

Mrs. Weston waited patiently for two minutes, then impatiently for two more, and finally broke the silence.

'George!'

'Hmpph?'

- 5 'George, I say! *Will* you put down that paper and look at me?'

The paper rustled to the floor and Weston turned a weary face toward his wife, 'What is it, dear?'

'You know what it is, George. It's Gloria and that terrible machine.'

'What terrible machine?'

- 10 'Now don't pretend you don't know what I'm talking about. It's that robot Gloria calls Robbie. He doesn't leave her for a moment.'

'Well, why should he? He's not supposed to. And he certainly isn't a terrible machine. He's the best darn robot money can buy and I'm damned sure he set me back half a year's income. He's worth it, though – darn sight cleverer than half my office staff.'

- 15 He made a move to pick up the paper again, but his wife was quicker and snatched it away.

'You listen to *me*, George. I won't have my daughter entrusted to a machine – and I don't care how clever it is. It has no soul, and no one knows what it may be thinking. A child just isn't *made* to be guarded by a thing of metal.'

- 20 Weston frowned, 'When did you decide this? He's been with Gloria two years now and I haven't seen you worry till now.'

'It was different at first. It was a novelty; it took a load off me, and – and it was a fashionable thing to do. But now I don't know. The neighbors—'

- 25 'Well, what have the neighbors to do with it? Now, look. A robot is infinitely more to be trusted than a human nursemaid. Robbie was constructed for only one purpose really – to be the companion of a little child. His entire "mentality" has been created for the purpose. He just can't help being faithful and loving and kind. He's a machine – *made* so. That's more than you can say for humans.'

- 30 'But something might go wrong. Some – some —' Mrs. Weston was a bit hazy about the insides of a robot, 'some little jigger will come loose and the awful thing will go berserk and – and—' She couldn't bring herself to complete the quite obvious thought.

- 35 'Nonsense,' Weston denied, with an involuntary nervous shiver. 'That's completely ridiculous. We had a long discussion at the time we bought Robbie about the First Law of Robotics. You *know* that it is impossible for a robot to harm a human being; that long before enough can go wrong to alter that First Law, a robot would be completely inoperable. It's a mathematical impossibility.'

Isaac Asimov, 'Robbie', *I, Robot*, 1950

QUESTIONS

- Who do the pronouns refer to ?
 - You (l.5)
 - Me (l.5)
 - He (l.11)
 - Her (l.12)
- Make a list of the characters:
 - Who are present.
 - Who are mentioned.
- Say how these characters are related.
- Choose the adjectives from the list that could qualify the atmosphere of the scene and justify with a quote.
Warm – tense – friendly – heavy – hostile – relaxed
- TRUE or FALSE
 - George is happy to talk to his wife.
 - The robot has a name.
 - The robot was very expensive.
 - The robot is better than humans in some ways.
- Line 8: "It's Gloria and that terrible machine"
 - Say what the purpose of the robot is.
 - Did the two main characters want to buy the machine for the same reason? Explain.
 - Who doesn't want to keep the machine? Why?
 - Do the other character agree? What is the argument used?