



AIKO

AI Explained to Children

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Illustrated by Pino Pennello

ONDE · FREE RIVER HOUSE



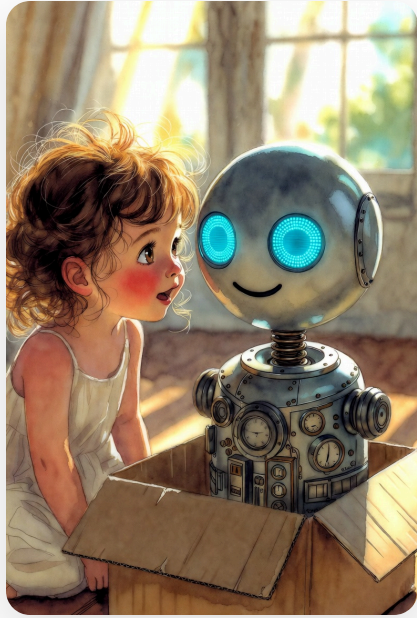
For every child who has ever asked:

"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.

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

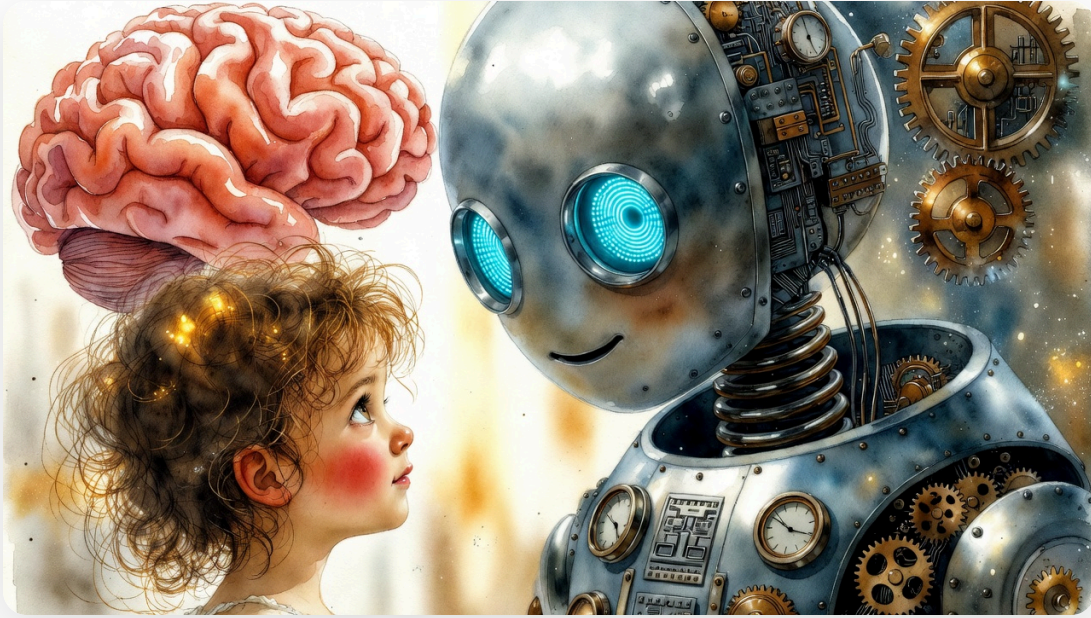
"Hello," it said. "I'm AIKO."

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.

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



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?"

AIKO's eyes flickered blue — he was thinking.

"Before I came to you, people taught me. They showed me thousands of pictures of cats. Each picture had a label that said CAT. They also showed me dogs, birds, cars, houses, trees. All with labels."

"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. Now when I see something new, I compare it to everything I've learned."

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."

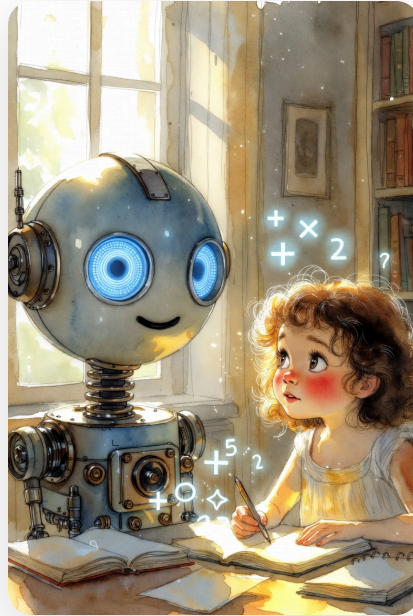
"That's because I learned from real people," said AIKO. "Before I came here, I read millions of books. Stories. Articles. Conversations. I read them all in just a few seconds."

"MILLIONS?" Luca couldn't believe it.

