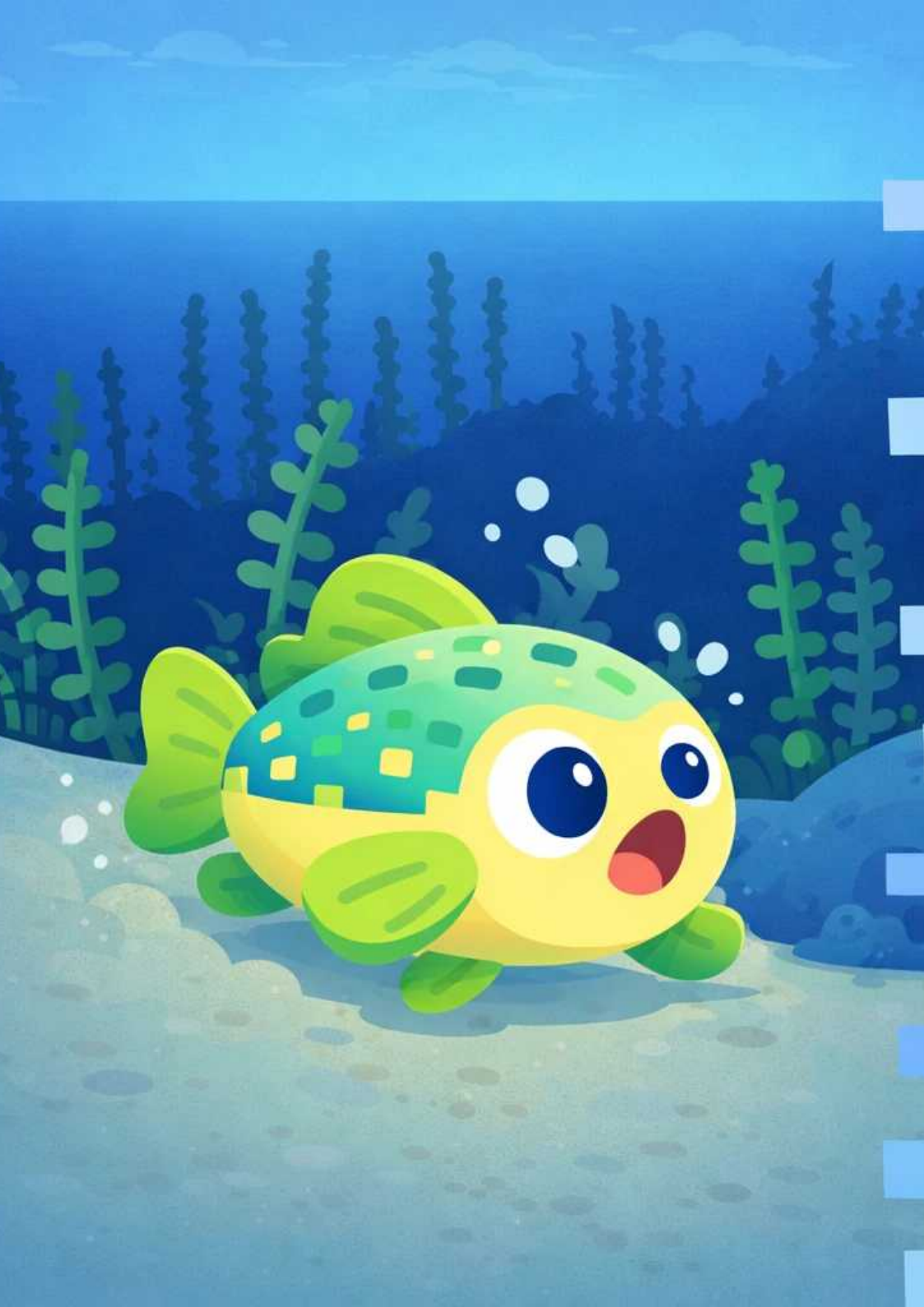


Cod Boasts



Deep in the cold sea
lives a cod. Not just
any cod. This cod is
the fastest, trickiest fish
in all the wide sea, and
no fisherman can get
it. All the fishers in
town have seen it. And
now not one hunts it.





The cod likes it that way.

When a fisherman comes too **close**, the cod flicks its green fins and slips into the kelp. Not there. Just like that.

'No fisherman can get me,' the cod **boasts**. And so far, it is right.

