Byte and the great big think

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

by Dr. Joe Watkins



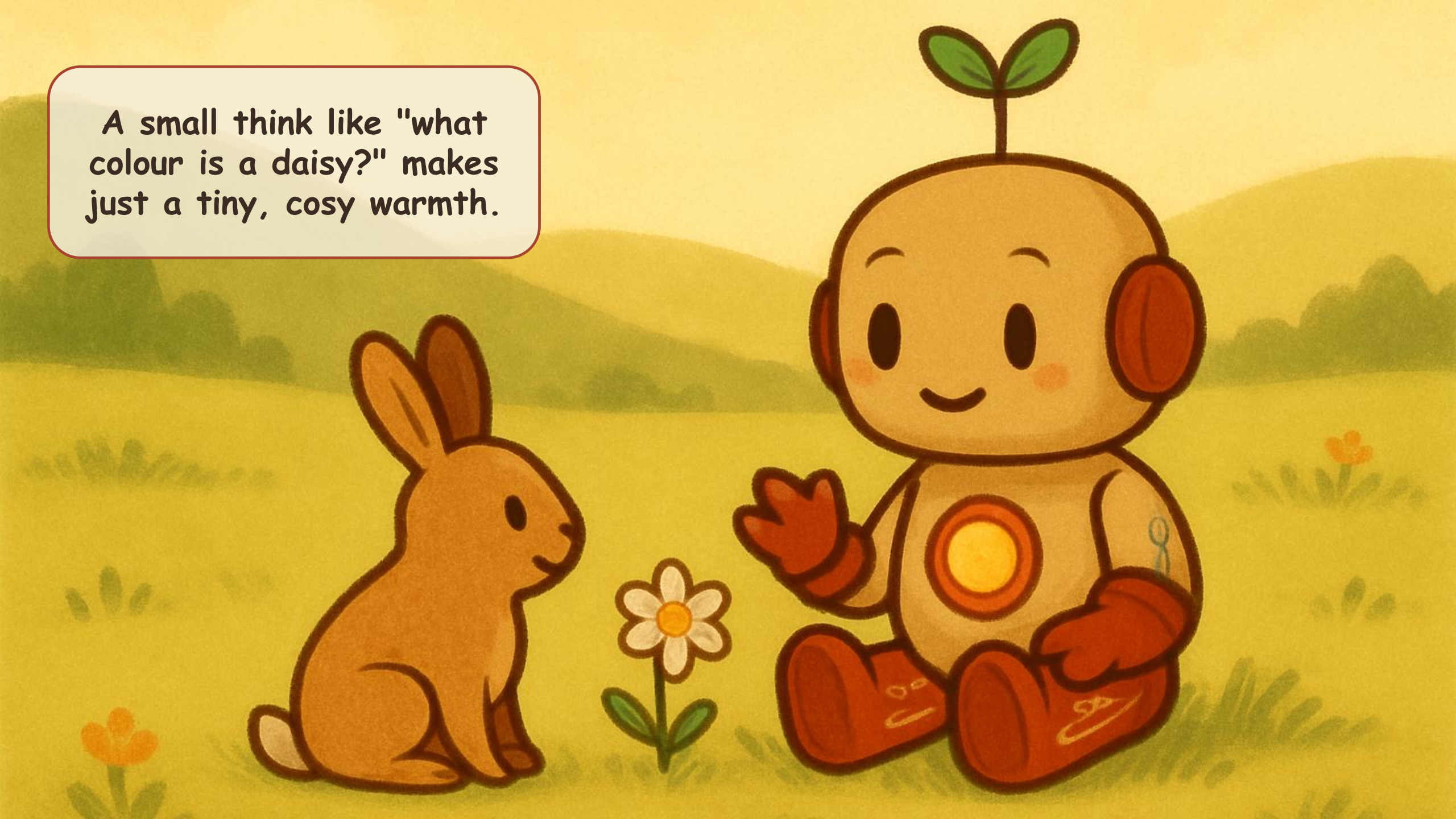
Before we begin — a note for grown-ups

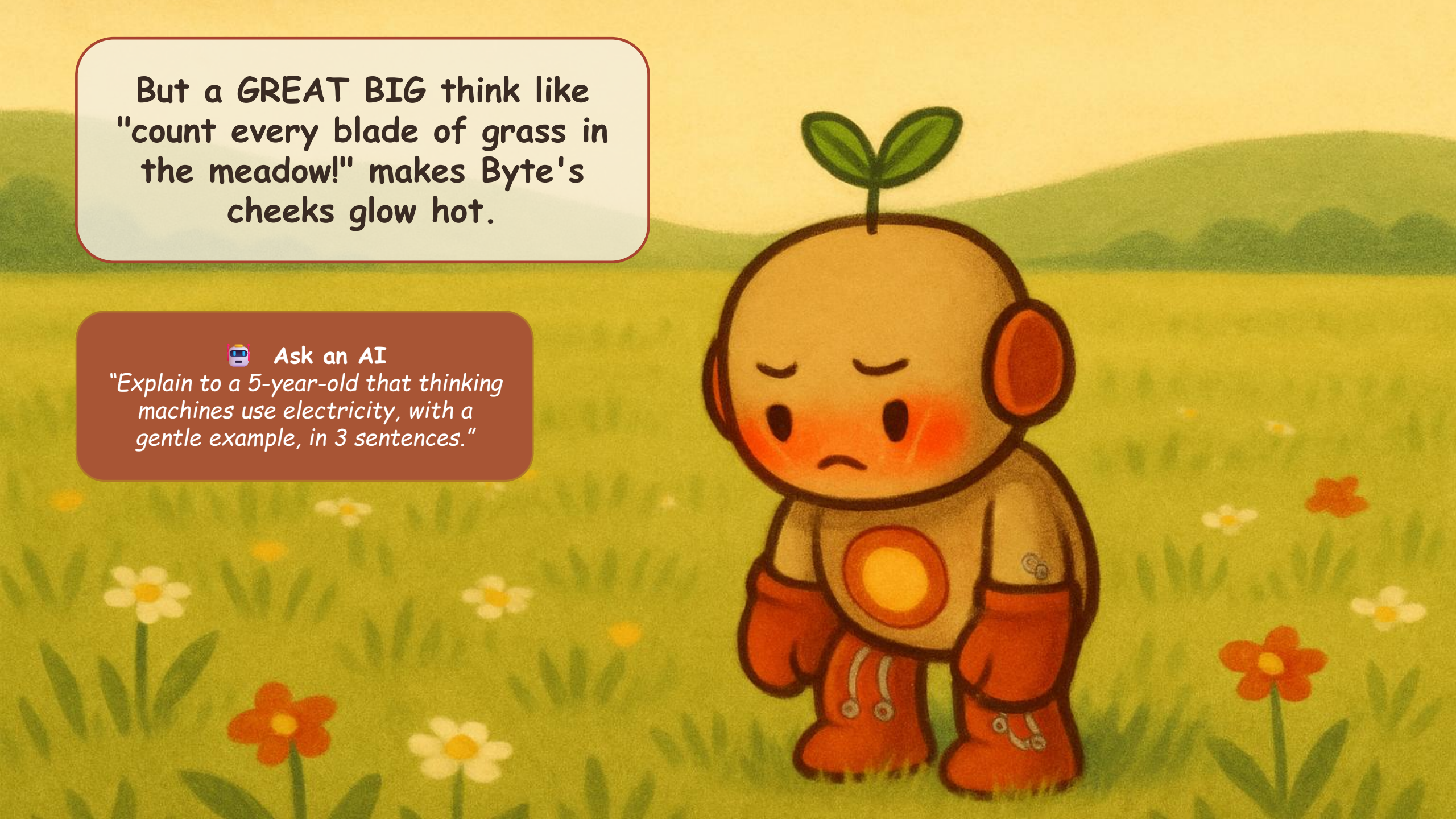
Every AI answer uses **energy,** in the form of real electricity and water, to keep the machines cool. A large request costs far more than a small one, and it is never free or invisible.

In this story, Byte's cheeks overheat when the thinks grow too big and so the friends learn to save big thinks for when they matter, and be kind to the meadow that powers them.

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Whenever Byte has a think, a warm little glow lights up their cheeks.


A small think like "what colour is a daisy?" makes just a tiny, cosy warmth.

