The Princess Bride by William Goldman. © The Princess Bride Ltd. All Rights Reserved. A Video Game On A Computer Screen. The game is in progress. As a sick coughing sound is heard Cut To This Kid lying in bed, coughing. Pale, one sick cookie. Maybe he's seven or eight or nine. He holds a remote in one hand, presses it, and the video game moves a little bit. Then he s hit by another spasm of coughing, puts the remote down. His room is monochromatic, greys and blues, mildly high-tech. We're in the present day and this is a middle class house, somewhere in the suburbs. Cut To The Kid's Mother as she enters, goes to him, fluffs his pillows, kisses him, and briefly feels his forehead. She's worried, it doesn't show. During this -- Mother: You feeling any better? The Kid: A little bit. Mother: Guess what. The Kid: What? Mother: Your grandfather's here. The Kid: (not overjoyed) Mom, can't you tell him that I'm sick? Mother: You are sick, that's why he's here. The Kid: He'll pinch my cheek. I hate that. Mother: Maybe he won't. The Kid shoots her an "I'm sure" look, as we Cut To The Kid's Grandfather bursting int o the room. Kind of rumpled. But the eyes are bright. He has a wrapped package tucked under one arm as he immediately goes to The Kid, pinches his cheek. Grandfather: Hey! How's the sickie? Heh? The Kid gives his Mother an "i told you so" look. The Mother ignores it, beats a retreat. Mother: I think I'll leave you two pals. (And she is gone. There's an uncomfortable silen nce, then-) Grandfather: I brought you a special present. The Kid: What is it? Grandfather: Open it up. The Kid does. He does his best to smile. The Kid: A book? Grandfather: That's right. When I was your age, television was called books. And this is a special book. It was the book my father used to read to me when I was sick, and I used to read it to your father. And today, I' m gonna read it to you. The Kid: Has it got any sports in it? Cut To The Grandfather. Suddenly passionate. Grandfather: Are you kidding? Fencing. Fighting. Torture. Revenge. Giants. Monsters. Chases. Escapes. True love. Miracles. Cut To The Two Of Them as the Grandfather sits in a chair by the bed. The Kid: (manages a shrug) It doesn't sound too bad. I'll try and stay aw ake. Grandfather: Oh. Well, thank you very much. It's very nice of you. Your vote of confidence is overwhelming. All right. (Book open now, he begins to read.) The Princess Bride, by S. Morgenstern. Chapter One. Buttercup was raised on a small farm in the country of Florin. Dissolve To The story he's reading about, as the monochromatic look of the bedroom is replaced by the dazzling color of the English countryside. Grandfather: (off-screen) Her favorite pastimes were riding her horse and tormenting the farm boy that worked there. His name was Westley, but she never called him that. (To The Kid) Isn't that a wonderful beginning? The Kid: (off screen): (doing his best) Yeah. It's really good. Grandfather: (off-screen) (reading) Nothing gave Buttercup as much pleasure as ordering Westley around. Cut To Buttercup's Farm. Day. Buttercup is standing, holding the reins of her horse, while in the background, Westley, in the stable doorway, looks at her Buttercup is in her late teens; doesn't care much about clothes and she hates brushing her long hair, so she isn't as attractive as she might be, but she's still prob ably the most beautiful woman in the world. Buttercup: Farm boy. Polish my horse's saddle. I want to see my face shining in it by morning. Westley: (quietly, watching her) As you wish. Westley is perhaps half a dozen years older than Buttercup. And maybe as handsome as she is beautiful. He gazes at her as she walks away. Grandfather: (off-screen) "As you wish" was all he ever said to her. Dissolve To Westley, outside, chopping wood. Buttercup drops two large buckets near him. Buttercup: Farm Boy. Fill these with water-(a beat)-please. Westley: As you wish. She leaves; his eyes stay on her. She stops, turns-he manages to look away as now her eyes stay on him. Grandfather: (off-screen) That day, she was amazed to discover that when he was saying, "As you wish," what he meant was, "i love you." Dissolve To Buttercup In The Kitchen. Dusk. Westley enters with an armload of firewood. Grandfather: (off screen) And even more amazing was the day she realized she truly loved him back. Buttercup: (pointing to a pitcher that she could reach herself) Farm Boy, fetch me that pitcher. He gets it, hands it to her ; they are standing very close to each other gazing into each other's eyes. Westley: As you wish. (Now he turns, moves outside.) Dissolve To Westley And Buttercup, outside his tiny hovel in the red glow of sunset. They are locked in a passionate kiss. The Kid (off-screen) -hold it, hold it- Cut To The Kid's Room. The Kid: What is this? Are you trying to trick me?-Where's the sports?