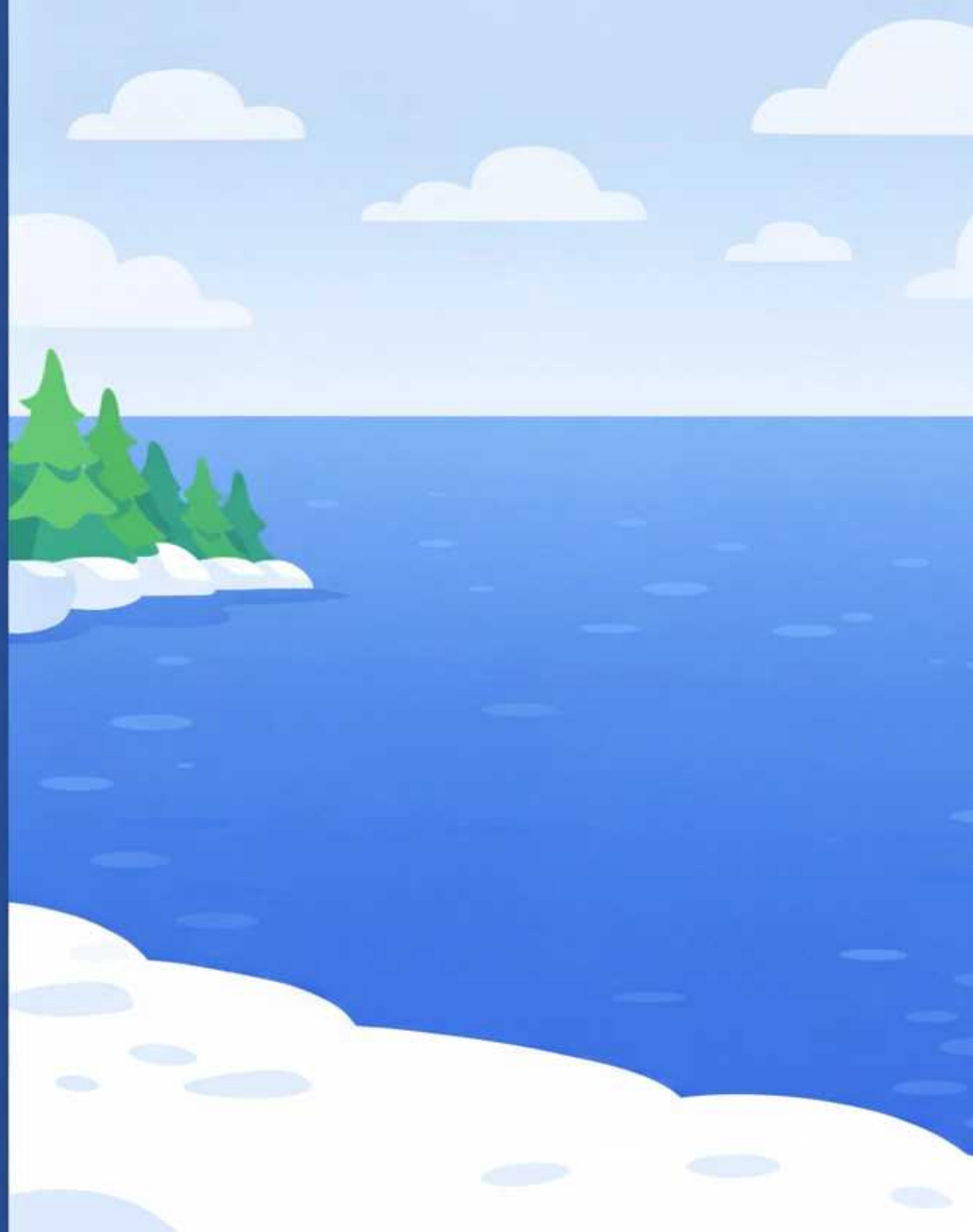
The sea is wide and empty. No **boats**.

No nets. No rods.

Not one fisherman in sight. The cod

beats them all, so nobody tries **now**.

Nobody, that is, but Steve.



