



Albright-Knox  
Art Gallery

# Family Guide



# Humble and Human

AN EXHIBITION IN HONOR  
OF RALPH C. WILSON, JR.

TREASURES FROM THE ALBRIGHT-KNOX  
AND THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS



# What are the **3** main parts of a story?

## 1 CHARACTERS

Who is in the story?

## 2 SETTING

Where does the story take place?

## 3 PLOT

What happens during the story?

## Introduction

Every story needs a beginning, and ours is the work *Study for “Le Pont de l’Europe”* by Gustave Caillebotte [pronounced: kai-ya-bot]. Caillebotte wanted to share all the new and exciting things he saw happening in his city, Paris, France, during his lifetime. What do you see? Would you want to go for a walk in this painting? Why do you think he chose this place to paint?



**Gustave Caillebotte**  
(French, 1848–1894).  
*Étude pour “Le Pont de l’Europe”* (Study for “Le Pont de l’Europe”), 1876. Oil on canvas, 32 ¾ x 48 ¼ inches (83.2 x 122.6 cm). Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Bequest of A. Conger Goodyear, by exchange, 1974 (1974:25).

# Characters



Take a long look at the people in Vincent van Gogh's [pronounced: van Go (EN) or van KHOKH (NL)] painting of Postman Roulin and Berthe Morisot's [pronounced: MORE-eh-so] painting of a woman sewing. If you could ask them questions, what would you ask? How do you think they would describe their lives? Did the artists give us clues to who these people are? (Hint: Look at their clothes, their hair, their facial expressions, and anything else you might notice.)

Do you think these people were important to the artists who painted them?

Why or why not?



Joseph Roulin was very special to van Gogh; you could say he was one of the “main characters” in van Gogh’s story. Although we don’t know much about the woman in Morisot’s painting, we are given a glimpse into a quiet moment of her everyday life.

Above (left to right) ▶

**Vincent van Gogh** (Dutch, 1853–1890). *Portrait of Postman Roulin*, 1888. Oil on canvas, 25 $\frac{1}{16}$  × 19 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches (65 × 50.5 cm). Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Buhl Ford II, 1996.25.

**Berthe Morisot** (French, 1841–1895). *Femme cousant (Woman Sewing)*, ca. 1879. Oil on canvas, 25 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 21 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches (65.4 × 54.6 cm). Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Fellows for Life Fund, 1926 (1926:1).

Next page (top to bottom) ▶

**Camille Pissarro** (French, born Saint Thomas, 1830–1903). *La Ferme à Montfoucault (Farm at Montfoucault)*, 1874. Oil on canvas, 21 $\frac{1}{2}$  × 25 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches (54.6 × 65.4 cm). Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Bequest of Miss Gertrude Watson, 1938 (1938:16).

**Claude Monet** (French, 1840–1926). *Rounded Flower Bed*, 1876. Oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{3}{8}$  × 32 inches (59.3 × 81.3 cm). Detroit Institute of Arts, City of Detroit Purchase, 21.71.

**Camille Pissarro** (French, born Saint Thomas, 1830–1903). *The Kitchen at Piette's, Montfoucault*, 1874. Oil on canvas, 18 $\frac{1}{4}$  × 22 inches (46.4 × 55.9 cm). Detroit Institute of Arts, Bequest of Edward E. Rothman, 75.31.

**Claude Monet** (French, 1840–1926). *Chemin de halage à Argenteuil (Towpath at Argenteuil, Winter)*, 1875–76. Oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{3}{8}$  × 39 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches (60 × 100 cm). Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Gift of Charles Clifton, 1919 (1919:8).



## Setting

**Look at** the two paintings by Camille Pissarro [pronounced: Pi-ZAR-o]: *Farm at Montfoucault* and *Kitchen at Piette's, Moutfoucault*. These two works of art give us a unique opportunity to see the outside and inside of a setting at the same time. Pissarro's close friend, Piette, lived on this farm, and when the artist visited, he would paint what he saw: animals, plants, trees, and the people who lived there.

Which location  
would you visit?



Let's visit another two settings: *Rounded Flower Bed* and *Towpath at Argenteuil, Winter* by Claude Monet [pronounced: mo-nay]. Monet was one of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.'s favorite artists! Time to look at all of the details: What time of year do you think it is in each image? What clues might help us figure out the season? Do you think these scenes are taking place in the morning, the afternoon, or the evening?



Monet loved to paint the same places over and over again, showing us how settings change depending on the time of year and the time of day.

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## Plot

Now, let's think about the plot of a story. Look at Edgar Degas's [pronounced: Deh-gah (EN) or Dur-gah (FR)] painting, *Violinist and Young Woman*. What do you think happened right before this scene? What will happen next?



Next, focus on Georges Seurat's [pronounced: Sir-AH] *Study for "Le Chahut."* Imagine yourself in the painting—Where would you want to be? On the stage? Playing an instrument? Or in the crowd, watching the show?

Music was very important to Degas and Seurat, and their society. Do you like to listen to music? Do you play an instrument?



## Is music a part of your life story?

### Top to bottom

**Edgar Degas** (French, 1834–1917). *Violinist and Young Woman*, ca. 1871. Oil and crayon on canvas, 18 ¼ x 22 inches (46.4 x 55.9 cm). Detroit Institute of Arts, Bequest of Robert H. Tannahill, 70.167.

**Georges Seurat** (French, 1859–1891). *Étude pour "Le Chahut" (Study for "Le Chahut")*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 21 ¾ x 18 ½ inches (55.2 x 47 cm). Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; General Purchase Funds, 1943 (1943:10).



## Ending

Now it is time to end our adventure together. **Look at** Mary Cassatt's [pronounced: ca-SAHT] *In the Garden*, and picture this as the very last scene of a story. What kind of ending would it be? Happy? Sad? Exciting? Quiet? Cassatt was interested in showing everyday scenes from her life. She often painted outside, which many artists were beginning to do at this time.

All of the artists whose work we encountered today explored a new way of painting everyday people and places. These artists—who used quick brushstrokes, unusual angles, and bright, sunlit colors—became known as the Impressionists.

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Can you find any places where it looks like Cassatt painted quickly?

Do you see any paintings that include bright colors?

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**Mary Cassatt** (American, 1844–1926). *In the Garden*, 1903 or 1904. Oil on canvas, 26 ¾ x 32 ½ inches (67.9 x 82.6 cm). Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Dr. Ernest G. Stillman, 22.6.

While the original group of Impressionists lived in France, they inspired many artists working in other countries, including the United States, as well as a later generation of artists called the post-Impressionists.

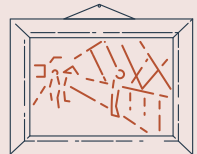
## TIME FOR **YOUR** STORY

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**1**  
Which **character** is your favorite?

**2**  
Pick a **setting** that you would like to have as part of your story.



**3**  
Now time for your **plot**: How does your story start? What happens next? How does it end?