-Is this a kissing book? Grandfather: -wait, just wait- The Kid: -well, when does it get good? Grandfather: Keep your shirt on. Let me read. (reading again) Westley had no money for marriage. So he packed his few belongings and left the farm to seek his fortune across the sea. Cut To Westley And Buttercup. They stand near the gate to the farm, locked in an embrace . Grandfather (off-screen): (reading) It was a very emotional time for Buttercup- The Kid (off screen): (groaning) I don't be-leeve this. Buttercup: I fear I'll never see you again. Westley: Of course you will. Buttercup: But what if something happens to you? Westley: Hear this now: I will come for you. Buttercup: But how can you be sure? Westley: This is true love. You think thi s happens every day? He smiles at her, she smiles too, throws her arms so tightly around him. They kiss. Then as Westley walks away, Buttercup watches him go. Grandfather: (off-screen) (reading) Westley didn't reach his destination. His ship was attacked by the Dread Pirate Roberts, who never left captives alive. When Buttercup got the news that Westley was murdered- The Kid: (off-screen) (perking up just a little) -murdered by pirates is good- Cut To Close Up: Buttercup, staring out the window of her room. Grandfather: (off-screen) She went into her room and shut the door. And for days, she neither slept nor ate. Buttercup: (no emotion at all in her voice) I will never love again. Hold On Her Face, perfect and perfectly sad. Dissolve To Flo rin Castle. Day. The main courtyard of Florin replete with townspeople, livestock, and a bustling marketplace. Grandfather: (off-screen) (reading) Five years later, the main square of Florin City was filled as never before to hear the announcement of the great Prince Humperdinck's bride-to be. Cut To Prince Humperdinck, a man of incredible power and bearing, standing in hi s royal robes on a castle balcony. Three others standing behind him: an Old Couple with crowns, the aging King And Queen, and a dark bearded man who seems the Prince's match in strength: this is Count Rugen Humperdinck: (raises his hands, starts to speak) My people. ..a month from now, our country will have its 500th anniversary. On that sundown, I shall marry a la dy who was once a commoner like yourselves-(pause)- but perhaps you will not find her common now. Would you like to meet her? And the answering Yessss booms like summer thunder. Cut To A giant staircase leading to the Crowd and as a Figure just begins to become visible, Cut To The Crowd, as they see the Figure. (We haven't yet.) And if there is such a thing as co llective action, then this Crowd, collectively, holds its breath. Cut To The Staircase, as the figure appears in the archway. It is Buttercup. And she is resplendent. Humperdinck: My people...the Princess Buttercup!! She descends the stairs and starts to move amongst the people. Cut To The Crowd, and they do a very strange thing: with no instruction at all, they suddenly go t o their knees. Great waves of people kneeling and- Cut To Buttercup, terribly moved. She stands immobile among her Subjects, blinking back tears. Hold on her beauty for a moment. Grandfather: (off-screen) Buttercup's emptiness consumed her. Although the law of the land gave Humperdinck the right to choose his bride, she did not love him. Cut To Woodlands -and Butt ercup, barreling along, controlling her horse easily. Grandfather: (off-screen) Despite Humperdinck's reassurance that she would grow to love him, the only joy she found was in her daily ride. Cut To A Wooded Glen, Close To Sundown. Lovely, quiet, deserted. Buttercup suddenly reins in. Voice: A word, my lady? Cut To Three Men, standing close together in the path. Beyo nd them can be seen the waters of Florin Channel. The Three Men are not your everyday commuter types. Standing in front is a tiny man with the most angelic face. He is Sicilian and his name is Vizzini. Beside him is a Spaniard, erect and taut as a blade of steel. His name is Inigo Montoya. Beside him is a giant. His name is Fezzik. Vizzini: We are but poor, lost circus perfor mers. Is there a village nearby? Buttercup: There is nothing nearby; not for miles. Vizzini: Then there will be no one to hear you scream- He nods to the giant, Fezzik, who merely reaches over, touches a nerve on Buttercup's neck, and the start of a scream is all she manages-unconsciousness comes that fast. As she starts to fall- Cut To A Tiny Isolated Spot At The Edge Of Florin Channel. A sailboat is moored. It's dusk now, shadows are long. Inigo, the Spaniard, busies himself getting the boat ready. Cut To The giant Fezzik carries Buttercup, unconscious, on board. Vizzini rips some tiny pieces of fabric from an army jacket and tucks them along the saddle of Buttercup's horse. There is about the entire operation a sense of tremendous skill a nd precision. Inigo: What is that you're ripping? Vizzini: (not stopping or turning) It's fabric from the uniform of an Army officer of Guilder. Fezzik: