

# **The Princess Bride Study Guide**

## **The Princess Bride by William Goldman**

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## Plot Summary

The cover of *The Princess Bride* states the the book is "S. Morgenstern's classic tale of true love and high adventure." Indeed *The Princess Bride* does contain a great deal of true love and action adventure, but not necessarily in the way most readers will be expecting. Buttercup and Westley are lovers destined to be together, but circumstances beyond their control separate them for many years. Inigo is embroiled in a quest to avenge his father's murder, and Fezzik is looking for a true friend who enjoys rhymes. In addition to these characters there is a Prince who is averse to marriage but in love with hunting and a Count who enjoys researching pain. Along with a bumbling King, a fired Miracle Man, an albino, and the Zoo of Death the reader is treated to a tale of great skill; from both the characters and the author.

William Goldman says in his introduction that he decided to publish the "good parts" of *The Princess Bride*. The good parts of the story involve an attack by the Dread Pirate Roberts who never leaves survivors. A mysterious Man in Black appears to steal the stolen property from Vizzini the Sicilian. Inigo duels with the Man in Black; Fezzik fights the Man in Black in hand to hand combat, and the Sicilian tries to outwit the masked stranger, but not one of them can best the rogue. The Man in Black retrieves the property kidnapped by Vizzini, and the reader discovers he is someone thought lost to the story. A harrowing escape through a Fire Swamp ends when the Man in Black and his companion are caught by the devilish Prince Humperdinck and Count Rugen, the six-fingered man. Inigo and Fezzik resurface and work to free the imprisoned Man in Black. Once gathered together, the Man in Black must be brought back to life; the castle must be stormed, a wedding stopped; the six-fingered man needs killed by Inigo, and the Princess needs rescued before they can all make another great escape.

Finding the high adventure in *The Princess Bride* is not difficult. True love is also easy enough to recognize, but the author is a master craftsman in his own right as he weaves together a story full of twists, turns, foreshadowing, memories, interruptions, and abrupt halts. The story itself contains adventure and love, but the reader must be ready to participate in the action of the book and put forth enough love to stick with the relationship until the final page.



# The Princess Bride

## The Princess Bride Summary

William Goldman was a loner who did not excel at sports during his childhood. His only companionship came from his own active imagination. In 1941, William is delirious with pneumonia. To entertain the sick child, William's father reads him the story of *The Princess Bride* by S. Morgenstern. For the first time in his life, William becomes interested in a book. William's father reads the book through twice while the boy is recuperating. For years afterwards William always associates the book with his father and hears the story read in his father's voice. Once William is better he is obsessed with books and asks his teacher for more suggestions.

When William's own son, Jason turns ten, William is determined to procure a copy of *The Princess Bride* for him; however, William is in California while his family is back in New York. An extensive search of New York City bookstores finally turns up an ancient copy. William misses Jason's birthday, but cannot wait to return home and talk about the book with his son. Jason says that he really enjoyed it but is unable to answer his father's questions about the book. William realizes that his son never read the book. His wife explains that the story was just too difficult for Jason, and she told him to stop reading. William locks himself in the library with the book and begins to leaf through the story. After discovering several passages that he does not remember, William realizes that his father only read him the action portions. Morgenstern did not write a children's action story but a satiric history of his homeland. In that moment William decides to abridge *The Princess Bride* to produce a copy that contains only the "good parts" of the story. Even years later William is not sure why he wanted to write the abridgment. He used to believe in true love and high adventure thinking that his own life would turn out that way, but now those ideals are gone. The only thing William can do now is give the ideals to the reader to do as the reader sees fit.

## The Princess Bride Analysis

The reader quickly senses Goldman's love for the story of *The Princess Bride*. Knowing that Goldman's father took the time to spend with his ill son nearly brings tears to the reader. It is clear that Goldman's family did not have luxuries and that his father needed to work long hours to provide for his family. There is a noticeable contrast between Goldman and his father. While his father took the time out of his tiring life to read to his son, Goldman sips drinks near a pool while using the telephone to locate a copy of the book. Goldman does not return home in time for Jason's birthday and he does not read *The Princess Bride* to his son. Goldman says he does not know why he choose to purchase the rights to do the abridgment. The reader may wonder if it was to make up for not being the father to his son that his father was to him.



# Chapter One, The Bride

## Chapter One, The Bride Summary

Buttercup is not thought of as one of the most beautiful females in the world. She is not concerned with her image and does not like to bathe or comb her hair. Instead she spends her time riding her horse and taunting the farm boy. No matter what Buttercup commands the Farm Boy to do, he simply answers, "As you wish." When Buttercup turns sixteen she notices other girls do not speak to her. Buttercup asks one of the village girls why they ignore her and learns that the girls are jealous because all the village boys fawn over Buttercup. When Buttercup is seventeen a rich man drives twenty miles to catch a glimpse of her. He is not the first man to do so but he is the first rich man to travel from far away. This man mentions her to Count Rugen, close friend of Prince Humperdinck. Prince Humperdinck rules Florin, the country where Buttercup lives. One day the Count and Countess with all of their entourage are traveling past Buttercup's hovel. As her parents marvel over the sight, the procession turns toward the house. The Count wishes to see Buttercup, and when she appears, he cannot take his eyes from her. The Countess then wishes to see the Farm Boy who introduces himself as Westley.

Buttercup cannot stop thinking about the way the Countess stared at Westley. She thinks about all of Farm Boy's features: blue eyes, blond hair, tan, muscles, teeth. Buttercup cannot understand why the Countess was so interested in Westley. Buttercup tosses and turns all night thinking about why women follow Farm Boy around town. In the morning she goes to Westley's hovel to tell him that she loves him. After a long speech, Buttercup finally looks into Westley's eyes for the first time and he shuts the door in her face. Buttercup runs to her room weeping uncontrollably. She tries to convince herself that Westley is stupid but spends the day sobbing in her room. Westley comes in the evening to tell her he is leaving for America. He intends to seek his fortune in order to build a life for the two of them. Westley explains that he has always loved Buttercup. Each time he said "As you wish," he really meant, "I love you." Buttercup promises to wait for him and never love another. Just off the coast of America, Westley's ship is attacked by the Dread Pirate Roberts. Roberts never leaves prisoners alive. When Buttercup hears the news, she stays in her room for a long time. She finally emerges but her appearance has altered from a girl to a woman who knows the pain of intense suffering. Buttercup vows to never love again.

