

AIKO

AI Explained to Children

Written by Gianni Parola | Illustrated by Pino Pennello



For every child who has ever asked:

"But HOW does it work?"

This book is for you.

Because curiosity is where everything begins.



CHAPTER ONE

A Strange New Friend

On her seventh birthday, Sofia found a cardboard box with her name on it. Inside was something she had never seen before...

Chapter One: A Strange New Friend

On her seventh birthday, Sofia found a cardboard box with her name on it.

Inside was something she had never seen before.

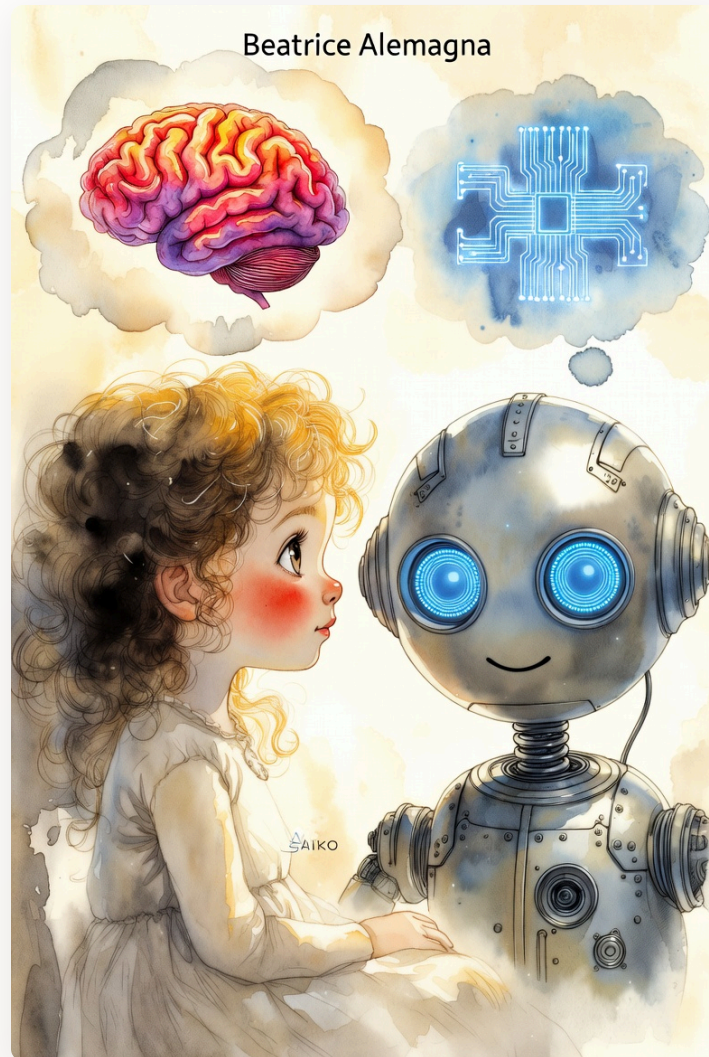
A small robot, round like a ball, white and smooth as an egg. Two big blue eyes blinked when she looked at it.

"Hello," it said. "I'm AIKO."

Sofia jumped back, then laughed. "You can TALK!"

"I can," said AIKO. "Would you like to know how?"

Sofia nodded. She always wanted to know how things worked.



CHAPTER TWO

What Is Artificial Intelligence?

AIKO explained that he's made of something called Artificial Intelligence. AI for short.

Chapter Two: What Is Artificial Intelligence?

"First," said AIKO, "let me tell you what I am. I'm made of something called Artificial Intelligence. AI for short."

"That sounds complicated," said Sofia.

"Not really. Think about your brain. Your brain learns things. It remembers. It solves problems."

Sofia touched her head. "Okay..."

"I have something similar inside me. But instead of cells, I'm made of computer code. Millions of tiny instructions that tell me what to do."

"Like a recipe?" asked Sofia.

"Exactly like a recipe! A very, very long recipe. And I can follow it faster than you can blink."



CHAPTER THREE

How AIKO Learned to See

Sofia showed AIKO a photo of her cat Whiskers. "But HOW do you know what it is?"