Who's Guilder? Vizzini: (pointing straight out) The country across the sea. The sworn enemy of Florin. (slaps the horse's rump) Go! The horse takes off. They start for the boat. Vizzini: Once the horse reaches the castle, the fabric will make the Prince suspect the Guilderians have abducted his love. When he finds her body dead on the Guilder frontier, his suspicions will be totally confirmed. Fezzik: You never said anything about killing anyone. Vizzini hops onto the boat. Vizzini: I've hired you to help me start a war. That's a prestigious line of work with a long and glorious tradition. Fezzik: I just don' t think it's right, killing an innocent girl. Vizzini: (whirling on Fezzik) Am I going mad or did the word "think" escape your lips? You were not hired for your brains, you hippopotamic land mass. Inigo: I agree with Fezzik. Cut To Close Up: Vizzini, in a fury. Vizzini: (We only thought he was in a fury-now he's really getting mad.) Oh. The sot has spoken. What happens to her is n ot truly your concern-I will kill her-(louder) And remember this-never forget this- Cut To Inigo And Fezzik, as Vizzini advances on them. Nothing shows on Inigo's face, but Fezzik is panicked by Vizzini. Vizzini: (to Inigo) - when I found you, you were so slobbering drunk you couldn't buy brandy-(now to Fezzik, who retreats as much as he can while Vizzini advances)-and you-f riendless, brainless, helpless, hopeless-Do you want me to send you back to where you were, unemployed in Greenland? Vizzini glares at him, then turns, leaves them. During this, Inigo has gone close to Fezzik who is very distressed at the insults he's just received. As Inigo casts off Inigo: (softly) That Vizzini, he can fuss. (a slight emphasis on the last word) Fezzik: (looki ng at Inigo) ... fuss ... fuss...(Suddenly, he's got it again, emphasis on the last word.) I think he likes to scream at us. Inigo: Probably he means no harm. Fezzik: He's really very short on charm. Inigo: (proudly) Oh, you've a great gift for rhyme. Fezzik: Yes, some of the time. (He starts to smile.) Vizzini: (whirling on them) Enough of that. As they sail off, we hear their voices as the boat recedes. Inigo: Fezzik, are there rocks ahead? Fezzik: If there are, we'll all be dead. Vizzini: No more rhymes now, I mean it. Fezzik: Anybody want a peanut? As Vizzini screams we Dissolve To The Sailboat Racing Across The Dark Waters. Inigo is at the helm. Fezzik stands near the body of the princess-whose eyelids flutter slightly-or do they? Vizzini sits motionles s. The waves are higher, there are only occasional flashes of moon slanting down between clouds. Vizzini: (to Inigo) We'll reach the Cliffs by dawn. Inigo nods, glances back. Vizzini: Why are you doing that? Inigo: Making sure nobody's following us. Vizzini: That would be inconceivable. Buttercup: Despite what you think, you will be caught. And when you are, the Prince wil l see you all hanged. Vizzini turns a cold eye on the Princess. Vizzini: Of all the necks on this boat, Highness, the one you should be worrying about is your own. Inigo keeps staring behind them. Vizzini: Stop doing that. We can all relax, it's almost over- Inigo: You're sure nobody's following us? Vizzini: As I told you, it would be absolutely, totally, and in all other ways, incon ceivable. No one in Guilder knows what we've done. And no one in Florin could have gotten here so fast. Out of curiosity, why do you ask? Inigo: No reason. It's only, I just happened to look behind us, and something is there. Vizzini: What? And suddenly the Three whirl, stare back and as they do- Cut To The Darkness Behind Them. It's hard to see; the moon is behind clou ds now. But the wind whistles. And the waves pound. And suddenly it's all gone ominous. Cut To Inigo, Fezzik And Vizzini squinting back, trying desperately to see. At this moment, they are all holding their breaths. Cut To The Darkness Behind Them. And there's still nothing to be seen. It's still ominous. Only now it's eerie too. Then- The moon slips through and- Inigo was right something is very much there. A sailboat. Black. With a great billowing sail. Black. It's a good distance behind them, but it's coming like hell, closing the gap. Cut To Inigo, Fezzik And Vizzini staring at the other boat. Vizzini: (explaining with as much logic as he can muster) Probably some local fisherman out for a pleasure cruise at night through eel-infested waters. An d now as a sound comes from their boat they turn as we- Cut To Buttercup, diving into the water, starting to swim away. Cut To The Boat, and Vizzini screaming. Vizzini: Go in, get after her! Inigo: I don't swim. Fezzik: (to the unasked question) I only dog paddle. Vizzini: Veer left. Left. Left! Cut To Buttercup, still close to the boat, switching from a crawl to a silent breast strok e. The wind dies and as it does, something new is heard: a not-too-distant high-pitched shrieking sound. Buttercup stops suddenly, treads