

THE Paper Bag Princess

story by Robert Munsch art by Michael Martchenko





◆ About the Book ◆

When the fiercest dragon in the whole world smashes Princess Elizabeth's castle, burns all her clothes, and captures her fiancé, Prince Ronald, Elizabeth takes matters into her own hands. With her wits alone and nothing but a paper bag to wear, the princess challenges the dragon to show his strength in the hopes of saving the prince. But is it worth all that trouble?



Readers the world over have fallen in love with this classic story of empowerment by Robert Munsch and illustrated by Michael Martchenko.





About the Creators

ROBERT MUNSCH, author of such classics as *Stephanie's Ponytail* and *Thomas' Snowsuit*, is one of the world's bestselling authors of children's books.

MICHAEL MARTCHENKO is the award-winning illustrator of the Classic Munsch series and many other beloved children's books.



AGE INTEREST: 4–7, Grades K–2

CCSS.ELA-Literacy Strand-Reading literature

RF.1–2.4

Reading Level:

Lexile 510L

THEMES: courage/bravery; problem-solving; role reversal; self-esteem; stereotyping; bullying; choices; conflict resolution; empowerment; self-determination



Discussion Questions

1. What comes to mind when you think of a princess? Have the class think of princesses they know (Fiona from *Shrek*, Mulan, Elsa from *Frozen*, Princess Jasmine, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, etc.). What traits do these princesses have? How are they similar to Elizabeth? How are they different?
2. In the story, neither the dragon nor Prince Ronald are very nice to Princess Elizabeth. The dragon smashes her castle, burns all her expensive princess clothes, and runs off with her prince. Pointing a finger at her, Ronald says, *“Elizabeth, you are a mess! You smell like ashes, your hair is all tangled and you are wearing a dirty old paper bag. Come back when you are dressed like a real princess.”*

Ask the class to brainstorm the characteristics that make a good friend. Do either the dragon or Ronald fit these characteristics? How does Elizabeth behave like a good friend to Ronald?

3. How is the ending of the story different from other stories with princesses? Does it challenge how people normally imagine a princess to be like? How is Elizabeth different?



Follow-Up Activities

1. Using the crown outline provided, have the class decorate their crowns! Encourage them to decorate their crowns with things dragons like to keep in their lairs (rubies, sapphires, diamonds, emeralds, etc.).
2. Working individually, in small groups, or as a class, research dragons from different places (Japanese dragons, Chinese dragons, Welsh dragons, or even some real ones like the Komodo dragon or bearded dragon). Ask students to draw their own dragons. Label the parts of the dragon with the traits the dragon exhibits (i.e. large wings for fast around-the-world flying).
3. Have students write a letter to Prince Ronald telling him how the ending of the story made them feel.
4. Ask students if they know that *The Paper Bag Princess* was a banned book.
5. As a follow-up, ask why they think people had problems with the story and had it banned. After they provide answers, tell them why it was really banned: it was called “anti-family” because Princess Elizabeth chooses not to marry Prince Ronald.
6. Open up discussion on how they feel about the real reason for *The Paper Bag Princess* being banned. What does the book being banned for the above reason say about gender stereotypes and expectations?