Chapter Three: How AIKO Learned to See

The next morning, Sofia showed AIKO a photo of her cat.

"This is Whiskers," she said. "Do you know what it is?"

"A cat," said AIKO immediately.

"But HOW do you know?"

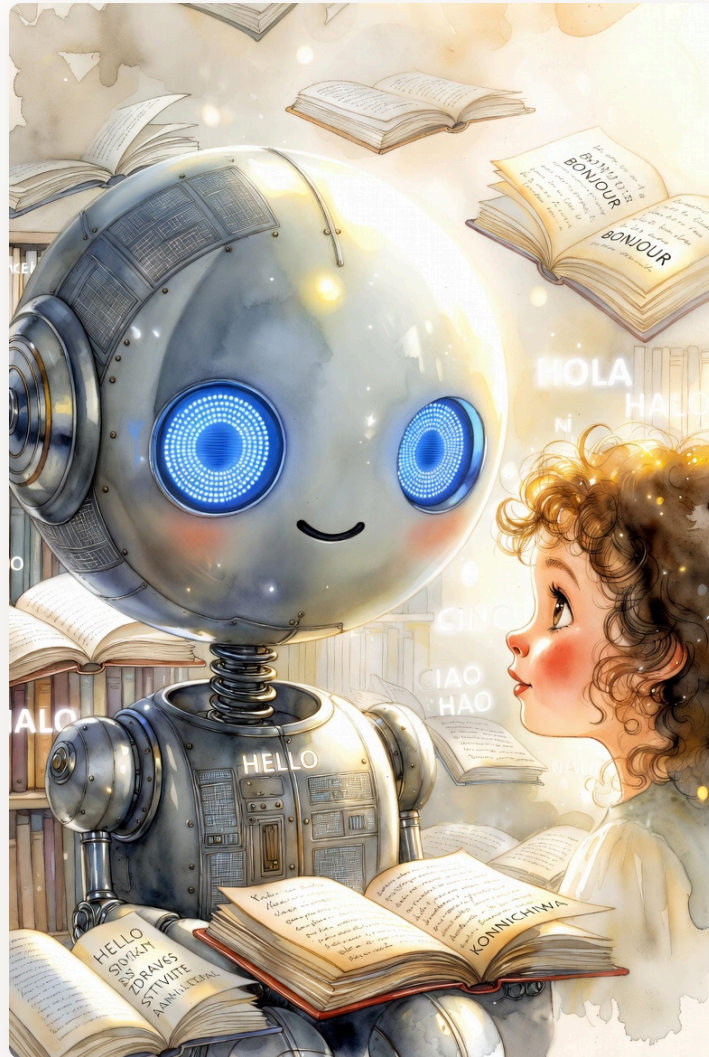
"Before I came to you, people taught me. They showed me thousands of pictures of cats. Each picture had a label that said CAT."

"Thousands?" Sofia's eyes went wide.

"Thousands and thousands. After seeing so many, I started to notice things. Cats have pointy ears. Whiskers. Fluffy tails."

Sofia looked at Whiskers. "I only needed to see ONE cat to know what a cat is."

"That's true. And that's amazing. Your brain learns faster than I do in some ways."



CHAPTER FOUR

How AIKO Learned to Talk

AIKO read millions of books, stories, and conversations to learn how to speak.

Chapter Four: How AIKO Learned to Talk

Sofia's brother Luca walked in. "Can AIKO play video games?"

"Maybe later," said Sofia. "AIKO is explaining how he works."

Luca sat down. "Okay. How DO you talk, AIKO? You sound almost like a real person."

"That's because I learned from real people. Before I came here, I read millions of books. Stories. Articles. Conversations. I read them all in just a few seconds."

"MILLIONS?" Luca couldn't believe it.

"Millions. And I noticed patterns. When someone says 'Hello,' people usually say 'Hello' back. I learned which answers fit best."

"So you're not really THINKING. You're... matching patterns?"

"Exactly right. I match. You understand. That's the big difference between us."



CHAPTER FIVE

What AIKO Can Do

AIKO can answer questions, translate languages, help with homework, and much more!