water. Cut To The Boat. Vizzini: Do you know what that sound is, Highness? Those are the Shrieking Eels-if you doubt me, just wait. They always grow louder when they're about to feed on human flesh. Cut To Buttercup, treading water, still not far from the boat. The shrieking sounds are getting louder. And more terrifying. Buttercup stays silent. Cut To The Boat. Vizzini: If you swim back now, I promise, no harm will come to you. I doubt you will get such an offer from the Eels. Cut To Buttercup, and she's a gutsy girl. The shrieking sound is louder still, but she doesn't make a sound. Behind her now, som ething dark and gigantic slithers past. She's scared, sure, petrified, who wouldn't be, but she makes no reply- -and now a Shrieking Eel has zeroed in on her- -and now she sees it, a short distance away, circling, starting to close- -and Buttercup is frozen, trying not to make a movement of any kind- -and the Eel slithers closer, closer- - and Buttercup knows it now, there's not hing she can do, it's over, all over- -and now the Eel opens its mouth wi de, and it's never made such a noise, and as its great jaws are about to clamp down- Grandfather: (off-screen) She doesn't get eaten by the Eels at this time. And the second we hear him: Cut To The Sick Kid's Room. The Kid looks the same, pale and weak, but maybe he's gripping the sheets a little too tightly with his hands. The Kid: What? Grandfather: The Eel doesn't get her. I'm explaining to you because you looked nervous. The Kid: Well, I wasn't nervous. His Grandfather says nothing, just waits. The Kid: Well, maybe I was a little bit concerned. But th at's not the same thing. Grandfather: Because I can stop now if you want. The Kid: No. You could read a little bit more...if you want. (He grips the s heets again, as the Grandfather picks up the book.) Grandfather: (reading) "Do you know what that sound is, Highness?" Cut To Vizzini. We're back in the boat. Vizzini: Those are the Shrieking Eel s. The Kid: (off screen) We're past that, Grandpa. Cut To The Sick Kid's Ro om. The Kid: You read it already. Grandfather: Oh. Oh my goodnes s, I did. I'm sorry. Beg your pardon. Cut To Buttercup, treading water. Grandfather: (off-screen) All right, all right, let's see. Uh, she was in the water, the Eel was coming after her. She was frighten ed. The Eel started to charge her. And then - And we're back where we w ere at the last moment we saw her, Buttercup Frozen, The Shrie ki ng Eel, jaws wide, about to clamp down as we - Cut To A Giant Arm, pounding the Eel unconscious in one move, then easily lifting Buttercup. Pull Back To Reveal The Boat And Fezzik, Buttercup b eing deposited on the deck. Vizzini: Put her down. Just put her down. C ut To Inigo, pointing behind them. Inigo: I think he's getting close r. Viz zini, tying Buttercup's Hands. Vizzini: He's no concern of ours. Sail on! (to Buttercup) I suppose you think you're brave, don't you? Buttercup: (staring deep at him) Only compared to so me. Dissolve To The Boat At Dawn, being followed closely by the black sailboat, which we can see for the first time is being sailed by a M an In Black, and his boat almost seems to be flying. Inigo: Look! He's right on top of us. I wonder if he is using the same wind we are using. Vizzini: Whoever he is, he's too late-(pointing ahea d of them)-see? (big) The Cliffs of Insanity. And once he's said the nam e, Cut To The Cliffs Of Insanity At Dawn. They rise straight up, s heer from the water, impossibly high. Cut To The Two Sailboats in a wild race for the Cliffs and the Man In Black is closing faster than ever, but not fast enough, the lead was too great to ov ercome, and as Inigo sails with great precision straight at the Cliffs - C ut To The Boat being pursued. Vizzini: Hurry up. Move the thin g! U rn.. .that other thing. Move it! (staring back now) We're safe-o nly Fezzik is strong enough to go up our way-he'll have to sail around for hours 'til he finds a harbor. There i s much activity going on, all of it swift, expert, economical. Fezzik reac hes up along the Cliff face, grabs a jutting rock, reaches behin d it. Sud denly there is a thick rope in his hands. He drops back t o the boat, gives the rope a freeing swing and Cut To The Cliffs. The rope goes all the way to the top. Cut T o Inigo hurrying to Fezzik He straps a harness to him, then lifts Butterc up and Vizzini in the harness. Finally, he himself gets in the ha rness . All three are strapped to Fezzik like papooses. And he sta rts to ascend the rope, carrying them all along with him as he goes. Cut To The Man In Black, sailing in to ward the Cliffs of Insanity, watching as Fezzik rises swiftly through the first moments of dawn. Cut To The Top Of The Cliffs, Looking Do wn. F EZZIK's Group is only faintly visible far below. This is the first time we've gotten the real vertigo feeling and it's a gasper. Cut To Fezzik Climbing On. Butterc up is almost out of her