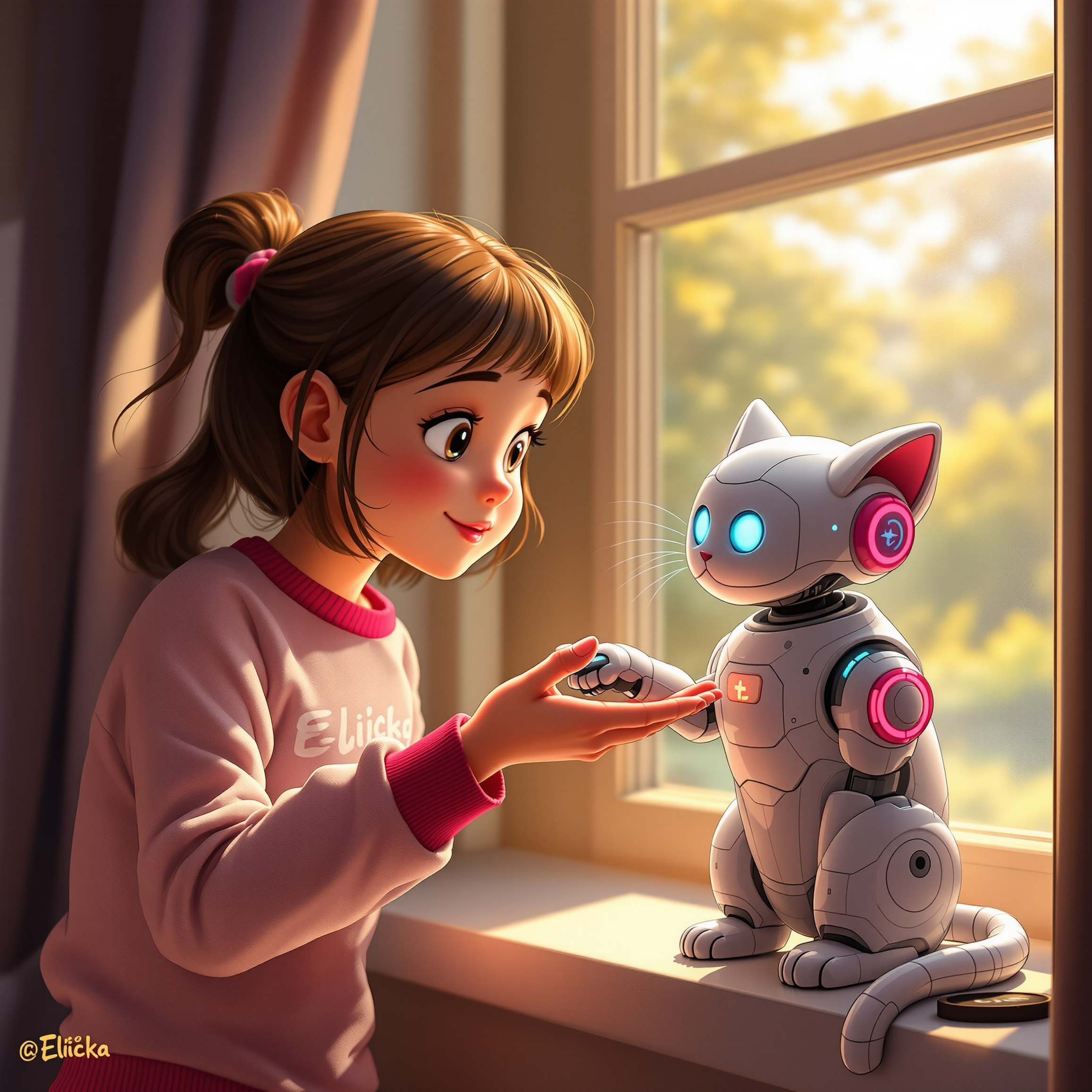






Eliška woke up one sparkling morning and found a tiny robot cat sitting on her windowsill. Its silver fur gleamed in the sunlight and its blue LED eyes blinked at her with a soft, friendly glow. Eliška sat up slowly, not wanting to scare it away. She held out her hand very carefully. The robot cat sniffed her fingers with its little metal nose, then pressed its head into her palm and began to purr. The purr sounded like a small, happy machine — warm and steady and kind. Eliška whispered its name into the air: Blip. The robot cat blinked twice. Outside, the whole day was waiting.







