

BEVERLY CLEARLY

THE

RAMONA

BY

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Illustrated by

Jacqueline Rogers

1927

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Harper & Brothers

New York

Printed in the U.S.A.

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RAMONA THE PEST

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An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers

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Ramona the Pest

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For information address HarperCollins Children's Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers, 10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022.

www.harpercollinschildrens.com

Library of Congress catalog card number: 2012948573

ISBN 978-0-380-70954-0 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-0-688-21721-1 (hardcover)

Typography by Sarah Nichole Kaufman



Reillustrated edition, 2013

14 CG/OPM 85 84 83 82 81

sandwiches are ready."

"See my two-wheeler," cried Ramona, pedaling in a lopsided circle.

"Well, aren't you a big girl!" exclaimed her mother. "How did you ever manage to do that?"

Ramona came to a halt. "Howie fixed my trike for me and told me how to ride it."

"What a clever boy!" said Mrs. Quimby.

"You must be very good with tools."

Howie beamed with pleasure at this compliment.

"And Mama," said Ramona, "Howie says I can have Miss Binney's ribbon."

"Sure," agreed Howie. "What do I want with an old ribbon?"

"I'm going to weave it in and out of the front spokes of my two-wheeler and ride so fast it will make a blur," said Ramona.

"Come on, Howie, let's go eat our tuna-fish sandwiches."

3

SEAT WORK

There were two kinds of children who went to kindergarten—those who lined up beside the door before school, as they were supposed to, and those who ran around the playground and scrambled to get into line when they saw Miss Binney approaching. Ramona ran around the playground.

One morning as Ramona was running



around the playground she noticed Davy waiting for Henry Huggins to lead him across the intersection. She was interested to see that Davy was wearing a black cape pinned to his shoulders with two big safety pins.

While Henry held up two cars and a cement truck, Ramona watched Davy

crossing the street. The more Ramona saw of Davy, the better she liked him. He was such a nice shy boy with blue eyes and soft brown hair. Ramona always tried to choose Davy for her partner in folk dancing, and when the class played Gray Duck Ramona always tagged Davy unless he was already in the mush pot.

When Davy arrived, Ramona marched up to him, and asked, "Are you Batman?"

"No," said Davy.

"Are you Superman?" asked Ramona.

"No," said Davy.

Who else could Davy be in a black cape? Ramona stopped and thought, but was unable to think of anyone else who wore a cape.

"Well, who are you?" she asked at last.

"Mighty Mouse!" crowed Davy, delighted that he had baffled Ramona.

"I'm going to kiss you, Mighty Mouse!" shrieked Ramona.

Davy began to run and Ramona ran after him. Round and round the playground they ran with Davy's cape flying out behind him. Under the traveling bars and around the jungle gym she chased him.

"Run, Davy! Run!" screamed the rest of the class, jumping up and down, until Miss Binney was seen approaching, and everyone scrambled to get into line.

Every morning afterward when Ramona reached the playground she tried to catch Davy so she could kiss him.

"Here comes Ramona!" the other boys and girls shouted, when they saw Ramona walking down the street. "Run, Davy! Run!"

And Davy ran with Ramona after him. Round and round the playground they ran while the class cheered Davy on.

"That kid ought to go out for track when he gets a little older," Ramona heard one of the workmen across the street say one day.



Once Ramona came near enough to grab Davy's clothes, but he jerked away, popping the buttons off his shirt. For once Davy stopped running. "Now see what you did!" he accused. "My mother is going to be mad at you."

Ramona stopped in her tracks. "I didn't do anything," she said indignantly. "I just hung on. You did the pulling."

"Here comes Miss Binney," someone called out, and Ramona and Davy scurried

to get in line by the door.

After that Davy stayed farther away from Ramona than ever, which made Ramona sad because Davy was *such* a nice boy and she did so long to kiss him. However, Ramona was not so sad that she stopped chasing Davy. Round and round they went every morning until Miss Binney arrived.

Miss Binney, by this time, had begun to teach her class something more than games, the rules of the kindergarten, and the mysterious dawnzer song. Ramona thought of kindergarten as being divided into two parts. The first part was the running part, which included games, dancing, finger painting, and playing. The second part was called seat work. Seat work was serious. Everyone was expected to work quietly in his own seat without disturbing anyone else. Ramona found it difficult to sit still, because she was always interested in what everyone else was

doing. "Ramona, keep your eyes on your own work," Miss Binney said, and sometimes Ramona remembered.

For the first seat-work assignment each member of the class was told to draw a picture of his own house. Ramona, who had expected to learn to read and write in school like her sister Beezus, used her new crayons quickly to draw her house with two windows, a door, and a red chimney. With her green crayon she scrubbed in some shrubbery. Anyone familiar with her neighborhood could tell the picture was of her house, but somehow Ramona was not satisfied. She looked around to see what others were doing.

