The Thirsty Robot

A Byte story about **energy and the environment** in AI

by Dr. Joe Watkins



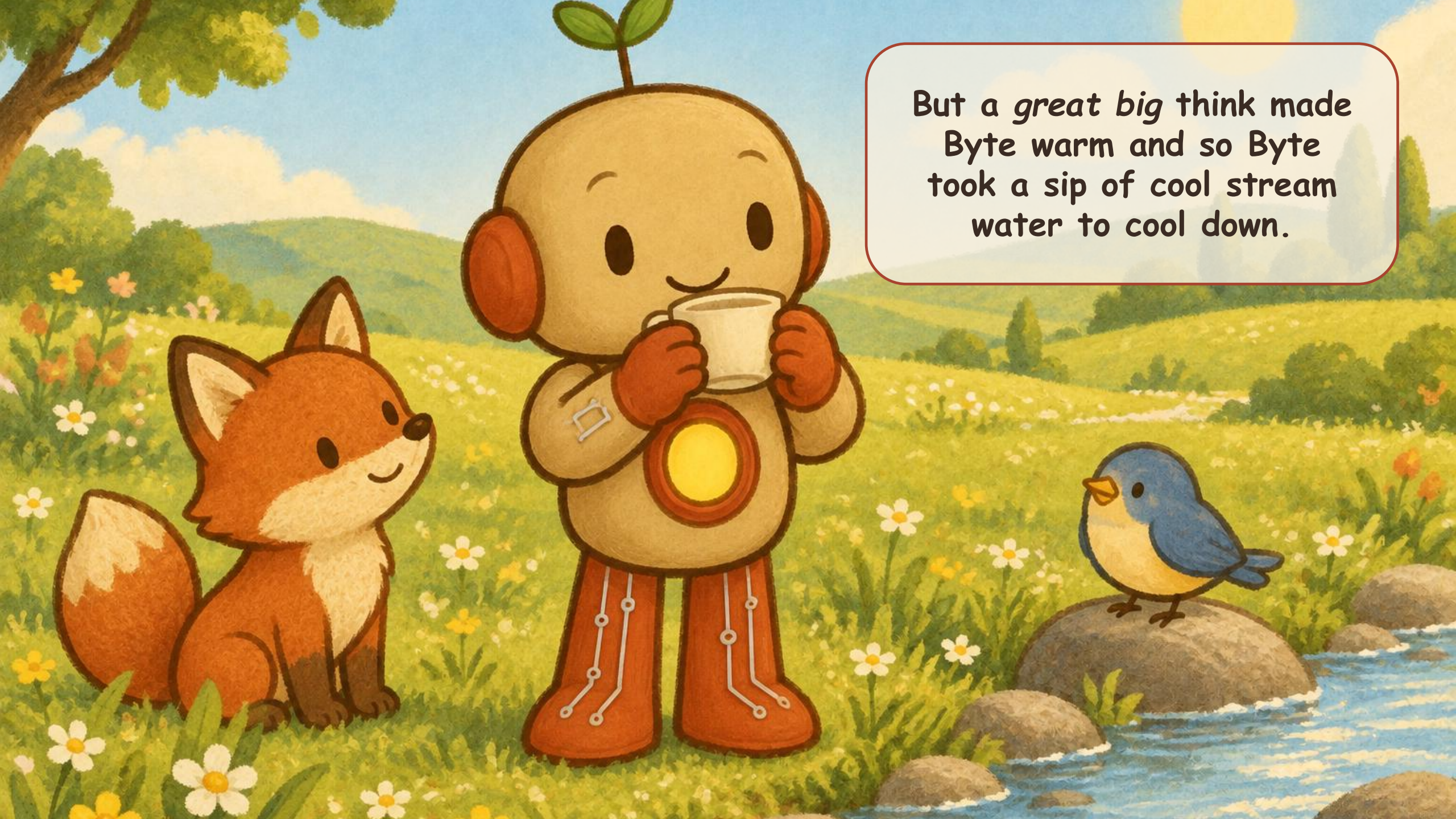
Before we begin — a note for grown-ups

Energy is used by every AI answer, and the big computers that do the thinking are cooled with water, so a big answer costs more than a small one.

In this story, each great big think makes Byte sip the stream to cool down, until the stream runs low and the friends learn to save the big thinks for when they matter.

