

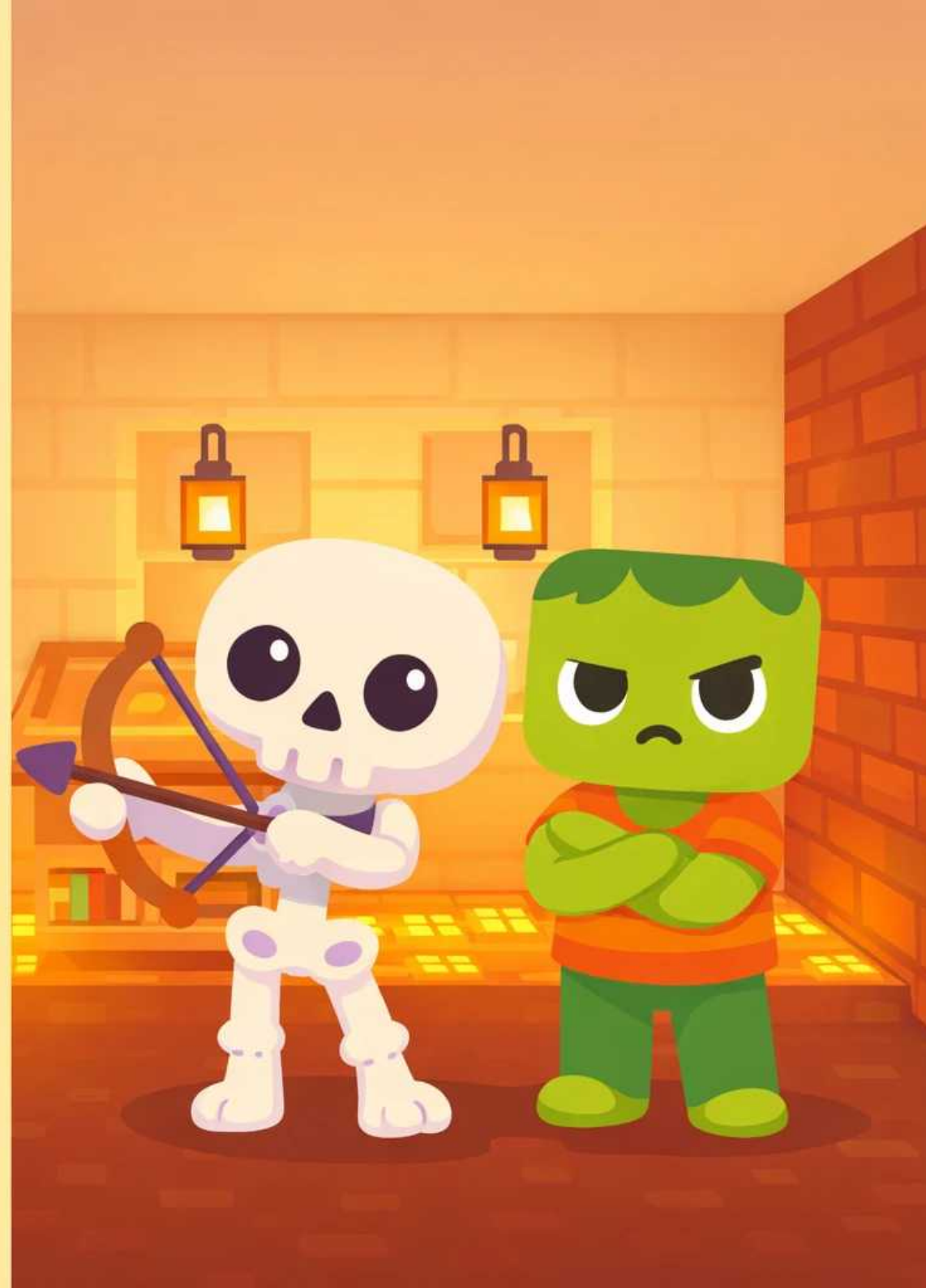
Eight Bugs and a Great Clean



Skel loved his cozy brick house more than all the wide world.