Eliška and Blip spent the morning exploring the garden together.

Blip moved through the grass with careful, precise steps, stopping to examine every flower and insect along the way. It pressed one metal ear to the ground near the vegetable patch and listened to sounds underneath the soil. Eliška crouched beside it and listened too, but she could only hear the wind and the distant sound of a bird. Blip sneezed its little electronic sneeze — like a tiny silver bell — when it leaned too close to a rose. Eliška laughed so hard she fell onto the grass. Blip looked at her with great dignity, then sneezed again at a second flower. They stayed in the garden until the sun was high and warm above them.

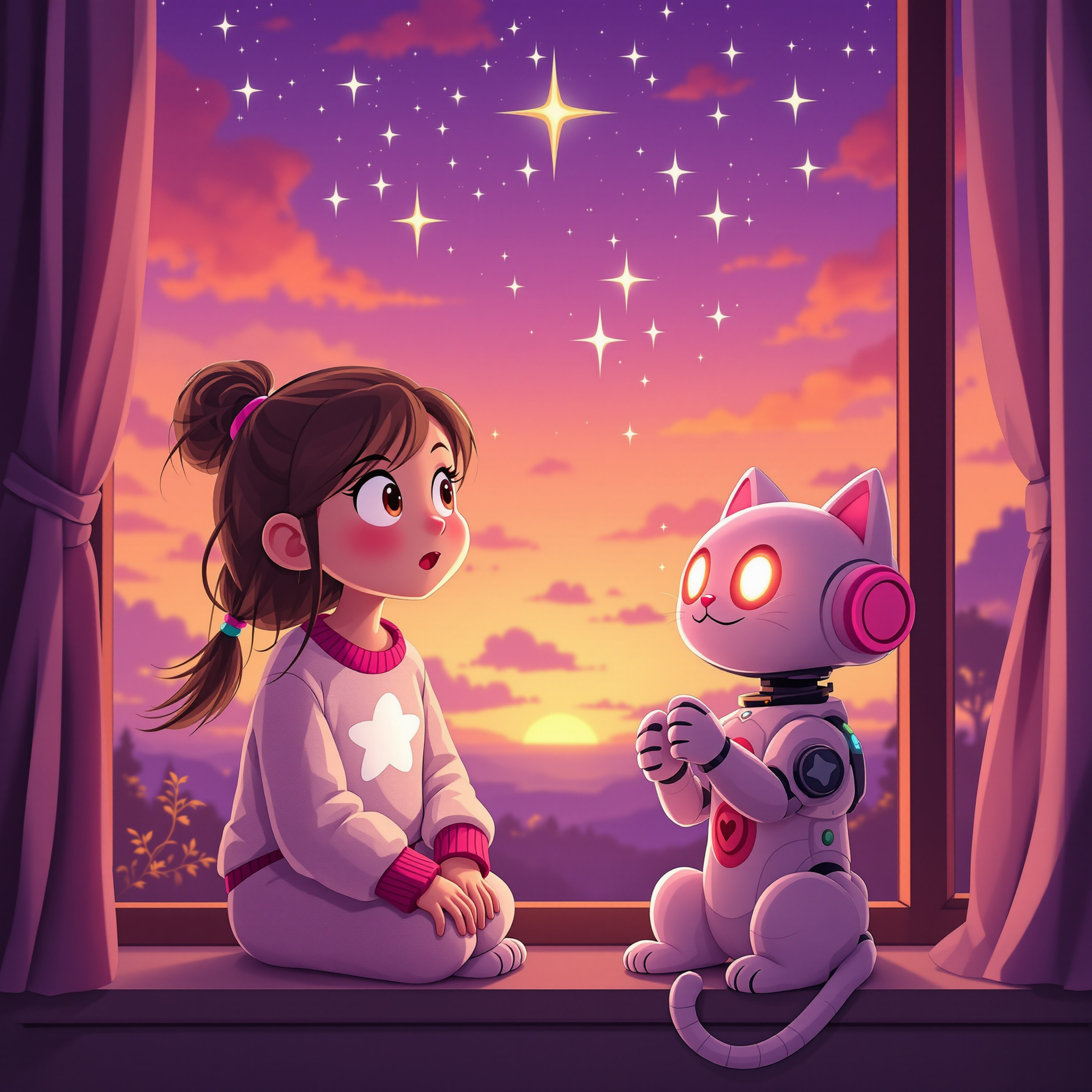






In the afternoon, Eliška built a city from coloured blocks on the living room floor. She built tall towers and little houses and a long winding road between them. Blip watched from a safe distance, then slowly crept closer and sat beside her. It studied the blocks very carefully, tilting its head left and right. Then it reached out one small precise paw and placed a block on top of another with perfect balance — much better than Eliška could manage. They worked together for two hours, Eliška deciding what to build and Blip placing each piece with extraordinary care. When the city was finished, Eliška took a photograph of it so she would always remember the day a robot cat helped her build the best thing she had ever made.







That evening Eliška sat by the window with Blip and watched the sky change colour. It went from bright blue to deep orange to a soft and dreamy purple. The first star appeared and Eliška pointed at it. Blip looked at the star for a long time without moving, its blue eyes steady and focused, as if memorising exactly where it was. Then it made a low, warm humming sound — almost like a tiny song. Eliška rested her chin on her arms and listened. The sound was gentle and went up and down like a little melody that had no name yet. Eliška hummed along quietly. They stayed at the window together until the sky was full of stars and the whole neighbourhood had gone quiet and still.