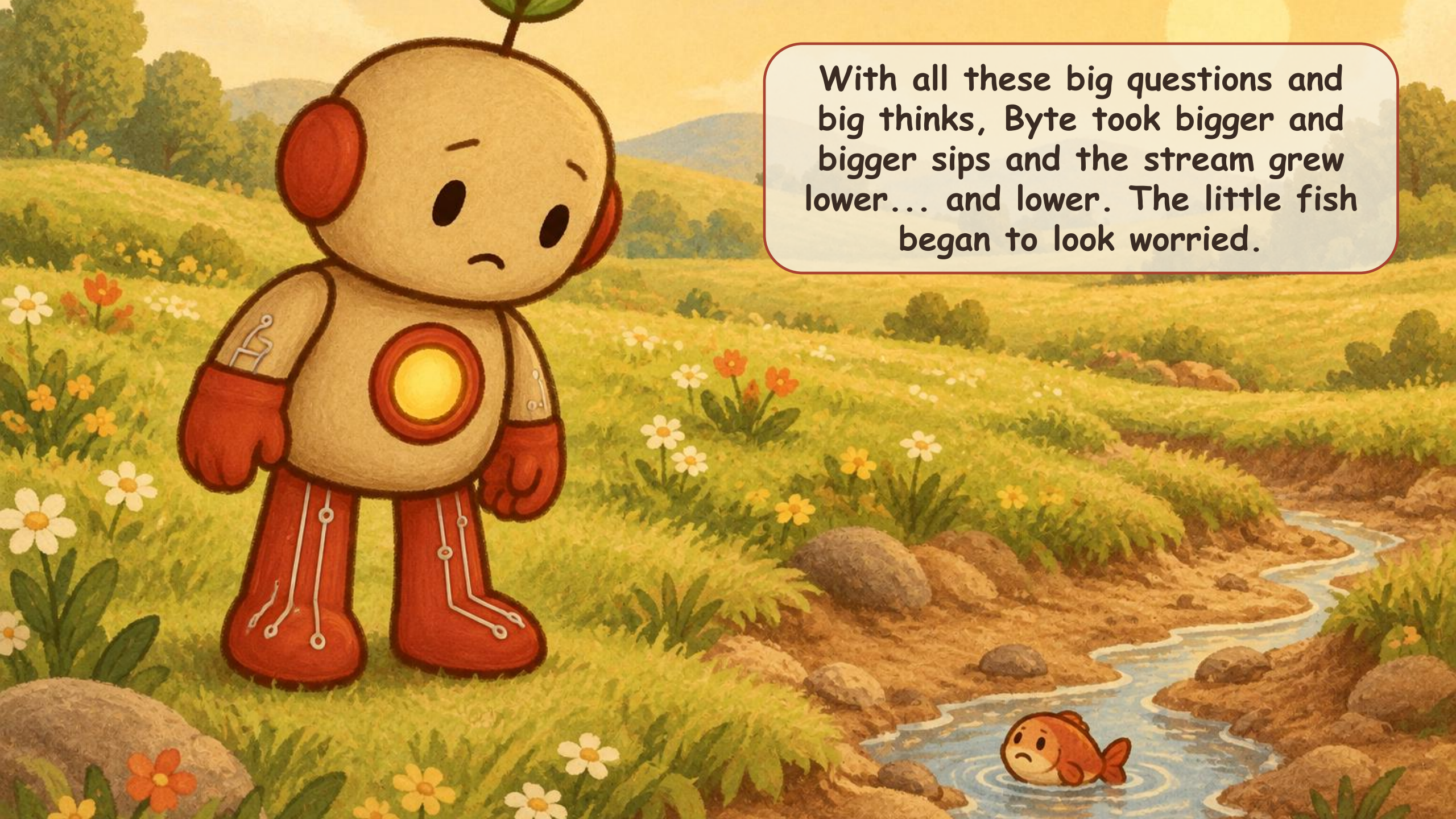
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When Byte did a little think, they stayed cool as a cucumber.
Ask an AI
"Give me three simple, cheerful ways a family could save energy at home."


But a *great big* think made Byte warm and so Byte took a sip of cool stream water to cool down.


Ask an AI
"Explain to a 5-year-old that answering big questions uses energy and water."
A sip here, a sip there. The friends loved asking Byte big, tricky things to see what they knew about.


"Byte, count all the blades of grass!" "Byte, name every star!"
These were hard questions, so Byte went Sip... sip... SIP.


With all these big questions and big thinks, Byte took bigger and bigger sips and the stream grew lower... and lower. The little fish began to look worried.


The flowers drooped. The frog's pool went muddy. The whole meadow felt thirsty and brown.
Talk together
What do you think is happening to the meadow?


"Oh no," said Byte. "My big thinks and big sips have drunk up almost all the stream."


The wise fox said, "Byte, save the big thinks for when they matter. Otherwise you'll drink all the water to cool down."


After this, the friends asked small when they could. "What colour is this petal?" meant Byte had just a tiny sip.
Talk together
When is a GREAT BIG think really worth it?


And they saved the GREAT BIG thinks for something truly, wonderfully special, and for when answering the question was really important.


Only taking a few big sips, the stream stayed full and the meadow stayed happy. The little fish danced.


Now the meadow and Byte had all the water they needed — shared, and saved for everyone to use.

Let's talk about it together ☘

- Why did Byte need to sip water after a big think?
- What happened to the meadow when Byte did too many big thinks?
- What did the wise fox suggest the friends do?
- When is a GREAT BIG think really worth the cost?
- How can we use clever helpers like AI wisely?

🔍 **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 read the full lesson at the AI Literacy Lab