



Robot Dreams

by Sara Varon

Grade Level: 5 - 12

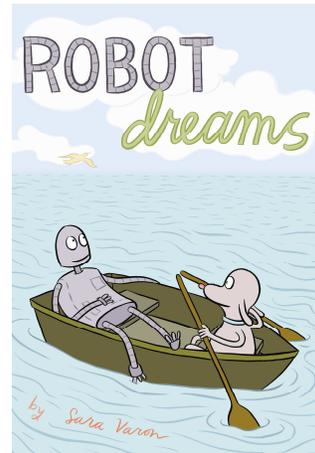
Publisher: First Second Books, New York

Year: 2003

ISBN13: 978-1-59643-108-9

208 pages

Form: Wordless graphic novel



Description

Dog abandons his best friend Robot on the beach after a dip in the sea paralyzes Robot's metal parts. Dog tries to make new friends, but the relationships falter. Meanwhile, sand-strapped Robot dreams of rescue and a renewed friendship with Dog.

Transdisciplinary Curriculum Connections

The wordless graphic novel presents engaging opportunities to connect to many aspects of the curriculum.

- Language Arts: developing appreciation for elements of literature (character, plot, setting, conflict, resolution/transformation)
- Art: studying elements of art (shape, line, color, texture, movement) and also form (sequential flow, page turns)
- Performance Arts: building understanding of the emotional and informational aspects of dialogue
- Social Studies: assessing the components of interpersonal relationships, including emotional responses to change

Second Language Acquisition

The wordless graphic novel escapes linguistic boundaries: the visual medium allows the reader to interpret the story in his or her native language or as an exercise in practicing a second or third language. For second-language learners, *Robot Dreams* provides a reason for producing vocabulary, whether vocally or in written form, when guided by an instructor.

Students should create their own word lists on a Word Wall, where they write the words in the first language that they are seeking to use in the second language. For example, a student might write "beach" on the Word Wall. Another student who knows the word in Spanish would write "playa" beside it. The linguistic flexibility means that all suggestions here may be adapted to English or other languages.

Key Second-Language Vocabulary

Nouns: robot, dream, dog, inventor, beach, raccoon, radio, music, junk, snowman, seasons/months

Verbs: to see, to dream/a dream, to build/assemble, to leave/abandon, to swim, to wish, to dream, to miss someone

Broader Concepts: abandonment, rescue, immobility, jealousy, patience, loneliness, hopelessness, adjustment to change

Instructor Notes

Because *Robot Dreams* is a wordless book, some students may have trouble initially understanding how to read it. Advanced readers tend to rely on text to interpret stories, so you may find that they need more direction than usual.



Model how you interpret each image, and how you see the connection each image has with the next. Convey the importance of looking at all the details, especially the expressions and hand gestures, as well as the white spaces between boxes or sections and the size of the images.

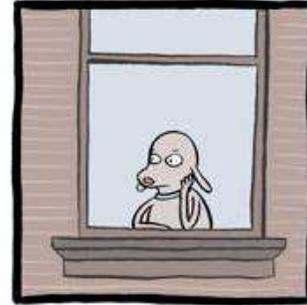
Emphasize that there are no right or wrong interpretations. Your ideas about the story may be very different than theirs, and that's terrific!

Activities - For group or individual study as appropriate.

As an independent reading activity or as a group, read *Robot Dreams*.

Comic Book Talk

Ask students to look at Robot's dream on pages 24-26 (or pick any spread). Write dialogue or what the character is thinking in each image. Using white copy paper and a black marker, make thought bubbles or voice bubbles as you would see in a comic book to show your words. Cut them out and attach them to the book using sticky glue (available in craft stores), or read them to the class.



Reader's Theater

Assign sections of the book to groups of students. Each group creates the narrative and any dialogue for the section. When completed, each group presents its section in the sequence of the book, using the reader's theater format. Every student should read at least four lines of narration or dialogue.

Build A 2-D Friend

Ask students to consider: If you wanted a friend who is not human but can be any other form, what characteristics would your friend possess? After writing these characteristics (brainstorming techniques work well), students should cut out images from magazines that represent those characteristics. Students should glue the images onto construction paper as a collage in the shape of a person. Display the collage friends.

Build A 3-D Friend

Provide a miscellaneous pile of 3D recyclables and small items (buttons, envelopes, bottle caps, paper clips, strips of cloth, coils, hard pasta, pipe cleaners, etc.) from which each student may select a handful of items. Using these items, the student assembles a friend. The student must name the friend and introduce him/her/it to the class and provide a description of what makes the friend special. Display the friends.

Discussion/Essays

- Compare Robot's dream on pages 86-89 to the events on pages 203-208. What happens in these two sections? How does Robot feel differently in the last section than in the first?
- How are Dog and Raccoon alike when they build their "friends" on pages 160-162 and 175-179? Are there differences?
- The word "dreams" in the title could be read as a noun or a verb; explain how the meaning is the same or different.
- How does Robot change physically and emotionally from the beginning to the end of the book? Provide examples of these changes.
- What does Robot want most at the beginning of the story? Does he get what he wants? Explain.
- What does Dog want most at the beginning of the story? Does he get what he wants? Explain.
- What do you think the author is saying about friendships in this story? Provide examples to support your answer.