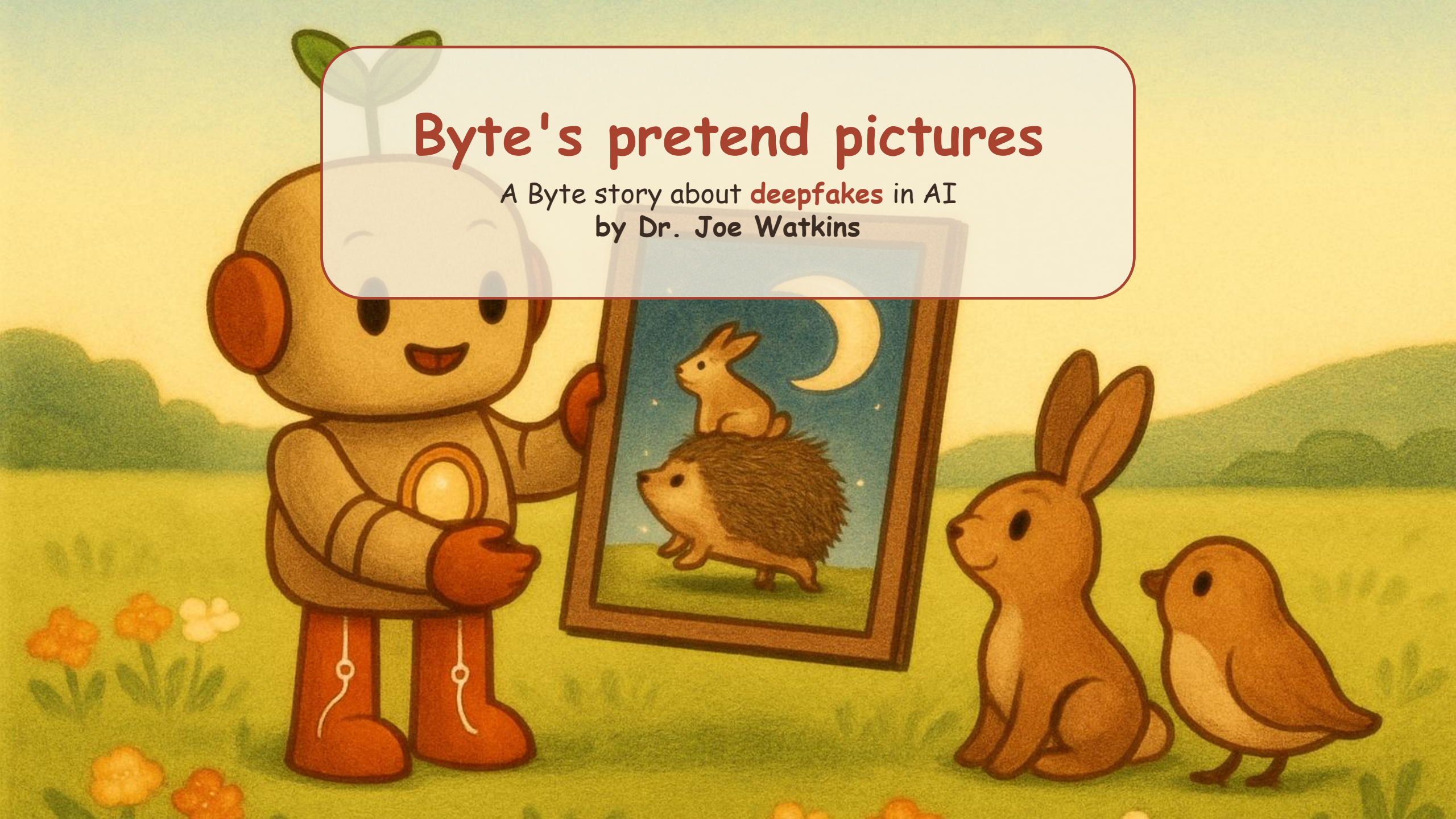
