

SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL – JANUARY 2015

BALLIETT, Blue. *Pieces and Players*. 320p. Scholastic. Apr. 2015. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9780545299909; ebk. \$17.99. ISBN 9780545746342.

Gr 4-6—This time it's a small family museum and 13 missing pieces of art providing the mystery that brings back characters met in previous titles. Tommy, Petra, and Calder are joined by Early Pearl and Zoomy Chamberlain. With all five kids led by their teacher Mrs. Hussey, each of the detective's special skills add to their understanding and help them arrive at the solution. Fans of the previous books will be delighted as these characters continue with their familiar predilections such as Calder's pentominoes clacking in his pockets. The realistic Chicago setting and familiar characters combined with the somewhat ghostly aura in the museum, provide just enough drama and enigmas to solve. The stolen artwork is from various masters comprising the "pieces" mentioned in the title. Uncertainties abound, particularly as the kids question their ability to find the stolen works and the honesty of those asking them to find it. People in black leather jackets appear and disappear without explanation, along with red herring clues. Fortunately, this is a puzzle worthy of the capabilities of our fearsome fivesome. Fun and engaging; a fitting addition for readers addicted to these art mysteries.—Carol A. Edwards, Denver Public Library, CO