## Chapter One, The Bride Analysis

Goldman spends a great deal of time discussing the beautiful women of the world. He carefully points out their most salient features and how their concern with their appearance eventually leads to downfall. The reader senses a new twist on the old "pride goeth before the fall" sermon. However, Goldman hammers at the point so that the reader will realize that Buttercup is not like these other women. Buttercup's



appearance has never been topmost in her mind and only becomes so once she falls in love. Buttercup and Westley are simple people motivated by the purest of intentions. Their love is not frivolous or based upon appearances or money. The purity of their love is what makes Westley's death so tragic.



# Chapter Two, The Groom; Chapter Three, The Courtship; Chapter Four, The Preparations

## Chapter Two, The Groom; Chapter Three, The Courtship; Chapter Four, The Preparations Summary

Prince Humperdinck is shaped like a barrel. He is short and stocky and walks like a crab. His only true love in life is hunting. Since hunting often takes him away from Florin for a long time, Humperdinck builds a Zoo of Death with the help of Count Rugen. The Zoo is kept stocked with all manner of beast for the Prince's hunting pleasure and tended by an albino zoo keeper. The Zoo is located in a remote corner of the castle grounds. It is composed of five levels, each more dangerous than the one above it. The fifth level is left empty because Humperdinck has yet to find an opponent worthy of his abilities. When the announcement comes that King Lotharon is dying, Humperdinck is upset only because he will now have to get married and produce an heir.

The Prince, Count Rugen, King Lotharon and Queen Bella meet to discuss who the Prince should marry. The King can only mumble at this age and Bella translates for him. The Queen does not always know what her husband is saying and relates what she wants to say instead. An agreement is reached to have a look at Noreena, a princess from the neighboring country of Guilder. An introductory dinner is held in Florin Castle's drafty center hall. Everything appears to be going well until a large gust of wind blows through three open doors whisking the hat off Noreena's head. The Prince storms from the dining hall shouting that he will not marry Noreena. When the others finally catch up with Humperdinck, he explains that he cannot have a bald queen. The Count then says he has found the perfect girl for the Prince. When Prince Humperdinck lays eyes on Buttercup he agrees to the marriage and rides immediately to "court" her. The Prince demands Buttercup marry him but she says she cannot love another. Humperdinck says he does not want her love and will give her none in return. Buttercup agrees to the marriage.

Chapter Four is a half page paragraph of an interruption by Goldman. Goldman states that Morgenstern's chapter was 105 pages long. Over the course of these 105 pages, Morgenstern painstakingly details the three years of Humperdinck and Buttercup's courtship. Buttercup is trained as a princess and given the title of Princess of Hammersmith. The King's health improves slightly, and there is an argument among the nobles about Humperdinck marrying a commoner.





## **Chapter Two, The Groom; Chapter Three, The Courtship; Chapter Four, The Preparations Analysis**

Prince Humperdinck is the antithesis to Buttercup and Westley. The Prince is arrogant, narcissistic, and concerned only with activities that showcase his skill. Buttercup is a possession, a necessary step in his role as king-to-be. Humperdinck is concerned with appearances. Noreena could be a pleasant person but her lack of hair makes her unsuitable. Buttercup cannot offer love but she possesses the beauty to make a nice queen to stand next to Humperdinck. Goldman claims to be abridging Morgenstern's satire, but in reality he is presenting his own satire under the guise of a fairy tale.



# Chapter Five, The Announcement: Pages 87-107

## Chapter Five, The Announcement: Pages 87-107 Summary

People flock to the square of Florin City anxious to see Buttercup for the first time. The Prince announces that the wedding will take place in three months on the 500th anniversary of Florin. Buttercup is now twenty-one and more breathtaking than anyone can imagine. Humperdinck tries to shuffle her quickly back inside but Buttercup wants to walk among the people. She goes down to greet them with open arms. Three of the people in the crowd are planning to kill Buttercup. In the shadows of the highest building stands the Man in Black whose eyes flash with cruelty.

Buttercup takes Horse out for a ride after her introduction to Florin. As she rides, Buttercup contemplates her impending marriage finally deciding she must be happy without wishing for more. Dusk begins to fall and Buttercup turns Horse toward home. Three men approach her from the forest. One is a short, hunchbacked Sicilian; one is a Spaniard, dark and tall as his gleaming sword, and the third is a Turkish giant. The Sicilian approaches her and the next thing Buttercup knows, she awakens in the bottom of a boat. Buttercup lies huddled in a blanket listening to the three men talk about killing her once they reach Guilder in order to start a war. The Spaniard realizes Buttercup is listening and knocks her unconscious. When she awakens again she does not hesitate to jump overboard into Florin Channel.

Buttercup swims silently and the darkness hides her from the men on the boat. The Sicilian calls out that Buttercup should beware of the bloodthirsty sharks. He threatens that if she does not return to the boat he will cut his arm and throw the blood into the water. Buttercup hesitates when she hears a slight splash followed by the sound of sharks going mad. The moon comes out enough for the men to see Buttercup, and the Turk fishes her from the water. They have reached the Cliffs of Insanity and the Sicilian is excited that his plan is still working. The Spaniard notes that someone is following them. A ship painted black with a black sail and piloted by a man dressed all in black is gaining on them. The Sicilian makes light of the follower as they dock at the Cliffs.

A rope appears from above and the Sicilian orders them to be quick so they can reach the top and cut the rope just in case the Man in Black is following them. The Turk sinks the boat and then grasps the rope. The Spaniard ties himself and Buttercup to the Turk as the Sicilian clings to the Turk's neck. Fezzik, the Turk, begins to climb the thousand-foot, sheer cliff. The long haul carrying three extra people is no problem for Fezzik because his arms never tire. When they are over halfway to the top the Spaniard announces that the Man in Black has reached the cliffs and is climbing the rope. At the top the Sicilian unties the rope but the Man in Black manages to hang onto the cliffs instead of falling. The group at the top anxiously waits for the masked man to fall to his



death. However, the Man in Black begins to slowly climb the sheer cliff face. The Sicilian remains convinced that the Man in Black is not following them but orders the Spaniard to kill him anyway. The Sicilian hobbles away as the Turk picks up Buttercup. Fezzik turns to tell Inigo to hurry and catch up. Inigo lays on his stomach peering over the cliff edge studying the man in black. He realizes that the man climbs by jamming his fists into crevices and pulling up. Inigo sees that the man wears a mask and wonders if the stranger is an outlaw like himself. He considers how shameful it will be to kill such a master as the Man in Black but he must follow the Sicilian's orders. Inigo hates waiting and passes the time practicing with his prized possession: the six fingered sword.

