



Transcript for *Joan Procter, Dragon Doctor* by Patricia Valdez (Knopf Books for Young Readers, an Imprint of Penguin Random House)

Introduction (approximately 0:00 – 4:01)

Hi everyone! It's Colleen from the KU Natural History Museum, and I'm so excited for today's Story Book Science. Now I do want to wait for some folks to join us. So while we wait, I want to talk a little bit about who we are going to be reading about today.

So we're going to be reading a book about Joan Procter. And Joan Procter was a British herpetologist from England. So what that means is that she studied amphibians and reptiles because that's what a herpetologist studies! Now Joan studied many, many, many different amphibians and reptiles, and she had been studying amphibians and reptiles ever since she was a young girl. And some people didn't think that Joan should study reptiles and amphibians. They didn't think that that's something young girls should study. But Joan didn't really care what those people thought! And she had a passion for studying those animals, and she shared that passion with other curious people.

Now when we read the book about Joan Procter today, we're going to be reading about one lizard she studied in particular. And I don't want to tell you what the lizard is since we'll be reading about it, but I do want to give you some hints. It is the largest living lizard in the world, and it is named after one of the islands in Indonesia where it can be found. Do you have any ideas what lizard this could be? Well if you need some help, we'll learn later in the book what that lizard is.

Now it looks like folks have joined us. So let's go ahead and get started!

First and foremost, we need to go over our guidelines for Story Book Science. So our guidelines are the same as if we were in the museum. We're not in the museum, but we're going to follow those same rules. So what that means is if you have a question or if you have a comment, you should feel free to ask that question or make that comment. But we want to make sure that we use kind and considerate words. Also, if you respond to someone's question or comment, you also need to make sure you use kind and considerate words. We are not in the museum, as I mentioned, but we do want to make sure that just like we would if we were in the museum, that this space is welcoming and inclusive. So can you make sure to use kind and considerate words for me? Excellent! Alright.

So welcome to Story Book Science! For today's Story Book Science, we are reading the book *Joan Procter, Dragon Doctor*. This book is written by Patricia Valdez, and it's illustrated by Felicita Sala. And it is published and being read with permission from Knopf Books for Young Readers, which is an imprint of Penguin Random House. Now I love this book. I love talking about some of my favorite female scientists, and Joan Procter is one of my favorite female scientists! And we're going to talk about how she studied herpetology. She studied amphibians and reptiles, and she had a passion for doing that. And it's such a great reminder that we should study and learn about the things we're passionate about too.

Now I do want to mention a couple other things before we start reading. The first is if you have questions or comments, please feel free to write those! But just know that if you have a question, I may not be able to see

it immediately. And I'll only be able to answer it, if time remains. And lastly if you need a partial transcript of this reading, that will be made available later today. And you can find it on the museum's website.

Now I don't have anything else to add, so let's go ahead and get started with our book!

Joan Procter, Dragon Doctor.

Reading from *Joan Procter, Dragon Doctor* (approximately 4:02 – 13:42)

Joan Procter, Dragon Doctor includes copyrighted materials, and we do not have permission to include the written text of the book in this transcript.

Conclusion (approximately 13:43 – 24:01)

And that is the end of this book.

Now earlier, before we started reading, I asked you if you could think of what the largest living lizard in the, living on Earth was because that is what Joan studied, or one of the many things she studied. Now if you guessed Komodo dragon, then you're correct! Komodo dragons are the largest living lizards on Earth, and we read about two Komodo dragons that Joan took care of. One in particular, whose name was Sumbawa, and this is a photo from the London Zoo of Sumbawa. So that is a photo of the Komodo dragon we read about.

Now that was a photo of a Komodo dragon in the zoo. I wanted to also share a photo of a Komodo dragon in the wild. So this is a photo of a Komodo dragon in the wild.

Now we know that Komodo dragons are the largest living lizards alive on Earth today, and we know that they can grow up to be about 10 feet. So when we look at this photo of the Komodo dragon, one of the things I want you to look for is its tail, which is right there. Now the tail of a Komodo dragon, it's about half of the length of the Komodo dragon. So there's the head and the body and then, roughly the same size, as the tail right there.

Now that tail is very, very strong. It can be used to fight other Komodo dragons. It can be used to catch prey. So I want you to just take a moment to look at this photo and really look at the tail and see if you can determine how it's about half the length of the Komodo dragon. Alright!

Now in the book we learned that Komodo dragons come from Indonesia. And I also wanted to share a map of Indonesia with you because, even though Komodo dragons are from Indonesia, they can only be found in certain places. So here's a map of Indonesia, and Indonesia is a very, very big country! It's made up of many, many, many different islands. So here is Indonesia, and then these islands are also a part of Indonesia. All of these islands. All those islands. Those make up the country of Indonesia.

