

The hilarious sequel to *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*

Barbara Robinson

Best  
~~The Worst~~  
School Year  
Ever





Unless you're somebody like Huckleberry Finn, the first day of school isn't too bad. Most kids, by then, are bored with summer and itchy from mosquito bites and poison ivy and nothing to do. Your sneakers are all worn out and you can't get new ones till school starts and your mother is sick and tired of yelling at you to pick things up and you're sick and tired of picking the same things up.

Plus, the first day of school is only half a day for kids.





My little brother, Charlie, once asked my mother what the teachers do for the rest of the day.

"They get things ready—books and papers and lessons."

"That's not what Leroy Herdman says," Charlie told her. "Leroy says as soon as the kids are gone, they lock all the doors and order in pizza and beer."

"Well, they don't," Mother said, "and how would Leroy know anyway?"

"He forgot something," Charlie said, "and he went back to get it and he couldn't get in."

"They saw him coming and locked the doors," Mother said. "Wouldn't you?"

Well, yes. Anyone would, because the Herdmans—Ralph, Imogene, Leroy, Claude, Ollie, and Gladys—were the worst kids in the history of the world. They weren't honest or cheerful or industrious or cooperative or clean.

They told lies and smoked cigars and set fire to things and hit little kids and cursed and stayed away from school whenever they wanted to and wouldn't learn anything when they were there.

They were always there, though, on the first day, so you always knew right away that this was going to be another exciting Herdman year in the Woodrow Wilson Elementary School.

At least there was only one of them in each grade, and since they never got kept back, you always had the same one to put up with. I had Imogene, and what I did was stay out of her way, but it wasn't easy.

This time she grabbed me in the hall and shoved an oatmeal box in my face. "Hey," she said, "you want to buy a science project?"

I figured that Imogene's idea of a science project would probably explode or catch fire or smell really bad or be alive and bite me—and, in fact, I could hear something squealing



# The worst kids in the history of the world!

**T**he Herdman kids are the outlaws of Woodrow Wilson Elementary School. They smoke cigars, lie, and set fire to things—and that's only when they bother to come to school. If anything goes wrong, you can be sure there's a Herdman behind it.

Then a school project forces the students to think of compliments for their classmates—*all* of them. Is it possible that behind their outrageous pranks there might be something good about this crazy clan after all?

“As wild as ever.”

—*The New York Times Book Review*

“The many readers who laughed out loud at **THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER** will enthusiastically welcome the return of the Herdman kids.”

—*Publishers Weekly* (STARRED REVIEW)

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