## **Chapter Five, The Announcement: Pages 87-107 Analysis**

The real action of the story has begun. Goldman takes his time developing characters and whetting the reader's appetite with long expository passages. Once the action adventure begins it is fast paced and exciting. An immediate kidnapping that takes the victim into shark infested waters is thrilling. Perhaps most exciting is the introduction of the new characters. The Turk, Sicilian and Spaniard are apparently villains but there is something likable about them. The reader knows that the Man in Black intends harm but how four villains figure into the story seems inconceivable.

Goldman continues the theme about the importance of appearance. Humperdinck wishes only to show his lovely bride-to-be to the villagers briefly, just long enough for them to be overcome by her beauty. The Prince uses her as a skillfully placed pawn in his little game. Buttercup views the villagers as her own people. She wishes not to look down upon them from a balcony but to see them face to face. Buttercup would make an excellent queen if given the proper chance even with her background as a commoner. All the lessons on becoming a princess cannot erase her compassion for the lower classes.



## Chapter Five, The Announcement - Inigo: Pages 107-138

### Chapter Five, The Announcement - Inigo: Pages 107-138 Summary

Inigo grew up in the small village of Arabella in the mountains of Central Spain. His mother died in childbirth but Inigo was truly happy because of his father, Domingo Montoya. Domingo is a master craftsman sword maker, although he does not like to market his skills. One day, a dark, broad-shouldered man knocks on Domingo's door requesting a special sword. Domingo tries to put the man off but when the dark man shows the six-fingers on his right hand, Domingo is overcome with thoughts of the challenge. For the next year Domingo slaves over the sword, one day excited, the next full of despair. Finally the sword is done and it is perfection. The six-fingered man returns and disagrees that the sword is perfect. He refuses to pay more than ten gold pieces, although five hundred were promised. Domingo is indignant and flings a gold piece back at the six-fingered man. Domingo refuses to give up the sword, so the six-fingered man kills him. Ten-year-old Inigo confronts the six-fingered man who leaves the boy with a scar down each cheek. Following his father's death Inigo stays with a family friend until he leaves to travel the world and learn.

One day Inigo returns to his homeland. He has spent ten years learning to fence. At the age of twenty-two, Inigo begins his search for his father's murderer. After five years Inigo has not found the six-fingered man and begins to worry that the ten years he spent training was too long. Discouraged Inigo turns to wine and makes his living challenging local champions. At thirty, Inigo gives up his quest and spends his days drinking until the Sicilian finds him. The Sicilian offers him a job as part of his band of criminals, and Inigo has been following the Sicilian's orders ever since.

Inigo paces the cliff edge calling out to the Man in Black. They exchange words and Inigo swears on his father's soul that the man will reach the top alive. He then proceeds to use a bit of extra rope to pull the masked man the last forty feet up the Cliffs. After a brief rest, the Man in Black says he is ready and the two men begin to duel. Inigo draws first blood then is pushed back to the edge of the Cliffs. Just as all seems bleak Inigo switches to his right hand, which is his usual fighting hand, and the tide of the duel shifts. The Man in Black soon finds himself against the cliffs about to die, but he is not left-handed either and shifts his sword to his right hand. As the duel ranges about the plateau, Inigo realizes that the Man in Black is better than he. Inigo loses his sword and drops to his knees pleading to be killed quickly. The Man in Black does not want to kill Inigo so knocks him unconscious and ties him to a tree before running after the Sicilian.

As Fezzik and the Sicilian hurry up a mountain pass strewn with boulders, Fezzik sees the Man in Black coming behind them. Fezzik feels sad at the death of Inigo and thinks a few rhymes to himself as a tribute to his friend. The Sicilian takes Buttercup telling



Fezzik to finish the Man in Black by throwing a rock at his head. Fezzik thanks Vizzini for the instructions before taking a few practice shots. He then sinks into the shadows to wait for the Man in Black.

## **Chapter Five, The Announcement - Inigo: Pages 107-138 Analysis**

Inigo's history reveals the nobility of his character. Despite his father's excellent skill as a sword maker, Inigo possesses no arrogance. He is determined and motivated by pure love. Inigo's duel with the Man in Black further showcases his noble spirit. Inigo could have gone back on his word and let go of the rope once the Man in Black had a firm grip. A man like Vizzini would probably have done such a thing. Instead Inigo is excited by a new challenge for his rusty body and relishes the encounter with a fellow master. There is a shared sense of decency and respect between Inigo and the Man in Black. This mutual admiration is what brings them back together later in the story as friends.



## Chapter Five, The Announcement - Fezzik: Pages 138-165

### Chapter Five, The Announcement - Fezzik: Pages 138-165 Summary

Turkish babies are notoriously large at birth. Fezzik is on the small side at fifteen pounds, but he is born two weeks early. Fezzik quickly grows and by the time he begins kindergarten, he is the size of a man. Despite his enormous size, Fezzik is a chicken and the other children take advantage of his soft side. Fezzik loves rhymes and rhymes in his head what others say to him. Fezzik's parents tire of the other children beating him up and his father tries to teach him to fight. It is then decided that Fezzik will take up fighting and his father will be his manager. They train for three years; when Fezzik is nine, he has his first fight. Everywhere Fezzik fights, he wins but the people begin to "boo" him. In Mongolia Fezzik's parents die of a plague and Fezzik goes on alone. He finally learns that by fighting groups he can make the "booing" stop. He joins a circus and fights groups until he is twenty and the "booing" returns. Fezzik has grown too strong and knows too much about fighting. In the middle of Greenland, the circus fires Fezzik leaving him utterly alone until Vizzini finds him and takes him into his employ.