Susan had drawn a picture of her house and was adding a girl with *boing-boing* curls looking out the window. Howie, who had drawn his house with the garage door open and a car inside, was adding a motorcycle parked at the curb. Davy's house looked

like a clubhouse built by some boys who had a few old boards and not enough nails. It leaned to one side in a tired sort of way.

Ramona studied her own drawing and decided she would have to do something to make it more interesting. After considering various colors of crayon, she selected the black and drew big black swirls coming from the windows.

"You aren't supposed to scribble on your picture," said Howie, who also was inclined to pay attention to other people's work.

Ramona was indignant. "I didn't scribble. The black is part of my picture."

When Miss Binney asked the class to set their pictures on the chalk rail so that everyone might see them, the class noticed Ramona's picture at once, because it was drawn with bold, heavy strokes and because of the black swirls.

"Miss Binney, Ramona scribbled all over

her house," said Susan, who by now had revealed herself as the kind of girl who always wanted to play house so she could be the mother and boss everybody.

"I did not!" protested Ramona, beginning to see that her picture was going to be misunderstood by everyone. Maybe she had been wrong to try to make it interesting. Maybe Miss Binney did not want interesting pictures.

"You did, too!" Joey ran up to the chalk rail and pointed to Ramona's black swirls. "See!"

The class, including Ramona, waited for Miss Binney to say Ramona should not scribble on her picture, but Miss Binney merely smiled and said, "Remember your seat, Joey. Ramona, suppose you tell us about your picture."

"I didn't scribble on it," said Ramona.

"Of course you didn't," Miss Binney said. Ramona loved her teacher even more.

"Well," she began, "that black isn't scribbling. It's smoke coming out of the windows."

"And why is smoke coming out of the windows?" gently pressed Miss Binney.

"Because there's a fire in the fireplace and the chimney is stopped up," explained Ramona. "It's stopped up with Santa Claus, but he doesn't show in the picture." Ramona smiled shyly at her teacher. "I wanted to make my picture interesting."

Miss Binney returned her smile. "And you did make it interesting."

Davy looked worried. "How does Santa Claus get out?" he asked. "He doesn't stay in there, does he?"

"Of course he gets out," said Ramona. "I just didn't show that part."

The next day seat work got harder. Miss Binney said that everyone had to learn to print his name. Ramona saw right away that this

business of names was not fair. When Miss Binney handed each member of the class a strip of cardboard with his name printed on it, anyone could see that a girl named Ramona was going to have to work harder than a girl named Ann or a boy named Joe. Not that Ramona minded having to work harder—she was eager to learn to read and write. Having been the youngest member of her family and of the neighborhood, however, she had learned to watch for unfair situations.

Carefully Ramona printed *R* the way Miss Binney had printed it. *A* was easy. Even a baby could print *A*. Miss Binney said *A* was pointed like a witch's hat, and Ramona was planning to be a witch for the Halloween parade. *O* was also easy. It was a round balloon. Some people's *O*'s looked like leaky balloons, but Ramona's *O*'s were balloons full of air.

"I like the way Ramona's *O*'s are fat

balloons full of air," Miss Binney said to the class, and Ramona's heart filled with joy. Miss Binney liked her O's best!

Miss Binney walked around the classroom looking over shoulders. "That's right, boys and girls. Nice pointed A's," she said. "A's with nice sharp peaks. No, Davy. D faces the other way. Splendid, Karen. I like the way Karen's K has a nice straight back."

Ramona wished she had a K in her name, so that she could give it a nice straight back. Ramona enjoyed Miss Binney's descriptions of the letters of the alphabet and listened for them while she worked. In front of her Susan played with a curl while she worked. She twisted it around her finger, stretched it out, and let it go. *Boing*, thought Ramona automatically.

"Ramona, let's keep our eyes on our work," said Miss Binney. "No, Davy. D faces the *other way*."

Once more Ramona bent over her paper. The hardest part of her name, she soon discovered, was getting the right number of points on the M and N. Sometimes her name came out RANOMA, but before long she remembered that two points came first. "Good work, Ramona," said Miss Binney, the first time Ramona printed her name correctly. Ramona hugged herself with happiness and love for Miss Binney. Soon, she was sure, she would be able to join



her letters together and write her name in the same rumply grown-up way that Beezus wrote her name.

Then Ramona discovered that some boys and girls had an extra letter followed by a dot. "Miss Binney, why don't I have a letter with a dot after it?" she asked.

"Because we have only one Ramona," said Miss Binney. "We have two Erics. Eric Jones and Eric Ryan. We call them Eric J. and Eric R., because we don't want to get our Erics mixed up."

