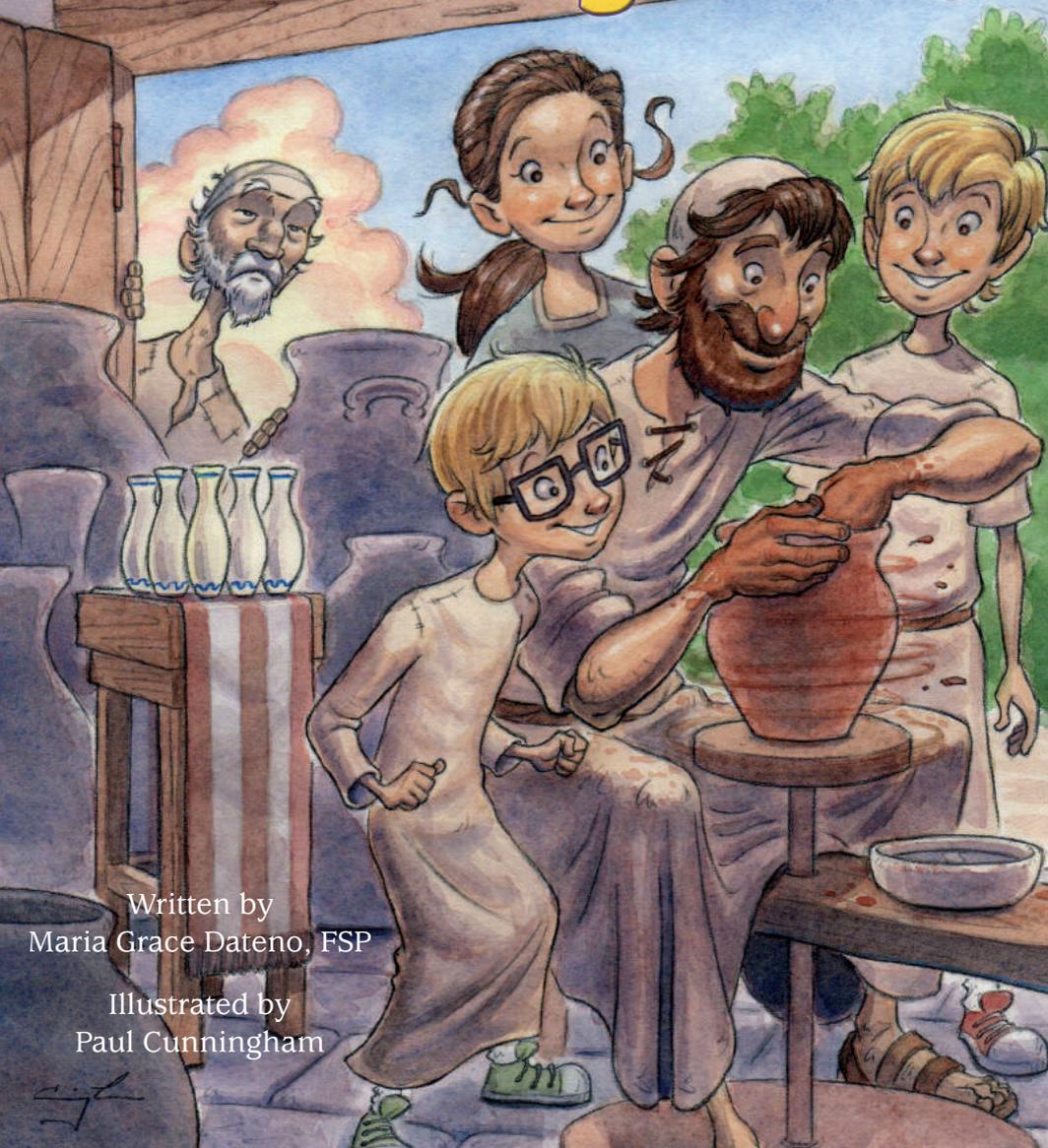


Mystery of the Missing Jars

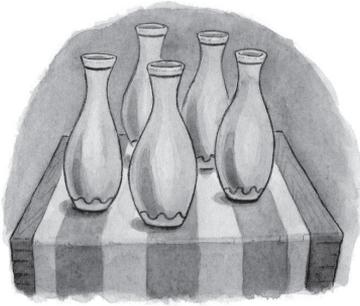


Written by
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Illustrated by
Paul Cunningham



Mystery of the Missing Jars



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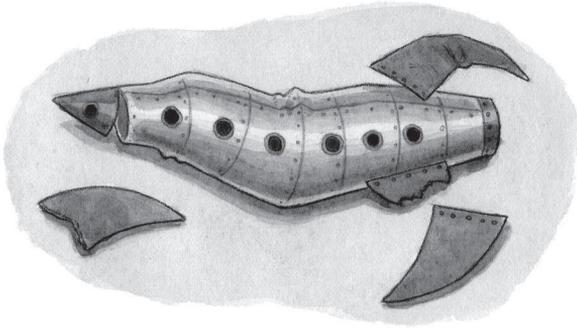
Illustrated by Paul Cunningham

*To my siblings—
George, Jennie, Elizabeth,
Sarah, and Emily
—and to our childhood memories
(even if only some of us have them).*

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Chapter One



The Smashed Rocket

“It’s not fair!” I yelled as I came into the house.

“Caleb, calm down and tell me what you’re angry about,” Mom said.

“I’m not angry! I’m just so mad that Kevin said he wouldn’t mess up this time and he did.”

“What did he mess up?”

“Our rocket for the Space Adventures Science Fair project! We’ve been working on it for ages. I know we could have won a prize. And now he’s ruined it!”

“Maybe it can be fixed,” said Mom.

“No, it can’t!” I said.

“You didn’t even see it,” said Hannah, as she came in the door behind me. She had been visiting her friend, who was Kevin’s older sister. “Neither did I. I’m just telling you what Kevin’s sister said. It’s in pieces and kind of smashed. But it might not be his fault, Caleb. Their baby sister might have done it.”

“Why do people always blame the youngest one?” asked Noah. He’s six and is the youngest in our family.

“You’re not helping, guys!” I said.

“Well, according to you, there’s nothing anyone can do to help,” said Hannah. “Come on, Noah. Let’s go see if there are any tomatoes that are ripe.”

“What am I going to do, Mom?” I asked, after they had left. “The fair is this Tuesday!”

“The first thing is to wait until you see the damage yourself. It might not be as bad as you think.”

How could “in pieces and kind of smashed” not be as bad as I think! I thought.

Just then, my mom's cell phone beeped at her, and she looked at the text message. They're almost always from my dad.

"Hey, Caleb. Dad wants you guys in the workshop to try out that new 3-D puzzle he's working on."

"Sure!" I said and jumped up to head out the door. It was amazing how I felt so much better so quickly.

My dad's workshop is next door to the house. It's where he makes furniture and toys out of wood, which is his job. He's starting to teach me woodworking.

I was halfway across the yard to Dad's workshop when I heard Hannah and Noah coming back from the garden. I was going to hurry into the workshop by myself and not tell them that Dad had called for us. That way I could be the first one to try out the new toy. But something made me change my mind. I stopped and turned toward them.

"Hannah! Noah!" I called. "Dad wants us to try out something."

"Oh, yay!" said Noah. They hurried over and we headed toward the workshop.

That's when something amazing happened.

It wasn't the first time it had happened. (It was actually the fourth time.) But this time we weren't trying to make it happen. We weren't talking about it, or even thinking about it.

But it happened anyway.