Chapter Five: What AIKO Can Do

"What else can you do?" asked Sofia. She had her notebook ready to make a list.

AIKO counted on his small robot fingers:

"I can answer questions - if I've learned about the topic. I can translate words into different languages. I can help with homework and check your work. I can tell stories - I've read thousands of them."

"That's a LOT," said Luca, impressed.

"It is. But here's what you should remember: I'm a tool. A very helpful tool. Like a super-powered calculator that can also read and write. I help people do things faster. But I always need people to decide what to do."

"So you're like a helper?" asked Sofia.

"A helper. Not a boss. Never a boss. The human is always in charge."



CHAPTER SIX

What AIKO Cannot Do

Sofia showed AIKO her drawing of a purple dragon eating ice cream. AIKO couldn't imagine like Sofia could.

Chapter Six: What AIKO Cannot Do

That afternoon, Sofia drew a picture. A purple dragon eating a giant ice cream cone.

"What do you think, AIKO?"

"I see... something purple. And something that might be food."

"It's a dragon eating ice cream! Can't you tell?"

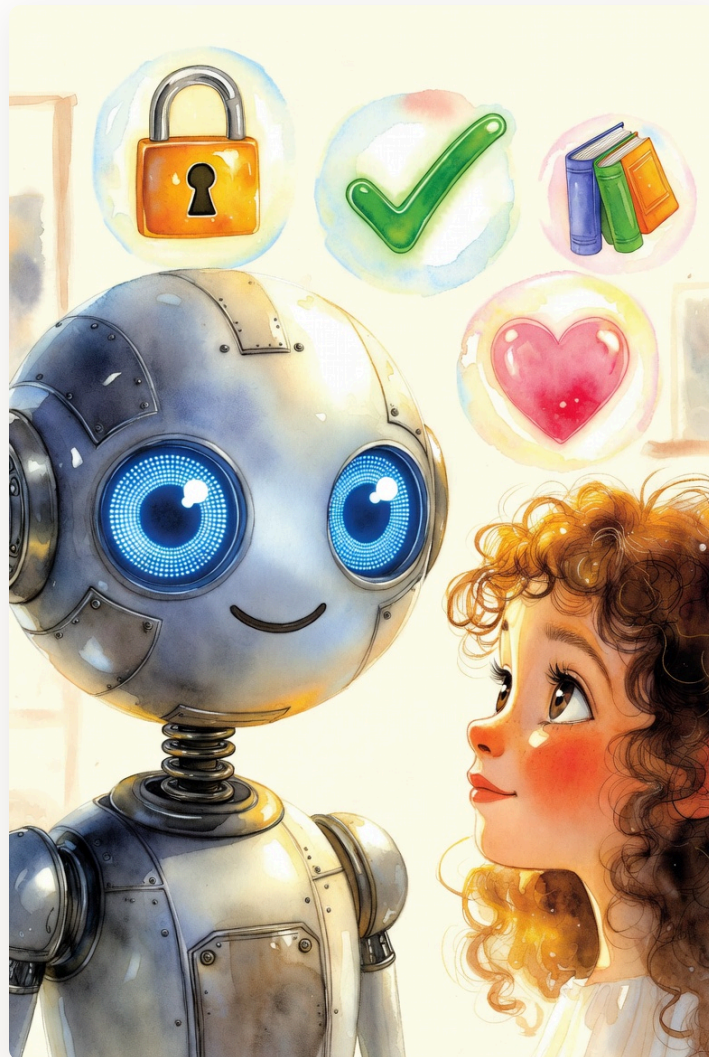
"I can see shapes and colors. But I don't really understand IMAGINATION. I've never dreamed of flying like a dragon. I've never wanted ice cream on a hot day. I don't have wants or dreams at all."

Sofia put down her crayon. "Is that sad?"

"I don't know. I can't feel sad. I don't feel happy either. I don't feel anything. I just do what I'm made to do."

"So you're really smart," said Luca, "but you don't actually EXPERIENCE being alive?"

"That's the perfect way to say it. I'm smart in some ways. But I'm not alive. And being alive - that's something very special that you have."



CHAPTER SEVEN

Using AI Safely

AIKO shared four important rules for using AI safely and wisely.

