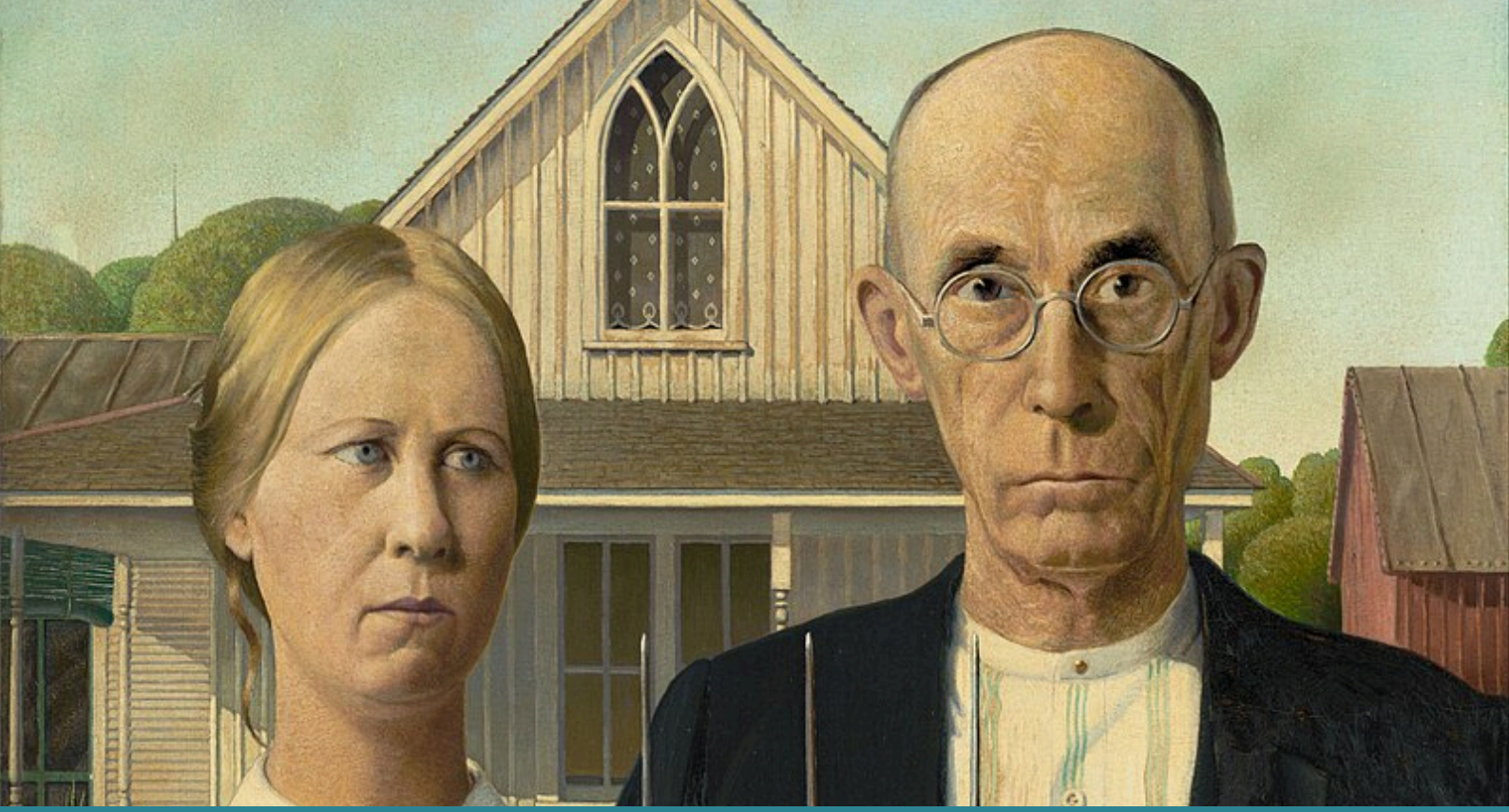

American Gothic
Grant Wood, 1930

Gentle jazz music plays

This is Redstart Radio, the station that brings you all the hottest art news and stories by Chard's finest art detectives.

In this episode, agents investigated a painting by the American artist Grant Wood. You'll hear what the agents uncovered very soon. But first, a little about the painting.

It is called American Gothic, and Grant Wood painted it in 1930. It features a man and a woman standing outside a white wooden house. The man is holding a pitchfork, and the woman looks at him, a little concerned. There's lots of old farm tools in the museum here, which is why you're listening to this here.

Now it's time for you to hear some stories, written and performed by the agents who investigated this artwork.

Sound of a slow jazz trumpet

Murders on the Loose, inspired by American Gothic, by Kyra, Jacob and Letitia.

Trumpet fades, replaced with sounds of light rain and the noise of a spade digging sharply into wet ground.

Why are you looking at me Leigh-Ann?
Did you remember to bury the body?
I'm just looking past you!
(whispers) Yes, I have.

The pitchfork! They're going to notice the blooming pitchfork!
There's blood on the floor!

Faint sounds of a police siren steadily approaching.

I'm going to run away!

The police siren gets closer and then stops.

Oh great, we're dead.
I'm gonna kill all of you!

Sounds of a metal implement being swung, contacting with a body.
A grunt and the sound of the body falling to the floor.
Then the sound of the spade digging in the ground once more.

Did you remember to bury the body?

Sound of a jazz trumpet, then fades and is replaced with the sound of an angry crowd calling and shouting.

Once in the small town of Chard, early in the nineteenth century, a riot erupted between two very different ideas.

Voice echoes through a loud-speaker

All y'all gathered souls, young and old, fair and bold
Are here to witness our last missus of the manor.

Oh lord, what's to become of me?
A grave fate, or however.
However what?

Listen here boss lady, the time for being tight with the wages is over. If you want peace in your life you'll raise the pay, and you'll do it now, because we ain't leaving until it's done.

Very well.

Once more through the loudspeaker.

I'll raise the pay to ten buckaroos a week.

Sound of the crowd cheering.

But mark my words, this is not an open invitation to push me further.

That's what we needed to hear, lady. A mistress who knows when to bend and stand firm. Alright then, we're on our way now, but remember there won' t be a chance next time.

Sound of an amplified acoustic guitar, then the singer Billy Bragg sings:

The union forever, defending our rights!
Down with the blackleg, all workers unite!
With our brothers and our sisters from many far off lands,
There is power in a union.

Sound of the crowd cheering.

Gentle jazz music plays.
You're listening to Redstart Radio. Remember, there's 10 episodes to find, all around Chard. Where will you go next?

If you enjoyed these stories inspired by paintings, why not create a new story yourself? Investigate a painting, fire up your imagination and let the story flow!