

BEVERLY CLEARY

RAMONA THE PEST

Sometimes a littler person has to be
a little bit nosier and a little bit more stubborn in order
to be noticed at all.





CHAPTER 1

Ramona's Great Day

"I AM *not* a pest," Ramona Quimby told her big sister Beezus.

"Then stop acting like a pest," said Beezus, whose real name was Beatrice. She was standing by the front window waiting for her friend Mary Jane to walk to school with her.

"I'm not acting like a pest. I'm singing and skipping," said Ramona, who had only recently

learned to skip with both feet. Ramona did not think she was a pest. No matter what others said, she never thought she was a pest. The people who called her a pest were always bigger and so they could be unfair.

Ramona went on with her singing and skipping. "This is a great day, a great day, a great day!" she sang, and to Ramona, who was feeling grown-up in a dress instead of play clothes, this was a great day, the greatest day of her whole life. No longer would she have to sit on her tricycle watching Beezus and Henry Huggins and the rest of the boys and girls in the neighborhood go off to school. Today she was going to school, too. Today she was going to learn to read and write and do all the things that would help her catch up with Beezus.

"Come *on*, Mama!" urged Ramona, pausing in her singing and skipping. "We don't want to be late for school."

"Don't pester, Ramona," said Mrs. Quimby. "I'll get you there in plenty of time."

"I'm *not* pestering," protested Ramona, who never meant to pester. She was not a slow-

poke grownup. She was a girl who could not wait. Life was so interesting she had to find out what happened next.

Then Mary Jane arrived. "Mrs. Quimby, would it be all right if Beezus and I take Ramona to kindergarten?" she asked.

"No!" said Ramona instantly. Mary Jane was one of those girls who always wanted to pretend she was a mother and who always wanted Ramona to be the baby. Nobody was going to catch Ramona being a baby on her first day of school.

"Why not?" Mrs. Quimby asked Ramona. "You could walk to school with Beezus and Mary Jane just like a big girl."

"No, I couldn't." Ramona was not fooled for an instant. Mary Jane would talk in that silly voice she used when she was being a mother and take her by the hand and help her across the street, and everyone would think she really was a baby.

"Please, Ramona," coaxed Beezus. "It would be lots of fun to take you in and introduce you to the kindergarten teacher."

"A VERY FUNNY STORY." *School Library Journal*

"RAMONA'S ADVENTURES RING AS TRUE AS THE RECESS BELL."

The New York Times

"A TRULY FUNNY AND REALISTIC PORTRAYAL."

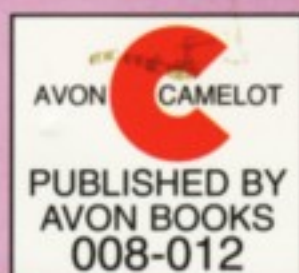
American Library Association

"THE AUTHOR HAS A SURE INSTINCT FOR THE THOUGHT
AND EXPRESSION OF FIVE-YEAR-OLDS." *The Horn Book*

It is the greatest day of Ramona's life. She is in kindergarten and she loves her teacher, Miss Binney. She likes a little boy named Davy so much she wants to kiss him. She's fascinated by Susan's beautiful reddish brown curls that bounce like springs when she runs. Ramona is thrilled about all the new things to see.

So how in the world does Ramona get in trouble? Why is she sitting on a bench when the rest of the class is playing Gray Duck? Why does Davy run as fast as he can when Ramona comes near him? And how does Ramona disrupt the whole class during rest time? Well, anyone who knows Ramona knows that she is never a pest on purpose.

Illustrated by Louis Darling • Cover illustration by Alan Tiegreen



www.avonbooks.com