



**STORYLAB**

**PRESENTS**



**WILLIAM GOLDMAN'S**

# **The Princess Bride**

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

# William Goldman's *The Princess Bride*

**T**he story starts with Buttercup growing up on a farm. She falls in love with Westley, the farm boy. Whenever Buttercup asks Westley to do something, he just says, "As you wish." Buttercup soon realizes what he really means is "I love you."

One day Westley leaves to seek his fortune. He wants to earn enough money to marry Buttercup. Soon after, Buttercup gets the news that he has been killed by the Dread Pirate Roberts. Buttercup is heartbroken and swears never to love again.

Five years later, Buttercup is forced to marry Prince Humperdinck. The prince plans to murder Buttercup, so he can blame a neighboring country and start a war. The prince hires three criminals to kidnap Buttercup: Vizzini as the brains, the gentle giant Fezzik, and Inigo Montoya, a master swordsman.

A mysterious man in black follows them. He challenges each kidnapper. First, he has a sword fight with Inigo. Then, he has a physical fight with Fezzik. Finally, he faces a battle of wits with Vizzini. He wins all three battles and the respect of Inigo and Fezzik. However, Vizzini dies from his own stupidity.

The man in black turns out to be Westley. He has secretly taken over the Dread Pirate Roberts identity. Buttercup and



In *The Princess Bride*, an unlikely hero must face many challenges in order to rescue a princess.

Westley are reunited.

But Prince Humperdinck captures Westley. He takes him to his torture chamber, which is run by Count Rugen. The count tortures Westley on a life-sucking machine.

Inigo and Fezzik rescue the mostly-dead Westley. They bring him to Miracle Max, who brings him back to life.

Westley, Inigo, and Fezzik storm the castle. Inigo finally gets his revenge on Count Rugen. Fezzik handles the guards. Westley confronts Prince Humperdinck, who turns out to be a coward.

Westley and Princess Buttercup escape together. Inigo and Fezzik become Westley's crew as the new Dread Pirate Roberts.

## MEMORABLE QUOTATIONS FROM *THE PRINCESS BRIDE*:

**T**he book, *The Princess Bride*, was made into a movie in 1987. William Goldman wrote both the book and the screenplay. A screenplay is the script that includes the dialogue and directions for what happens on screen. Directed by Rob Reiner, the movie has become a beloved classic. It is known for its wit, charm, and memorable quotes.

For example:

***“Hello. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die.”***

—Inigo Montoya to Count Rugen, the six-fingered man

Inigo Montoya is a swordsman. He has been hunting for the six-fingered man who murdered his father. When he finally corners Count Rugen, he says these words with deadly calm. The line is so over-the-top that it became hilarious. Now people say it when they're pretending to be tough.



This meme is a play on Inigo Montoya's quote, "My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die."

***“Inconceivable!”***

—Vizzini, when something unexpected happens

The kidnapper Vizzini thinks he's the smartest guy in the room. If something impossible happens, such as the Man in Black gaining on them, he shouts, "Inconceivable!" The problem is, he is wrong. Now people often say "Inconceivable!" to be sarcastic.

***“As you wish.”***

—Westley to Buttercup

Farm boy Westley is too shy to just say "I love you" to Buttercup. So whenever she asks him to do something, like feed the pigs, he says "As you wish." Now if you say, "As you wish," people know it's more than saying "okay."

***“Have fun storming the castle!”***

—Miracle Max to Fezzik, Inigo, and Westley

As our heroes head off to face impossible odds with terrible equipment, Miracle Max waves goodbye and cheerfully calls out "Have fun storming the castle!" Now it's the perfect sarcastic send-off when someone's about to do something awful. Your sister's going to ask your parents for money? "Have fun storming the castle!"



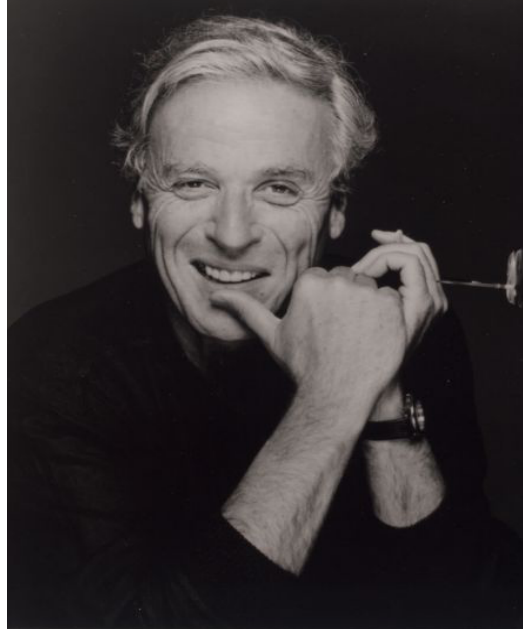
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# William Goldman

**T**he *Princess Bride* sounds like it is going to be some mushy romance novel, right? But don't judge this book by its title. The story is packed with sword fights, revenge plots, and dangerous escapes. It's way more action adventure than fairy tale.

The author William Goldman wrote it for his young daughters.

