

ENQUIRING MINDS

EQM EP 5 SEG 2

HOLLY: Pyramids, pharaohs, mummies, must have been a fascinating time in Egypt.

LOCKIE: I'm down here to meet 7-year-old Amber. She's a bit of an artist but I also hear a budding archaeologist. Amber, so what have we got here?

AMBER: We've got some rocks we found.

LOCKIE: A couple of cool rocks, can I have a look?

AMBER: Yeah.

LOCKIE: What's that one?

AMBER: Looks like a smiley face rock.

LOCKIE: It's pretty cool. I hear you like archaeology?

AMBER: Yes.

LOCKIE: Is that true?

AMBER: Yes.

LOCKIE: Like digging around a bit?

AMBER: Yes.

LOCKIE: What other ancient things are you into?

AMBER: Well, pyramids and things that really come from Egypt.

LOCKIE: So you love ancient Egypt?

AMBER: Yes.

LOCKIE: The pharaohs?

AMBER: Yeah.

LOCKIE: Me too. I hear you're into art.

AMBER: Yes.

LOCKIE: And you like to paint?

AMBER: Yeah.

LOCKIE: Do you reckon we should go and have a look at some of your painting?

AMBER: Okay.

LOCKIE: That would be great.

AMBER: Yeah.

LOCKIE: Well this looks like fun, what are you up to?

AMBER: Well I'm painting a picture of a palm tree, a camel and some pyramids.

LOCKIE: I like the blue of the sky, it's really blue.

AMBER: Thanks.

LOCKIE: And the difference in colour is good too between the camel and pyramids.

AMBER: Thanks.

LOCKIE: How did you know how to paint them so well?

AMBER: Well my dad went to Egypt and he took some photos.

LOCKIE: Have you seen pyramids anywhere else?

AMBER: Only in some books.

LOCKIE: You've got books on Egypt?

AMBER: Yes.

LOCKIE: Can we have a look at them?

AMBER: Mm-hm.

LOCKIE: Well these pyramids look a little bit like the ones we were just painting.

AMBER: Probably take a long time to build.

LOCKIE: There's thousands and thousands of bricks in there. How do you think they made them?

AMBER: Probably by stacking them on each other.

LOCKIE: It's a lot of stacking.

AMBER: Mm.

LOCKIE: What about this?

AMBER: Looks like some hieroglyphics.

LOCKIE: Actually these hieroglyphics look like some of these hieroglyphics here too on these sarcophaguses. What do you think it means?

AMBER: I don't know.

LOCKIE: Would you like to go and meet someone who knows a bit more about ancient Egypt and mummies?

AMBER: Yes.

LOCKIE: Okay, come on, let's go.

RONIKA: Archaeologists are ancient detectives.

Okay, so from here to here.

We look at different threads of evidence, physical remains, objects, artefacts, those kinds of things and see how they weave together to make a singular story.

I'm expecting that there's an additional substance here.

LOCKIE: Hi, Ronika.

RONIKA: Hi.

LOCKIE: Good to see you again.

RONIKA: How are you, Lockie?

LOCKIE: Good, this is Amber.

RONIKA: Hello, Amber, I'm Ronika, welcome to the Museum of Ancient Cultures.

LOCKIE: So Amber's really into archaeology and ancient history and pretty excited to have a look around.

AMBER: What got you into ancient Egypt?

RONIKA: Well, when I was a little girl, probably about your age actually, one of my favourite things to do was to go through the encyclopaedia and one night I was looking through it and we came across the pyramids of Egypt and ever since that day, since I was around about your age, I have been transfixed by everything to do with Egyptology.

LOCKIE: It's funny that you mention pyramids because we've just come from painting some pyramids ourselves.

RONIKA: Really? That's so impressive. So you like art, do you?

AMBER: Yes.

RONIKA: That's really, really cool and it's so important as an archaeologist to have an interest in art. Do you want to check out some Egyptian art with me?

AMBER: Yeah.

How important was art in Egyptian culture?

RONIKA: It was one of the main ways that they communicated. Have you seen hieroglyphs before?

AMBER: Yes.

RONIKA: Excellent. So as you can see hieroglyphs are painted images. They're pictures but they also have a sound value and that means that we can reconstruct the words and reconstruct the sentences and reconstruct the messages in the stories.

LOCKIE: How hard is it to write in hieroglyphics?

RONIKA: Oh, Lockie, it's actually really easy. Would you like to do some writing in hieroglyphs?

AMBER: Yes, please.

RONIKA: Why don't we try to write your name?

AMBER: Okay.

RONIKA: That would be cool. So we can have a look here and see in this chart all of the different letters that compose the Egyptian alphabet. Can you see any

letters here that might spell out the word Amber?

AMBER: Yeah.

RONIKA: Which ones do you think?

AMBER: I think that one.

RONIKA: This one here the Egyptian vulture, the aleph sign.

AMBER: Yeah.

RONIKA: Which one's next?

AMBER: Probably the owl.