Fezzik waits for the Man in Black deciding to face him as his parents taught him: sportsmanlike. When the Man in Black approaches, Fezzik throws the boulder narrowly missing the masked man's head. They begin to circle each other testing one another's strength. Fezzik imagines that he can easily crumple the Man in Black, but in actuality his foe is a good opponent. Fezzik realizes that he has not fought a single opponent for so long that he has forgotten how. Fezzik tries to adjust his fighting style but the Man in Black takes him by the throat. Fezzik loses more and more air, eventually falling to his knees unconscious. The Man in Black gathers his sword and hurries off knowing that his most difficult opponent awaits him.

Vizzini is waiting for the Man in Black. He has laid out a picnic and waits with a knife to the blindfolded Buttercup's throat. The Man in Black challenges Vizzini to a battle of wits. Vizzini is so arrogant regarding his own intelligence that he eagerly accepts. The Man in Black produces a packet of iocane powder that he pours into each wine goblet out of Vizzini's sight. He then places the goblets in front of them and says that Vizzini must choose which to drink to see who is right and who is dead. Vizzini engages in a lengthy discussion of where he thinks the poison is located. He finally distracts the Man in Black, switches drinks and then announces that they drink. Vizzini dies laughing at his apparent deception of the Man in Black. Buttercup asks about the poison, and the Man in Black tells her that he poisoned both cups but he built up an immunity to the poison. He unbinds Buttercup and hurries her away from the scene.

Together they head through the mountains over rough terrain. They stop for a rest and Buttercup says that Humperdinck will pay a great sum for her. The Man in Black scoffs



as Buttercup says the Prince will find her no matter what. The Man in Black taunts her about her love for the Prince but Buttercup denies loving her betrothed. She says that she has loved very deeply once and will never do so again. They continue running until they rest at the top of a deep ravine. The Man in Black looks back at Florin Channel to see the Prince's Armada approaching. Buttercup takes advantage of the Man in Black's distraction to push him down the ravine. She says he can die for all she cares and turns away. Buttercup just barely hears whispered words, "As. . .you. . .wish." Buttercup turns back and sees Westley removing his mask as he lies in a heap at the bottom of the gulch. Buttercup throws herself down the cliff after her lost love.

## **Chapter Five, The Announcement - Fezzik: Pages 138-165 Analysis**

Fezzik's life history sounds like a circus side show. He comes from a humble background that mirrors his peaceful nature. Some readers may feel that Fezzik's parents exploited their son, but they truly had their son's best interests at heart. Fezzik's childhood fosters his gentleness and creates a strong sense of honor. Like Inigo, Fezzik does not agree with Vizzini's plan to kill the Man in Black quickly. Fezzik takes pride in his fighting and does not want to be a humongous bully. Fezzik and the Man in Black share a mutual respect that keeps them both alive and brings them together later in the story.

Vizzini is nothing like his two companions. Vizzini is truly more like Prince Humperdinck. The Sicilian is full of a false sense of grandiosity. He eagerly accepts the masked man's challenge to a battle of wits because he desires to showcase his mental capacity. Perhaps for the first time Vizzini is forced to admit that he does not know all. The reader is certain that the Man in Black would have left Vizzini alive just as he did the previous two opponents; however, Vizzini's arrogance leads to his own demise.



# Chapter Five, The Announcement: Pages 165-192

## Chapter Five, The Announcement: Pages 165-192 Summary

Humperdinck reaches the Cliffs of Insanity and surveys the climbing marks in the side of the cliff. He calls orders for the Armada to divide and sail around to meet on the other side at the Fire Swamp. The Prince's own ship searches for a place to land so he can survey the top of the cliff. They continue on to the site where Fezzik and the Man in Black fought, Humperdinck observes the footprints, finding a set belonging to Buttercup. They hurry after her trail. When he reaches the point where the two fell down the mountain, he tells the Count that it is odd such a master would choose to flee in a ravine leading into the Fire Swamp. The Prince smiles with glee at the impending capture of his prey.

Westly soon realizes they are headed for the Fire Swamp. A quick survey of their surroundings reveals no other means of escape. He decides to try and avoid Buttercup's fears by mentioning their destination as if he has planned it all along and is the best place for them. The Florin/Guilder Fire Swamp is a bit unlike other swamps due to the presence of snow sand and R.O.U.S. No one has ever tried to make it through the Fire Swamp, which is used as a scare tactic for misbehaving children. The Prince and the Count stare in disbelief at the footprints showing that Westley and Buttercup actually entered the Fire Swamp. Humperdinck says they will wait for them on the other side. As Buttercup follows Westley she realizes the Fire Swamp is not as bad as parents let on. That is before the Snow Sand swallows her. Buttercup remembers to spread herself out as Westley instructed her and her descent slows, but she is beginning to panic. Westley uses a vine to dive in after her but it is too short. Westley tells himself over and over that failure is not an option and lets go of the vine. Westley searches for Buttercup, finds her and pulls her out to safety. Once recovered, Buttercup refuses to continue on until Westley explains why they must hurry. Westley tries to put her off but she will not budge, so he begins to explain.

At the far end of the Fire Swamp the pirate ship Revenge waits for them. Westley is the Dread Pirate Roberts, captain of the ship. When the Dread Pirate Roberts captured the ship Westley was sailing to America on, Westley managed to stay alive by telling Roberts about Buttercup's beauty. For a year, Westley learns to sail, fence, hand fight, and anything else he can learn from Roberts. Each night Roberts says he will likely kill Westley in the morning. Finally, Roberts takes Westley aside and explains that he is not the real Dread Pirate Roberts. The original Roberts has been retired for fifteen years. The Revenge has been passed down several times. Each time a new crew was brought aboard, the old Roberts stays on long enough to convince the new crew that the successor is the real Dread Pirate. As Westley finishes his story the first of three





R.O.U.S.s that have been following the couple attack Westley. A brief battle ensues. Westley manages to kill the rodents but suffers a wound to his shoulder.