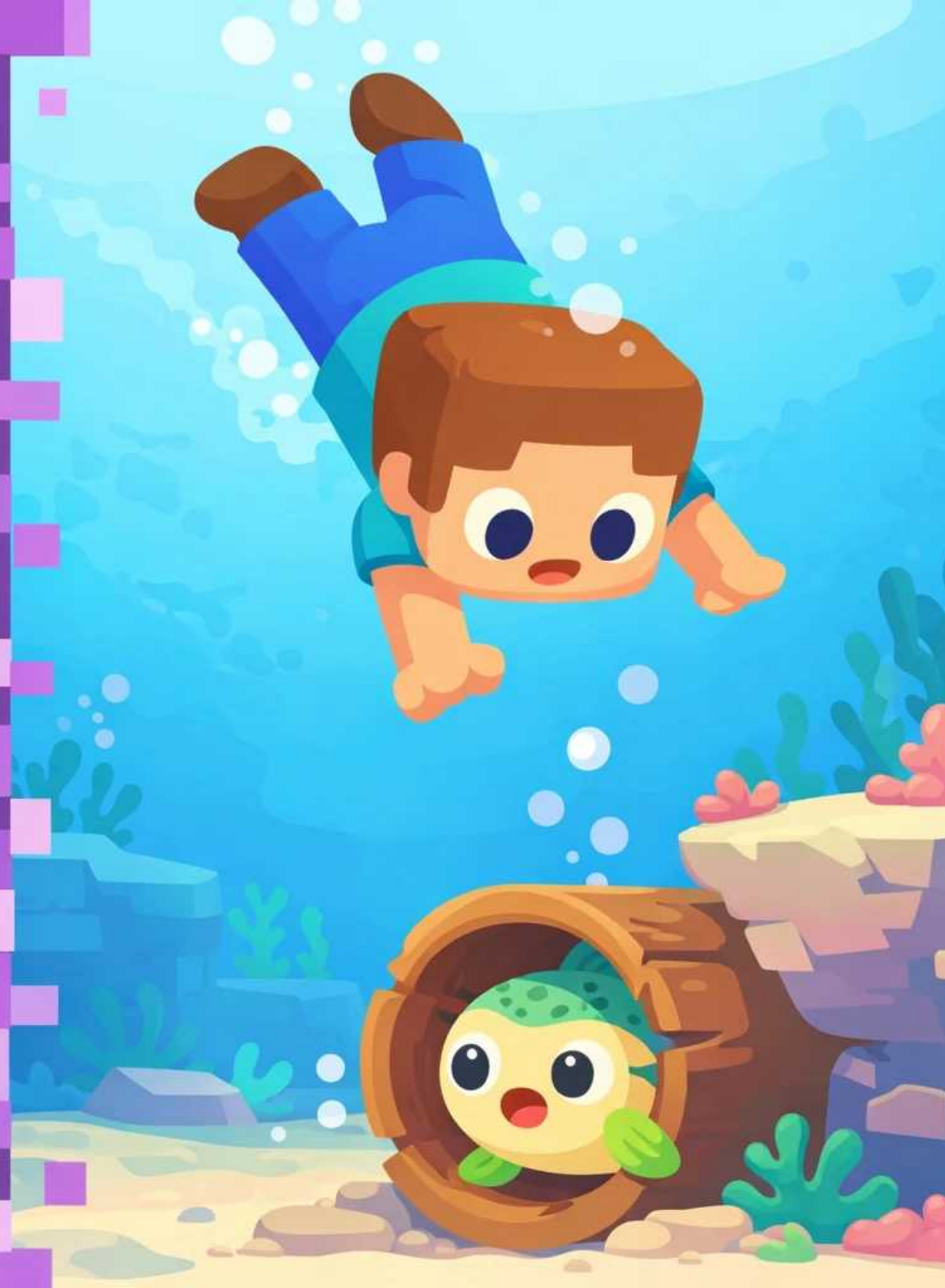


Steve stands on the beach and looks at the sea. 'I **vow** to get that cod,' he says. 'I **vow** to cook it and eat it for lunch.'

He has no rod. He has no net. He has no **boat**, no line, no bait, and no plan.

But Steve has one thing. Steve thinks he can not miss.

Steve jumps right in. No plan. No thinking. Just splash, into the deep blue sea, hands grabbing at nothing. The cod sees him coming from far off. It darts into a **hollow** log and peeks out as Steve sinks past. Round bits puff from Steve's mouth and rise up in a long trail. '**Wow,**' thinks the cod. 'This will be easy.'





Steve swims to the **hollow** log and peeks inside. Empty. 'Where did it go?' he says, but round bits pop from his mouth and drift up. He looks left. He looks right. He looks up. He looks down **below**. The deep sea is dark and still all round him. The cod is not there.

