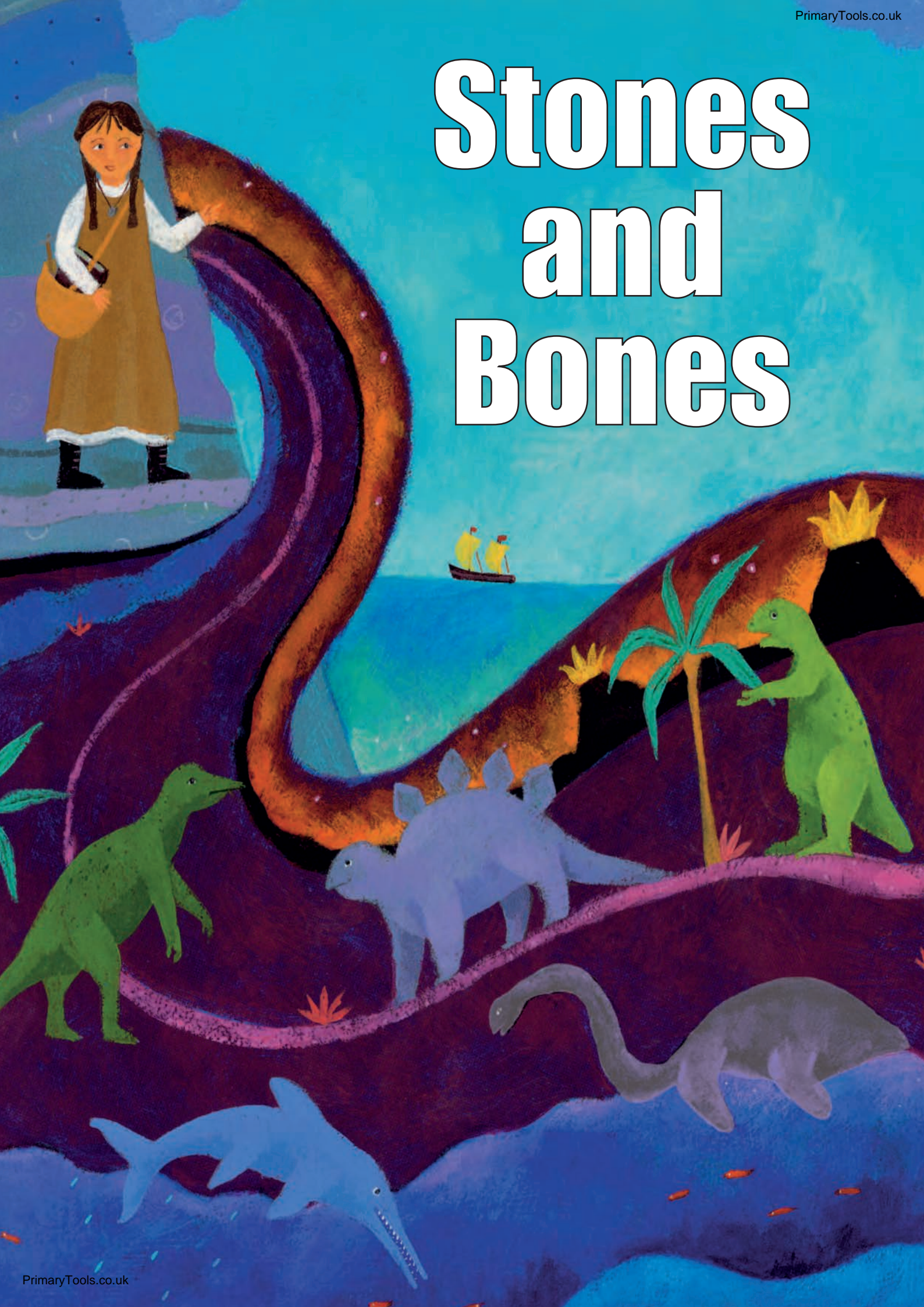


# Stones and Bones



# Mary Anning

Adapted from *Stone Girl Bone Girl* by Laurence Anholt

This is the true story of Mary Anning, who lived 200 years ago. Mary was born in 1799 and was one of the first people to hunt for fossils. She lived in a seaside town in England called Lyme Regis.

At the time when Mary lived, many people did not know what fossils were, and called them 'Curiosities' instead.

When Mary was young, she adored her father, who worked as a carpenter. One Saturday, Mary's father took her down to the cliffs by the crashing sea. Mary held tightly to his hand because she knew how dangerous it could be. The cliffs were soft as melting chocolate, and Mary had sometimes seen huge slabs of land slipping and tumbling to the beach below.



When they reached the cliffs, Mary's father reached into his pocket and, to Mary's surprise, took out his steel hammer. He knelt beside a large rock and began carefully tapping away.

"What are you looking for?" asked Mary, dancing about on the sand.

"Just be patient," laughed her father. Mary bent closer. There was something hidden inside the rock!

At last Mary's father pulled the thing free and handed it to Mary. "It ... it's TREASURE!" she gasped. "It's what we call a Curiosity," smiled her father. "A present for you, Mary girl."



The Curiosity was the most beautiful thing Mary had ever seen. Her father polished it and hung it on a string for Mary – like a perfect necklace.

That night Mary couldn't sleep. Her head swirled with thoughts. "The cliffs are full of treasure," she whispered over and over again.

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.