

BEVERLY CLEARY

BEEZUS AND RAMONA



Little
sisters
can be
difficult
... this
little sister
is impossible!



CHAPTER ONE

Beezus and Her Little Sister

BEATRICE QUIMBY'S biggest problem was her little sister Ramona. Beatrice, or Beezus (as everyone called her, because that was what Ramona had called her when she first learned to talk), knew other nine-year-old girls who had little sisters who went to nursery school, but she did not know anyone with a little sister like Ramona.

Beezus felt that the biggest trouble with four-year-old Ramona was that she was just plain exasperating. If Ramona drank lemonade through a straw, she blew into the straw as hard as she could to see what would happen. If she played with her finger paints in the front yard, she wiped her hands on the neighbors' cat. That was the exasperating sort of thing Ramona did. And then there was the way she behaved about her favorite book.

It all began one afternoon after school when Beezus was sitting in her father's big chair embroidering a laughing teakettle on a pot holder for one of her aunts for Christmas. She was trying to embroider this one neatly, because she planned to give it to Aunt Beatrice, who was Mother's younger sister and Beezus' most special aunt.

With gray thread Beezus carefully outlined the steam coming from the teakettle's spout and thought about her pretty young aunt, who was always so gay and so understanding. No wonder she was Mother's favorite sister. Beezus hoped to be exactly like Aunt Beatrice when she grew up. She wanted to be a fourth-grade teacher and drive a

yellow convertible and live in an apartment house with an elevator and a buzzer that opened the front door. Because she was named after Aunt Beatrice, Beezus felt she might be like her in other ways, too.

While Beezus was sewing, Ramona, holding a mouth organ in her teeth, was riding around the living room on her tricycle. Since she needed both hands to steer the tricycle, she could blow in and out on only one note. This made the harmonica sound as if it were groaning *oh dear, oh dear* over and over again.

Beezus tried to pay no attention. She tied a small knot in the end of a piece of red thread to embroider the teakettle's laughing mouth. "Conceal a knot as you would a secret," Grandmother always said.

Inhaling and exhaling into her mouth organ, Ramona closed her eyes and tried to pedal around the coffee table without looking.

"Ramona!" cried Beezus. "Watch where you're going!"

When Ramona crashed into the coffee table, she

"RAMONA IS ONE OF THE FUNNIEST LITTLE SISTERS
IN FICTION." *The New York Times*

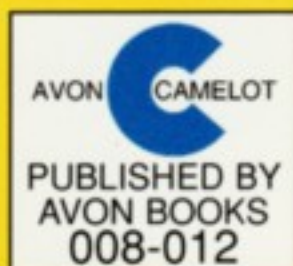
"HILARIOUS—AND WISE." *Chicago Tribune*

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Beezus Quimby tries very hard to be patient with her little sister, but four-year-old Ramona has the habit of doing the most unpredictable, annoying, embarrassing things in the world. How many nine-year-old girls have to put up with a silly little sister who hops around in rabbit ears and bakes a rubber doll into her sister's birthday cake? Sometimes Beezus doesn't like Ramona very much, and that makes her feel very guilty. Sisters are supposed to love each other, but pesky little Ramona just doesn't seem very lovable to Beezus.

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