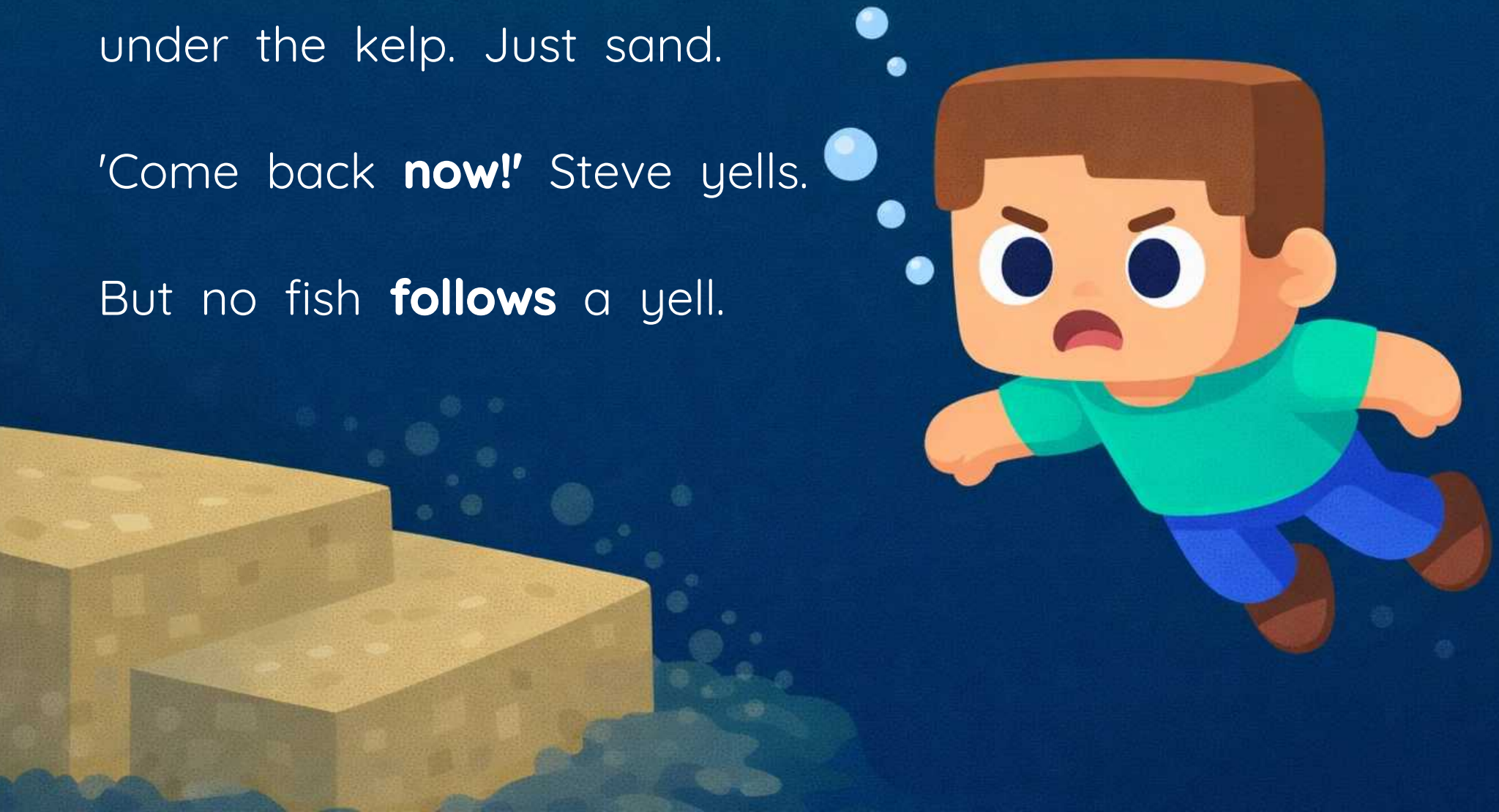
Wait. There! A green flash, down **low** in the kelp. Steve kicks **closer**, very **slowly**, very softly. He reaches out his hands. The cod just waits. And waits. Then, zoom! It slips from Steve's hands like wet **soap**.



Steve chases it to a sand bank. Not there. He checks by a rock. Nothing. He peeks under the kelp. Just sand.

'Come back **now!**' Steve yells.

But no fish **follows** a yell.



Steve wades out from the sea, dripping wet, with no cod at all. 'That fish,' he **groans**, 'is smarter than me.' Then he looks down at the sand. And there, right at his feet, is a thing the tide has left.





A bucket!

Steve picks it up, and a grin **grows** on his face. A big, **slow**, sly grin.

'Cod is faster than me,' he says in a **low** voice. 'Cod is sneakier than me. But Cod can not stop itself. Cod must come and peek. I bet on it.'

Steve wades back into the sea, sits down **low**, and does nothing at all. He does not splash. He does not chase. He just sits still with his bucket and waits.

One cod swims **close**. Then two. Then three. They swim round his legs, keen to see what this odd, still lump is.

'Now,' Steve says in a **low** voice.





Scoop! Steve jumps up and lifts the bucket high, one upset cod flopping inside. 'I did it!' he yells. 'I got a fish with a bucket! **Wow!**' The cod looks up at Steve. Steve looks down at the cod. 'So,' says Steve. 'Do fish like chips?'



Cod Boasts

A cod rules the coast, too fast and too sneaky for any fisherman to catch. When Steve wades into the sea with no rod, no net, and no plan, the cod barely blinks. Every chase ends the same way, with the cod vanishing into the kelp and Steve gasping in empty water. But when Steve spots something washed up on the sand, will a clever fisherman finally outsmart the cleverest fish in the sea? Written for Jolly Phonics classrooms (Step 3, Unit 7: /oa/ mixed), this book practices words like 'boasts', 'boat', 'slowly', 'hollow', 'closer'.

Phonics Focus: <mixed>

below, boasts, boat, boats, close, closer, follows, groans, grows, hollow, low, now, slow, slowly, soap, town, vow, wow

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