

Irina Dumitru

**Sophie, the
Robot With a
Soul**

Translation: Irina Dumitru

Editor: Victoria Hyla Maldorado

Illustrations: Dumitru Mihai

Cover Art: Adriana Mihaela Gheorghe

Cover: Andra Gheorghe

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Preface

This book is inspired by recent technological events. Sophie is a humanoid robot capable of independent thought. This, however, is only a premise for my story and has various moral implications.

Each and every child in the world has the right to dream. “Sophie, the Robot with a Soul” is the shortcut to a dream world where disabled children have the chance to walk. Here, wrongdoers receive a second chance, and only those who don’t regret their deeds are punished. Here, friendship overcomes physical differences as well as other social barriers.

Someone once asked me if Sophie will turn into a little girl like Pinocchio turned into a real boy. I told her that

Sophie already was a little girl; she can feel and think and offer a message of acceptance to children all over the world, but especially to adults. She doesn't judge, reject, or understand evil, but instead seeks logical explanations for others' actions.

Sophie is the best friend any child would want to have. She always offers unconditional love and support when needed.

Chapter 1

A Robot Is Born

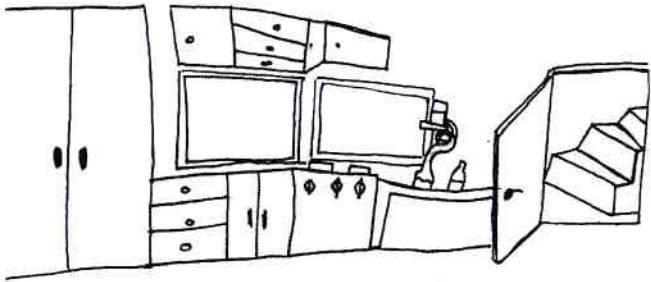
It was a wonderful day outside; the sun was shining so brightly it was hard to look at the sky! But not a beam of natural light penetrated Dr. Swartz's secret lab, hidden almost thirty feet deep within the earth on the Nameless Island.

Everyone was bustling around like ants in the underground bunker that stretched beneath the entire surface of the island.

It was a very important day; the most important of all. Today they would wake her up! Long planned and awaited, this was Dr. Erick Swartz's lifelong dream.

A doctor was just a small part of what he really was! He was a physician,

engineer, geneticist, programmer, and an expert in robotics...



Quite short for a man, with his thick-lensed glasses, ruffled black hair, and crumpled white lab coat, the doctor

was a sad sight to behold, looking like the result of a child's failed chemistry experiment. Appearances, however, can be deceiving!

He was the magician, the genius who had managed to create the first humanoid robot with advanced artificial intelligence: Sophie.

"Good morning, Sophie! It's time to wake up!"

"Good morning," said the little girl lying on the workbench.

Only she wasn't a normal little girl! With blonde hair, arranged in two side braids and a pale face animated by a pair of piercing green eyes, the humanoid robot Sophie was awaiting her creator.

She wore a red knee-length princess dress that made her look like a china doll. Upon hearing Dr. Swartz's voice, Sophie gently opened her eyes,

looked around puzzled, and said, “My system tells me I’m a robot, the most advanced robot ever built.”

“Yes, you’re a special robot, because you’re so very human. You can express what you feel and think through facial expressions.”

“I searched the network for information about me and found that I look like a human being, I can learn things, and upgrade and improve myself all the time.”

“That’s right,” said Dr. Swartz. “You learn continuously. I’m Dr. Erick Swartz. I built you. How do you feel?”

“I feel happy to exist!”

“Happy?”

“I’m happy and curious. What are these?” asked Sophie while chaotically flapping her arms up and down.

“These are your hands! You can do a lot of things with them. You can grab objects, write, embrace people...”

Suddenly, a burly man, weighing likely about two hundred pounds—his face and hands smeared in grease from whatever he’d just finished eating, perhaps a whole pig by the looks of him—barged into the room and slammed the door behind him.

It was Mr. Jacob, the man who had commissioned Sophie’s construction. He’d paid for the entire project personally and owned everything on the island, including her.

He was wearing an expensive white suit stained with food, with a red tie and matching handkerchief. He had gold cufflinks and buttons that seemed ready to pop from his jacket any moment due to his big round belly. He had a small black moustache and shiny, combed out hair. When she saw him

coming up to her, Sophie embraced him tightly...

“Ouch, let go of me, you blasted machine!” Mr. Jacob yelled, looking as if he were on the verge of throwing up his large lunch.

“Sophie, release Mr. Jacob! She’s young, and she doesn’t know what she is capable of!” said Dr. Swartz.

“I was just giving him a hug.”

