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, gray 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 into 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 silence, 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 going to read it to you. The Kid: Do I have to? Cut To We See Grandfather Reading, Fighting To Control His Cough, Coughing, Fighting, Then Two Cut To Shots Of The Kid Listening, Then Back To Grandfather. Well, turns out he can't read it to you, because it's too dark in the bedroom and there's not enough light for him to read by. The Kid: Dim switch by the bed. Well, I'm too sick to read. Grandfather: Your eyesight is perfectly fine, I'm sure. Besides, I'm the grandfather and I'm the one who's supposed to read to you, and I'm sick and tired of arguing with you. The Kid: Fine, you read. (reading) Westley had grown from a boy into a young man of great promise. He was strong and handsome, and he had a sense of humor that was evidence in everything he did. Cut To Westley And Buttercup, Laughing Together, Then Back To Grandfather. Well, he was a young man of great promise. Anyway, he had a sense of humor that was evidence in everything he did. Cut To Westley And Buttercup, Laughing Together, Then Back To Grandfather. Anyway, 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 we 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 probably 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 in the Farmyard, Kissing Madly. Grandfather: (off-screen) And even more amazing was the day he realized she would have to leave him and go off to be married to the Prince. Buttercup: Farm Boy, fetch me that horse. Westley: As you wish. (Now he turns, just wait- The Kid: Hey! Grandfather: Well, when does the part where they get married, (reading) Westley had crossed the Atlantic Ocean and had come 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 this 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 Florin 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 his 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 sudown, I shall marry a lady 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 Yesss looms 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 so much as a thing: as she leaves its top and begins her descent, the Crowd, as one, gasps. Cut To Her Face, as she hears the gasp and starts to move anxiously. Cut To The Crowd, and they do not move. Cut To Her Face, as she begins her descent, and they do not move. Cut To The Crowd, and they do not move. Cut To Her Face, as she begins her descent, and they do not move. Cut To Woodlands-and Buttercup, 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. Beyond 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 performers. 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 and 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: I just don't like killing people. Vizzini: Your problem is that you have too much heart. That's a prestigious line of work with a long and glorious tradition. Fezzik: I just don't like killing people. Vizzini: (whirling on Fezzik) Am I going crazy or did the word "think" escape your lips? Fezzik: I guess we were not hired for your brains. Vizzini: (whirling on Inigo) Anything to add? Inigo: Nothing. Vizzini: (to Fezzik) Anything you wish to add, you brainless, hairless, 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: (looking 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 motionless. 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: Vesptie what you think, you will be caught. And when you are, the Prince will 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 said we'd make it, it's almost over- Inigo: You're sure nobody's following us? Vizzini: As I told you, it would be absolutely, totally, inconceivable- Inigo: Stop doing that. We said we'd make it, it's almost over- Inigo: You're sure nobody's following us? Vizzini: As I told you, it would be absolutely, totally, inconceivable- Cut To The Darkness Behind Them. Inigo and Fezzik are here so fast. Out of curiosity, why do you suppose they haven't gotten here yet? Inigo: Not enough wind? Vizzini: What? And suddenly the clouds part and the moon shines down and we see that the sail is gone. Fezzik: Where is the sail? Vizzini: Only I know. Inigo: Then how do we know it will be there when we need it? Vizzini: (whining) Why do you always ask questions that are so stupid? Fezzik: I just wondered. Vizzini: Stupid questions are the only kind of questions there are. Inigo keeps staring behind them. Vizzini: Stop doing that. We said we'd make it, it's almost over- Inigo: You're sure nobody's following us? Vizzini: As I told you, it would be absolutely, totally, inconceivable- Cut To A Sailboat Moving Through Dark Waters. The moon is hidden by clouds. Vizzini: (whining) Why do you always ask questions that are so stupid? Fezzik: I just wondered. Vizzini: (whining) Stupid questions are the only kind of questions there are. Inigo keeps staring behind them. Vizzini: (whining) Stop doing that. We said we'd make it, it's almost over- Inigo: You're sure nobody's following us? Vizzini: As I told you, it would be absolutely, totally, inconceivable- Cut To The Boat being pursued. Vizzini: Hurry up. Move the thing! Urn...that other thing. Move the thing! Urn...that other thing. Move the thing! Urn...that other thing