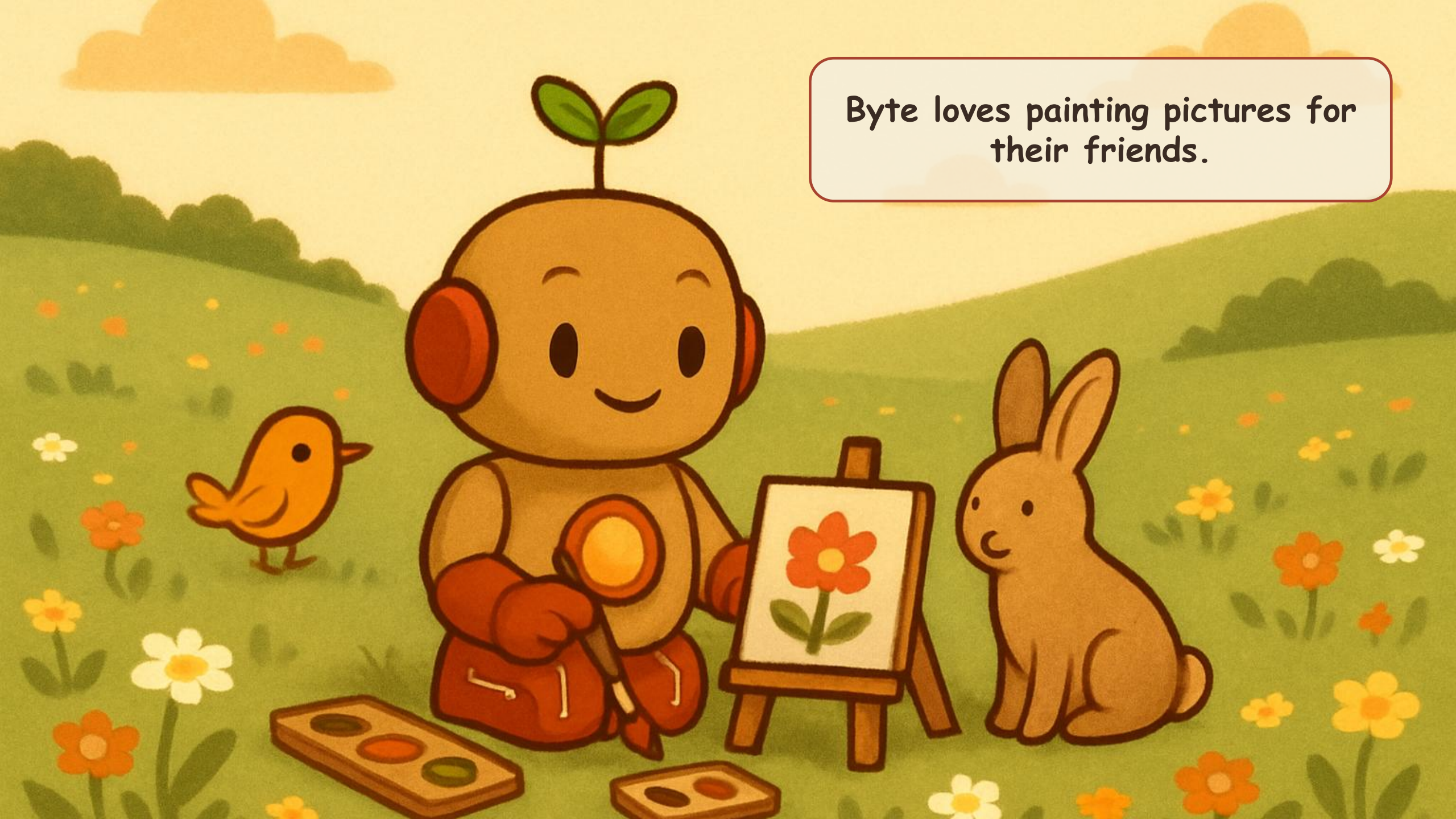

