

Barbara Robinson	
(AUTHOR)	
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever	
(BOOK TITLE)	
DATE	TIME
6 DEC 2022	8:00PM ET

Book Club

EST. 2019

Club

HOLLY FURTICK
BOOK CLUB

Book Club

EST. 2019

HOLLY FURTICK
BOOK CLUB



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- Author of several children's books
- Most known for this one
- Passed away in 2013

ABOUT THE BOOK

• *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* is a children's novel written by Barbara Robinson in 1971. It tells the story of six misfit children who volunteer to star in their town's Sunday school Christmas pageant, and end up teaching the town the true meaning of Christmas.

• *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* was made into a classic TV movie and on which this book was based. The play *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* is produced annually in theaters, schools, and churches all over the world.

SETTING/LOCATION

- Second Presbyterian Church

CHARACTERS

The Herdmans:

- Ralph
- Imogene
- Leroy
- Claude
- Ollie
- Gladys

The Bradleys:

- Mother - Grace Bradley (based on plays, never actually names her)
- Father - Bob Bradley (based on plays, never actually names him)
- Narrator - Beth Bradley (based on plays, never actually names her)
- Charlie - Brother

- Mrs. George Armstrong (Helen) - The Original Pageant Leader (fell and broke her leg)
- Alice Wendleken (the “old” Mary that snitched on everyone)
- Elmer Hopkins - minister’s son, always played Joseph
- Reverend Hopkins
- Miss Brandel - teacher
- Miss Hempell - school nurse

THINGS I LOVED ABOUT THIS BOOK

- Imogene blackmailing everyone about their weight
- The girl with the charm bracelet
- Hearing the Christmas story for the first time

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- Which part made you laugh?
- Which Herdman did you like the best?
- Did this book make you think of the Christmas story differently?
- What was the most surprising thing that the Herdmans did?
- Who changed the most in the story?

MEMORABLE SCENES

- Pg. 1 (& 19) - The Set Up of The Pageant
- Pg. 2 - The Herdmans taking the doughnuts from the scene of the fire they started
- Pg. 7 - Claude brought his cat for show-and-tell
- Pg. 11 - Imogene recording everyone’s weight
- Pg. 14 - Fat Camp
- Pg. 41 - When the Herdmans all volunteer for parts
- Pg. 54 - First rehearsal with all the Jesus questions
- Pg. 60 - “We put Gladys in a bureau drawer” trying to draw a parallel to Jesus in a manger
- Pg. 71 - Library about King Heros
- Pg. 76 - “Get away from the baby”
- Pg. 79 - No one wanted their real baby in the pageant
- Pg. 89 - Cigars in the bathroom at dress rehearsal
- Pg. 91 - Fire at dress rehearsal (not from cigars - but baking)

- Pg. 100 - Herdman boys bring a ham for Jesus
- Pg. 104 - Imogene crying at the manger
- Pg. 104 - People thought it was the best pageant but couldn't put their finger on why
- Pg. 108 - Angel Gladys

MEMORABLE QUOTES

Some of these would be fun to read out loud:

- Pg. 14 - Fat-camp is a place where they feed you lettuce and grapefruit and cottage cheese and eggs for a month, and you either give up and cheat or give up and get skinny.
- Pg. 19 - So the herdman's pretty much looked after themselves...
We figured they were headed straight to hell, by way of the state penitentiary ... until they got themselves mixed up with the church, and my mother, and our Christmas pageant.
- Pg. 67 - I couldn't understand the Herdmans. You would have thought the Christmas story came right out of the F.B.I. files, they...
And they left the first rehearsal arguing about whether Joseph should have set fire to the inn, or just chased the innkeeper into the next county.
- Pg. 88 - "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."
I could have hit her.
"My God!" Imogene said. "He'd never get out of first grade if he had to write all that."
- Pg. 102 - As for ruining the whole thing, it seemed to me that the Herdmans had improved the pageant a lot, just by doing what came naturally— like burping the baby, for instance, or thinking a ham would make a better present than a lot of perfumed oil.
- Pg. 105 - The end of the book is so beautiful.