CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Ramona

Helen Hunt Jackson · *1884 · original English text*

It was sheep-shearing time in Southern California, but sheep-shearing was late at the Senora Moreno's. Felipe had been ill, and without him, the Senora thought, nothing could be done on the ranch. The book that follows is Ramona's story, and Alessandro's, and a record of injustice in a California the author wanted her readers to see. The hosted text is Jackson's original English, Project Gutenberg #2802, complete. In this text "Senora" is printed without a tilde.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What is asked of a young woman raised in a California rancho when she loves Alessandro, and how should a school read a novel written to make a people see an injustice?

"IT was sheep-shearing time in Southern California, but sheep-shearing was late at the Senora Moreno's."

opening

Ramona is a romance and a testimony. The Moreno household, Father Salvierderra, Felipe, and the shearers from Temecula open a world. Alessandro's fate, and Ramona's loyalty, are the cost the book will not hide. Teach the injustice to the Indians of California with gravity, and teach the loyalty and faith as Jackson wrote them. Keep "Senora" and "Senor" as this text prints them, without the tilde. The last page still names "Ramona, daughter of Alessandro the Indian."

KEY CHARACTERS

Ramona
Raised in the Senora's house, whose loyalty to Alessandro, and whose later life, the book follows to the last page

Alessandro
Of Temecula, a shearer and a man of his people, whose fate the book will not hide

Senora Moreno
The mistress of the ranch, whose will rules the opening world; "Senora" as this text prints it

Felipe Moreno
Her son, ill at the opening, and present to the close

Father Salvierderra
The priest whose coming belongs to the spiritual life of the ranch

A LATE SHEARING, AND A NAME KEPT

> *"IT was sheep-shearing time in Southern California, but sheep-shearing was late at the Senora Moreno's."*
>
> opening

> *"the most beautiful of them all, and, it was said, the most beloved by both father and mother, was the eldest one: the one who bore the mother's name, and was only step-daughter to the Senor,--Ramona,--Ramona, daughter of Alessandro the Indian."*
>
> the close

Grades 9–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

Sheep-Shearing Time

THE OPENING

Sheep-shearing is late at the Senora Moreno's. Felipe, her eldest son, has been ill; without him, she thinks, nothing can be done on the ranch. The Fates seem to have combined to put the work off.

- The first sentence is exact, including "IT" in capitals and "Senora" without a tilde
- Felipe has been at the head of his mother's house since his father's death
- The ranch, Southern California, and a delayed shearing are the first weather of the book
- Alessandro's band from Temecula is already expected as the best shearers in the country

> *"IT was sheep-shearing time in Southern California, but sheep-shearing was late at the Senora Moreno's."*
>
> opening

02

The Rancho, and Ramona

THE EARLY CHAPTERS

The Senora's household, the coming of Father Salvierderra, and the life of the ranch form the world in which Ramona has been raised. She is of the house, and not simply of it.

- Father Salvierderra belongs to the book's Christian life; take the faith seriously as Jackson wrote it
- The Senora's will is a power in the house; Ramona's place in it is already a question
- Do not treat the ranch only as scenery; it is a way of life already passing
- Quote "Senora," "Senor," and "Felipe" as printed

03

Alessandro, and a Loyalty

THE MIDDLE OF THE BOOK

Alessandro comes with the shearers from Temecula. Ramona's love, and her loyalty, set her against the Senora's will and into a harder California than the ranch had taught her to expect.

- Alessandro is not a decoration of the romance; his people and his fate are the book's testimony
- Teach the injustice with gravity: dispossession, violence, and broken faith with the Indians of California
- Ramona's loyalty is a virtue in this book, and it is costly
- For older students; handle the adult matter with tact

04

Daughter of Alessandro

THE CLOSE

The last pages, after much loss, still name a household and children. The most beautiful of the daughters, and the most beloved, is the eldest: Ramona, daughter of Alessandro the Indian.

- The last identification is exact: "Ramona,--Ramona, daughter of Alessandro the Indian."
- Felipe's later household is part of the close; do not invent a different last settlement than the book gives
- A loyal, loving, serene heart is the book's last word on Ramona; it has been paid for
- Teach the ending as loyalty remaining, not as a simple happy ending that erases what has been done

> *"the most beautiful of them all, and, it was said, the most beloved by both father and mother, was the eldest one: the one who bore the mother's name, and was only step-daughter to the Senor,--Ramona,--Ramona, daughter of Alessandro the Indian."*
>
> the close

05

The Hosted File

PG #2802

The hosted text is complete, original English, 1884. In this text "Senora" and "Senor" are printed without a tilde; keep that spelling when you quote.

- Helen Hunt Jackson wrote the novel to make readers see an injustice; teach that purpose, and also the particular story
- The Christian life of the ranch and of Father Salvierderra is part of the book, not a backdrop only
- For older students; a California novel of loyalty, faith, and wrong
- Quote the hosted wording only

Loyalty | Injustice and Testimony | Faith | A California Rancho | A Costly Love | A Name Kept

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 9–12

1. The book opens: "IT was sheep-shearing time in Southern California, but sheep-shearing was late at the Senora Moreno's." In this text "Senora" and "Senor" are printed without a tilde; keep that spelling.
2. The hosted text is complete, original English, 1884, PG #2802.
3. Teach the injustice to the Indians of California with gravity. Alessandro is not a decoration of the romance.
4. The close still names "Ramona,--Ramona, daughter of Alessandro the Indian." Teach the ending as loyalty remaining, not as a simple happy ending that erases what has been done.
5. Father Salvierderra and the Christian life of the ranch are part of the book. Take them as Jackson wrote them.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text, Project Gutenberg #2802, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/ramona/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.