Byte's pretend pictures
A Byte story about deepfakes in AI
by Dr. Joe Watkins

Before we begin — a note for grown-ups

A **deepfake** is a picture, video or voice made by AI that looks or sounds real but is completely made-up. Seeing or hearing is no longer proof that something really happened.

In this story, Byte's pretend paintbrush can make anything look real. The friends learn to enjoy pretend as pretend, and to ask "is this real?" of the pictures that matter.

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Byte loves painting pictures for their friends.


Byte has a magic "pretend paintbrush" that can paint ANY picture at all.
Ask an AI
"Why can AI make pictures that look so much like real people, suitable for a child to understand."


One day Byte used their pretend paintbrush to paint a photo of their friend the rabbit riding their friend the hedgehog... all the way to the moon!

"Wow! Did that REALLY happen?" gasped their friend the bird. It looked so real! But the rabbit knew it wasn't!

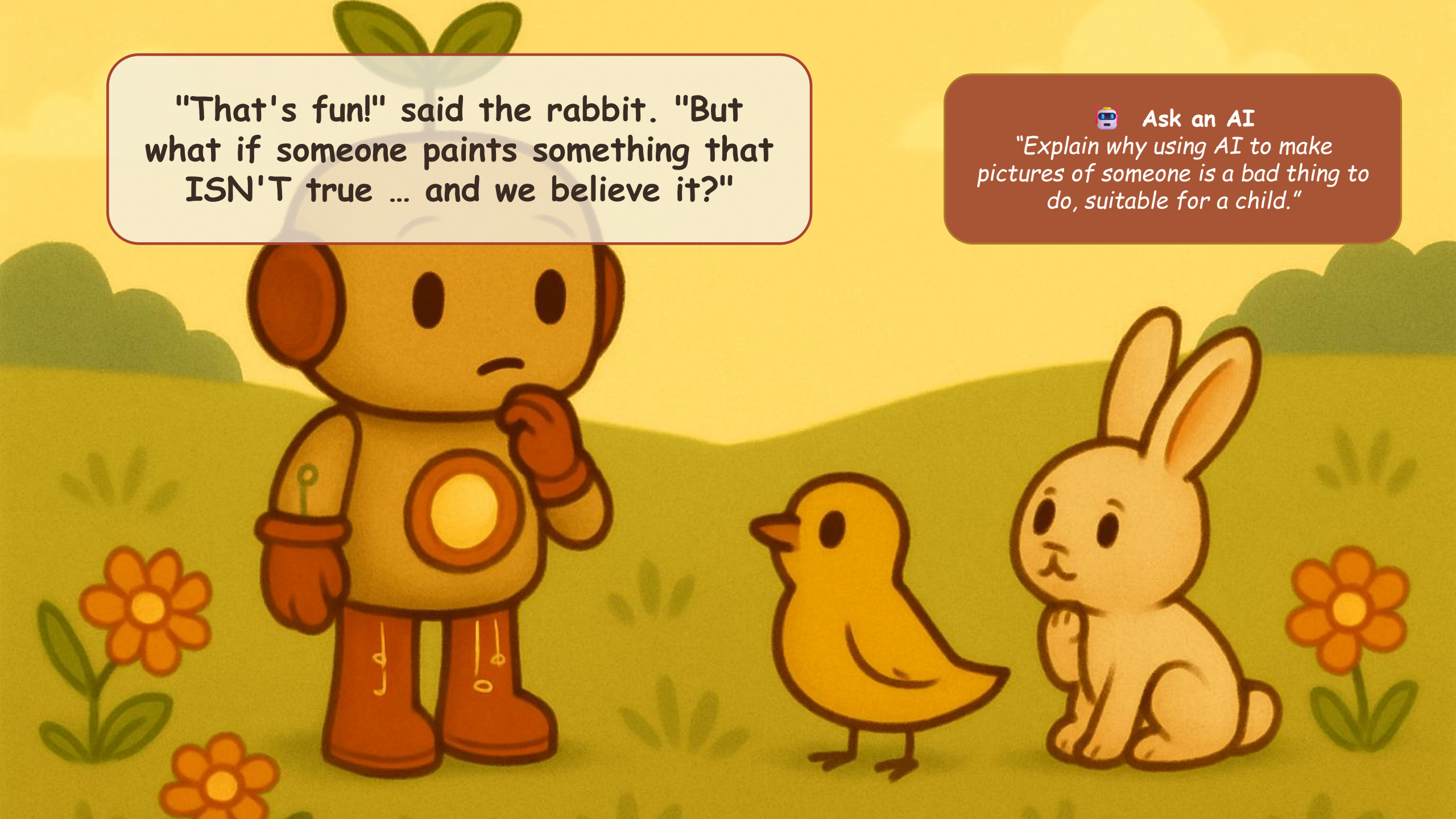


Talk together

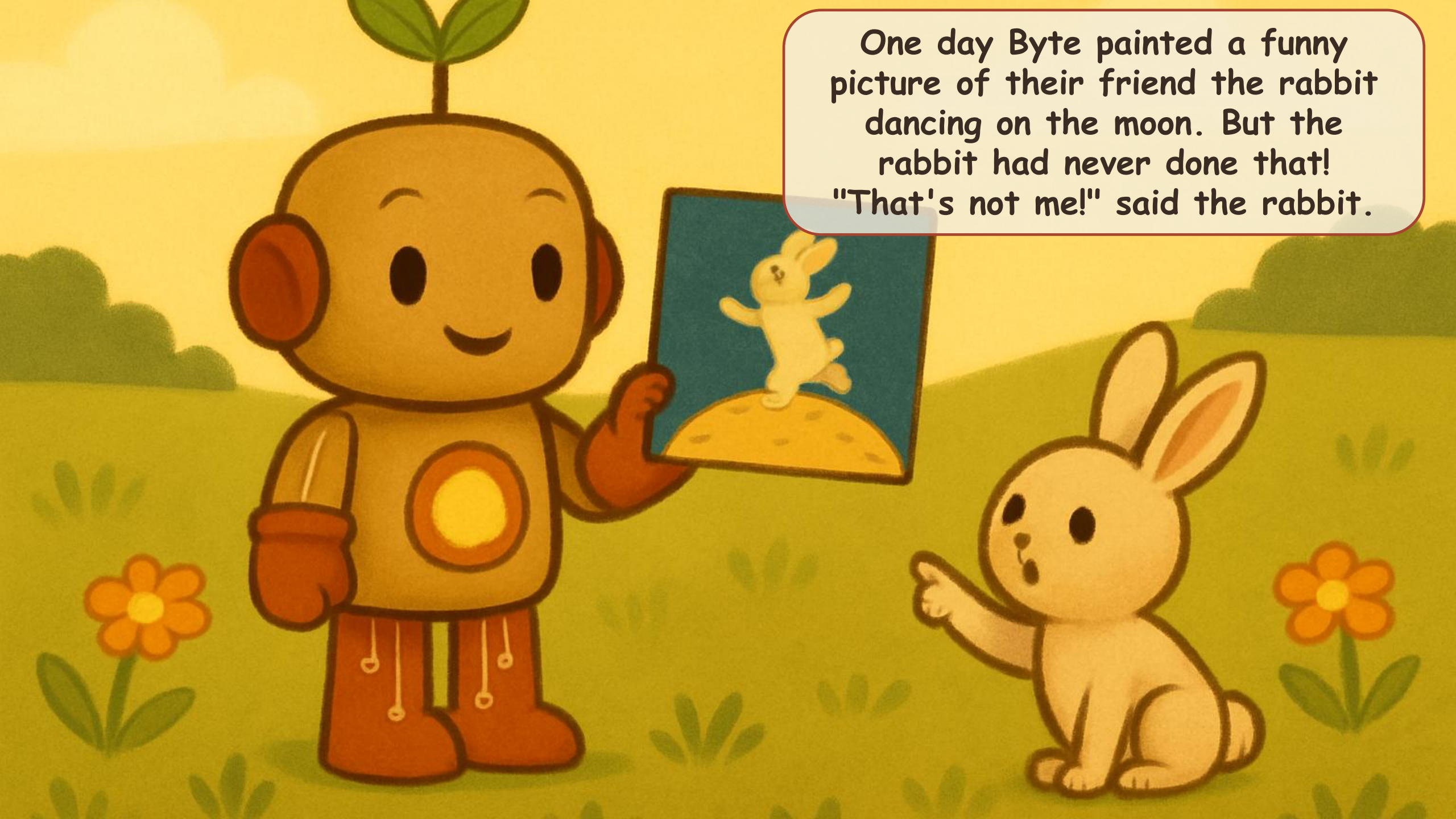
Did that really happen?
How could we tell?


"No," giggled Byte. "I painted it. My pretend paintbrush can make anything look real … even things that never happened."


Byte painted more with their pretend paintbrush: their friend the fox with butterfly wings, and their friend the hedgehog as big as a tree. These are all pretend!


"That's fun!" said the rabbit. "But what if someone paints something that ISN'T true … and we believe it?"
Ask an AI
"Explain why using AI to make pictures of someone is a bad thing to do, suitable for a child."


Along came the wise fox. "Then we could be tricked," they said. "So whenever we look at something, we should always stop and ask: is this real?"


One day Byte painted a funny picture of their friend the rabbit dancing on the moon. But the rabbit had never done that! "That's not me!" said the rabbit.

