

THE LONELY ANDROID

Hal Ames



He is an android. His primary job is to be a house servant. He is one of the newest models of robots to have human characteristics. The popularity of this new model has surprised everyone, especially the owners of the company. They are the most humanlike androids ever made because they are very friendly. They are able to adjust to many different situations very easily.

His new family has been waiting for him to be ready for over six months. When they ordered him, they asked that his name would be Rondol.

Rondol is only the fifteenth of this model made. The family is so excited that instead of having him brought to their home, they go to the office to get him themselves.

The sales manager greets them at the door.

“Mr. and Mrs. Grumfton, I would like to introduce you to Rondol. He is your new house android. I would like to show you what he can do,” the sales manager starts to explain just how great this new android will be for them.

“I haven’t been this excited since I bought my first new car!” Mr. Grumfton says, while watching the sales manager turn Rondol on for the first time.

Rondol’s eyes move from side to side. His arms move up and down. He starts to walk around the room making a beeping noise. He looks as if he is going to walk into a desk, when he suddenly stops, turns around, and smiles.

“Hi, I am Rondol. I am your Home-Helper. I am happy to meet you,” Rondol says. “How can I help you today?”

Laughing, the family walks over to Rondol to take a closer look at him.

The sales manager tells them how they should take care of him.

Lukas says, “Dad, he’s a lot cooler than I thought. Every one of my friends is going to want to see him. Can we have a party?!”

“A party? That’s a great idea,” Mr. Grumfton says to his family.

They agree that a party would be the perfect way to introduce Rondol to all their friends.

Rondol looks puzzled, and asks, “What is a party? I do not know that word.”

Mr. Grumfton answers, “We’ll invite our friends to our house to meet you. We’ll have cake and ice cream for everyone, and we’ll have a lot of fun.”

Rondol still seems a bit confused about what a party is.

“Am I invited to your party?” he asks.

“Of course. You’ll be the reason the people will come,” Mr. Grumfton replies.

“That sounds wonderful. How may I help?” asks Rondol.

“We’ll tell you everything once we get home,” he tells Rondol.

The sales manager explains he would need to learn a lot of new words in the coming weeks.

Mr. Grumfton says to his family, “Let’s get into the van and go home.”

The children help Rondol get into the van, and then they leave for home.

Rondol looks out the window of the van at everything with curiosity. He has never seen anything outside of the building where he was made. His programming is only on how to help the family. He has a lot more to learn.

“Can you tell me what those tall things are?” Rondol asks for some help.

“Oh, those are trees, and over there are houses. We live in a house and you are going to live there with us,” Amanda says with a big smile on her face.

They arrive home and everyone gets out of the van. Rondol stands next to the van waiting to be told what to do next.

Amanda takes his hand and leads him to the door. She giggles as she shows him

where to go.

She tells him, “This is our house. This is where we live. This is where you are going to live with us. I want to show you everything about our house.”

Rondol is a little confused since Amanda is speaking so fast.

They walk into the house and then Amanda takes Rondol to his room.

At the back of the house is a small room where inside there is a place for Rondol to recharge his batteries. Every night they will connect him to the charger so his batteries will be charged by the next day. He will sleep in this room at night and then in the morning, he will be ready for the day’s work.

Rondol looks inside the small room.

“Is this where I will live?” Rondol asks.

“Yes, but only at night when you sleep. During the day you’ll be with us, in the house,” Lucas answers the question.

“I am not sure I am going to like this place. It is so small,” Rondol responds.

“It’ll be fine. You’ll only be here at night,” Amanda explains.

Rondol follows the children into the house.

“This is the living room. We’re not allowed to play in here. Mom and dad want this room to stay clean and neat,” Amanda tells him.

Moving through the house to the next room, Amanda explains, “This is the dining room. This is where we eat our meals at dinnertime. However, we usually eat in the kitchen for breakfast and lunch.”

Amanda continues to give Rondol a tour of the house.

“Now this is the kitchen. Mom prepares our food for us and we eat at the table over there in the morning,” Lucas explains, pointing to the table in the corner.

Rondol responds, “I will make your food. I will serve you your food. I will clean the house. It is now my job. Your mother will not have to do that anymore. She can get a job and then she will not have to worry about the house when she gets home in the evening.”

The rest of the day Rondol becomes familiar with the house and what he must do for the family. Everyone is happy to have Rondol.

The children teach him how to play some games with them. He learns to play hide-and-seek, and how to solve a Rubik's Cube.

That night they put Rondol into his room, and plug him into the power connection so he can recharge his batteries. Then they close the door and go back into the house to go to bed.

In the middle of the night, there is a scream from Amanda's room. She is yelling at something in the corner of her room.

"Who are you? What do you want?" Amanda yells out into the dark.

The family runs to her room to see why she is screaming.

Mr. Grumfton turns on the light and in the corner of the room he sees Rondol.

"What are you doing here?" Mr. Grumfton asks Rondol.

"I was lonely in my room. I do not want to stay in there. It is dark. I was scared," Rondol answers the question.

"Rondol, you have to go back to your room. If you don't, your batteries will not last all day," Mr. Grumfton says to Rondol, wondering why Rondol does not want to be in his room.