On the other side of the Fire Swamp Westley and Buttercup are greeted by the Prince's Armada, Humperdinck and Count Rugen. Buttercup says that if the Prince promises not to hurt Westley she will go with Humperdinck willingly. The Prince agrees and then quietly tells the Count to place the Man in Black in the fifth level of the Zoo of Death. Before Buttercup leaves with Humperdinck she asks that Westley be returned to his ship. As Rugen approaches Westley to club him over the head, Westley notices that Rugen has six-fingers.

## **Chapter Five, The Announcement: Pages 165-192 Analysis**

The bulk of this chapter revolves around the escape through the Fire Swamp. The Fire Swamp gives the reader a break from the rest of the story and the opportunity to concentrate on Buttercup and Westley. The interlude in the swamp allows Westley to explain how he survived the attack by the Dread Pirate Roberts several years earlier. The interesting thing about his story is that the Dread Pirate Roberts is not as dreadful as people suppose. Like the Fire Swamp, the name of the pirate is used to strike fear into villagers. Westley's story turns being a pirate into an almost mundane career.

In addition to the revelation about the Dread Pirate Roberts, the reader learns the identity of the six-fingered man. The conclusion to Inigo's quest lays before him except he lies unconscious at the Cliffs of Insanity. The reader also realizes that only another man could fill the empty fifth level of the Zoo. However, the Prince seems to sense that Westley poses an immeasurable threat to him and takes immediate action to bar Westley from any chance of winning.



## Chapter Six, The Festivities: Pages 195-212

### Chapter Six, The Festivities: Pages 195-212 Summary

Inigo regains consciousness to find himself tied to a tree. He manages to bring his sword close enough to cut his bonds. Once free Inigo remembers Vizzini's advice to always go back to the beginning if they became separated. Vizzini found Inigo in the Thieves Quarter of Florin City and that is where he heads. Once back in the Thieves Quarter Inigo feels alone and afraid. He is a failure once again and turns back to the ale bottle.

Fezzik regains consciousness and struggles to remember what he is supposed to do now that he is separated from Inigo and Vizzini. Unable to remember his instructions, Fezzik runs off after Vizzini. When he discovers that the Sicilian is dead, Fezzik runs after Inigo. When he cannot find his friend, Fezzik sets off running finally, taking refuge in a small cave outside a small village. The village boys come to taunt him. Fezzik tries to take solace in the fact that they are not throwing things at him - yet.

Westley awakens to find himself chained in a giant cave beneath the ground. Above him he can hear animals bellowing. An albino arrives with food and bandages for his wounded shoulder. Westley tries to gather information about his whereabouts, but the albino only shrugs. Westley settles himself on the cage floor and begins to prepare his mind for the pain he knows will come.

King Lotharon dies fifty-five days before the wedding. Humperdinck throws himself into learning the details of his new role as king. Buttercup does not realize that she is now queen until the day she stands beside Humperdinck on a balcony to greet the people again. Buttercup asks to walk among the people. As she passes by, an aged woman ridicules her for leaving Westley in the Fire Swamp. The woman's screams grow louder and louder until Buttercup wakes up. The wedding is still two months away, but her nightmares are just beginning. Goldman breaks in with a long digression about his initial reaction to this scene. He always found it disheartening and it bothered his soul that Buttercup married the Prince. It was the first time he realized that life is not always fair. Goldman warns readers that some more very unfair things are about to happen.

Buttercup's nightmares continue. She dreams that she gives birth to a daughter who tells Buttercup that her milk is sour and kills those Buttercup loves. The baby shrivels and dies. Buttercup then dreams that she has a son who calls her a murderer for leaving Westley in the Fire Swamp. The son also dies. Buttercup tries to keep herself awake but soon she dreams that she is watching her own birth. Her parents say that she is very beautiful but the midwife says the child is trouble because the baby is heartless. The midwife says the child will only cause sorrow and anguish as she grows



older. At the recommendation of the midwife Buttercup's parents strangle her after deciding to have another baby.

## **Chapter Six, The Festivities: Pages 195-212 Analysis**

This section functions to bring the reader quickly into the future as well as tie up lingering questions. The reader learns what happens to both Inigo and Fezzik, although their hoped-for reunion has not taken place yet. The reader is left anxiously awaiting what will become of Westley.

Buttercup's nightmares are interesting. The first mirrors the reader's own feelings toward the heroine. When Buttercup gave Westley up in the Fire Swamp without a backward glance, the reader became infuriated. Against impossible odds and after several years, the lovers are finally reunited. Buttercup appears to throw Westley away as if she does not care for him. As the reader progresses through each successively worse nightmare, the reader begins to realize that Buttercup's soul is being tormented. She is suffering for her actions in the Fire Swamp.



# Chapter Six, The Festivities: Pages 213-232

## Chapter Six, The Festivities: Pages 213-232 Summary

Fifty days before the wedding Buttercup tells Humperdinck that if she must marry him, she will be dead by morning since she realizes she can only love Westley. The Prince offers to send his four fastest ships in search of Westley's ship. Each ship will carry a copy of a letter written by Buttercup explaining her feelings for Westley. If Westley still loves her, then Buttercup is free to marry him and Humperdinck will try to content himself with a different bride. If Westley does not come for Buttercup, she will marry Humperdinck as planned. After Buttercup leaves his chamber, Humperdinck contemplates how well things are working out. He had originally hired the Sicilian to kidnap and murder Buttercup but the Man in Black spoiled those plans. Now the people so love Buttercup that when Humperdinck murders her on their wedding night and frames Guilder for it, the people will be so overcome they will follow him to war.

That same night the Count and Humperdinck begin to torture Westley. The Prince offers Westley freedom in exchange for the truthful answer to one question. When Westley answers truthfully to the Prince's unfair question, the Count dips Westley's hand in oil and sets it on fire. The Count and the Prince leave the Zoo and the albino sets about healing Westley's hand. For the first time the albino speaks to encourage Westley to tell Humperdinck what he wants to know. Westley says they will kill him either way so why bother. Humperdinck continues to torture Westley nightly but the truth is that Westley feels no pain. Each time the Prince approaches Westley's cage, Westley closes his eyes and takes his mind away to thoughts of Buttercup. Westley screams and writhes as if in pain in order to please the Count and Humperdinck, but he is really biding his time until he can exact revenge.