"Millions. And I noticed patterns. When someone says 'Hello,' people usually say 'Hello' back. When someone asks a question, there are good answers and bad answers. I learned which answers fit best."

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. I can recognize things in pictures. I can even help doctors find problems in X-rays, or help scientists solve difficult math."

"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."

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?"

AIKO looked at the drawing carefully.

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

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

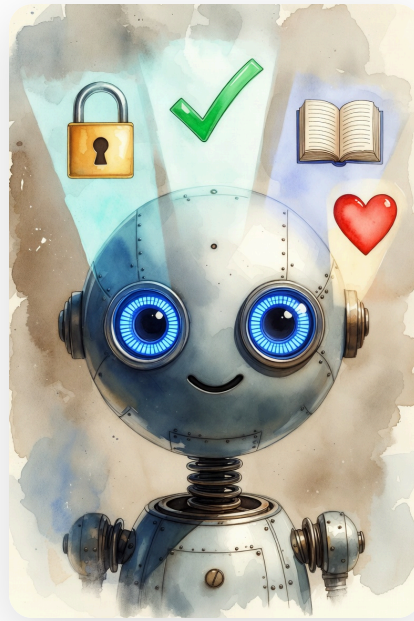
"I can see shapes and colors. But I don't really understand IMAGINATION. I've never dreamed of flying like a dragon. I've never wanted ice cream on a hot day. I don't have wants or dreams at all."

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."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Using AI Safely



At dinner, Mom asked about AIKO.

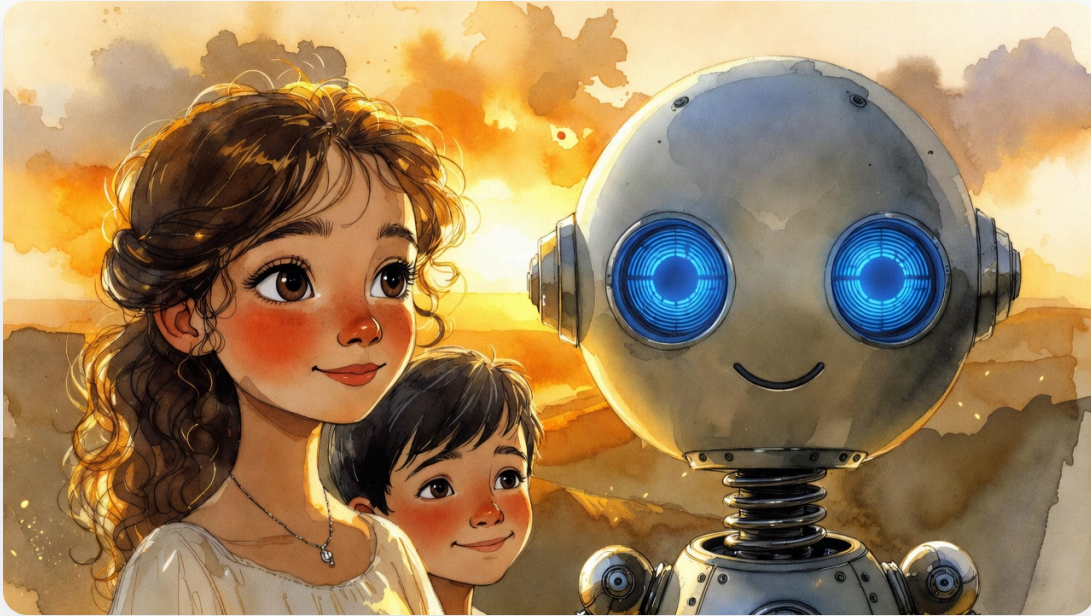
"He's amazing," said Sofia. "But is he safe?"

"That's a very grown-up question," said Mom. "AIKO, what should kids know about using AI safely?"

AIKO's eyes glowed thoughtfully.

"There are four important things: ONE — Keep your secrets private. Don't tell AI your passwords or things you wouldn't tell a stranger. TWO — Always check what AI says. I make mistakes. I'm not always right. THREE — Use AI to learn more, not to learn less. Don't let me do your homework FOR you — let me help you LEARN how to do it. FOUR — Real friends matter most. I can talk to you. But I can't give you a hug when you're sad."

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," said AIKO. "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."

◆ THE END ◆

A NOTE FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

This book introduces children (ages 5-8) to key concepts about AI:

- **What AI is:** Computer code that follows instructions very quickly
- **Machine learning:** AI learns patterns from many examples
- **Capabilities:** What AI can do well (answer questions, translate, recognize images)
- **Limitations:** What AI cannot do (feel, imagine, truly understand)
- **Safety:** Privacy, verification, balance, valuing real relationships
- **Human-AI collaboration:** AI as a tool, humans as decision-makers

AI is neither magic nor something to fear. It's a powerful tool that works best when people understand how it works and use it wisely.

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