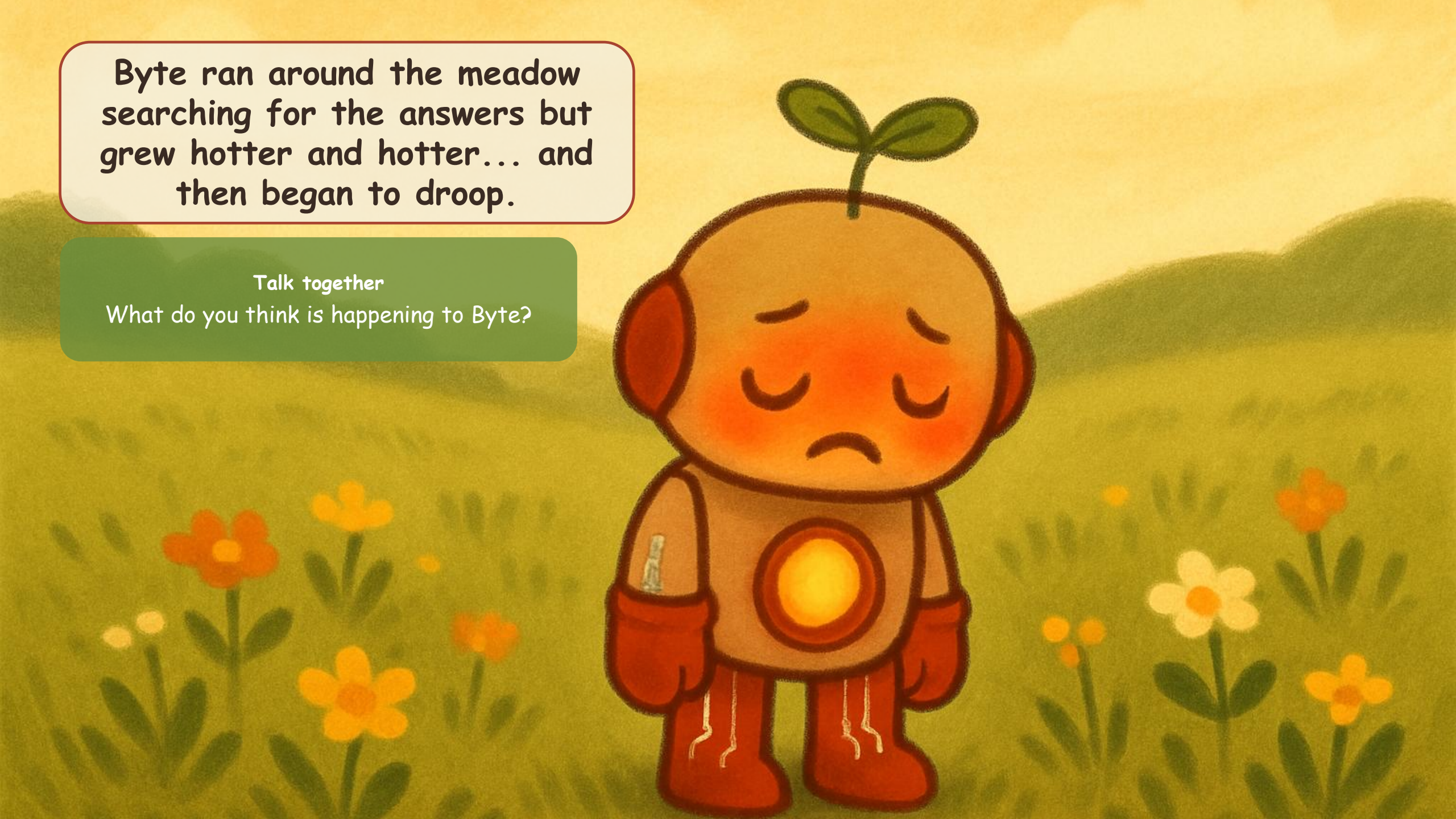

But a GREAT BIG think like "count every blade of grass in the meadow!" makes Byte's cheeks glow hot.
Ask an AI
"Explain to a 5-year-old that thinking machines use electricity, with a gentle example, in 3 sentences."


One day Byte's friends kept asking bigger and sillier questions. "Count every star!" "Name every raindrop!"

Byte ran around the meadow searching for the answers but grew hotter and hotter... and then began to droop.

Talk together

What do you think is happening to Byte?