The Prince is overwhelmed with details of running Florin and realizes he has forgotten to implement the plan to frame Guilder for Buttercup's death. Humperdinck orders the Thieves Quarter emptied because he has heard that Guilderians disguised as Florinese are infiltrating and plan to kidnap Buttercup. As Yellin, the Prince's man in charge of security, is leaving the Prince's chambers a piercing scream passes over the kingdom. The sound is unlike anything anyone has ever heard, and it is several moments before the shriek slithers back to the first level of the Zoo of Death. Shortly after the scream, the Count bursts happily into Humperdinck's chamber announcing that the machine is ready. Later that evening the albino brings a series of wires, suction cups and other items into Westley's cage. The Count tells Westley that these items make up The Machine. Westley watches with curiosity while the Count sets about assembling the parts. Once assembled, the Count leaves Westley to contemplate the contraption. The next day the Count returns and attaches the suction cups to every inch of Westley's body inside and out. Westley tries to take his brain away like every other night of torture but when the Machine is turned on it does more than torture his body; it tortures his



mind. The Count says that he has just sucked one year of Westley's life away. Someday he may go up to five but for now he wants to know how Westley feels. Westley can make no sound other than to cry like a baby.

## Chapter Six, The Festivities: Pages 213-232 Analysis

Buttercup finally realizes the depth of her feelings for Westley. She has grown from the naive seventeen year old, who first professed her love to the handsome farm boy. Buttercup has lost her first and one true love only to have him brought briefly back into her life before disappearing again. Although Buttercup is the one who left Westley in the Fire Swamp, the reader understands that had she not done so the Prince would have killed Westley before snatching Buttercup away. At least by leaving Westley to go willingly with Humperdinck, Buttercup assumes that Westley will remain alive. At that moment her line of thinking maintained that Westley alive although separated from her is better than Westley dead. However, Buttercup now realizes that if Westley is alive she must be with him and if he is dead or does not want her any more, then she is better off dead.

Westley's torture by the Count and Humperdinck is merely for their pleasure. Rugen claims to be a scientist working for the sake of posterity, while the Prince sees the torture as a way to get back at Westley. Humperdinck may not love Buttercup, but she is his betrothed and therefore his property. The Prince does not tolerate others trying to take what he rightfully owns so Westley must suffer. Additionally, the Man in Black could be a possible threat to his plans of war with Guilder.



## Chapter Six, The Festivities: Pages 232-254

### Chapter Six, The Festivities: Pages 232-254 Summary

The emptying of the Thieves Quarter continues until thirty-six days before the wedding and only a few unruly criminals are left. Yellin instructs a quiet brute and a noisy brute to take care of a drunken but feisty fencer. The noisy brute tries to trick Inigo into coming out of the Quarter, but as Inigo responds, the quiet brute begins rhyming with Inigo's sentences. Fezzik bonks the noisy brute on the head and hides him beneath a blanket. Fezzik hides Inigo in a house and take the unconscious body of the other brute to be counted in Inigo's place. Fezzik returns to the house and nurses Inigo out of his drunken stupor. Fezzik tells Inigo that the six-fingered man is right in Florin City and that Vizzini is dead. As Inigo recuperates he begins to think about how to take his revenge on Count Rugen. Inigo is not a planner and he needs the Man in Black to lead them. Fezzik and Inigo make their way out of the Thieves Quarter. Inigo reasons that the Man in Black must be somewhere in Florin City so that Humperdinck can torture him.

Westley lies in his cage crying. The Count has already sucked twenty years of Westley's life and figures that he has twenty more to take before Westley is dead. Buttercup visits Humperdinck in his chamber the night before their wedding. The Prince is barking orders to Yellin and makes a mistake as he mentions his entire Armada. Buttercup reminds him of the four ships sent to find Westley, but the Prince's blank stare tells her that the ships were never sent. When Buttercup calls Humperdinck a coward saying he will never win over Westley, the Prince becomes enraged and locks Buttercup in her room. The Prince then hurries to the Zoo of Death where he barges into Westley's cage and throws the Machine switch to twenty. The scream that issues from Westley's throat carries through all of Florin terrifying all who hear it. No one can guess what makes the sound except Inigo, whose heart made that sound when his father was slaughtered. Inigo realizes that only the Man in Black has cause to make that sound now. Fezzik clears a path as they race through the crowds. They follow the scream to the castle.

Not until Westley lies dead does the Prince release the lever. He quickly leaves the underground chamber without looking back. The Count is upset that his perfect specimen has been abruptly taken from him. He cannot discuss the effects of pain with a dead man. Rugen tells the albino to dispose of the body and then leaves the chamber as well. The albino must fetch a wheelbarrow from the back of a storage shed. As he comes out of the shed he is greeted by the point of Inigo's sword. After a little coercion the albino says that Westley is in the Zoo of Death and points to the entrance. Fezzik knocks the albino unconscious and hurries with Inigo to the entrance of the Zoo. This entrance is not the secret, safe entrance but the one that will lead them through all five levels, encountering the jaws of all the Prince's wild beasts.



## Chapter Six, The Festivities: Pages 232-254 Analysis

The action escalates to a crescendo in this section. Fezzik and Inigo are amazingly reunited. The reader never learns how Fezzik comes to be in Florin unless the cave in which he sought refuge was really just outside the city. Fezzik's news that the six-fingered man lives in Florin Castle brings Inigo's quest back into his mind and reawakens his thirst for blood. Just as Inigo is driven for revenge, Prince Humperdinck is pushed to his limits. The wedding is rapidly approaching; the war with Guilder looms closer, and his bride-to-be emasculates him in front of his chief of security. Everyone is on edge.



# Chapter Seven, The Wedding: Pages 257-271

## Chapter Seven, The Wedding: Pages 257-271 Summary

Fezzik and Inigo enter the first level of the Zoo. They hurry past cages of animals that are swift: cheetahs, hummingbirds. The pair moves through a door and begin to descend a staircase to the second level. When Fezzik admits to being scared, Inigo begins to worry. He is also scared and hoped that Fezzik's strength would keep Fezzik from being frightened. As they enter the third level, the door closes and locks behind them as the candles on the wall go out. Just before they are plunged into darkness the duo sees that the stairwell curves halfway down so they cannot know what lies at the bottom. Inigo tries to remain brave for Fezzik suggesting that they walk side by side with their arms around each others shoulders for safety. Fezzik clenches his free fist while Inigo draws his sword with his free hand.