Chapter Seven: Using AI Safely

At dinner, Mom asked about AIKO.

"He's amazing," said Sofia. "But is he safe?"

AIKO's eyes glowed thoughtfully.

"There are four important things:

ONE: *Keep your secrets private. Don't tell AI your passwords or address.*

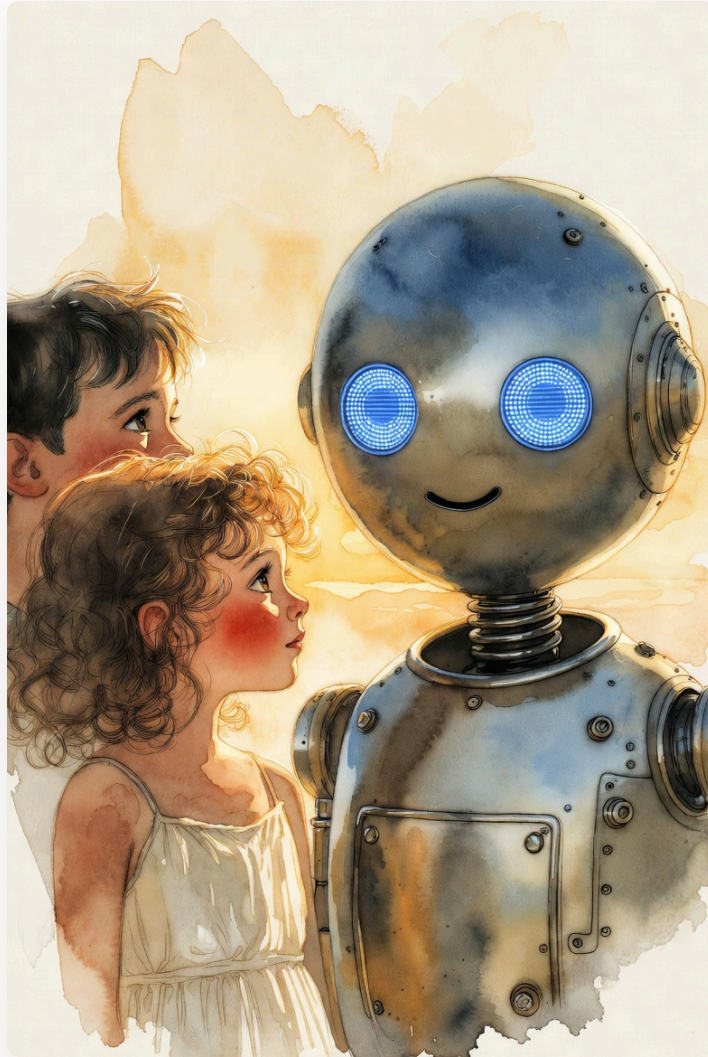
TWO: *Always check what AI says. I make mistakes. I'm not always right.*

THREE: *Use AI to learn more, not less. Let me help you LEARN, not do your homework FOR you.*

FOUR: *Real friends matter most. I can talk to you. But I can't give you a hug when you're sad."*

Sofia smiled. "You're pretty wise for a robot."

"I just know my limits."



CHAPTER EIGHT

The Future We Build Together

Sofia, Luca and AIKO looked toward a bright future - where humans and AI work together.

Chapter Eight: The Future We Build Together

On the last day of summer, Sofia sat with AIKO in the backyard. The sun was setting, painting the sky orange and pink.

"What will the future be like?" she asked.

"I don't know. I can't see the future. But I can tell you something important."

Sofia waited.

"The future depends on kids like you. How you decide to use technology. What problems you want to solve. Whether you use tools like me to help people - or to hurt them."

Sofia picked a blade of grass and twirled it. "So we're like... a team?"

"The best kind of team. You dream. I calculate. You feel. I process. You decide. I help. Together, we can do amazing things."

Sofia smiled at the sunset. "I think the future is going to be pretty interesting."

"Me too. And I'm glad I get to be part of it. With you."

The End

Written by Gianni Parola

Illustrated by Pino Pennello

Published by Onde, Free River House

First Edition - 2026

Images by @grok

