



THE  
PRINCESS  
BRIDE

S. MORGENSTERN'S CLASSIC TALE  
OF TRUE LOVE AND HIGH ADVENTURE

WILLIAM GOLDMAN



THIS IS MY favorite book in all the world, though I have never read it.

How is such a thing possible? I'll do my best to explain. As a child, I had simply no interest in books. I hated reading, I was very bad at it, and besides, how could you take the time to read when there were games that shrieked for playing? Basketball, baseball, marbles—I could never get enough. I wasn't even good at them, but give me a football and an empty playground and I could invent last-second triumphs that would bring tears to your eyes. School was torture. Miss Roginski, who was my teacher for the third through fifth grades, would have meeting after meeting with my mother. "I don't feel Billy is perhaps extending himself quite as much as he might." Or, "When we test him, Billy does really exceptionally well, considering his class standing." Or, most often, "I don't know, Mrs. Goldman: what *are* we going to do about Billy?"

What *are* we going to do about Billy? That was the phrase that haunted me those first ten years. I pretended not to care, but secretly I was petrified. Everyone and everything was passing me by. I had no real friends, no single person who shared an equal interest in all games. I seemed busy, busy, busy, but I suppose, if pressed, I might have admitted that, for all my frenzy, I was very much alone.

"What *are* we going to do about you, Billy?"

"I don't know, Miss Roginski."

"How could you have failed this reading test? I've heard you use every word with my own ears."

"I'm sorry, Miss Roginski. I must not have been thinking."

"You're always thinking, Billy. You just weren't thinking about the reading test."

I could only nod.

"What was it this time?"

"I don't know. I can't remember."

"Was it Stanley Hack again?" (Stan Hack was the Cubs' third baseman for these and many other years. I saw him play once from a bleacher seat, and even at that distance he had the sweetest smile I had ever seen and to this day I swear he smiled at me several times. I just worshipped him. He could also hit a ton.)

"Bronko Nagurski. He's a football player. A great football player, and the paper last night said he might come back and play for the Bears again. He retired when I was little but if he came back and I could get someone to take me to a game, I could see him play and maybe if whoever took me also knew him, I could meet him after and maybe if he was hungry, I might let him have a sandwich I might have brought with me. I was trying to figure out what kind of sandwich Bronko Nagurski would like."

She just sagged at her desk. "You've got a wonderful imagination, Billy."

I don't know what I said. Probably "thank you" or something.

"I can't harness it, though," she went on. "Why is that?"

"I think it's that probably I need glasses and I don't read because the words are so fuzzy. That would explain why I'm all the time squinting. Maybe if I went to an eye doctor who could give me glasses I'd be the best reader in class and you wouldn't have to keep me after school so much."

She just pointed behind her. "Get to work cleaning the blackboards, Billy."

"Yes, ma'am." I was the best at cleaning blackboards.

"Do they look fuzzy?" Miss Roginski said after a while.

"Oh, no, I just made that up." I never squinted either. But she just seemed so whipped about it. She always did. This had been going on for three grades now.

"I'm just not getting through to you somehow."

"It's not your fault, Miss Roginski." (It wasn't. I just worshipped her too. She was all dumpy and fat but I used to wish she'd been my mother. I could never make that really come out right, unless she had been married to my father first, and then they'd gotten divorced and my father had married my mother, which was okay, because Miss Roginski had to work, so my father got custody of me—that all made sense. Only they never seemed to know each other, my dad and Miss Roginski. Whenever they'd meet, each year during the Christmas pageant when all the parents came, I'd watch the two of them like crazy, hoping for some kind of secret glimmer or look that could only mean, "Well, how are you, how's your life been going since our divorce?" but

A tale of true love and high adventure, pirates, princesses, giants, miracles, fencing, and a frightening assortment of wild beasts—*The Princess Bride* is a modern storytelling classic.

AS FLORIN AND GUILDER teeter on the verge of war, the reluctant Princess Buttercup is devastated by the loss of her true love, kidnapped by a mercenary and his henchmen, rescued by a pirate, forced to marry Prince Humperdinck, and rescued once again by the very crew who absconded with her in the first place. In the course of this dazzling adventure, she'll meet Vizzini—the criminal philosopher who'll do anything for a bag of gold; Fezzik—the gentle giant; Inigo—the Spaniard whose steel thirsts for revenge; and Count Rugen—the evil mastermind behind it all. Foiling all their plans and jumping into their stories is Westley, Princess Buttercup's one true love and a very good friend of a very dangerous pirate.

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