At **daybreak** each day, he swept the floor, dusted his books, and lined them up **straight**. He scrubbed every brick until it shone. 'A clean house,' Skel said with a big proud grin, 'is a **great** house.'

Zom stood in the corner. He crossed his arms and grunted. 'Dirt is fine.'





Jack was even worse than Zom. Skel handed him a mop. Jack dropped it on the floor. Skel handed him a cloth. Jack dropped that one too.

Then Jack shrugged his big orange hands and grinned wide, like he had just done something very clever.

'Hey,' Jack said with a huge pumpkin grin. 'Cleaning is not really my thing.'

Skel looked at the sticky counters. He looked at the muddy boot prints. He looked at the big pile of crumbs where Jack had been eating toast over the rug. Again. Skel gripped his broom so tight his knuckles went whiter than his skull. 'Fine,' he said. 'You two will not clean? Then I will not **break** my back for you any longer. Good luck!'





Zom and Jack watched Skel march out the door. **They** looked at each other. Then both looked at the bright sunny yard.

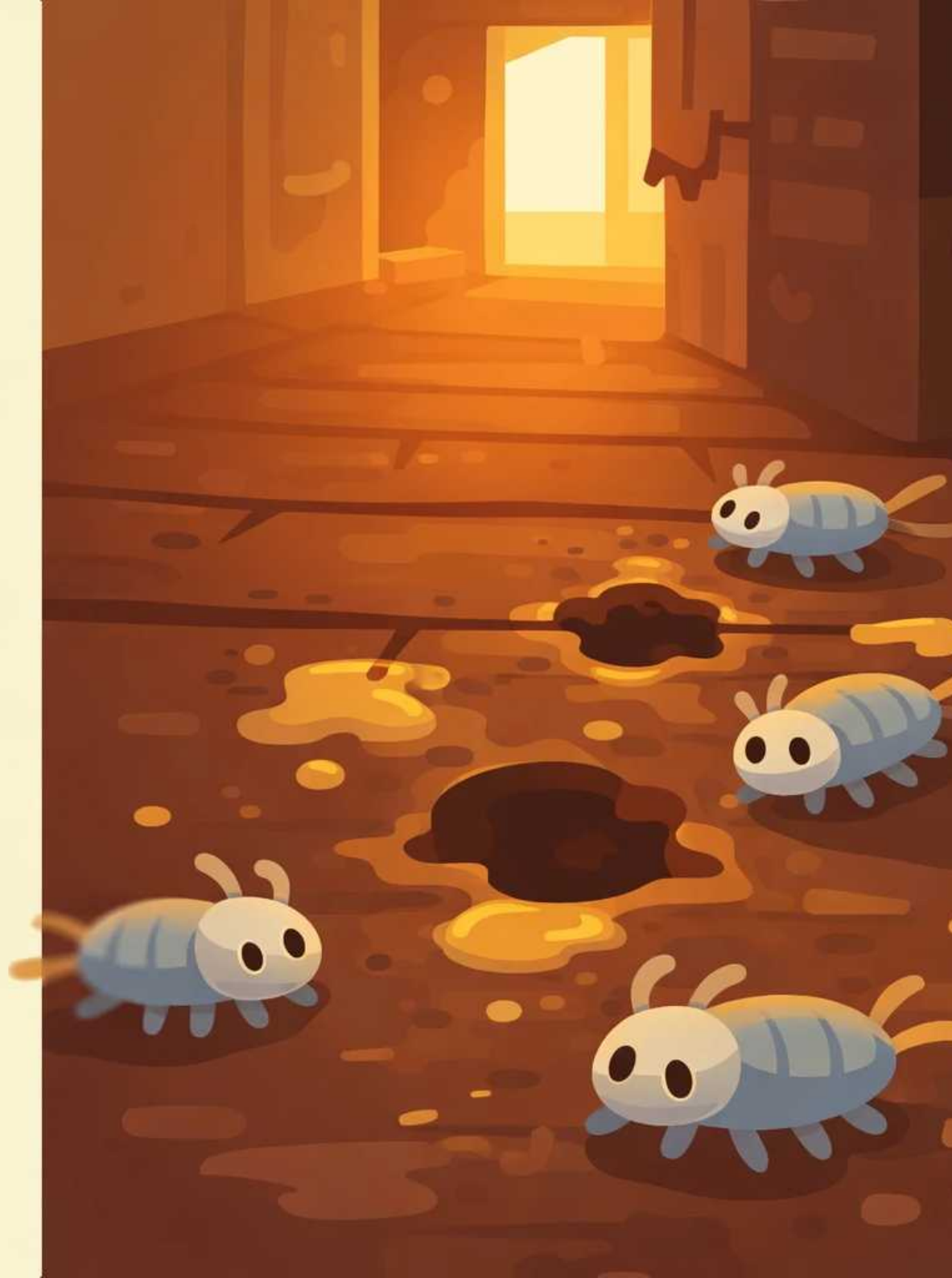
'No more sweeping!' said Jack.
'No more scrubbing!' said Zom.

