

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."



That winter was cold, wet and stormy. Sadly, Mary's father fell ill and died. Mary and her mother needed money, and after a while, Mary found that she could sell the Curiosities to holiday-makers.





One day, Mary found a little dog, who followed her home. From that moment, Mary and the dog were never apart.



All summer, Mary searched for Curiosities for her shop. As she searched, Mary thought more and more about the giant sea monster. She imagined fantastic landscapes and extraordinary creatures.

One morning, Mary was so busy day dreaming, she didn't notice that her dog had wandered away. She ran along the beach, calling for him, but he was nowhere to be seen.

At last, she heard a faint barking and, looking up, she saw her dog high on the sloping side of the cliff.

Mary called for him to come down, but the little dog wouldn't move. He was furiously scratching at something in the clay.





Mary began slowly to climb the rock face. At last she reached the little ledge where the dog was standing. She couldn't believe what she saw ... Grinning up at Mary was an enormous skull. The little dog had found the sea monster!

The sea monster was far too big for Mary to carry on her own. Leaving the dog to guard the monster, Mary climbed carefully down to the beach, then ran as fast as she could to the town.

"I've found it!" she shouted. "I've found the sea monster!"

In less than ten minutes, Mary was leading a group of men carrying picks and shovels up the side of the cliff.

The news spread like fire through the town. An excited crowd gathered on the beach to watch the excavation. The Philpot sisters arrived and made a tremendous fuss of Mary.





As the evening sun melted into the sea, six strong men carefully carried the bones of the sea monster back to the town. It was as long as a tree and more than one hundred and sixty-five million years old. The skeleton was laid out for all the world to see.

For months afterwards, visitors came to meet Mary – “The Fossil Girl” of Lyme Regis. The sea monster was the most important fossil ever found, people said.

They called the monster Ichthyosaurus – “the fish lizard”. The museum that bought it paid enough money for Mary and her mother to live happily for the rest of their lives.