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Pages: 200
Target age range: 9-12
Genre: informational fiction

TRUTH OR LEGEND?: THE BONE WARS

By Shay McClean

Meet the characters:

OTHNIEL CHARLES “O.C.” MARSH (historical): One of the two major combatants in the Bone Wars. He is most famous for his discovery of common household names like *Stegosaurus*, *Triceratops*, and *Brontosaurus*—and, of course, for his petty feud with Edward Cope. Methodical, calculating, looked a bit like a walrus.

EDWARD DRINKER COPE (historical): Raised wealthy, Edward was tempted away from a life as a gentleman farm owner by his love of the natural world. He named species such as *Dimetrodon*, *Camarasaurus*, and *Elasmosaurus*. Known for his good looks, his philandering, and his fiery, combative nature.

CLIO (fictional): A Junior Historical Technician at the Office of Information Correction. She’s been working as an assistant to other Historical Technicians, and the Bone Wars case is her big chance at a promotion.

“PICKAXE” PETE (fictional): One of two “Bone Hunters” brought forward in time from the 1870s to help Clio with the case. Pete’s job is to collect fossils for paleontologists, but he hasn’t worked for Cope or Marsh directly.

CLEM (fictional): Clem is the other “Bone Hunter” brought forward in time. Like Pete, he’s a fossil collector-for-hire, but doesn’t have any personal experience with Cope or Marsh. Not the sharpest pick in the tool collection, but sweet as your granny’s apple pie.

Note to readers: In this scene, a holographic version of O.C. Marsh is recounting his version of a historical event. This account is based on O.C. Marsh's actual writings.

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PANEL 1

EXT - THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN, 1862, DAY. A young Marsh [age 32] sits on a bench outside the University of Berlin.

HOLOGRAPHIC MARSH (OFF)

I first met Cope when I was a student at the University of Berlin.

PANEL 2

EXT CONT. - A young Cope [age 23] approaches, hand outstretched.

HOLOGRAPHIC MARSH (OFF)

He introduced himself...

PANEL 3

EXT CONT. - Marsh and Cope walk together down a path at the University. Cope is gesticulating wildly as he talks, clearly overcome with emotion. Marsh is listening, concerned.

HOLOGRAPHIC MARSH (OFF)

...and right away began complaining about all the many things that were bothering him.

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PANEL 1

EXT CONT. - Tight on Cope's face as he talks. He looks like a raving lunatic.

HOLOGRAPHIC MARSH (OFF)

He seemed completely crazy, to be honest.

PANEL 2

EXT CONT. - Cope and Marsh stand together on the path. Marsh is clearly providing heartfelt words of advice and support.

HOLOGRAPHIC MARSH (OFF)

But still, I gave him good advice and we became friends.

PANEL 3

CLIO

Hmm. Does that sound like a true story to you two?

PETE

Does what seem like a who now?

PANEL 4

CLIO

Keep in mind, this is just how *Marsh* told the story.

He certainly made himself sound like a kind, reasonable guy, and Cope like a total nut job.

But of course there are two sides to every story...

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PANEL 1

Clio turns to the holographic version of Professor Cope.

CLIO

Professor Cope, can you please tell us about your first meeting with Professor Marsh?

PANEL 2

Holographic Cope is silent.

PANEL 3

CLEM

I do believe the lady asked you a question...?

PANEL 4

Holographic Cope is silent.

PANEL 5

CLEM

Tuh. This one ain't very friendly.

CLIO

That just means that the computer can't find a record of Cope's version of events. Pity.