Then he takes him back and plugs him into the charging station.

"You need to stay here, otherwise your batteries will be dead and you'll not be able to do your work tomorrow. I'll see you in the morning, OK?" Mr. Grumfton explains to Rondol.

"OK, I will see you in the morning," Rondol responds.

Mr. Grumfton closes the door and goes back to bed.

In the morning, Rondol is not in his room and he is not in the house. The family looks everywhere, but they cannot find him.

Finally, Amanda finds him in the garage with the dog.

"Why are you in the garage with the dog?" Amanda asks him.

“I was lonely. The dog was the only thing I could find to make me happy,” Rondol responds.

“Dad, I found Rondol in the garage. He’s with the dog,” Amanda yells into the house.

Mr. Grumfton goes to the garage to talk to Rondol. Just as he is about to tell him that he needs to go to his room, Rondol’s batteries go dead.

“Honey, will you bring me the power cord from Rondol’s room, please. We have to plug him into the power here in the garage. I can’t move him. He’s too heavy,” Mr. Grumfton yells into the house.

Lucas brings the cord to his dad.

“How long will it take for him to recharge?” Lucas asks his dad.

“About eight hours. He’ll be here in the garage all day. We’ll have a talk with him tonight,” Mr. Grumfton answers Lucas.

The rest of the day, things in the house are just like before. Mother is cleaning the house and preparing the meals.

In the evening, Rondol walks into the house.

“My batteries are now charged. What can I do for you?” he asks.

“Nothing Rondol. I did it all. While you were recharging I did all the work. You can rest until tomorrow,” Mrs. Grumfton says to Rondol.

The next day they cannot find Rondol again. They look everywhere, even in the garage.

The Grumfton’s call the police to tell them that their android, Rondol, is missing.

Before the police arrive, Rondol comes walking into the house.

“Where have you been? We’ve been looking all over for you,” Mr. Grumfton asks Rondol about where he was all morning.

“I was not tired, so I took a walk with the dog. Is that a bad thing?” Rondol responds with a question of his own.

“Yes, it is. We’ve been looking everywhere for you all morning,” Mrs. Grumfton

adds her comment, the look of being upset is clearly seen on her face.

Suddenly, Rondol's batteries go dead again while he is standing in the middle of the kitchen.

Lucas suggests, "Dad, I think we should wait until this evening to plug Rondol in again. If we charge him now, he might not want to go to his room later. This way he will be fully charged in the morning."

"That's a great idea," Mr. Grumfton agrees with Lucas.

As the family goes to bed, they plug Rondol into the power cord.

In the morning, Rondol is standing in the living room.

"Did you sleep well?" Amanda asked.

"This is much better. I do not like that small room. Can you plug me in like this every night?" Rondol asks. "I can just stand here and then I will not feel so lonely."

The family talks about it and agrees that it is a good idea. They will now let Rondol stay in the house at night to recharge his batteries.

Everyone is happy, especially Rondol.

The End

VOCABULARY: (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. android ____ | a. place to keep a car |
| 2. popular ____ | b. refresh electrical charge |
| 3. function ____ | c. desire to know how something works |
| 4. curiosity ____ | d. purpose, job, task |
| 5. programming ____ | e. well liked |
| 6. recharge ____ | f. extra electrical wire |
| 7. power cord ____ | g. home helper |
| 8. garage ____ | h. constant sound |
| 9. house servant ____ | i. encoding, training, instructions |
| 10. beeping ____ | j. robot, humanlike |

TRUE, FALSE:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. The Android is named Randall. | T / F |
| 2. He is an android. | T / F |
| 3. The family's name is Grumfton. | T / F |
| 4. The android needs to be recharged every night. | T / F |
| 5. The police found Rondol walking down the street. | T / F |
| 6. The dog slept in the small room with Rondol. | T / F |
| 7. Amanda was afraid of something in her room. | T / F |
| 8. Lucas found Rondol in the garage. | T / F |
| 9. Rondol wanted to sleep in the garage. | T / F |
| 10. Mrs. Grumfton wanted to return Rondol to the store. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. What model was Rondol? _____
 - a) House servant
 - b) Sportsman
 - c) Car washer
 - d) Baby sitter

2. Where was Rondol supposed to sleep? _____
 - a) garage
 - b) living room
 - c) back yard
 - d) small room

3. Where was Rondol when Amanda found him in the morning? _____
 - a) outside
 - b) garage
 - c) living room
 - d) kitchen

4. Where had Rondol gone with the dog? _____
 - a) for a walk
 - b) to the library
 - c) to the park
 - d) to the back yard

COMPREHENSION: (*Write a complete sentence to answer the question.*)

1. What was the name of the android?

2. What did he see out the windows of the van on his way to the house?

3. Who took Rondol on a tour of the house?

4. Whom did Rondol scare the first night?

5. Why did Rondol not want to sleep in his room?

6. Who did Mr. Grumfton call when Rondol was missing?

7. Where had Rondol gone with the dog?

8. How many times did Rondol's batteries go dead?

9. What was the name of the boy?

10. Why was Rondol happy at the end of the story?