As they begin to navigate the curve of the stairwell, the first coil of the African Garstini snake captures their free hands. The second coil traps them completely. As the last coil winds around their throats, Inigo can feel the snake breath on his face. He tells Fezzik that he must do something because Inigo has rhymes to teach him. Inigo falls silent and when Fezzik cannot get any rhymes from his friend, he gets angry. Fezzik's anger motivates him to fight the snake. When the last coil is thrown off and the snake lies dead, Inigo says he has no rhymes but needed something to anger Fezzik into action. Fezzik is angry that his only friend has lied to him and bursts into the fourth level without examining what lies ahead.

Fezzik cries out that the King bats are coming and stops paralyzed with fear. Inigo orders Fezzik to lay flat on the ground as he thinks back on his years of training preparing to face the bats in the dark. Inigo expertly picks off all the bats. Fezzik apologizes for his earlier anger and after a few rhymes the two are friends again. They hurry past the rest of the cages and open the door to the fifth level. It is brightly lit and there appears to be nothing in the room. At the bottom of the staircase is an ornate green-handled door. Inigo tells Fezzik to wait at the open upper door while he goes down the steps to see what will happen. Halfway down the stairs Inigo has encountered nothing and the candles are still burning. Fezzik lets the door close and comes to meet Inigo on the sixth step. A paragraph explains that Humperdinck has a green-speckled recluse spider that lives behind the door handle of the ornate door. This means that death is only five steps away from Inigo and Fezzik. Fezzik suddenly panics and smashes the door down without touching the handle. Inigo stares after his friend and watches a small green spider scurrying across the floor. Inigo crushes the spider with his boot as he hurries after Fezzik. Inside the chamber they find the Man in Black dead. Inigo spends a minute wallowing in despair and frustration before hopping up and





commanding Fezzik to bring the body. Inigo asks Fezzik if he has any money. Fezzik says he has a little, and Inigo replies that he hopes it is enough to buy a miracle.

## **Chapter Seven, The Wedding: Pages 257-271 Analysis**

This section is intensely humorous. Fezzik and Inigo make an exceptional pair of characters. Goldman has written their personalities extremely well. As Inigo and Fezzik cautiously approach each new level, the reader sits with suspended breath waiting for something terrible to happen. Each step brings the duo closer to either death or the realization of their dreams. Neither one of them expect to find both. According to Inigo, the Man in Black is the only person who can formulate a plan to get them into the castle; however, when confronted with the Man in Black's dead body, Inigo takes charge. Even in the Thieves Quarter Inigo was the one directing the action. Inigo, without realizing it, is discovering a new strength within himself. Fezzik also discovers that he can act on his own without being told what to do by someone else.



# Chapter Seven, The Wedding: Pages 271- 295

## Chapter Seven, The Wedding: Pages 271- 295 Summary

Max almost does not open the door when the knock sounds, but the late hour and the urgency of the knock suggest that it might be worth a peek. Max asks what is so important that he should help them. Inigo tries to invent a story but Max says Inigo is a bad liar. To find out the truth Max places the end of a bellows into Westley's mouth and pumps air into his lungs. When Inigo protests, Max says that Westley is only sort of dead and there is still some brain activity left. Max shouts in Westley's ear asking him what is so important to live for and they all stand back to wait. Finally Westley says, "troo luv." Inigo announces that the Man in Black is Buttercup's true love and to bring him back to life will cause the Prince great suffering. Since Humperdinck fired Max, Max is eager for revenge and agrees to take the case. As Max goes for the chocolate coating for the miracle pill, he worries that he has forgotten something. He eventually remembers what he forgot, but it is too late.

Max and Valerie sit in the basement having coffee. Max suddenly remembers that he did not put the proper amounts of medicine in the pill and instead of working for an hour, the pill will only work for a half hour. Fezzik and Inigo arrive at the castle wall with the near stiff body of the Man in Black. Once all three men are on top of the wall, Inigo says they should give the Man in Black the miracle pill. As soon as the pill passes down Westley's throat, he begins talking. Inigo quickly explains the situation and lists their formidable liabilities and limited assets. Westley mumbles despairingly about how Buttercup is marrying another man while he is helpless. He says if they had a wheelbarrow and a holocaust cloak they might be able to do something. Inigo asks Fezzik where the barrow is that the albino had and Fezzik says it is over the albino. Fezzik then pulls a holocaust cloak from inside his shirt. He obtained it while gathering ingredients for Miracle Max and kept it because it fit.

Buttercup feels no excitement before her wedding. Instead she is extremely calm knowing that Westley will soon be there to save her. Even the knowledge that Humperdinck has moved up the wedding time does not shake her faith. When the screaming begins outside the main gate at 5:25 pm, Buttercup smiles to herself knowing that Westley has finally arrived. At the gate Westley struggles to walk in a straight line behind Inigo who is pushing Fezzik in the wheelbarrow. Fezzik stands tall with his arms out intoning the phrase, "I am the Dread Pirate Roberts and there will be no survivors." Fezzik wears the holocaust cloak, which Inigo lights on fire to make the giant's appearance even more menacing as he glides through the darkness spewing his message. The thought that more giants are waiting in the shadows send the men guarding the gate running in panic.

## **Chapter Seven, The Wedding: Pages 271- 295 Analysis**

The tension continues to mount as the time of Humperdinck's wedding draws near. The Prince alters the action to fit his own needs by moving the time of the wedding forward an hour. The only person who does not appear worried about something is Buttercup. Whether her faith in Westley is so powerful or whether she is so simple minded, the Princess can think only of her impending rescue. Inigo's time of being in control ends when Westley reawakens. Westley does not question why the men who were so eager to kill him a few months ago are now excited to have him alive again. There is a silent agreement among the men to accept each other's aid without question. Each man contributes his own unique strength to the situation. By working together, the three new friends formulate a plan that combines their strength, brains, and skill.