Now for Komodo dragons that live in Indonesia, they can be found on only five islands. And those islands are right here. So this map zooms in on those islands. So we can look at this part to look a little more closely at the islands. And the five islands Komodo dragons live on include Komodo, which is where their name comes from, Rinca, Gili Dasami, Gili Montang, and Flores. So those are the five islands where you can find Komodo dragons in the wild.

Now I've never been to Indonesia. I've also never seen a Komodo dragon before, whether in the wild or at a zoo, but it's kind of hard for me to imagine how big they are! Like I know that they can grow up to 10 feet. I

know that Sumbawa, the Komodo dragon we read about, was about seven feet. But that's really hard for me to think of! So I have to think of lizards that I have seen to try to really imagine how big a Komodo dragon is. And one of the lizards that I've seen in my life is the Carolina anole, and I have a museum specimen of a Carolina anole that I would like to share with you. So I'm going to grab that.

Now the Carolina anole – whoops, there we go! As you can see, it is on my thumb. So its head and its body is about the length of my thumb. And it has a long tail that you can see. And with the tail, the entire length of the anole is about the length of my hand. And my hand is nowhere near a foot. So this isn't quite one foot. And it's so much smaller than the length of a Komodo dragon that we've talked about! So imagine this small Carolina anole that's not quite the length of my hand, and imagine that about 10 more times. And then that would be the length of a Komodo dragon. So I'll let you look at that, and I want you to think about that. Now I'm going to put this Carolina anole back.

Now when we talk about Komodo dragons or Carolina anoles or really any lizard, we can really think about all of those differences, specifically the size. So there's so many lizards! There's so much diversity! So many different types, some of which are really small, and some of which are really big like the Komodo dragon.

Now Joan Procter, she studied many, many other reptiles. Some of the reptiles she studied were pit vipers. So this is an example of a pit viper. It's a venomous snake, and this was one type of snake that Joan Procter studied. She also studied pythons. So pythons are very long snakes that Joan Procter studied. And I wanted to give you yet another example of diversity in reptiles. So Joan Procter studied pit vipers and pythons, but there are other snakes as well. And I have a skull of a racer, and I want to show that to you. So I'm going to bring this closer to the camera. But this is the skull of a snake known as a racer. So I'll hold it from a different angle. So that is another example of a reptile.

Now some other reptiles that Joan studied included pancake tortoises and other turtles and, also, crocodiles! So Joan studied many, many different reptiles. And she also reminded all of the people that she talked to about these reptiles that they shouldn't be feared! They have amazing qualities. There are so many different types of reptiles that we shouldn't be afraid of them. So when we read about Joan Procter, did you also learn that we shouldn't be afraid of reptiles? I was definitely reminded about not being afraid of reptiles reading this book.

Now the last thing I want to say is how Joan learned about all of these amazing reptiles. In the book, we learned that Joan read a lot of books. We also read that she made observations about the pets that she had. We learned she went to the Natural History Museum and learned about reptiles. And we also learned that she worked at the zoo and learned a lot about reptiles there. Now Joan learned reptile – about reptiles – in all of those places because she couldn't go to university. And the reason that Joan couldn't go to university is because she had a chronic health disability. And what that means is that she had a condition that lasted all of her life that sometimes made it difficult to do everyday activities. And, in fact, sometimes she also had to use a wheelchair, as we saw in the book, towards the end of her life. Now with Joan's chronic health disability, sometimes it was visible, sometimes it wasn't. But it doesn't matter if it was visible or not. A disability is real, whether you can see it or not, and it was something that impacted Joan. Now she couldn't go to university because of this chronic health disability because universities wouldn't support her. So she had to learn all about reptiles in different ways. And it's a reminder to us that you don't have to go to university to learn things. Universities aren't the only places where you can gain knowledge. You can read books! You can go to museums! You can go to zoos to learn all of these amazing things! Alright?

Now I had an amazing time reading about Joan Procter with you and learning about reptiles, especially Komodo dragons! And I hope you enjoyed the time you spent here as well. I do have a question for you,

though. What are you passionate about? Joan loved reptiles, and she loved sharing that information with curious folks! But what things are you passionate about? What do you want to share with curious people? Alright.

Now this is the end of Story Book Science, but I will be back next week with another book. We are going to read *Shark Lady*. This book is about Eugenie Clark. And Eugenie Clark is very similar to Joan Procter in that Eugenie Clark did not care what people thought about her! Some people said she shouldn't be a scientist. Some people said she shouldn't study sharks because they were man-eating beasts! But Eugenie Clark knew better. And she was very passionate, and she shared all that she knew and learned about sharks. So join me next week so we can read about Eugenie Clark together and learn about sharks. I'll see you then! Bye!