

Name _____ Date _____

Ramona's Quilt

Ramona rushed to the car. "Ballet practice was great! My ballet teacher chose me for the part of Maria in The Nutcracker," she told her dad. "Congratulations, Ramona," said her father. "I'm proud of you. Your mom and grandmother will be proud, too." "Let's hurry, dad," said Ramona. "I'll be late for my soccer game." Ramona's dad sighed, "Sometimes, I think your activities keep you much too busy."

"Dad, I love all my activities, and I'm doing fine in school," laughed Ramona. It was very late when Ramona and her father got home from the game. She said hello to her mom and gave her abuela a kiss. Abuela, which means "grandmother" had moved to Chicago from Mexico. She was a quiet woman who loved to make quilts. Her hands were always busy with fabric and needles. Ramona loved her grandmother. but with her busy schedule, she rarely had time to spend with her.

As the date for The Nutcracker approached, Ramona was away at ballet practice more and more. When Ramona wasn't dancing, she was playing soccer and practicing the piano. Her schoolwork started to suffer. As much as Ramona hated to admit it, she was too busy. After soccer practice one night, her parents met Ramona at the door. They told her that her teacher had called. He had informed them that Ramona was not doing well in school.

"I don't know what to do," Ramona cried. "I'm always busy with ballet or piano or soccer. Sometimes, I'm just too tired to finish my homework. Maybe I should quit everything! I'm not having fun doing anything." "Ramona, quitting is not the answer. Get a good night's rest, and we'll talk again," said her dad. Her parents left Ramona alone in the kitchen. After some time, her grandmother returned and placed a large box in front of Ramona. She looked at her grandmother. "Here's a gift for you," Abuela said softly.

Ramona opened the box. Inside was a quilt. She gently unfolded it. For the first time, Ramona saw what her grandmother had been working on. Ramona's eyes moved from square to square. Each one contained a picture. On one square, she saw Maria from The Nutcracker. On another was Ramona as a soccer player. Thread and fabric showed musical notes, her family, the Mexican flag, and much more. "Abuela," whispered Ramona. "I had no idea what you were making. It's beautiful - so full and rich."

"It's a picture of your life, Ramona," said Abuela. "My life is a mess," replied Ramona. "It's too full! I'm not doing well at anything." "Now, Ramona," said Abuela. "You know that isn't true. You always do everything well - when you don't have too much to do." "What should I do?" asked Ramona. "Well, let's see," Abuela continued. "You're a wonderful dancer. You should perform in The Nutcracker, but you must take a break from soccer and piano for a short while. Your talents will not disappear. They are a part of you, just like these squares are a part of the quilt."

"Do you really think so? I really want to dance in The Nutcracker. Maybe taking a break could help. I can play soccer during the summer. I can start my piano lessons again after The Nutcracker." "That's a good idea," said Abuela. "You'll have time to enjoy each activity." "Yes, that's true," said Ramona. "I've been too busy trying to do everything - all at once," said Ramona.

"Let's hang the quilt in your room," suggested Abuela. "It will remind you of who you are and all that you can do." Thank you, Abuela," said Ramona. "Your gift has helped me solve a big problem." Ramona gave her grandmother a big hug.