

An Adventure in Arrow Rock

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Chapter Eight

Heading Home

As John slid the last piece of the vase into place, he looked up at Charlie. Their eyes met.

"That's right," he said. "I was an artist, too. I made many useful things at the potter's wheel and I also made them beautiful." He smiled.

"The black community contributed a lot to this place. Not just building its foundations but its arts community as well. The influence of our community here may have been ignored by generations who looked the other way, but it's always been here, and it's important. Look, and you'll see black influence all around you."

The kids nodded, taking in John Brown, the completed vase, and the church.

"Well," John said. "I expect now you've got a vase to deliver."

He handed the vessel to Charlie, who took it with careful reverence.

"History reminds you," he told them. "To never forget."

And then he was gone.

"Let's go find Dr. Tom!" Rory shouted excitedly.

The kids scurried out of the church, heading to the Masonic Lodge on 6th Street.

They arrived at a small, white clapboard house. A muddy graduate student sat on the steps, bits of pottery on a cloth around her.

"We're looking for Dr. Tom!" Samantha announced. "Is this his dig site?"

"It is," the student answered cheerily. "But he went to do research at the Print Shop Museum on Main Street."

"Quick!" Henry yelled. "Back to Main Street!"

Charlie had to jog to keep up as the students raced to a large, red brick building in the center of town.

The group burst through the doors, but the hush inside the Museum quickly stifled their exuberance.

"Wow," Zuri murmured. "Look at all of these presses and

old newspapers."

The group made their way around the room, examining everything. Charlie chuckled at his students, entranced by the many ways people once made newspapers. It contrasted sharply with their modern-day phone addictions.

Dr. Tom walked in and greeted them. "Charlie, class! How was your day in Arrow Rock?"

Everyone started talking at once.

"We saw lots of ghosts! We learned about history from all of them! We found clues, solved puzzles and finished your vase!"

"Whoa, whoa, whoa," Dr. Tom said. "You did what and met who?"

Charlie presented the vase to Dr. Tom whose eyes lit up.

"It's the missing nesting vase! It matches the collection perfectly! But how did you?..."

Charlie looked at his class. They radiated excitement.

"We took a journey through Arrow Rock history," he said. "And had help along the way."

Half an hour later, students and adults boarded their bus. As the driver turned onto I-70 East, Charlie sat back in his seat. The drive home felt so different. It was anything but silent. The kids bubbled with excitement, swapping stories and retelling history. Not a phone in sight.

Charlie's goal each year was to turn his students into who he became after his own adventure. And here they were, excited explorers of their world and its past.

And the rest, as they say, is history.



NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

This story ends at the Print Shop Museum. Write a short story of your own, based on the history of your area and submit it for possible publication. Wouldn't it be awesome if a press printed it?