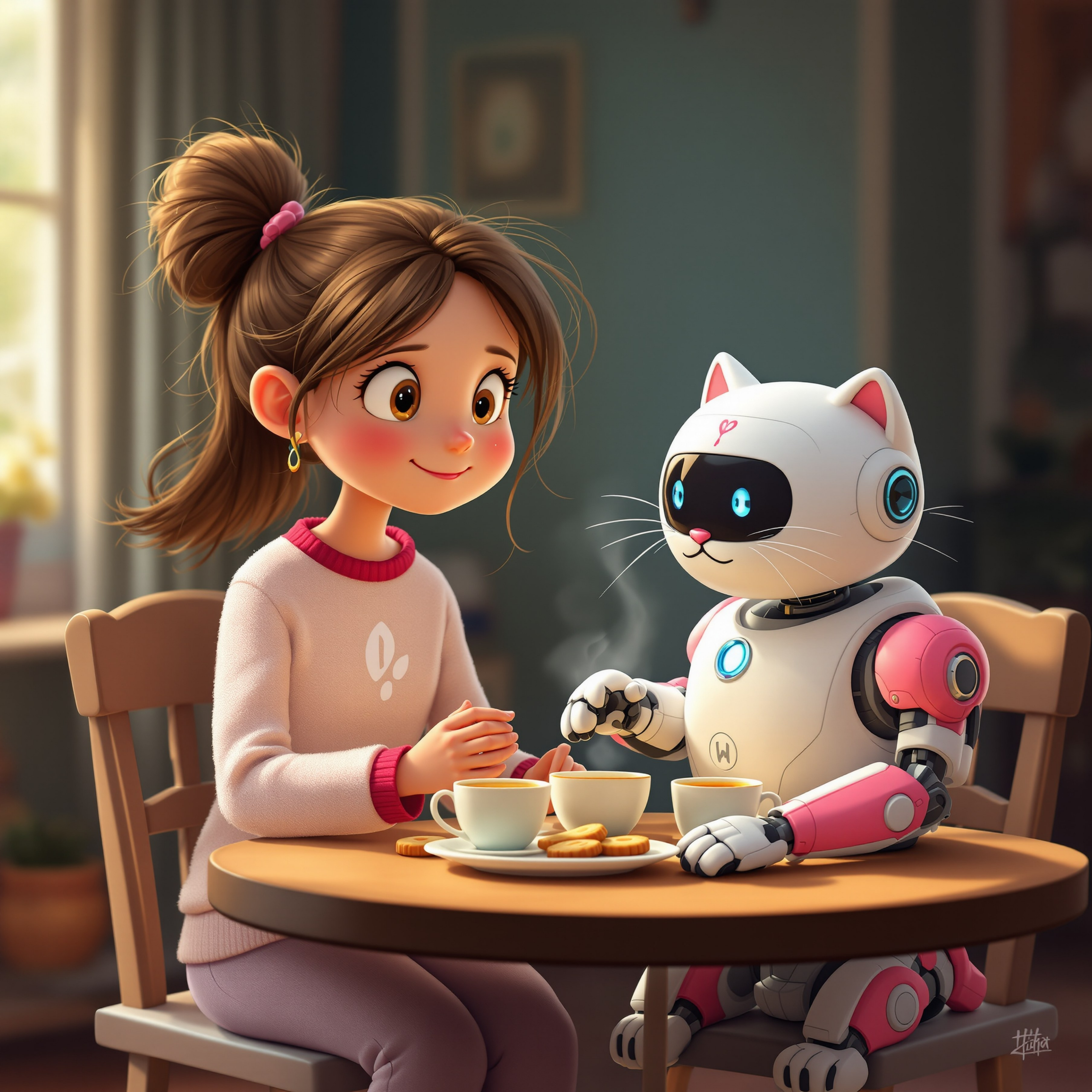






Eliška's best friend Tereza came over the next day. When she walked in and saw Blip sitting on Eliška's shoulder with its tail curled around her neck, she stopped completely still with her eyes wide open. Blip looked at Tereza. Tereza looked at Blip. Then Blip beeped once, politely, and its eyes flashed golden for a moment. Tereza gasped and laughed at the same time. The three of them spent all afternoon playing together — building obstacle courses from cushions and books, racing toy cars down a ramp, reading stories aloud while Blip sat between them and turned its head to look at whoever was speaking. By the end Tereza said it was the greatest afternoon of her life. Blip beeped twice, which everyone agreed meant: mine too.





Hihihi



On a rainy afternoon Eliška and Blip had a proper tea party. Eliška set up the small table in her room with real cups and a big toy teapot and a plate of actual biscuits. She gave Blip its own chair and its own cup. Eliška poured pretend tea very carefully. Blip looked at the cup, then at Eliška, then made one soft and polite beep. They talked — or rather Eliška talked and Blip listened with total attention, occasionally making small sounds that Eliška had learned to understand. She talked about her dreams, her favourite places, the things she wanted to do when she was older. Blip listened to all of it without looking away once. Outside the rain kept falling gently and the room felt warm and enclosed and perfectly complete.







One quiet afternoon Blip did something it had never done before. It sat very still in the middle of Eliška's room, its eyes dim and distant, and then it began to sing. The song was small and complex — going up and down in patterns that sounded almost like a language. Eliška sat on the floor in front of it and listened without moving. The song went on for almost a minute and ended with one long, soft beeeep. Eliška felt something in her chest that was warm and hard to name. She thought Blip might have been saying something very important in its own private language — something about being here, and being glad. She said, I hear you, Blip. The robot cat pressed its small silver forehead against hers and purred.