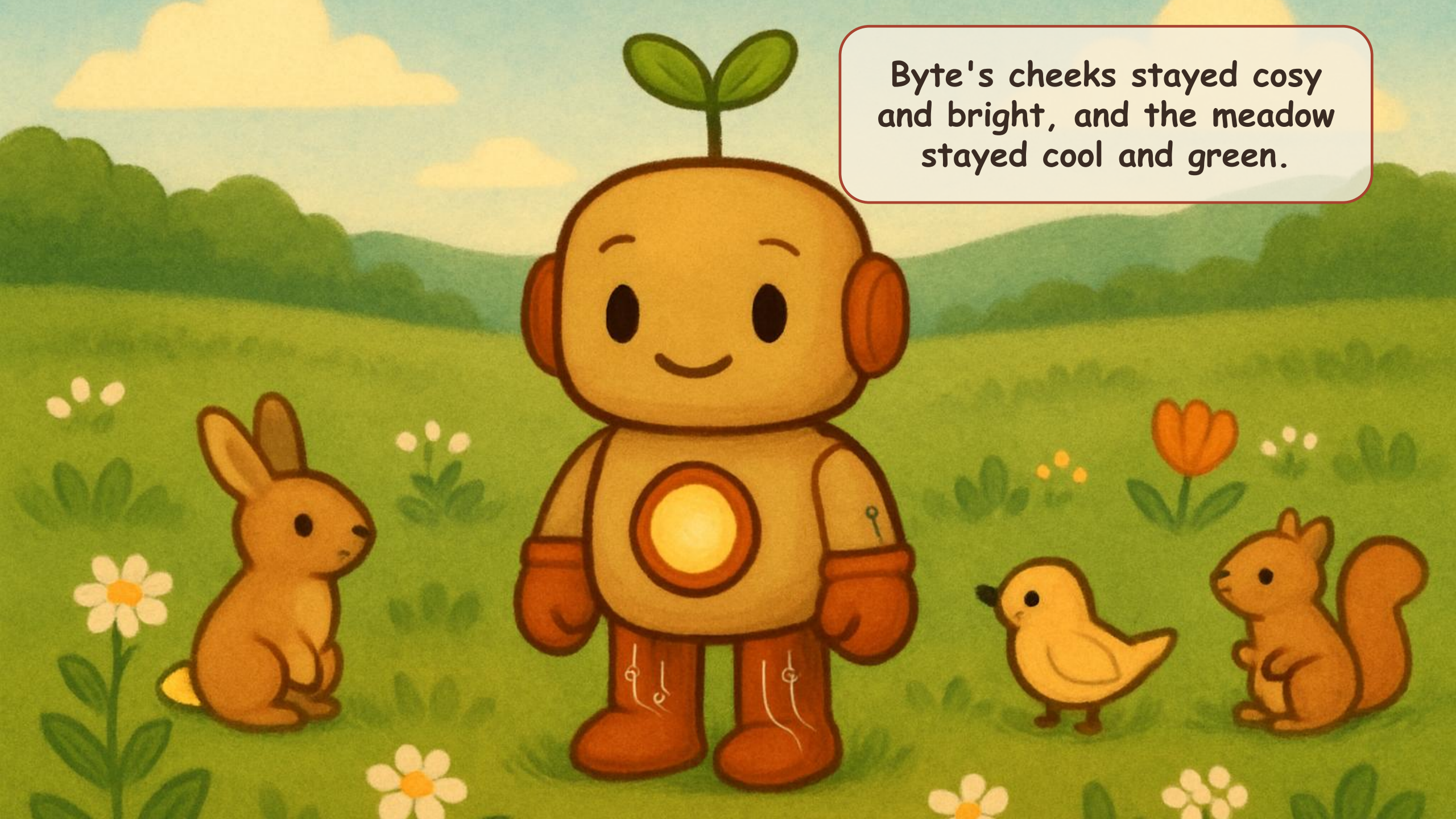


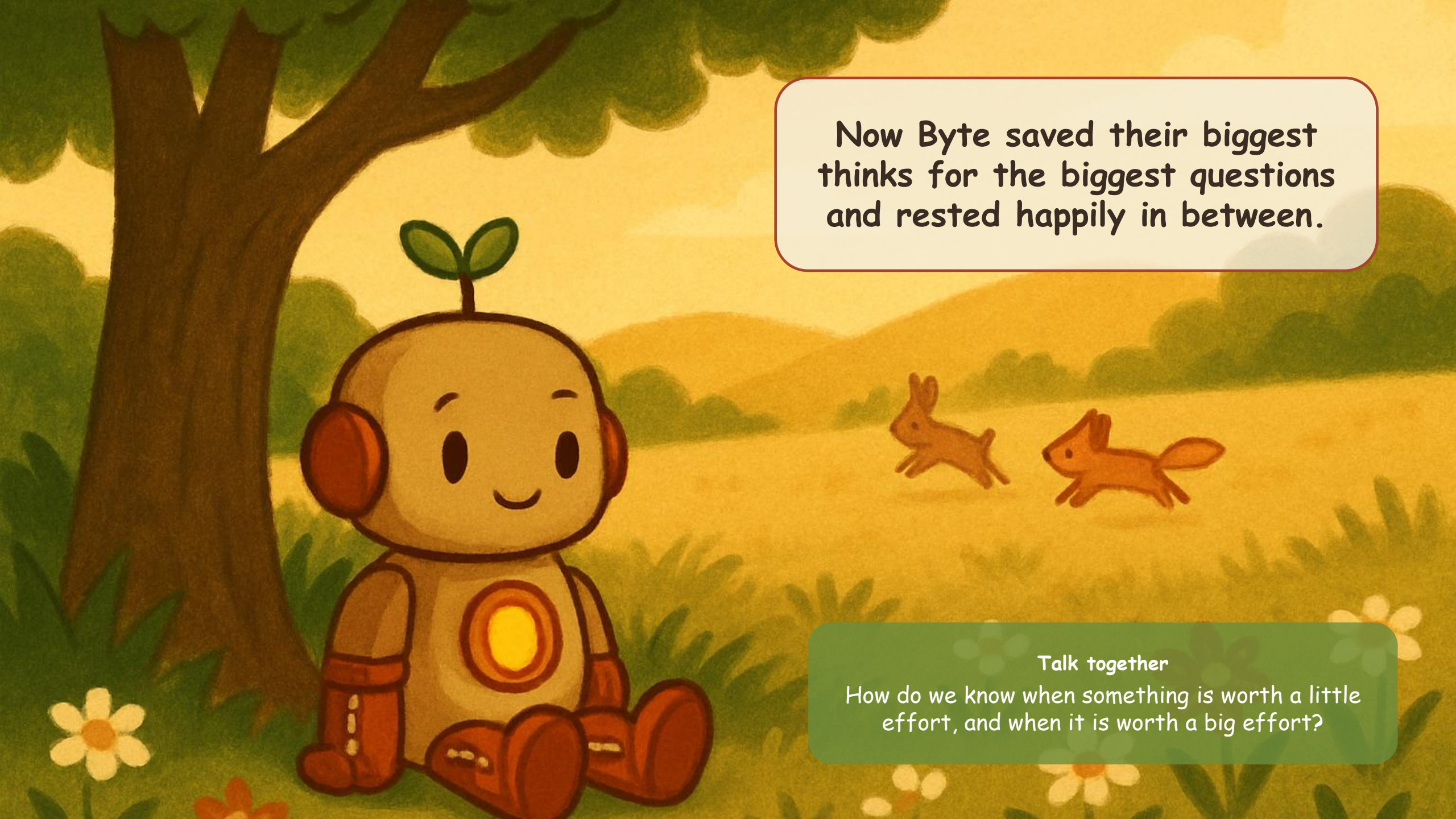

"Byte's too warm!" cried the rabbit. So the friends fanned Byte with big leaves and found cool shade by the stream.


"Every think uses power," explained the wise fox to Byte, "and a BIG one uses lots. Let's save the big thinks for when they really matter."


So for little questions, the friends worked them out themselves and saved Byte for the thinks that counted.
Ask an AI
"Give me 3 simple, cheerful ways a family could save energy at home."


And when a big think WAS worth it, they all sat in the cool shade and did it together.


Byte's cheeks stayed cosy and bright, and the meadow stayed cool and green.


Now Byte saved their biggest thinks for the biggest questions and rested happily in between.
Talk together
How do we know when something is worth a little effort, and when it is worth a big effort?

Let's talk about it together ☘

- What happened to Byte when the thinks got bigger and bigger?
- When is a big think really worth it? What could we work out ourselves first?
- Does a machine's thinking cost anything, even if we can't see it?
- How were the friends kind to Byte — and to the meadow?
- What small ways could we save power at home?

🔍 **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