

Stone Girl Bone Girl: The Story of Mary Anning

by Laurence Anholt



From that day on, Mary spent every spare moment searching for Curiosities. She had sharp eyes and found them everywhere, in every shape and size – tiny shiny ones, others straight as stone fingers or delicate like plants.

One evening some rich ladies came to visit her father. Mary knew who they were – the Philpot sisters who lived together in a fine house above the town. Scientists, people said.

One of the ladies, Annie Philpot, wanted Mary's father to build her a cabinet. "To display Curiosities," she said.

Mary couldn't believe that someone else was interested in Curiosities. She nervously showed the Philpot sisters her collection. "Oh!" gasped the ladies. "What wonderful fossils!"

Fossils? Mary had never heard the word. "I'll tell you what, Mary," said Annie Philpot. "Why don't you come and visit us? We could have some tea and then we will show you our collection."

Mary was amazed by the Philpots' fine house. But most wonderful of all was their collection of Curiosities. The Philpot sisters explained that the fossils were the remains of ancient sea creatures that had been preserved in the clay.

Then Annie Philpot showed Mary a huge tooth she had found. "From a great sea monster," she said. She told Mary she believed the rest of the creature was still out there, hidden in the cliffs. "If anyone could ever find that, Mary! That would be the greatest treasure of all."