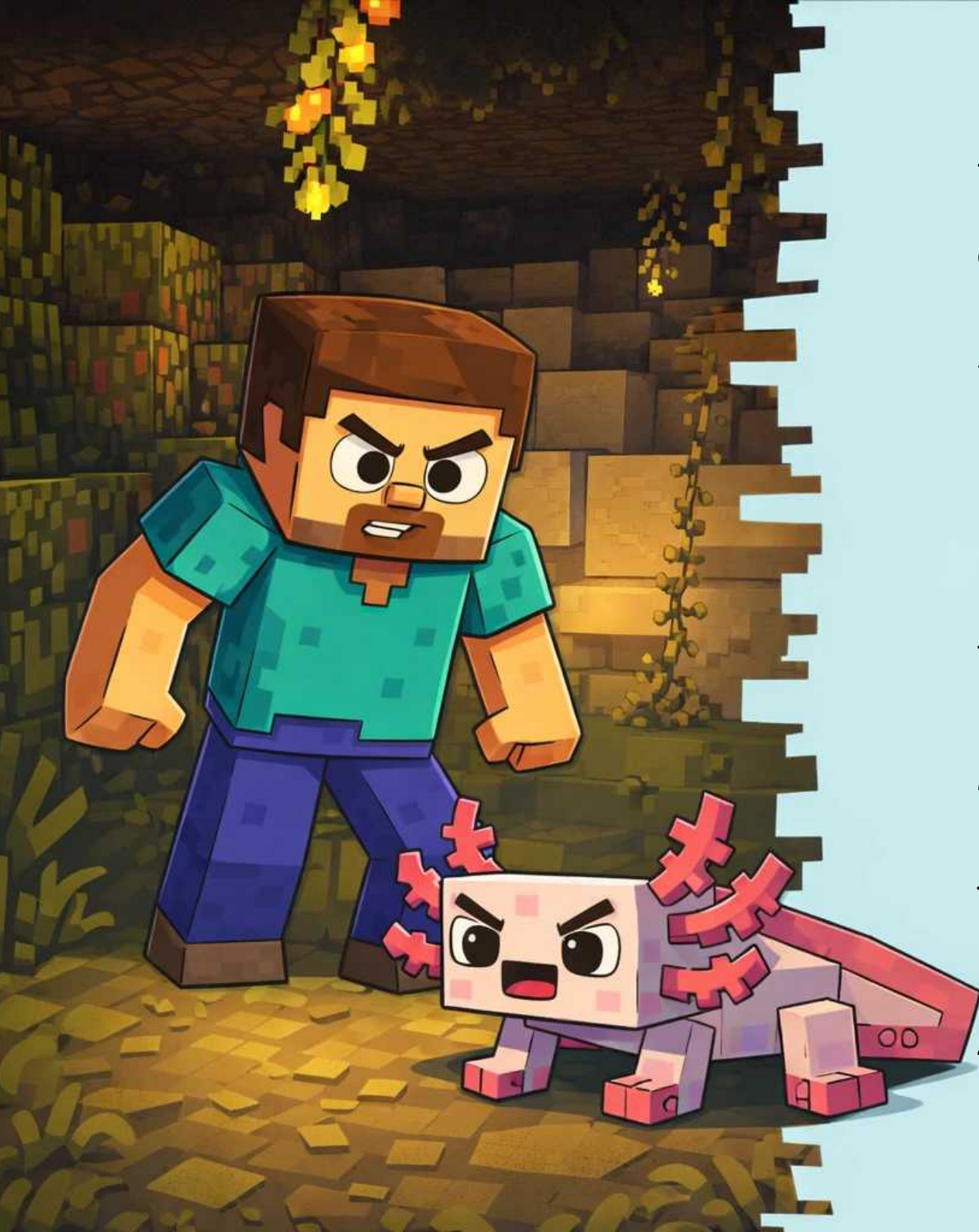


What Glows in the Cave?



Steve **roams** all the caves,
all the hills, and all the
seas. No cave can shock
Steve **now**. Then Steve
sees a cave where green
moss **glows**. '**Wow,**' Steve
says, and he creeps **down**
low to a pond. Two wee
beasts gaze up at Steve
with big goofy grins. 'What
are they?' Steve asks.





Steve crouches **low** for a look. Axolotl does not swim off. It does not hide. It plops out of the pond and sits at his feet like a wet little dog.

'Well,' Steve says. 'I think Axolotl picked me.'

Axolotl just grins.

Steve holds Axolotl and
treks **home**, up the cave
path, past the hills, and
down to his **own** little pond.

'Here, pal. This is **home
now!**' Steve gets **down** by
the pond and holds Axolotl
out.

