

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF CHASING VERMEER AND THE WRIGHT 3


BLUE BALLIETT

ILLUSTRATED BY BRETT HELQUIST

THE CALDER GAME

Includes AFTER WORDS™ bonus features



 **SCHOLASTIC**

CHAPTER ONE

▲ ▲ ▲ The setting is a very old town in England. It is dawn, a pale October dawn that pours through the streets like cream, erasing line and dissolving shadow. Red ivy stirs against damp stone; the houses are stone, the walls are stone, the street is stone. A lace curtain has escaped through an open window and waves unseen in the early light. Now a black cat blinks, stretches, and slowly crosses the empty square, stepping carefully around a raised sign that reads, *MINOTAUR*, ALEXANDER CALDER, 1959.

Someone sneezes behind closed shutters. A light goes on in a kitchen and a man in plaid pajamas fills a brass kettle. In other houses, butter sizzles and silverware clinks. The first truck of the day rattles across cobblestones and comes to a sudden stop. The driver sits for a moment looking straight ahead, his mouth open, then hops out and hurries to

a nearby door. He bangs the knocker twice, sticks his head in, and shouts, "It's gone! The sculpture is gone!"

Soon enough, the town realizes that a boy is also gone.

CHAPTER TWO

▲ ▲ ▲ Exactly two weeks earlier, on a shiny, blue morning in the United States, three kids sat talking.

"Your dad is really taking you to England?" Petra Andalee asked, her voice thin with surprise.

Tommy Segovia's eyebrows shot up and his mouth opened in a slowly widening O. "Lucky," he muttered.

Calder Pillay pulled a piece of yellow plastic out of his pocket and ran the W-shape back and forth over one leg, back and forth between Petra and Tommy. "Yeah, I wish you guys could come," he said. "We're going next week, so I even get to miss school."

The three sat silently for a moment, banging their heels against the hollow sides of a circular piece of sculpture near the University of Chicago campus. Sun glinted off the metal, making it difficult to see.

TWO CALDERS ARE MISSING.

When Calder Pillay travels with his father to a remote village in England, he finds mazes and mystery . . . and an unexpected Alexander Calder sculpture in the town square. Calder is drawn to the sculpture, but others have less-than-friendly feelings toward it . . . and on the same night, both the boy and the sculpture disappear!

Calder's friends Petra and Tommy fly to England to help his father find him. But this mystery has more twists and turns than anyone suspects . . . with more at stake than at first meets the eye.

★ "Acclaimed for her sophisticated juggling of art concepts, mystery, philosophy and storytelling, Balliett outdoes herself with this ambitious novel." —*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★ "Balliett [...] weaves in the kids' attraction to puzzles, words, and found objects as she moves them through literal and figurative mazes. Balliett again offers readers new ways to think." —*Booklist*, starred review

"Balliett again skillfully weaves art, math, puzzles, and suspense into a page-turning mystery." —*VOYA*

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