



Ramona Quimby, Age 8

By Beverly Cleary
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Introduction:

Ramona likes being big enough to be counted on, but must everything depend on her? If Mrs. Kemp didn't look after Ramona, her mother couldn't work full-time. If Ramona's mother didn't work, her father couldn't return to college. Ramona does get to ride the school bus by herself this year. And despite teasing from Danny the Yard Ape, she's determined to enjoy the third grade; her new teacher, Mrs. Whaley; and learning to read and write. If only Mother would not remind Ramona each morning to be nice to Willa Jean Kemp. If only her parents wouldn't quarrel at home. If only Ramona didn't get sick one horrible day and throw up—at school. But being a patient has its advantages. Even book reports and rainy Sundays have a bright side. In Ramona's world, being eight isn't easy, but it's never dull.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it so hard for Ramona to be nice to Howie Kemp's four-year-old sister Willa Jean? Why does Ramona's mother say that getting along at the Kemps' is Ramona's job in the family?
2. How does Ramona manage to deal with Danny, a boy on her school bus, when he calls her Bigfoot? Why is it that, once she gets her eraser back from him, Ramona begins to sort of like him?
3. Why does Mrs. Whaley, Ramona's third grade teacher, call Sustained Silent Reading period D.E.A.R.? Why doesn't Ramona like the name? Why is it the best part of the school day, according to Ramona and Howie? How does Ramona use Sustained Silent Reading after school to help her get along with Willa Jean?
4. Who started the hard-boiled egg fad at school? What happens when Ramona tries to follow the fad?
5. What does Ramona overhear Mrs. Whaley saying about her and why does it hurt her feelings? Do you think Ramona is really a show-off and a nuisance?
6. When Ramona and her older sister Beezus complain about what they are eating for dinner, Mr. Quimby decides that the two girls will make dinner the following night. Do you think this is a reasonable punishment? Were you surprised that the dinner Beezus and Ramona came up with was such a success? Would you know how to make dinner (from scratch) if your parents asked you to? What would you make?
7. Ramona makes an effort to be less of a nuisance, but suddenly the most terrible thing happens and she becomes a "supernuisance" by throwing up at school! Then, at the risk of being a show-off, in place of a book report Ramona writes a kind of commercial to "sell" her book. It turns out Mrs. Whaley doesn't have a bad opinion of Ramona after all. Why are Ramona's teachers always so important to her?
8. What is the "happy ending" to the day when the Quimby's go out for dinner together one dismal rainy Sunday when everyone is cross?