



Byte and the Blank Page



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A Cheat Code Story

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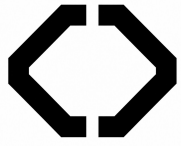
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CHEATCODE



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The assignment was simple. One sentence on the board:

Create something. Anything. Due Friday.

Every other kid in Ms. Luma's class went home with an idea. **Byte** went home and made a list of questions the assignment hadn't answered.



By Thursday evening Byte had eleven plans. Then, all eleven were crossed out.

Glitch sat across the table, feet up, his own piece already done. He was drawing something new just because he felt like it.

"What's wrong with that one?" **Glitch** asked, pointing at plan number eleven.

"It doesn't have a clear objective," **Byte** said.



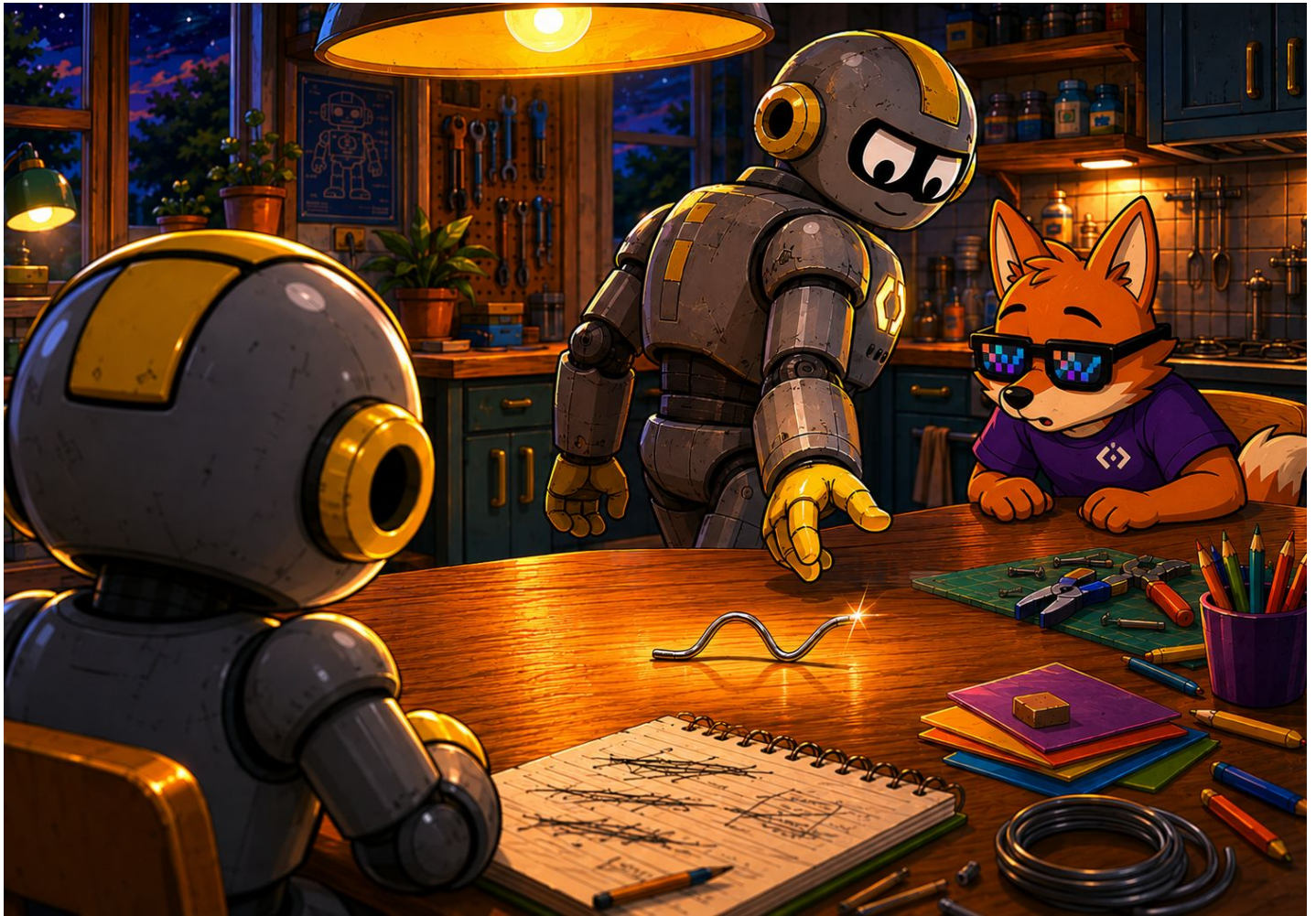
Byte picked up a piece of wire. He turned it over the put it down.