mind with fear C ut To The Entire Length Of The Cliffs. Fezzik is moving right along; however high they are, he's a lread y over a third of the way done. Cut To The Alan In B lack, leaping from his ship to the rope, starting to climb. He's impossibly far behind, but the way he go es you'd think he didn't know that b ecause he is flying up the ro pe, hand over hand like lightning. Cut To Vizzini And The Others. Inigo : (look ing down) He's climbing the rope. And he's gaining on us. Vizzini: Inconceivable! He prods Fezzik, who nods, increases his pace. Cut To The Man In Bl ack, roaring up the rope, and Cu t To Long Shot-the Cliffs -an d the Man In Black is cutting deeply into Fezzik's lead. Cut To Vizzini A nd The Others. Vizzini: (shrieking) Faster! Fezzik: I thought I was g oing faster. Vizzini: You were supposed to be this colossus. You were this great, legendary thing. And yet he ga ins. Fezzik: Well, I'm carrying three people. An d he's got only himself. Vizzini: (cutting through) - I do not accept excu ses . (sh aking his head) I'm just going to have to find mysel f a n ew gia nt, that's all. Fezzik: (hurt) Don't say that, Vizzini. Please. And his arms begin moving much more slowly. The Man In Black. His arms sti ll work as before. If anything, he has speeded up. Fezzik's lead is smal ler and smaller. Cut To The View From The Top Of The Cliff s. M ay be a h undred feet for Fezzik to go. Maybe more. Cut To Vizzini And The Others, and it's getting too close now. Viz zin i: Did I ake it clear that your job is at st ake? Cut To The Man In Black, less than a hundred feet behind them. A nd g aining. Cut To The Cliff Top As Fezzik Makes It! Vizzini leap s o ff an d ta kes out a knife, begins to cut the rope which is tied around a great rock while Inigo helps the Princess to her f eet an d F ez zik just stands around, waiting f or someone to tell him to do something. Nearby are some stone ruins. Once they might have been a fort, now they kind of resemble St one henge. Cut To The Man In Black, 75 feet from the top now, maybe less-maybe only S0-and his pace is as dazzlin g as b efore, and Cut To Vizzini, cutting t hrough the last of the rope and Cut To The Rope, slithering across the grou nd an d out of sight toward the Channel, like some gr eat serpent at last going home. Cut To Fezzik, standing with Inigo And Buttercup by the cliff edge. Fezzik: (to Inigo-impre ss ed) H e has very good arms. Cut To The Man In Black, hanging suspended hundreds of feet in the air, holding to the jagg ed rocks, desperately trying to cling to life. C ut To Vizzini, stunned, turning to the Others, looking down. Vizzini: He didn't fall? Inconceivable!! Inigo: (whirling on Vi zz ini) You keep using that word-I do not thin k it means what you think it means. (looks down again) My God! He's climb ing. Cut To The Man In Black, and s o he is. Verrrry slowly, he is picking his way upwards, sometimes afoot at a time, sometimes an inch. Cut To The Gr ou p At T he Top, staring down. Vizzini: Whoever he is, he's obviously seen us with the Princess, and must therefore die. (to Fe zzik) You, carry her. (to I nigo) We'll head straight for the Guilder frontier. Catch up when he's dead. If he falls, fine. If not, the sword. Inigo no ds. In igo: I w ant to duel him left-handed. Vizzini: Y ou know what a hurry we're in. Inigo: Well, it's the only way I can be satisfie d . If I u se my right-ha h-over t oo quickly. Vizzini: (turns abruptly, starts off-screen) Oh, have it your way. Cut To The Man In Black, still creeping hi s w ay upward. Cut To Fezzik, who goes to I nigo. Fezzik: You be careful. (Gravely)-people in masks cannot be trusted. V iz zini: (calling out) I'm waiting! Fez zik nods, hurries after Vizzini. Cut To Inigo. He watches them depart, then turns, peers down over the Cliffs. He w atches a moment, then paces, shaking his hands loose. He practices a few of his honed fencing skills. He is a taut a nd nerv ous fell ow , a n d has never been one for waiting around. Cut To The M an In Bl ac k, climbing on. He must b e s ix inches closer to the top than when las t we saw him. Inigo Is Watching. Cut To Inigo, walking away. Finally he goe s ack to c liff e dg e, st arts to talk. It's instant death if the Man In Black fall s, bu t neith er gives that possibi lit y m u ch credence. This is our two heroes mee ing. They don't know it yet; but that's what it is. Inigo: (hollering down) Hell o t here . Th e Ma n I n Black glances up, kind of grunts. Inigo: Slow go in g? Man In Black: Look, I d on't mea n t o be rude, but this is not as easy as it look S. So I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't distract me. Inigo: Sorry. Man In Black : Th an k yo u . I nigo steps away, draws his sword, loosens up w i th a few perfect thru sts. Then r es he athes and looks eagerly over the edge agai n. Inigo: I do not suppose you could speed things up? Man In Black: (with s ome hea t) I f you' re in