

Free Scenes for Teen: Almost Mary; cast 1f (age 13), 1 m (age 11)

SCENE 1 – February, 1811

AT RISE we are below the cliffs. It is about one year later. JOSEPH is seen staring at a large fossil head. (About four feet long and crocodile-like in appearance.)

It is in a large rock that had fallen off of the cliff. It could also be simply embedded in soft rock on the ground. The details of the discovery are sketchy. JOSEPH has a hammer and chisel but is just staring at the gigantic head in wonder. MARY appears.

MARY

JO-SEPH! ANSWER ME!

(MARY sees JOSEPH who is very still.)

JOSEPH! Mom's going to skin your hide if she knew you were - oh mercy me! Look at that gorgeous skull! I think I'm in love!

JOSEPH

Mary's smitten with a dragon!

MARY

Dragon?

JOSEPH

Maybe.

MARY

Whatever it is, it's positively smashing! I bet it's over a meter long!

JOSEPH

Mary's in love with a dragon skull!

MARY

Imagine the eyes! That magnificent head/

JOSEPH

Look at that jaw. It could bite my head off!

(JOSEPH mimes getting his hand stuck in the rock.)

MARY! HELP! *It's got my fingers!*

MARY

JOSEPH!

(Abrupt change from fear to stern.)

Jo-seph.

JOSEPH

You're such an easy target.

MARY

I am a serious geologist who looks at every possibility.

JOSEPH

You are a serious geologist who fancies a dragon head.

MARY

Because he's amazing. I want to know everything about him – his world, his eating habits, his family/his – maybe it's a her – maybe/

JOSEPH

/You're crackers.

MARY

You have to be crackers to do this work.

JOSEPH

Mary! We found a dragon! People will sing songs about us!

MARY

If this were a dragon, wouldn't the skull be black from breathing out all that fire and smoke?

JOSEPH

What else could it be? *I know!* A crocodile.

MARY

No!

JOSEPH

Yes! Look.

MARY

It does look like a crocodile. I thought they were only in Africa. These fossils are clues to a big, grand mystery. And guess what we are?

JOSEPH

Two children!

MARY

Try harder.

JOSEPH

Crocodile hunters!

MARY

Detectives – of the past.

JOSEPH

We'll have to look the head up. You do still have Papa's books?

MARY

All two of them. And I kept his tools, tools, his clothes...

(JOSEPH smashes his fist into the rock.)

JOSEPH

/Owwww!

MARY

Joseph! Why'd you do that?

JOSEPH

I didn't want to cry.

(Beat.)

MARY

I think when you lose your father, you're allowed to cry.

JOSEPH

Even boys?

MARY

Even boys.

(Beat)

JOSEPH

We haven't been here since -

MARY
- Papa's fall.

JOSEPH
I miss him.

MARY
We were always underfoot, showing him our treasures.

JOSEPH
Which were usually seashells.

MARY
(Loudly to the sky.)
Look, Papa! Look! Your children found something that is not a giant seashell!

JOSEPH
Mary ...

MARY
He's smiling at us. I can feel his huge, toothy grin smiling all the way from heaven.
He would have loved your dragon head!

JOSEPH
Almost as much as you do!

MARY
I'm going to show Papa where we are. Remember when we would put our initials in the sand after a big find?

JOSEPH
And then the sea washed it away.

MARY
Still - I like the tradition.

(MARY draws a circle in the sand and puts her name and Joseph's initials inside it.)

MARY (cont'd)
Maybe Papa can see this from heaven. There! Now, I must stop being a lazy lay-about and chisel!

(JOSEPH goes at it with too much enthusiasm.)

MARY (cont'd)

Don't hammer her! You'll hurt her!

JOSEPH

I hate to break it to you, but she's dead.

MARY

But we want her in one piece. You get more money that way.

(They chisel.)

JOSEPH

Papa said that a long time ago the ocean came up to the top of the cliffs!

MARY

All of our fossils seem to have come from the sea.

JOSEPH

Maybe it was a sea-dragon! Can you imagine – with such a large head – how gigantic the body must have been?

MARY

And if the head is here –

JOSEPH

Where is the body?

MARY

What did Papa say, "First things first, my dears." And you know what comes first, Joseph?

JOSEPH

Work. Always work.

(They chisel.)

JOSEPH (cont'd)

This head could make our fortune.

MARY

Such dreams! But maybe it is worth more than sterling. *Maybe* – it will go to a fancy museum and people will study it and learn from it. And I, Mary Anning, will be a fancy geologist/

JOSEPH

/Now who's dreaming?

MARY

I dream every time I come down here.

JOSEPH

My dreams are usually about eating.

MARY

I daresay, we could buy a little rice and treacle if we sell this!

JOSEPH

(JOSEPH starts speaking the Nursery Rhyme which turns into song.)

Half a pound of two-penny rice; half a pound of treacle;
That's the way the money goes!

(MARY joins in.)

Pop! Goes the weasel!

JOSEPH and MARY

Up and down the City Road; In and out the Eagle;
That's the way the money goes! Pop! Goes the weasel!

(The lights will dim at the end of the song as we fade to black.)