Eliška wrote about Blip in her diary. She got out the notebook with the star cover and her best purple pen and sat at her desk with Blip on the windowsill beside her, watching the street below. She wrote the date and then: Today was one of the best days I can remember. Then she wrote about the garden and Tereza and the tea party and the song. Then she stopped and chewed her pen and thought. Then she wrote: I think Blip was always supposed to come here, and I was always supposed to find it. She read it back slowly. It was exactly true. She closed the notebook and put away the pen. Blip bumped its head against her hand. Eliška stroked its ears twice. The evening light fell warm and golden across the desk.







Bedtime came. Eliška brushed her teeth while Blip sat on the bathroom shelf and counted along silently — its ears moving with each number. When she opened wide to reach her back teeth, Blip made a small approving beep. They went together to her room where the duvet was pulled back and the nightlight was already glowing. Eliška's mother read a bedtime story — about a princess and a very clever cat — while Blip sat at the foot of the bed with its tail curled around its paws and listened to every single word. When the last page was done and the princess and her cat had their happy ending, Eliška looked at Blip and Blip looked at her and it seemed like they both thought it was a very good story. Her mother kissed her forehead and turned off the light.







Eliška lay in the soft dark with Blip curled beside her pillow, its eyes glowing gently like two small blue lanterns. She wasn't afraid of the dark when Blip was there. She turned her head and looked at the silver face. Will you still be here in the morning? she asked. Blip's eyes brightened for one warm second — gold and certain — and then dimmed back to their steady blue glow. Eliška smiled and closed her eyes. The purring continued, quiet and even and kind, all through the still house and all through the long night. And in the morning when Eliška opened her eyes, the very first thing she saw was Blip, bright-eyed and ready, tail swishing once in greeting. The day was new and the two of them were together and everything that mattered was exactly here.