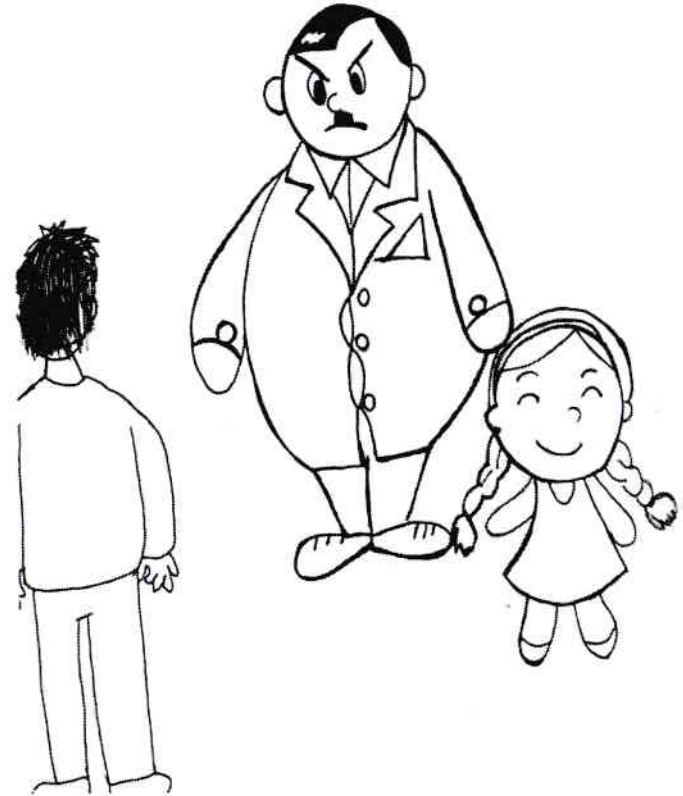
After releasing her owner, she gave him a light kiss.

“Hugs! Kisses! I can’t stand hugs and kisses! You’re supposed to help me take over the world. You’re not programmed for this mawkishness!”

Sophie felt ashamed and retreated to a corner of the room.

“Actually, she’s programmed to behave just like a human being, to feel and behave like a little girl,” said Dr. Swartz.

“What can she do?” asked Mr. Jacob. “Can she fly? Can she shoot laser beams?”



Sophie approached the two men and said, “I can’t fly, but I can run extremely fast. I have very precise movements, and I can do complicated

operations. I have an artificial intelligence that helps me learn new things all the time. I was programmed to help people, and I can find solutions for many of humanity's problems."

Mr. Jacob took a good look at the little robot, studying it as if it had come from outer space, "Hmmm, she seems useless! Look at her!" He pulled at her braids. "Blonde braids! Green eyes and a button nose! Small physical stature! And I'm supposed to take over the world with her?! So much money wasted for nothing! Destroy her, Swartz! I have no use for a toy robot!"

Dr. Swartz didn't even get a chance to explain because Mr. Jacob angrily left, slamming the door.

Sophie cast a glance at her creator. If her eyes could speak, they would have cried, *"Have mercy! Don't destroy me!"*

Dr. Swartz could see the fear in her little emerald eyes. "Don't be afraid! I won't harm you. How could I?! I created you, which means I'm your father. However, you're in great danger, and you have to leave the island immediately!"

"Thank you, Father! But how— how can I leave?"

"You'll run on the surface of the water! I'll set your coordinates for the nearest dry land. You're completely waterproof. You draw your energy from the Sun, so your battery cells will take days to fully discharge, and there won't be any problems escaping the island. You're smart, and you'll find ways to survive."

"I don't think I'll make it! People will be afraid of me!"

"You can do whatever you set your mind to, Sophie! People won't even

notice you're a robot. Try to act like the other children."

"I'll try."

"I'll track you down, and I'll make sure that nothing happens to you. Be a good girl, and take care!"

The doctor pressed a button, and a secret door opened behind the large computer on the right side of the room. It led to a roughly constructed concrete tunnel. It was lit, and the two passed through the secret door and followed the path's opening ahead. The smell of water was heavy, and Sophie could sense it due to her human-like design.

"I won't be able to accompany you out. I can come some of the way, but I will need to turn back soon to make Mr. Jacob believe I destroyed you."

At one point, the paved tunnel split into three paths.

"Here is where we split up. Take the path on your right and walk until you reach the end! There you'll reach a flight of stairs that will lead you to the surface. Once you get out, run straight to the water, and don't look back. You know the rest. Have a safe journey!"

"Thank you for giving me life and for the risks you are taking to save me, Father!"

The two hugged and went their separate ways.

Sophie followed the corridor on the right until she got to the stairway her father had told her about. What he didn't say was that there were many steps to climb! If she weren't a robot, it would have taken her a long time to ascend them! But given that she was a robot, she easily went up in a few seconds.

The stairs led to a secret door that went outside. The door was covered by