Next, he picked up a lump of clay. But he turned it over and put it down too.

"You're thinking too hard," **Glitch** said.

"There's no such thing as thinking too hard," **Byte** said.

Glitch didn't argue. He knew it was no use.



Byte's dad came over and stood at the table. He looked at the crossed-out plans. He looked at the untouched materials.

He didn't say anything about the plans. He just picked up a small piece of wire, bent it into a loose curve, and set it back down.

"Sometimes I don't even know what something is going to be," he said, "until I start making it."



Byte stared at the bent wire.

He picked it up. Everything in him said this was wrong — he had no plan, no objective, no way to know if what he did next would be right.

He bent it anyway, just to see.



It didn't look like anything.

Byte bent it again. Still nothing. But the nothing looked slightly different than before, and that was at least something to look at.

He reached for another piece. He didn't know where he was going. He just wanted to see what one more small change would do.



Byte reached into his pocket and pulled out his Kodex. He snapped it onto his wrist.

He didn't have a vision. He just wanted a finer touch than his hands could manage right now.

He entered a sequence. The Kodex pulsed with white light, yellow at the edges. Pixel sparks drifted up.



Byte's hands retracted into his forearms. A set of sculpting tools clicked out in their place.



Byte pressed. He shaped. More precisely than his hands alone could have managed. The wire form tightened and structured itself under the tools.

He still didn't know what it was. But somewhere around the fourth small adjustment, something changed.

He wanted to keep going.



Byte's hands retracted again, and this time a fine brush clicked out.

He'd never used this one before. He just wanted to see what color would do.

Blues and greys, thin and careful. Then a flicker of yellow, almost by accident.

He leaned in closer.



Byte's hands retracted again. A narrow engraving point clicked out.

No reason, except he wanted to see what fine lines would do to the surface.

They did exactly what he'd hoped. He hadn't known he was hoping for it until he saw it.