But don't let that fool you. This isn't a little kids' book. It's got seriously scary stuff like murder, kidnapping, and fire swamps. William Goldman was a screenwriting legend. He specialized in stories about underdogs facing impossible odds. Before *The Princess Bride*, he wrote the screenplay for *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. This award-winning



William Goldman

film is about outlaws in the West. He also wrote and received the Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay for *All the President's Men*. It tells the true story of the reporters who uncovered a presidential scandal in the United States.

To Goldman, it did not matter whether his characters were outlaws or journalists. They might even be a love-sick farm boy. The trait they shared was bravery, especially when everything seemed hopeless.

Goldman also understood that stories can mix humor with danger. In *The Princess Bride*, Westley and Inigo are funny. They're also real strong men who've survived terrible things. Also, Princess Buttercup isn't just sitting around waiting to be rescued. She's dealing with serious threats and making her own choices. The book and movie became famous partly because of this complexity. Goldman believes his audience is smart enough to handle every emotion. You can laugh at the ridiculous parts while still caring about whether the characters survive.

Goldman proved that stories written "for kids" don't have to be predictable. Sometimes the best adventures start out from common beginnings. At first glance, *The Princess Bride* looks like a light-hearted romance. But it is full of humor and courageous acts of daring.

## TEXT CONNECTION

# The Six-Fingered Man: Revenge and Real Life

In *The Princess Bride*, Count Rugen is an unforgettable character. If for no other reason, he has six fingers on his right hand. He also killed Inigo Montoya's father over money. Inigo's dad was a sword maker. He had made a special sword for Rugen's six-fingered grip. The count wouldn't pay. Instead, he murdered the sword maker in front of his 11-year-old son, Inigo.

This moment destroys young Inigo's life. Yet it also creates his life's purpose. Inigo spends the next twenty years becoming an incredible swordsman. He has one goal: find the six-fingered man and kill him. Every single day, he practices fighting. He repeats to himself the same speech: "Hello, my name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die."

When Count Rugen and Inigo finally meet again, it is an epic scene. Count Rugen thinks he's tough. But Inigo has been preparing for this moment since childhood. After two decades of waiting, Inigo gets his justice. He defeats the six-fingered man.

Count Rugen's extra finger is not just an invention of the author. It is a real condition called polydactyly. The word



This is a polydactyl cat. One of its front paws has six toes while most cats have five toes.

polydactyly means "many fingers." About 1 in 500 babies are born with extra fingers or toes. Other animals, such as cats, also can be born with this condition. The extra digits can range from tiny skin tags to fully formed fingers with bones and joints. Today, doctors usually remove extra fingers or toes. Some cultures consider extra digits lucky!

Of course, if you ever meet someone with polydactyly in real life, don't assume they're evil like Count Rugen. Having extra fingers or toes doesn't mean anything bad about a person. It is a normal variation that happens sometimes. Count Rugen was terrible because he chose to be cruel, not because he had six fingers.

## TEXT REFLECTION

# When Movies Match Books



Today, families still enjoy watching or reading *The Princess Bride* together.

**H**ere's something rare in Hollywood: a movie that's as amazing as the book it came from. William Goldman wrote *The Princess Bride* in 1973. It had fans, but it wasn't exactly setting the world on fire. Then, Rob Reiner directed the movie version in 1987. As the movie gained in popularity, people began to read—and reread—the story book original.

Interestingly, the movie was not a huge hit in theaters. It barely made money at the box office where tickets are sold.

But then something magical happened when it came out on home video. Families started watching it together. Children grew up quoting it. *The Princess Bride* became a classic.

Most movies come and go. But *The Princess Bride* somehow became part of how we communicate. People say “As you wish” instead of “okay.” They yell “Inconceivable!” when something surprises them. “Hello, my name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die” gets quoted everywhere from internet memes to political protests.

What made the movie adaptation so special? William Goldman wrote the screenplay himself, so he could fix anything that didn't work in the book. Rob Reiner put together a cast that understood both the humor and the heart of the story. They shot the movie with enough sincerity to make you care about the characters. But they also had enough self-awareness to laugh at the typical fairy tale parts.

The result was something that works for most everyone. Children tend to love the adventure. Adults appreciate the clever dialogue. Teenagers can connect with the themes of true love and standing up to bullies. So, whether you watch it or read it, *The Princess Bride* will make you a fan.

**What Are Fantasy Stories?** William Goodman's *The Princess Bride* is considered a modern fantasy story. It is also described as a mix of fairy tale, adventure, and comedy.

Fantasy writing consists of:

- a heroic character who must complete a mission;
- a struggle between good and evil; and
- a setting where magical events are believable.

**Keep Reading:** Want to read more of *The Princess Bride*?

- Visit your library to find: *The Princess Bride* by William Goldman

If you like *The Princess Bride*, then you might also like to read these comedic fantasy texts:

- *Howl's Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones
- *The Hero's Guide to Saving Your Kingdom* by Christopher Healy
- *Skulduggery Pleasant* by Derek Landy

**Start Writing:** Inspired to write your own fantasy comedy?

Consider this prompt to get started:

- "This is a true story. Well ... mostly true. Except for the parts that are completely made up."

**Now, make up your hero.** They could be a talking animal, a brave baker, or a kid who just wants a sandwich. Give them a big and funny mission—like saving a magical goat, finding invisible cheese, or stopping a wizard who is scared of kittens.



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