



# The Best School Year Ever

By Barbara Robinson

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The Worst Kids in the History of the World!

When anything goes wrong at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, from the hexing of Bus Six to the mysterious disappearance of the kindergarten gerbil, it's sure to have a Herdman behind it. The Herdmans are more than famous -- they're outlaws. They smoke cigars, lie, and set fire to things, and that's only when they bother to come to school!

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

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## **The Best School Year Ever** By Barbara Robinson Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The many readers who have laughed out loud at Robinson's uproarious 1972 novel, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, will enthusiastically welcome the return of the six cigar-smoking Herdman kids. These six waste no time bending rules: they break them outright. While the original story centered on the church Christmas pageant, the sequel has a broader focus, paving the way for more varied misadventures, virtually all of which the Herdmans craftily orchestrate. Among the dastardly deeds are the siblings' kidnapping of a bald baby, whose head they "tattoo" and show to other kids for a fee; their attempt to wash their cat (which is "missing one eye and part of an ear and most of its tail and all of whatever good nature it ever had") in a laundromat machine; and their ingenious sabotage of the school's Fire Safety Day observance. In one of the funniest scenes, cunning Imogene Herdman comes to the rescue of a boy whose head (thanks to Imogene's brother) is stuck in a bike rack: she flattens his prominent ears with Scotch tape and slathers his head with margarine so it slides through the bars. If this novel doesn't have quite the consistently razor-sharp repartee of its predecessor, it comes very, very close. Ages 8-up. 50,000 first printing.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 3-6-The Herdmans are back in this audio version of Barbara Robinson's riotous sequel (HarperCollins, 1994) to *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* (HarperCollins, 1972, pap. 1988). While *The Best School Year Ever* lacks the emotional climax of its predecessor, the vignettes are hilarious. The story follows the misadventures of the Herdmans (there's one in every elementary school grade) during Beth Bradley's year in the sixth grade. Beth's class must come up with "Compliments for Classmates," and when Beth is stuck with Imogene Herdman's name she hardly knows what to do. There are many adjectives one can use to describe Imogene, none of which are complimentary. During the school year, however, Beth begins to see Imogene in a new light - a somewhat odd light, but a new one nonetheless. Imogene is so many things that people never bothered to see, and she is so many things that she never knew. Wise beyond her years, Beth sees her town and its occupants as no one else can. Actress Elaine Stritch's earthy, worldly, almost boozy voice is perfect for Beth, the narrator. This audiobook is a must-have for school and public library collections. Listeners can only hope that it won't take another 20 years for the Herdmans to return.

Holly May Pickel, Bluffton Branch Library, SC

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 3-5. Although neither *quite* as hilarious nor as unexpectedly moving as *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* (1972), this sequel will still have children laughing out loud at the Herdmans' antics and believing that even such remarkably *bad* kids have some good qualities. The school year provides the framework for the story, narrated by Beth, who has Imogene Herdman in her class. As soon as the teacher announces that the yearlong class project will be "Compliments for Classmates," which involves writing down the other children's good qualities, it's inevitable that Beth will draw Imogene's name. And what do you say about a girl who swipes a classmate's baby brother, draws pictures on his head with markers, and charges folks a quarter for a look at the Amazing Tattooed Baby? Yet Robinson doesn't just play the Herdmans for laughs. Beth's identification of Imogene's strengths gives the book a level of humanity that makes the novel more than a series of humorous anecdotes. Readers can only hope that the Herdmans will not reform--at least not until after a few more sequels. Few characters in children's fiction are so unredeemed, so uncivilized, and so out-and-out funny. *Carolyn Phelan*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Judith Jordan:**

In this 21st century, people become competitive in each and every way. By being competitive at this point, people have to do something to make themselves survive, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice through surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated for a while is reading. Yep, by reading an e-book your ability to survive rises then having a chance to stay than others is high. For you personally who want to start reading some sort of book, we give you that *The Best School Year Ever* book as a beginning and daily reading book. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

#### **Daniel Soderquist:**

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