RONIKA: Probably the owl for an M and which letter comes next, do you think?

AMBER: The leg.

RONIKA: Yeah, and what sound is that?

AMBER: B.

RONIKA: B and what about the next one, what do you think?

AMBER: I think it's that one.

RONIKA: You think it's that one. Very clever, and that makes the sound of a which is at the end of your name, so do you want to give it a go and write it out?

AMBER: Sure.

RONIKA: Excellent. So all together it spells the Queen Amber. Excellent. Well done. Looks great.

AMBER: What did kids my age do in ancient Egypt?

RONIKA: You're about 8, yeah?

AMBER: Yes.

RONIKA: Excellent, okay, well it would really depend on how much money your family had. Some of the kids that were your age would go on to school and learn how to write but for a lot of kids they actually had to work. At your age they were out earning a living going to work every single day. It's pretty full on, isn't it?

AMBER: Yes.

RONIKA: Have a look in this cabinet here and you will see some amazing pots that have been excavated from Egypt. Now on some pots we have the evidence of kids' fingerprints exactly around your age, around 8 years old, that have been preserved in the pots for thousands and thousands of years telling us that children were employed in making ceramics for an income in ancient Egypt. That's pretty amazing, isn't it?

AMBER: Yes.

RONIKA: Fingerprints preserved for thousands of years.

LOCKIE: So what does it tell you about how ancient Egyptians lived?

RONIKA: Well, ceramics in particular tell us a lot about how ancient Egyptians lived. We can tell that they harvested clay from somewhere, but to make these pots hard they had to fire them to turn that clay from something soft into something so hard that it could last for thousands of years. This is a very, very early pot from ancient Egypt. Do you want to have a hold of that?

AMBER: Yep.

RONIKA: Excellent, have a good look at that. So this one is a net painted vessel from ancient Egypt and that's from very, very, very early, at the very beginning of Egyptian civilisation. Do you want to check out something else? Excellent. Now, this one is really cool. Have you ever seen something like this, Amber?

LOCKIE: Whoa.

AMBER: No.

RONIKA: This is called a shabti, do you want to have a hold?

AMBER: Yep, I can see it's like a pharaoh.

RONIKA: It's like a pharaoh, very, very good.

AMBER: He looks like he's sleeping.

RONIKA: He looks like he's sleeping, okay.

LOCKIE: Someone else held that thousands of years ago.

RONIKA: That's right, that's right. And it was made especially for the purposes of someone's funeral.

LOCKIE: Would you like to find out a bit more about it?

AMBER: Yes.

RONIKA: Have a look in there, Amber, what can you see?

AMBER: It's a mummy.

RONIKA: It's a mummy.

AMBER: Why did they wrap the bodies in bandages?

RONIKA: Through the act of wrapping the body in bandages the body itself became hidden and therefore became in itself a sacred, precious object.

LOCKIE: Is there anything that we can look at that shows us a bit more about the mummification process?

RONIKA: Well, there is something special. Do you want to have a look at something really cool, Amber?

AMBER: I'd love to.

RONIKA: We are going to look at a really, really, really special object that needs special kinds of equipment. What we've got to do is we've got to put some lab coats on and some masks on, what do you think about that?

AMBER: Cool.

RONIKA: Cool. But sorry, Lockie, we've only got two lab coats so this is just for me and Amber.

LOCKIE: So the boys are being left out?

RONIKA: This time, yeah.

LOCKIE: That's not how it worked in ancient Egypt.

RONIKA: Come this way, Amber. Have a look inside. Check out what I've got to show you just over here. Look at this. This is a mummified head from ancient Egypt. Have you ever seen anything like that before?

AMBER: No.

RONIKA: And it's really important for us to make sure that we've got our masks on and our coats on so that both we don't breathe in any kind of micro-organisms from the mummified head but also so that any particles or anything that we have on us doesn't affect the head at all either.

AMBER: Does it have any more teeth that's left?

RONIKA: In ancient Egypt they had notoriously bad teeth because their diet was very, very high in silica or sand because they were surrounded by sand in the desert and the wind would blow the sand into their food. They'd eat it and then sort of chew on it with their teeth. The sand would erode their teeth and cause horrible problems. So lots of Egyptians had really, really bad teeth problems. Interestingly they didn't actually use toothbrushes or anything like that. So not only would they have bad teeth problems but they also would have had really, really bad breath. Can you imagine it? Gross.

LOCKIE: It's been really cool stepping back in time with Ronika and Amber and visiting the world of ancient Egypt and I've got a sneaking suspicion Amber might use some of her skills in art and geology as a budding archaeologists.

HOLLY: Coming up on the next episode – Sacha discovers some basketball-playing robots and Lockie gets to hang out in dark tunnels with plenty of bats. See you next time. Bye.

VOICE-OVER: If these stories have inspired you then check out our website for activities and loads of information on all of our experts. Plus don't forget to challenge yourself with our Enquiring Minds game.

END OF TRANSCRIPT