The two pals flopped down on the soft grass and kicked back like kings. No chores. No Skel fussing. No need to **obey** his rules. Life was sweet.

Day one, a sock stuck to the floor. No big deal at all. Day two, something in the kitchen started to smell funny. Zom sniffed it and shrugged. By day three, the muck was so thick that you could leave footprints in it. Zom looked down at the brown grime oozing around his foot gear. He gave a **great** wide green grin. 'Still fine!'



It was not fine at all. The sticky floors got even stickier. Then the floors got crunchy. Strange little shapes skittered in the shadows. Tiny bug legs tapped across the floorboards in the dark. Pests! **Eight**, then **eighty**, then a **great** wave of them. **They** scuttled across the thick muck like it was a wide road.



Zom's gut grumbled. He reached for the last slice of pie on the kitchen counter. Flies! A thick, buzzing cloud of them landed right between Zom and his lunch. He reached for the pie again, and **they** swarmed closer. He lunged one more time, but the flies got there first. '**Hey!**' Zom yelled. 'That is my pie, not yours!'





Jack finally picked up the big pile of cloths he had left on the floor three days ago. Something moved beneath the pile. Something dark. Something with **eight** legs. Then lots and lots of legs! Spiders rushed out of the crack in the wall like a fuzzy black river. Jack stumbled back. 'Nope. Nope. Nope. Nope.'

The pets did their best. **They** pounced. **They** chased. **They** swatted. But for each bug **they** got, **eight** more came. Pests on the beds. Flies in the food. Spiders in the socks. One huge bright pink bug sat right in the middle of the floor like it ran the place. The pets had no chance. There was too much **prey** to catch. Zom and Jack looked at each other. 'We need Skel.'





Skel stood in the doorway, bow on his shoulder, grinning the **greatest** grin his skull had ever shown. 'So,' he said slowly, 'dirt is fine, is it?' Zom stared at his foot gear. Jack stared up. 'I will help,' said Skel, 'but this time, we all clean. Deal?' Zom grabbed a mop. Jack grabbed a cloth. **They** stood up **straight**, and this time, Jack did not drop a thing.



Dirt Is Fine!

Skel loves his brick house spotless, but Zom and Jack think dirt is fine and refuse to lift a mop or cloth. When Skel storms out and leaves them to it, the pals cheer, kick back, and skip every chore. But as the mess piles up, strange little shapes start scuttling in the shadows. What is creeping across their once-clean floor? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 114: Alternate /ā/ (ei, ey, eigh, aigh, ea)), this book practices words like 'eight', 'great', 'hey', 'straight', 'break'.

Phonics Focus: Alternate /ā/ (ei/ey/eigh/aigh/ea)

break, daybreak, eight, eighty, great, greatest, hey, obey, prey, straight, they

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