

# An Adventure in Arrow Rock

Written by Carolyn Mueller | Illustrated by Philip Goudeau

## Chapter Four

### Artist George Caleb Bingham

The master of paint, Charlie's students muttered, watching the writing on the pottery shard slowly disappear.

"Look," Samantha said, "The pieces fit perfectly!"

The five friends were trying to solve the mystery of a missing vase, assisted by the supernatural!

"Back to town," Zuri said.

Charlie led the way. He'd never seen his students so engaged or excited. Thinking of his adventure at the Capitol, he felt a happy surge of *deja vu*.

Back in Arrow Rock, the kids looked frantically for a clue.

"The master of paint," Henry said. "Has to be an artist living around here."

"Lived," Zuri said, pointing, "Look! The sign says that house belonged to artist George Caleb Bingham."

Charlie had been in the Bingham Gallery during his Capitol adventure. He said, "George Caleb Bingham is from Arrow Rock. His family moved here when he was about your age and grew up to become an internationally acclaimed artist."

"The master of paint!" Amir shouted triumphantly. "Let's go!"

The kids crossed the threshold of the tidy red brick house with green shutters. Inside was simple pioneer décor, along with reproductions of Bingham's works gracing the walls.

Moving silently between paintings, the students studied Bingham's depictions of Missouri.

"Do you like them?" someone asked with a hint of amusement.

The kids were startled by a man in the middle of the room with the same shimmering quality of the Osage warrior.

"You're George Caleb Bingham!" Zuri cried. "Look!" she pointed from the ghost to a portrait of Bingham.

"I was about your age when I came to Arrow Rock," he said. "It was different then, a town on the edge of the wilderness, a stopping place for families heading to their futures, some planning to follow the Santa Fe Trail. My mother brought us here to find a better life too, after my father died."

The kids listened quietly. Charlie marveled at their rapt attention as Bingham continued.

"I loved to paint and was lucky my mother who encouraged me despite the work needed for a family to survive on the frontier. Teachers and mentors helped too. I wanted to capture the adventure and spirit of my home." Bingham gestured to the paintings. "I aimed to paint scenes of pioneer and river life and the political sphere. The early days of statehood were full of brave men and women with important stories to tell.

"We all have important stories to tell and impacts we can make in our communities," he added and then disappeared. Zuri saw a pottery shard on a table, lunged forward and grabbed it, hurrying to turn it over before its clue disappeared.

*Find me in a place with libations and sustenance sold,*

*A gathering spot, well-known and incredibly old.*



## NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

Use context clues to define libations and sustenance, then do the same thing with unfamiliar words in your local newspaper.