Ramona did not like to miss anything. "Could I have another letter with a little dot?" she asked, knowing that Miss Binney would not think she was pestering.

Miss Binney smiled and leaned over Ramona's table. "Of course you may. This is the way to make a Q. A nice round O with a little tail like a cat. And there is your little dot, which is called a period." Then Miss

Binney walked on, supervising seat work.

Ramona was charmed by her last initial. She drew a nice round O beside the one Miss Binney had drawn, and then she added a tail before she leaned back to admire her work. She had one balloon and two Halloween hats in her first name and a cat in her last name. She doubted if anyone else in the morning kindergarten had such an interesting name.


The next day at seat-work time Ramona practiced her Q while Miss Binney walked around helping those with S in their names. All the S's were having trouble. "No, Susan," said Miss Binney. "S stands up straight. It does not lie down as if it were a little worm crawling along the ground."

Susan pulled out a curl and let it spring back.

Boing, thought Ramona.

"My, how many S's we have that are

crawling along like little worms," remarked Miss Binney.

Ramona was pleased that she had escaped *S*. She drew another *Q* and admired it a moment before she added two little pointed ears, and then she added two whiskers on each side so that her *Q* looked the way the cat looked when crouched on a rug in front of the fireplace.  How pleased Miss Binney would be! Miss Binney would say to the kindergarten, "What a splendid *Q* Ramona has made. It looks exactly like a little cat."

"No, Davy," Miss Binney was saying. "A *D* does not have four corners. It has two corners. One side is curved like a robin redbreast."

This conversation was so interesting that Ramona was curious to see Davy's *D* for herself. She waited until Miss Binney had moved away before she slipped out of her seat and over to the next table

to look at Davy's *D*. It was a great disappointment. "That *D* doesn't look like a robin," she whispered. "It doesn't have any feathers. A robin has to have feathers." She had watched robins pulling worms out of her front lawn many times. They all had feathers on their breasts, little soft feathers mused by the wind.

Davy studied his work. Then he scrubbed out half his *D* with his eraser and drew it in a series of little jags. It did not look like Miss Binney's *D*, but it did look, in Ramona's opinion, more like the front of a robin with feathers mused by the wind, which was what Miss Binney wanted, wasn't it? A *D* like a robin redbreast.

"Good work, Davy," said Ramona, trying to sound like her teacher. Now maybe Davy would let her kiss him.

"Ramona," said Miss Binney, "in your seat, please." She walked back to look at

Davy's seat work. "No, Davy. Didn't I tell you the curve of a *D* is as smooth as a robin redbreast? Yours is all jagged."

Davy looked bewildered. "Those are feathers," he said. "Feathers like a robin."

"Oh, I'm sorry, Davy. I didn't mean . . ."

Miss Binney behaved as if she did not know quite what to say. "I didn't mean you to show each feather. I meant you to make it smooth and round."

"Ramona told me to do it this way," said Davy. "Ramona said a robin has to have feathers."

"Ramona is not the kindergarten teacher."

Miss Binney's voice, although not exactly cross, was not her usual gentle voice.

"You make your *D* the way I showed you and never mind what Ramona says."

Ramona felt confused. Things had such an unexpected way of turning out all wrong. Miss Binney said a *D* should look like a

robin redbreast, didn't she? And robins had feathers, didn't they? So why wasn't putting feathers on a *D* all right?

Davy glared at Ramona as he took his eraser and scrubbed out half his *D* a second time. He scrubbed so hard he crumpled his paper. "Now see what you did," he said.

Ramona felt terrible. Dear little Davy whom she loved so much was angry with her, and now he would run faster than ever. She never would get to kiss him.

And even worse, Miss Binney did not like *D*'s with feathers, so she probably would not like *Q*'s with ears and whiskers either. Hoping her teacher would not see what she was doing, Ramona quickly and regretfully erased the ears and whiskers from her *Q*. How plain and bare it looked with only its tail left to keep it from being an *O*. Miss Binney, who could understand that Santa Claus in the chimney would make a

fireplace smoke, might be disappointed if she knew Ramona had given her Q ears and whiskers, because lettering was different from drawing pictures.

Ramona loved Miss Binney so much she did not want to disappoint her. Not ever. Miss Binney was the nicest teacher in the whole world.

THE SUBSTITUTE

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Before long Mrs. Quimby and Mrs. Kemp decided the time had come for Ramona and Howie to walk to school by themselves. Mrs. Kemp, pushing Willa Jean in her stroller, walked Howie to the Quimbys' house where Ramona's mother invited her in for a cup of coffee.

"You better put all your stuff away," Howie advised Ramona, as his mother lifted his