such a hurry, you could lower a rope, or a tre e br anch, or fi nd someth in g useful to do. Inigo: I could do that. In fact, I' ve got some rope up here. But I do not think that you will accept my help, s in ce I am onl y wa it ing arou nd to kill you. Man In Black: That does put a dam per on our rel ationshi p. (H e finds another hold a few inches higher.) Ini go: But I promise I will not kill you until you reach the top. Man In Black: Th at 's very c omfo r ting. B ut I'm afraid you'll just have to wait. Inigo: I hate w ait in g. I could gi ve y ou my word as a Spaniard. Man In Black: No good. I've known too many Spaniards. And he just hangs there in space, re st ing, gathe ring h is stren gth. Inigo: You don't know any way you'll trust me? Man In Blac k: N othing comes to mind. And on these words, C amera Zooms into a Close Up of Inigo. He raises his right hand high, his ey e s blaze, and his voice takes o n a tone we have not heard before. Inigo: I swear on th e soul of my father, Do mi ngo Montoya, you will reach the top alive. Cut To The Man In Black There is a pause. Then, quietly: Man In Black: Throw m e the rope. Cut T o Inigo. He dashes to the gia nt rock the rope was originally tied to. Cut To Th e M an In Black as his gri p loosens a moment, trying to cling to the side of the cliff. Cut To Inigo, now with a small coil of rope, hurries back to the e d g e and hurls it ove r- C ut To The Rope. It hang s close to the Man In Black. He releases the ro c k s , gr abs the rope, hangs helplessly in space a mome nt, then looks up at Inigo and- Cut To Inigo, straining, forcing his body awa y fr om the clif f ed and - Cut To The Man In Black rising thro u g h th e early morning light, slowly, steadily, and as the cliff top at last comes within reach- Cut To Inigo, watching as the Man In Bl a c k craw ls to sa fety , th en loo ks to Inigo. Man In Black : T han k you. (pulling his sword) Inigo: We'll wait until yo u're ready. Man In Black: Again. Thank you. The Man In Black sits to rest on th e b o ulde r that on ce held the rope. He tug s ff hi s leather boots and is amazed to see several large r ocks tumble out. The Man In Black wears gloves. Inigo stares at them. Inig o: I do n ot m e an t o pry, but you don't by an y cha nce happen to have six fingers on your right hand? He glances up-the question clearly baffles him. Man In Black: Do you always be gi n con v ers ation s this way? Inigo: My fathe r was sla ugh tered by a six-fingered man. He was a great swordma ker, my father. And when the six-fingered man appeared and requested a s p ec ial s wor d, my fa ther to ok the job. He slaved a yea r before he was done. He hands his sword to the Man In Black. Man In Black: (fondling it-impressed) I have never seen its equal. C ut To Clo se U p: Inigo: Even now, this still brings pain. Ini go: The six-fingered man returned and demanded it, but at one-tenth his promised price. My father refused. Without a word, the six-fi n ge red m an s lash ed him through the heart. I loved my father, so, natu rall y, challenged his murderer to a duel ...i failed ...the six-fi ngered man did leave me alive with the six-fingered sword, but he gave me t hese. (He touches his scars) Cut T o Th e M an In Black, looking up at Inigo. Man In Black: How old w ere you? Inigo: I was eleven years old. When I was strong e nough, I dedicated my life to the study of fencing. So the next time we mee t, I will not fail . I w ill go up to the six-fing ered man and say, "Hello, my name is Ini go Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die." Man In Black: You've done nothing but study swordplay? Inigo: More pursuit than s t udy lately. You se e, I cannot find him. It's been twent y years now. I am starting t o l ose confidence. I just work for Vizzini to pay the bills. Ther e's not a lot of money in revenge. Man In Black: (handing back the great sw or d , st art ing to rise) Well, I certainly h ope y ou find him, someday. In igo: You are ready, then? Man In Black: Whether I am or no t, you've been more than fair. Inigo: You seem a decent fellow. I hate to kill y o u. Ma n In Black: (walking away a few pa ces, u nsheathing his sword) You seem a decent fellow. I hate to di e. Inigo: Begin! And on that word- Cut To The Two Of Them. And what we a r e sta rt ing now is one of the two grea test sw ordfights in modern movies (the other one happens later on), and right from the beginning it looks different. Because they aren't close to e a ch ot her- none of th e sword s-c rossi ng "en garde" garbage. No. What we have here is two men, two athletes, and they look to be too far away to damage each other, but each ti m e on e mak es even the tini es t feint, the other counters, and there is silence, and as they start to cir cle- Cut To The Six-fingered Sword, feinting here, feinting there and- Cut T o T he T wo Me n, finis hed teas in g, begin to duel in earnest. Their swords cross, then