

Ramona by helen hunt jackson

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Alessandro is the son of the Chief of the tribe at Temecula Village. By this time, the Indians at Temecula have been chased away by the Americans and Alessandro's father has died in this grief. Also, the Indians have been forbidden from entering Temecula. Ramona and Alessandro get married, but they have no home to live in. They begin their painful journey from village to village. Eventually, they have two daughters out of which the elder one dies due to a lack of medical attention. Alessandro loses his mind due to the constant uncertainty and hardship they have endured. One evening he brings along an American's horse mistaking it for his own. The Americans follow him and shoot him to death in front of Ramona's eyes. In the meantime, Senora Moreno has died and Senor Felipe has come a long way in search of Ramona. He finds her and her surviving daughter. In the end, they go to Mexico and get married.

This novel mainly reflects Jackson's concern for the Native Americans and the harsh conditions they had to face in the nineteenth century. Jackson has also shown the contempt the Mexicans had against the Americans who took away their land. Jackson has described the helplessness of the Indians during that period through the bitter experiences of Ramona and Alessandro. With the help of Laws conveniently drafted, the Indians were forced to leave their own land. The Americans who occupied their houses were always ready with their guns to shoot an Indian who showed up anywhere near the land that was once theirs. Due to the evacuations, the Indians had to move hopelessly from one place to another in search of food, water, shelter, work, and safety.

Manifest Destiny, a term first used in the 1840s, gained ground as 'Indian Removal'. It was an explanation or justification for expansion. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 was passed which authorized the President to conduct treaties to exchange Native American land east of the Mississippi River for lands west of the river. Though the relocation was supposed to be voluntary as per the Act, in practice the Native Americans were made to sign treaties forcefully. As far as the American expansion and Native Americans relocation is concerned, the author has depicted the same very well. According to George Wharton James, Jackson has used many actual events in the creation of her novel, and although the hero and heroine are fictitious, Ramona is a work of essential truth. (11 Nov 2008 < <http://www.enotes.com/nineteenth-century-criticism/jackson-helen-hunt>>)