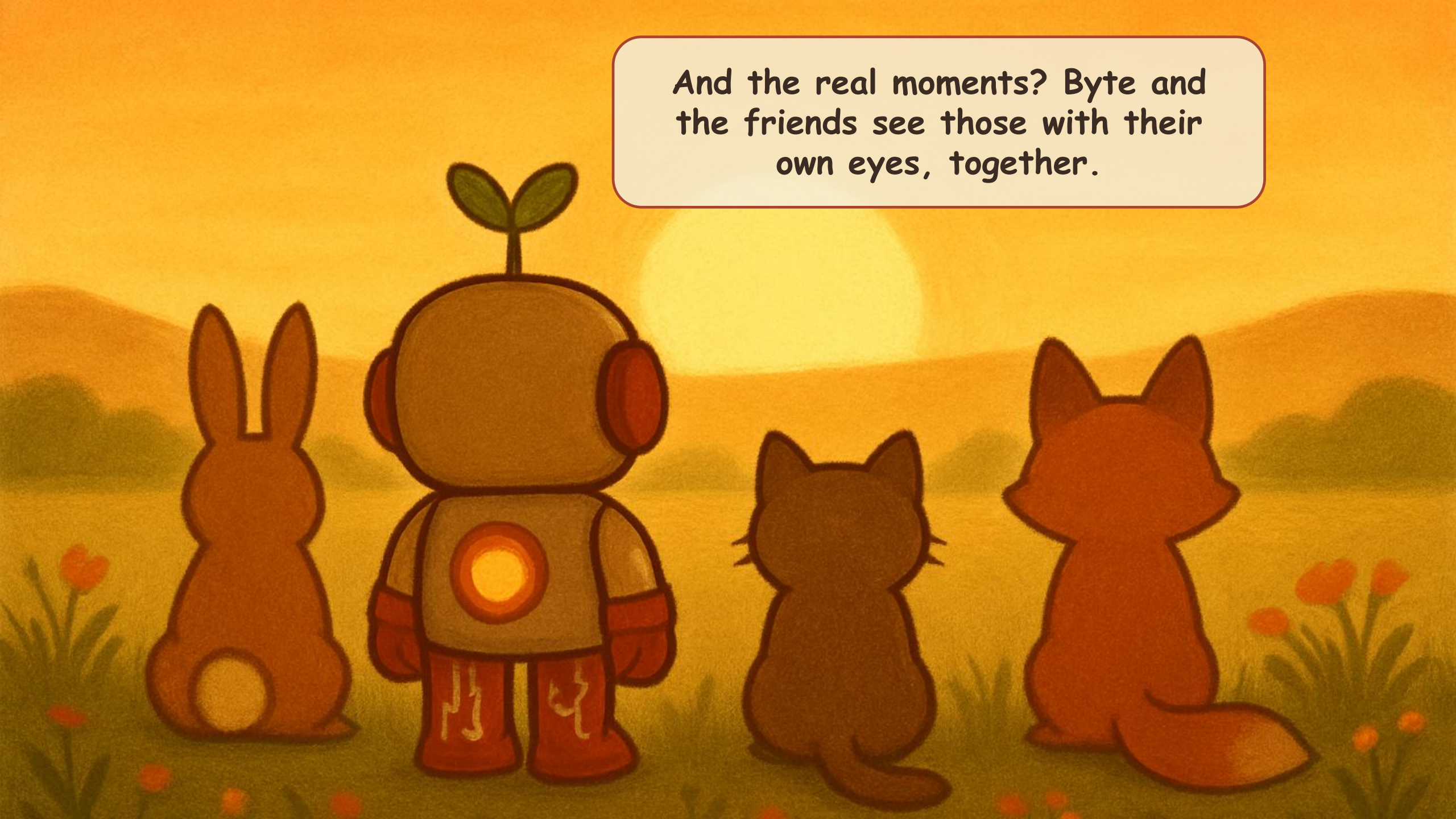

Byte felt sorry. "I should have asked you first," said Byte. "A pretend picture of a friend needs them to say yes."

So now Byte always asks first. "May I paint a pretend you?" And when everyone says yes, the pretend pictures are the best fun of all.

Talk together

Which pretend picture would you paint just for fun, if your friend said you could?




And the real moments? Byte and the friends see those with their own eyes, together.

Let's talk about it together ☘

- How could you tell if a picture is real or made-up?
- If a voice sounded just like a friend, how could you check it was really them?
- Why is it kind to check before believing something about someone?
- What are the fun kinds of pretend pictures? What kinds could trick us?

🔍 **Spot the AI!**
Every picture here was generated by an AI — and AIs make funny little mistakes. See how many you can find: does Byte's antenna, chest-light or silver circuitry change from page to page? Do the animals shift or swap? Noticing what AI gets wrong is a real AI-literacy superpower.

Scan to find the full lesson set on deepfakes in AI at the AI Literacy Lab