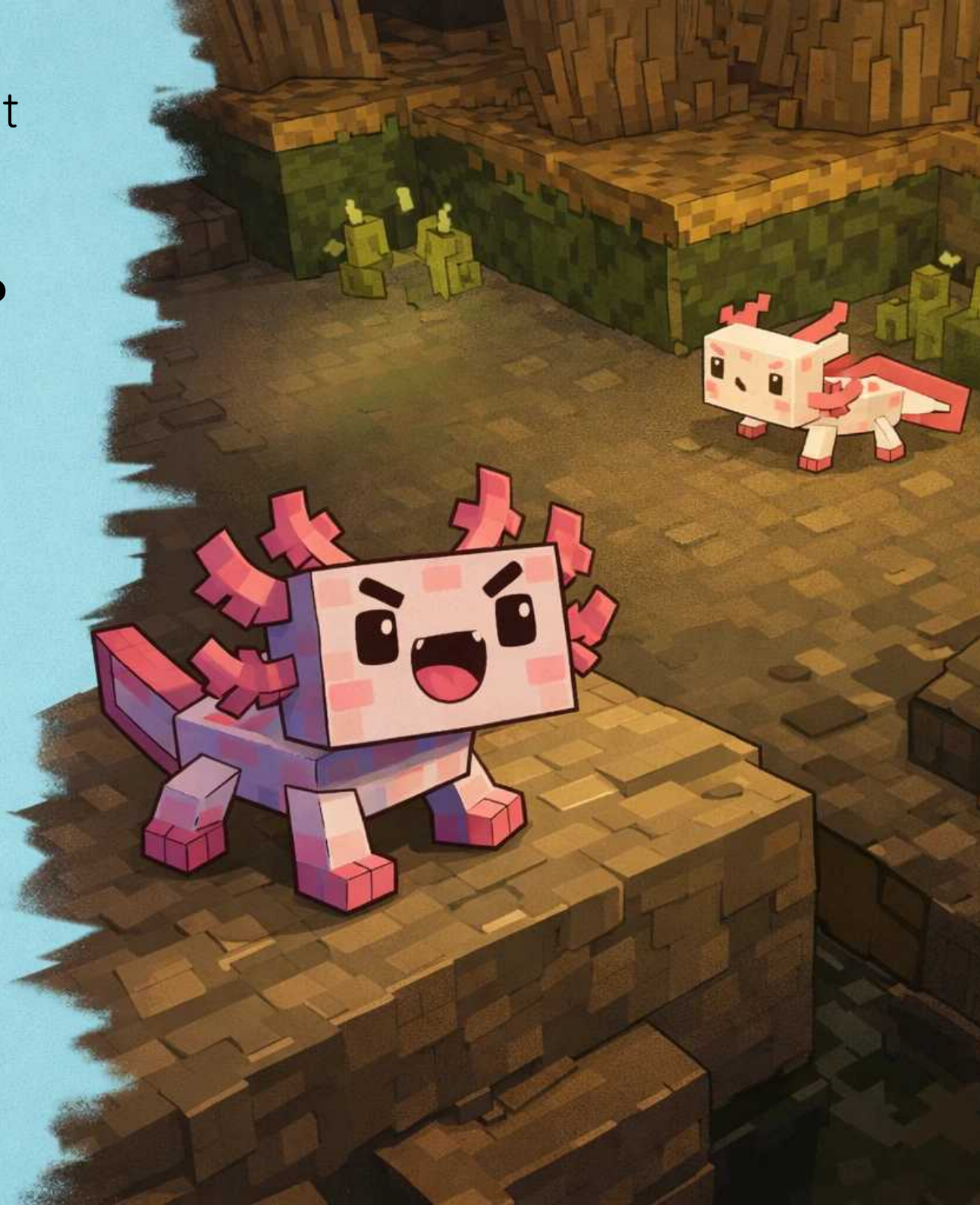
Axolotl gazes at the pond.
It gazes at Steve. It **frowns**.
It **groans** a **low groan**.





'I get it, I get it. Too plain. Wait, pal.' Steve grabs moss and **throws** it on the rocks. He packs it in all the nooks. He tucks it by all the **stones**. Then he steps back and pants, with dirt on his hands. Axolotl slips into the pond, wags its tail, and grins. Steve jumps up high and yells, 'Yes! Axolotl likes the moss!'

That night, Steve can not sleep. What if Axolotl feels sad all on its **own**? He races back to the cave. There, **glowing** in the dark like a wee moon, is a pale axolotl. Axolotl spots it first. Its grin **grows** and **grows**. 'So that is the one? Say no more.'





Steve brings the pale axolotl **home**, and the two slip into the pond. They bump **noses**. They swim round and round. They **float** in the sun, side by side. 'I did that,' Steve tells no one at all. 'I am so smart.'

Steve grabs a pail and scoops up a fish. 'Wait till the gang sees this. They will flip!' He spins round to plan his big **show**. Axolotl pops its head up out of the pond, right behind him. It grins. 'Stop that, Axolotl,' Steve says. 'That is my **show!**'





Steve never **shows** the gang. Each time he tries to go, the two do a new trick. A splash. A spin. A wee belly flop. He sits on the grass and takes in the **show**. 'Fine,' he says. 'The two win. This is better than any quest.' The two always grin. But **now**, so does Steve.



What Glows in the Cave?

Steve has explored every cave, mountain, and ocean; nothing surprises him anymore. Then he finds a hidden pool glowing green, where two goofy little creatures stare up at him. Could this strange new find finally be the surprise he's been missing? Written for Jolly Phonics classrooms (Step 3, Unit 7: /oa/ mixed), this book practices words like 'glow', 'glows', 'rooms', 'groans', 'home'.

Phonics Focus: <mixed>

down, float, frowns, glow, glowing, glows, groan, groans, grows, home, low, noses, now, own, rooms, show, shows, stones, throws, wow

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