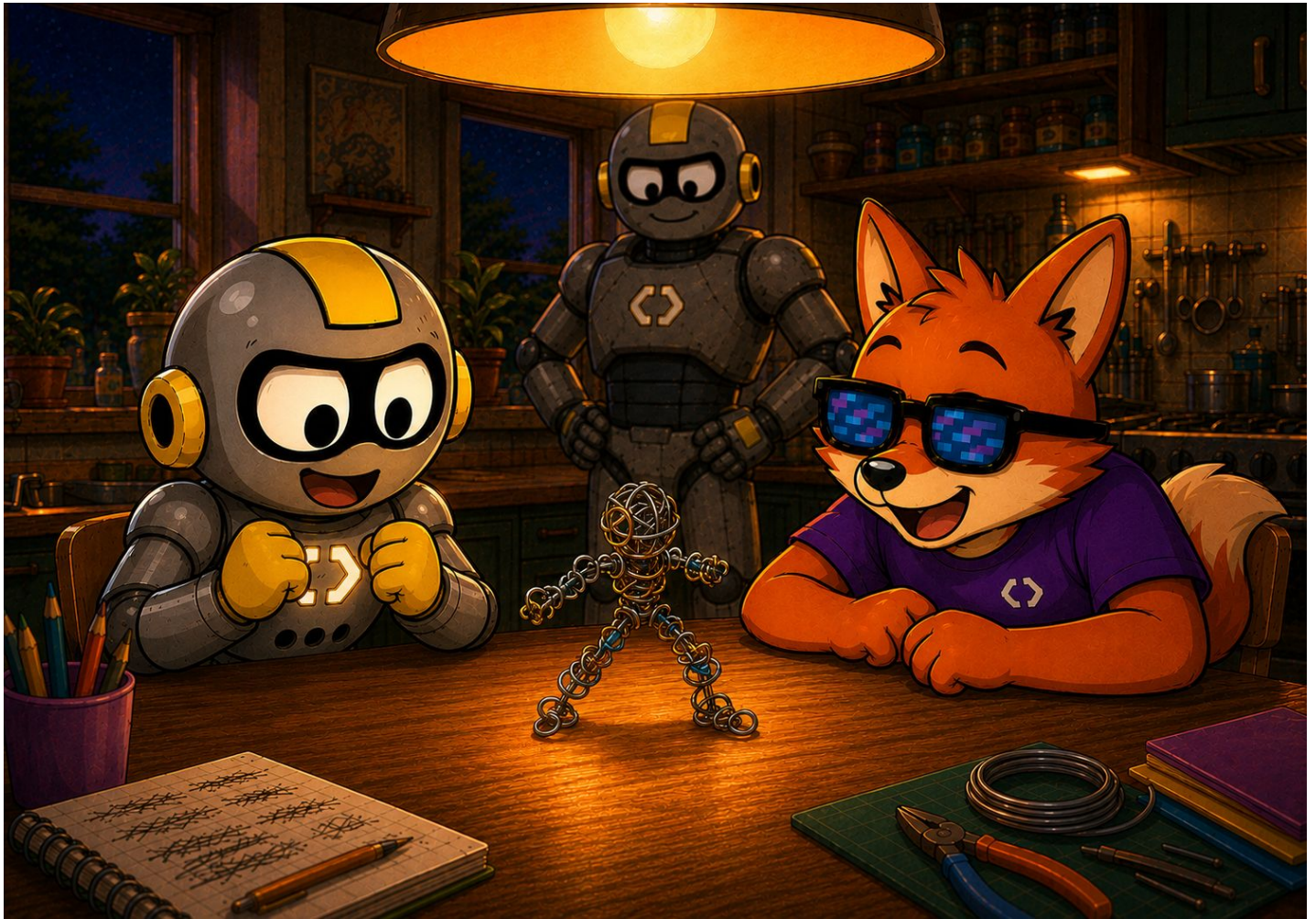


Byte's hands returned to their own shape.

He looked at what was in front of him. A figure — small, wired, colored, lined. A robot mid-stride, one arm forward.

He hadn't planned it. But he had chosen every single part of it.

He made one final adjustment with his own hands, bending the outstretched arm until it felt right.



Glitch leaned forward and looked at it for a long moment.

*"That's really good, **Byte**."*

He wasn't just being kind. **Glitch** didn't say things just to be kind.

*"I didn't really have a plan for it," **Byte** said.*

*"I know," **Glitch** said. "That's what makes it special."*



Byte's dad picked it up and held it in both hands.

"This reminds me of something," he said.

Byte waited.

"Me. When I was your age." He set it down carefully. "I used to make things. I forgot how much I liked it."



Byte brought his project to school on Friday.

Ms. Luma held it up for the class. She turned it slowly in the light and didn't say anything for a moment.

Then she said, *"This one surprised its maker."*

Byte smiled. It had. Every step of the way.



On the way out, **Byte** looked at the figure one more time where it sat on Ms. Luma's display shelf.

He still wasn't sure exactly how he had made it. But it was his own — every bent wire, every brushstroke, every line.

That was enough.

There's always another moment to share with the
Cheat Code crew. Join us for all their stories!



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