



A Club for Kids Who Love Books

CHASING VERMEER

About *Chasing Vermeer*

THE INSIDE SCOOP

**How did Blue Balliett get started on the story of *Chasing Vermeer*?
She followed her students into the mystery.**

I could never have written this book if I hadn't spent the last 20 years, 24 hours a day, with kids. I have three of my own, and I taught 3rd grade for ten years at the school my kids were going to, the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools.

As a teacher, I always tried to follow the interests of my class each year. Six years ago I had a group that wanted to find out about mysteries and art, so that's what we did. At the end of the school day I always read to my class, and I tried to pick books that fit with whatever we were investigating. I couldn't find enough to read that combined challenging art ideas and adventure, so we ended the year by each writing our own art mystery. My only rule was that all the ingredients of the story had to come from the real world.

Each of us set out to write the book we wanted to read. The kids did some fabulous things. And for me, that was the beginning of *Chasing Vermeer*.

Your turn! Are you fascinated by mysteries and art? Try the author's approach and combine real elements into your own book. Start by learning about Vermeer or another artist, then see where your imagination takes you.



SCHOLASTIC

<http://www.scholastic.com>