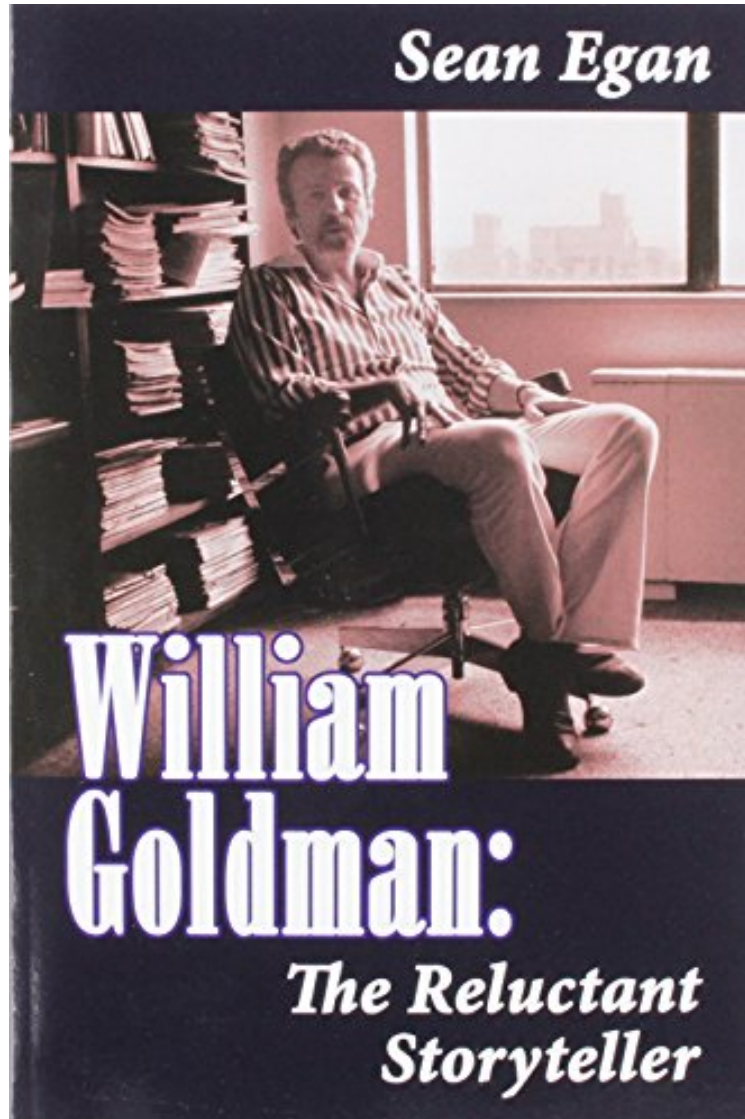


## William Goldman: The Reluctant Storyteller

*Sean Egan*

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**Sean Egan : William Goldman: The Reluctant Storyteller** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised William Goldman: The Reluctant Storyteller:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Of course criticism shouldn't be too fawning, but come ON, Sean Egan...By David BreckmanFour stars given for clear, lucid prose and exceptional scholarship and one star deducted for Egans frequently questionable ideas about Goldmans output. And art in general.Egan's book deals primarily with Goldmans prose output. The author seems to have a high opinion of Goldmans talent as a skillful (if superficial) teller of tales, but on balance thinks his fiction lacks depth, true lyricism, and, more often than not, authentic dialogue. (To

be fair, Egan does acknowledge Goldmans facility with glib, sarcastic dialogue, which in his view makes him a natural for Hollywood). One dubious opinion (among several): Egan calls Goldmans adaptation of John Grishams THE CHAMBER a better movie than THE PRINCESS BRIDE. In fact, Egan calls Goldmans original novel boring where it is not pleased with itself and a real chore to get through. Of the movie version, which Goldman himself scripted, Egan says the best thing that can be said is that its a bit less boring than the book on which its based. And that's his opinion of THE PRINCESS BRIDE, folks! Egan believes that, It is in the field of non-fiction wherein lies Goldmans greatest triumph. Egan calls THE SEASON: A CANDID LOOK AT BROADWAY and ADVENTURES IN THE SCREEN TRADE quite simply among the 20th centurys finest and most noteworthy pieces of journalism about the entertainment industry. Not to take anything away from either of those books, which are terrific, but I think calling Goldmans nonfiction his greatest triumph shortchanges the achievement of the man who wrote one of the top movie westerns of the last century (BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID) as well as THE quintessential newspaper picture (ALL THE PRESIDENTS MEN) and one of the best suspense novels ever written (MARATHON MAN) and arguably the best satiric-adventure novel of all time (THE PRINCESS BRIDE). But Egan advances his most risible idea in a chapter that deals with A FAMILY AFFAIR, a failed musical-comedy written by Goldman (along with his brother James, and John Kander), in the early 1960s. Egan writes: The shows book is rather effete, all marriage talk, dress selecting, cake-ordering, and genteel familial bickering. Its also, despite its over-arching competence, blandly old-fashioned. Partly because of that, there are no belly-laughs. This is humor before people were allowed to talk about the things that are amongst the most funny in life, such as sex and bodily functions. Profanity too is, of course, entirely absent. If the climate of the times had allowed it, this would have almost certainly led to laughter, it being the case that there is little more guaranteed to induce hilarity than the juxtaposition of agonized etiquette and Anglo-Saxon expletive. In other words -- Uh oh! Sorry Mr. Wilde, Mr Coward, Mr. Kaufman and Mr. Simon -- you guys are all amusing enough in your fashion, but true belly laughs only came along with the advent of fart jokes and swear words. (Guess you were just born too early!) Again: Egan is a fine and obviously intelligent writer, and Goldman's legions of fans will find much in this book they agree with as well as insights they hadnt considered before and opinions that tick them off. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. "Clearly, this just won't do..." By Infinitive Splitter A subject worthy of a critical biography, and fairly thoroughly covered by this one; but should have "101 Things I Don't Like About William Goldman's Fiction" as sub-subtitle. Often recalls THE COLOR OF LIGHT'S Andrew Cheney declaiming: "Clearly, this just won't do." Nor is much new biographic ground broken. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. a good read but with the underlining fact that Egan doesn't ... By Customer Basically, a good read but with the underlining fact that Egan doesn't seem to like Goldman's work, with a few exceptions. Anybody that doesn't enjoy HARPER has some kind of aesthetic quirk.

William Goldman is one of the world's most popular storytellers. Amongst his more than two-dozen motion picture screenplays are such iconic works as Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, The Stepford Wives, All the President's Men and A Bridge Too Far. His acclaimed novels include The Temple of Gold, Boys and Girls Together, The Princess Bride and Marathon Man. His non-fiction embraces The Season and Adventures in the Screen Trade, considered the definitive studies on Broadway and Hollywood respectively. Yet despite his success, Goldman has always been a tormented man, unable to enjoy either his art or the respect it has garnered him. Convinced he is "in on a pass," he has rarely written without a profound sense of self-doubt. In William Goldman: The Reluctant Storyteller, Sean Egan analyzes both Goldman's life and output, a task in which he has been assisted by Goldman himself via a series of interviews. The result is an enthralling book that gets to the core of a man who is both supreme talent and perplexing enigma.