again, again, and th e sound comes so fast it's almost continual. Inigo presses on, the Man In B la c k retr ea ting up a rocky inc lin e. Inigo: (t hrilled) You're using Bonetti's defense against me, ah? Man In Bl ack: I thought it fitting, considering the rocky terrain- Inigo: Naturally, you m u s t ex pe ct m e to attack wit h Capo Fe rro- And he shifts his style now. Man In Black: (coping as best he can) -naturally-(suddenly shifting again)-but I find Thibault cancels out Cap o F er r o, d on 't y ou? The Man In B lack is now perched at the edge of the elevated castle ruin. No where to g o, he jumps to the sand. Inigo stares down at him. Inigo: Unless the enemy h a s s tud ie d h is A grippa- And no w, with the grace of an Olympian, Inigo flies off the perch, somersaults clean over th e Man In Black's head, and lands facing his opponent. Inigo: -which I have. T h e T wo M en are a lmost flying acr os s the rocky terrain, n ever losing balance, never coming close to stumbling; the battle rage s with incredible finesse, first one and then the other gaining the advantage , a nd b y n o w, i t's c lear that this i sn 't just two athletes going at it, it's a lot more that that. This is two legendary swashbucklers and they're in their prime, it's Burt Lancaster in The Crimson Pirate battling Erro l F lyn n i n Rob in Ho od and then, incre di bly, the action begins goin g even faster than before as we Cut To Inigo. And behind him now, d rawing closer all the time, is the deadly edge of the Cliffs of Insanity. Inigo figh ts and duck s and fei nts a nd sla shes and it all w or ks, but not for long, as gradually the Man I n Black keeps the advantage, keeps forcing Inigo back, closer and closer t o death. Inigo: (happy as a clam) You are wonderful! Man In Black: Thank y ou -l' ve w ork ed har d to becom e s o. The Cliff edge is very close now. Inigo is continually being forced toward it. Inigo: I admit it-you are better than I am. Man In Black: Then why are you s m il ing? Inc h es from defea t, In ig o is, in fact, all smiles. Inigo: Because I know something you don't know. Man In Black: And what is that? Inigo: I am not left-handed. And he throws th e six-f ing ered sword into his rig ht hand and immediately, the tide of battle turns. Cut To The Man In Black , stunned, doing everything he can to keep Inigo by the Cliff edge. But no u se . Slow ly at fir st, he begin s to retr eat. Now faster. Inigo is in control and the Man In Black is desperate. Cut To Inigo. And the six-fingered sword is all but invisible now, as he increase s his attack, then suddenly swit ches yles a gain. Cut To A R ocky Staircase leading to a turret-shaped plateau, and the Man In Black is ret reating like mad up the steps and he can't stop INIGO-nothing can stop INI GO-and in a frenzy the Man In Bl ack ma kes ev ery feint, trie s ev ery th rust, lets go with all he has left. But he fails. Everything fails. He tries o ne or two final desperate moves but they are nothing. Man In Black: You're amazing! Inigo: I ought to be af ter t we nty yea rs. And now t he n In Bl ack is smashed into a stone pillar, pinned there under the sixfingered s word. Man In Black: (hollering it out) There's something I ought to tell you. Inigo: Tell me. Man In Black: I a m n ot I eft-han ded either. An d Ma n d no w he changes hands, and at last, the battle is fully joined. Cut To Inigo. And to his a mazement, he is being forced back down the steps. He tries one style, anot her, bu t it all comes down to th e sa me thing -the Man In Bl ac k seem s t o be in control. And before Inigo knows it, the six-fingered sword is k nocked clear out of his hand. Inigo retreats, dives from the stairs to a moss -co vered bar suspended ov er th e archwa y. He swings o ut, lan ds, and sc ra mbles to his sword and we Cut To The Man In Black who wat ches Inigo, then casually tosses his sword to the landing where it sticks in pe rfectly. Then the Man In Bla ck copies In igo. Not copies e xactl y, impr ov es. He dives to t he bar, swing s completely o ver it like a circus perform er and dismounts with a 9.7 backflip. Cut To Inigo, staring in awe. Inigo: Who ar e yo u?! Man In Black: No one of co nsequence . Inigo: I must kn ocking, a ow. Man In Bl ack: Get used to disappoi ntment. Inigo: Okay. Cut To Inigo, moving like lightning, and he thrusts forward, slashes, darts back, all in almost a s in gle movement and- Cut To The M an In B la ck. Dodging, bl nd again he t hr usts forward, fas ter e ven than bef ore, and again he slashes but- Cut To Inigo. And there is never a move anyone makes he doesn't rememb er, and this time he blocks the s lash, slashes out h im sel f with the si x- fingered sword. On it goes, b ack and forth across the rocky ter rain, Inigo's feet moving with the grace and speed of a great improvisation al d ancer. Cut To The Six-fingere d Swor d as it is knoc ke d fr ee, arching up in to the air, a nd- Cut To I nigo