

The Paperbag Princess

By Robert Munsch

When Elizabeth was a beautiful princess, she lived in a castle and had expensive princess clothes. She was going to marry a prince named Ronald. Unfortunately, a dragon smashed her castle, burned all her clothes with his fiery breath and carried off Prince Ronald. Elizabeth decided to chase



the dragon and get Ronald back. She looked all over for something to wear but the only thing she could find that was not burnt was a paper bag. So, she put on the paper bag and followed the dragon. He was easy to follow because he left a trail of burnt forests.

Finally, Elizabeth came to a cave with a large door that had a huge knocker on it. She took hold of the knocker and banged on the door. The dragon stuck his nose out the door and said, "Well, a princess! I love to eat princesses, but I have already eaten a whole castle today. I am a very busy dragon. Come back tomorrow." He slammed the door so fast that Elizabeth almost got her nose caught.

"Is it true," said Elizabeth, "That you can burn up ten forests with your fiery breath?"

"Oh, yes," said the dragon and he took a huge, deep breath and breathed out so much fire that he burnt up fifty forests. "Fantastic," said Elizabeth and the dragon took another huge breath and breathed out so much fire that he burnt up one hundred forests.

"Magnificent," said Elizabeth, and the dragon took another huge breath, but this time nothing came out. The dragon didn't even have enough fire left to cook a meat ball.

Elizabeth said, "Dragon, is it true that you can fly around the world in just ten seconds?"

"Why, yes," said the dragon and jumped up and flew all the way around the world in just ten seconds. He was very tired when he got back, but Elizabeth shouted, "Fantastic, do it again!" So, the dragon jumped up and flew around the whole world in just twenty seconds. When he got back, he was too tired to talk and he lay down and went right to sleep.

Elizabeth whispered very softly, "Hey, dragon." The dragon didn't move at all. She lifted up the dragon's ear and put her head right inside. She shouted as loud as she could, "Hey, dragon!" the dragon was so tired he didn't even move.

Elizabeth walked right over the dragon and opened the door to the cave. There was Prince Ronald. He looked at her and said, "Boy, are you a mess! You smell like ashes, your hair is all tangled and you are wearing a dirty old paper bag. Come back when you're dressed like a real princess.

"Ronald," said Elizabeth, "your clothes are really pretty and your hair is all neat. You look like a real prince, but you are a bum." They didn't get married after all.

1. What are some of Elizabeth's character traits? _____

2. What are some of the reasons that you think Elizabeth has those traits? _____

3. What are Ronald's character traits? _____

4. Why did you choose those traits for Ronald? _____

The Paper Bag Princess explores gender roles; instead of the prince rescuing the princess, the princess is rescuing the prince. Rather than the prince defeating the dragon, the princess not only defeats the dragon, but she does so by outsmarting him. It also shows kids that it is okay to stand up for yourself. And, in the end, it reveals that beauty is more than skin deep and that we do not need someone else to be happy or valuable. I received an advanced copy from Netgalley. Opinions are my own. More on this: Paper Bag Princess read by Robert Munsch (4 min 10 sec). Robert Munsch. Stand Up to