ways to look for a job?

Chapter 7

1. What do you think will happen to Sonny's welding job?
2. Give examples of Sonny's new way of looking at life.
3. What can make a person look at life in a new way?
4. What can people do to feel better about a job they don't like?

Chapter 8

1. What does it mean to "do or die"?
2. Think of a time when you had to "go with the flow."
3. If you were Sonny, what would you do?

Chapter 9

1. What is Sonny afraid of?
2. How can talking with someone who knows you help you think things out?
3. Do you work best with your head or your hands?
4. How do you learn best?
 - By listening to someone?
 - By watching someone do something?
 - By trying it out yourself?

Chapter 10

1. Do you ever find yourself talking to something that is not a person?
2. Why does Sonny like this training better than school?
3. In what ways are people better than machines?
4. In what ways are machines better than people?

Chapter 11

1. What has Sonny learned about life?
2. What makes you feel good about yourself? How do you show it?
3. Do you believe an “old dog” can learn “new tricks”?
4. How can you be ready for the future?