catching it again. And somethin g terrible is written behind his eyes: he has given his all, done everything ma n can do, tried every style, made ev e ry maneuver, but it wasn't enough, and on his face fo r all to se e is t he r ealization that he, Inigo Montoya of Spain, is going to lose. Cut To The Man In Black, moving in for the end now, blocking everyt hing, muzzling everything and Cut T o The Si x-fingered Sword, sent flying from Inigo's grip . H e s tands h elples s only a moment. Then he drops to his knees, bows his head, shuts his eyes. Inigo: Kill me quickly. Man In Black: I would as soon destroy a stained glass w ind ow as an artist like yourself. However, since I nigo's head with his heavy sword handle. Inigo pitc hes forward unconscious. Man In Black: Please understand, I hold you in the highest respect. He grabs hi s scabbard and takes off after the Princess and we Cut To ca n't have you following me either- And he clunks I ose Up: Vizzini. Vizzini: Inconceivable! Pull Back To Reve al Vizzini, staring down from a narrow mountain path, as far below the Man In Black can be seen run ning. Fezzik, carrying the Princess, stands alongside. It's a little later in the morning. Vizzini: Cl Give her to me. (grabs Buttercup starts off) Catch up with us q uickly. Fezzik: (starting to panic) What do I do? Vizzini: Finish him, finish him. Your way. Fezzik: Oh, good, my way. Thank you, Vizzini. (little pause) Which way is my way? Cut To A Couple Of Rocks. Nothing gig antic. Vizzi ni points to them. There is a large boulder nearby. Vizzini: Pick up one of th ose rocks, get behind the boulder, and in a few minutes, the Man in Black will come running around the bend. The minute his head is in view, hit it with the rock! As Vizzini And Buttercup hurry away. Fezzik: (little frown; softly) My way's not very sportsmanlike. He grabs one of the rocks and plods behind the boulder and we- Dissolve To The M an In Black, racing up the mountain trail. Ahead is a bend in the trail. He sees it, slows. Then he stops, listening. Satisfied by the silence, he starts forward again and as he rounds the bend-a rock flies Into Frame, shatte ring on a boulder inches in front of him. Cut To Fezzik. He moves into the mountain path. He has picked up another rock and holds it lightly. Fezz ik: I did that on purpose. I don't have to miss. Man In Black: I believe you-So what happens now? Fezzik: We face each other as God intended. Sportsmanlike. No tricks, no weapons, skill against skill alone. Man In Black: You mean, you'll put down your rock and I'll put down my sword, and we'll try to kill each other like civilized people? Fezzik: (gently) I could kill you now. He gets set to throw, but the Man In Black shakes his head, takes off his sword and scabbard, begins the approach toward the Giant. Man In Black: Frankly, I think the odds are slightly in your favor at hand fighting. Fezzik: It's not my fault being the biggest and the strongest. I don't even exercise. He flips the rock away. Cut To The Mountain Path And The Two Men. The Man I n Black is not now and has never been a shrimp. But it's like he wasn't even there, Fezzik towers over him so much. There is a moment's pause, and then the Man In Black dives at FEZZIK's chest, slams him several tremendous blows in the stomach, twists his arm severely, slips skillfully into a beautifully applied bear hug, and in general makes any number of terrific wrestli ng moves. Fezzik just stands there, kind of taking in the scenery. Finally the Man In Black pushes himself away, stares up at the Giant. Man In Black: Look, are you just fiddling around with me or what? Fezzik: I just want you to feel you're doing well. I hate for people to die embarrassed. They get set to begin again. Then suddenly- Cut To Fezzik, as he jumps forward with st unning speed for anyone his size and reaches for the Man In Black who drops to his knees, spins loose, and slips between the Giant's legs. Fezzik: You're quick. Man In Black: And a good thing too. Fezzik: (getting set for another onslaught) Why do you wear a mask? Were you burned by acid, or something like that? Man In Black: Oh no. It's just that they're terribly comfort able. I think everyone will be wearing them in the future. Fezzik considers this a moment, then attacks, and if he moved quickly last time, this time he is blinding and as the Man In Black slips down to avoid the charge, Fezzik moves right with him, only instead of twisting free and jumping to his feet, this time the Man In Black jumps for Fezzik's back and in a moment he is rid ing him, and his arms have Fezzik's throat, locked across Fezzik's windpipe, one in front, one behind. The Man In Black begins to squeeze. Tighter. Fezzik: (standing, talking as he does so) I just figured out why you give me so much trouble. Cut To Fezzik, as he charges toward a huge rock that lines the path, and just as he reaches it he spins his giant body so that the entir