

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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Pieces and Players.

Balliett, Blue (Author)

Mar 2015. 320 p. Scholastic, hardcover, \$17.99. (9780545299909).

After an art heist in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago, elderly museum trustee Mrs. Sharpe calls in five 13-year-olds to investigate the case and recover the artworks. Petra, Calder, and Peter, who collaborated in solving art-related mysteries in *Chasing Vermeer* (2004), *The Wright 3* (2006), and *The Calder Game* (2008), are joined by Zoomy from *The Danger Box* (2010) and Early from *Hold Fast* (2013). As they enter their teens, they are sometimes self-conscious about pimples and how they come across to the opposite sex, but they are still the quirky, insightful individuals they always were. Together, they visit the scene of the crime, tour public artworks in Chicago, make a great many random observations, shift their suspicions, befriend a ghost, and talk intelligently on any number of subjects. The plot may revolve around a mystery, but the heart of the book involves the mysterious human connection with great works of art. Balliett's fans will particularly enjoy the conversations as her five young protagonists join forces, working together toward a common goal.

— *Carolyn Phelan*