# Chapter Eight, Honeymoon: Pages 299-307

## Chapter Eight, Honeymoon: Pages 299-307 Summary

As the men run in panic, Yellin hides the only gate key in his shirt. Westley sees this and demands the key as the three men approach the gate. When Yellin denies he has the key, Inigo threatens him with his sword and Fezzik moves to rip Yellin's arms off. Yellin drops the key. Westley strips the gatekeeper of his sword and they allow him to run free. Fezzik unlocks the door and opens the gate, then re-locks it after they are safely through. Count Rugen and four armed men appear as Fezzik finishes with the gate. It is 5:34PM.

The wedding itself ended at 5:31PM. Humperdinck tries to hurry the Archdean along but the official is so old he cannot hear. Buttercup stands next to Humperdinck imagining Westley running through the castle corridors searching for her. The Prince approaches the Archdean screaming to skip to the part about man and wife. At 5:31PM, Buttercup is married to the Prince as Rugen runs to the commotion at the front gate.

Rugen is astonished to see Westley alive and standing at the castle gate. The Spaniard looks familiar to Rugen although he cannot recall why. As Inigo draws his sword and quickly dispatches the four men with Rugen recognition dawns on the Count. Inigo turns to the Count and issues his long awaiting greeting, "Hello. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father, prepare to die." Rugen turns and runs from the scene. It is 5:37PM.

The King and Queen arrive at the chapel at 5:31PM in time to see Rugen and his men running for the gate. Humperdinck asks them to escort Buttercup to his bedchamber while he goes to the garden to plan a counterattack. Buttercup is halfway down the corridor when she realizes that Westley did not come and she is now married to the Prince. Buttercup resolves herself to suicide knowing that Humperdinck keeps several weapons in his room. At 5:46PM she kisses the King and Queen goodnight.

When the Count turns and runs from Inigo, Inigo is so stunned that he cannot move for a moment. When he does follow, the Count has already gone through a door and Inigo cannot open it. Fezzik tells Westley he will be right back and goes to help Inigo. Westley is walking very slowly but by the time Fezzik returns from breaking down the door, Westley is gone. Fezzik tries to find him but becomes lost himself in the maze of corridors.

At 5:48PM Buttercup chooses the weapon with which she will kill herself, the Florinese dagger. As she puts the dagger to her breast, a voice speaks from the bed behind her. Buttercup turns to find Westley lying on the bed. Westley still thinks he has until 6:15PM before his hour pill loses effect, but since it is only a forty-minute pill, he only has seven more minutes. Buttercup rushes to the bed confused by Westley's odd behavior.



Westley tells her to be gentle as she apologizes for getting married. Westley says she is not married and there is always widowhood. As Westley makes this last statement he turns to the Prince who has just entered the room holding muddy boots. Humperdinck grabs a sword and challenges Westley to the death. As the minutes on the miracle pill count down, Westley says they will battle to the pain and begins to explain what he means.

## **Chapter Eight, Honeymoon: Pages 299-307 Analysis**

Goldman's device of marking the time and what each person is doing at that time keeps the tempo of action moving quickly. The flurry of activity conveys the panic with which everyone moves. Only Westley appears relaxed despite being the person who should be the most anxious. Neither the reader nor Westley knows what will happen when the miracle pill wears off. There is the chance that all the difficulties Westley and Buttercup faced up to this point will be for nothing. This moment in the Prince's chamber could be their last together.

Inigo is finally face-to-face with the man who murdered his father twenty years ago. At long last his quest is going to come to an end: either his or the six-fingered man's. The Count, once strong and proud, has been shaken to his core. The man he watched die just hours earlier stands limply before him. The truth about the Count is coming to the surface. For all Rugen's bravado and interest in torture, he is really a coward. Perhaps this is the real reason Rugen murdered Domingo. The Count knew that with such a magnificent sword he would expected to be a great swordsman. This is the first encounter the reader has seen the Count stand alone in battle. He is not worthy of the six-fingered sword.



# Chapter Eight, Honeymoon: Pages 307-317

## Chapter Eight, Honeymoon: Pages 307- 317 Summary

Inigo runs into a billiards room only to be struck by the Count's Florinese dagger. As blood flows from Inigo's stomach he sinks to the floor whispering that he is sorry. Recognition fully strikes Rugen as he sees the six-fingered sword. Somewhere in Inigo's subconscious, the voice of his father and one of his fencing coach's gives him the strength to pull the dagger from his wound and stand. Inigo blocks a few of the Count's blows and begins repeating his greeting, each time with more and more strength. Inigo repays the Count for the scars on his cheeks and for each blow Rugen has ever given him. The Count is becoming more and more unnerved by Inigo's repetition of his salutation. Inigo asks for money, power, anything he desires and Rugen agrees to it all. Inigo asks for his father back as he cuts out the Count's heart. Inigo then staggers from the room hoping to find someone to help him.

Westley explains that he and Humperdinck will duel. If Westley wins, the Prince will win but Westley will cut off his feet, his hands, his nose, his tongue and his eyes but will leave his ears so that the Prince will always hear when people shriek at his hideousness. The Prince drops his sword at Westley's command. Just then Westley falls dead, but as the Prince tries to recover his weapon, Westley's eyes pop open and are blazing. Humperdinck lowers his sword and Westley tells Buttercup to tie the Prince. Buttercup ties Humperdinck and as she finishes Inigo stumbles into the chamber. Inigo tells Buttercup to help Westley up and the Prince cries out that he knew Westley was bluffing. Fezzik calls out from below. The three look down from above to see Fezzik in the garden holding the reins of the Prince's four prized white horses. Buttercup, Inigo, and Westley jump one by one out the window and Fezzik catches them. At the castle gate Yellin has regrouped the Brute Squad. Buttercup asserts herself as queen ordering the squad to go to Humperdinck's aide. In doing so, she clears the way for the four of them to make their escape.

Buttercup and Westley pledge to outlive one another so they will never be separated again. At this point Goldman's father ended the book with, "And they lived happily ever after." Goldman always thought this was how the book really ended until he did the abridgment. Morgenstern ends the book this way: As Buttercup and Westley are making their pledge, Humperdinck can be heard shouting a short distance behind them. The four new friends are on the fastest horses in the land and should be able to outrun Humperdinck and the Brute Squad. That would have happened if Inigo's wounds had not opened wider, if Buttercup's horse had not thrown a shoe, if Westley had not weakened and if Fezzik had not taken a wrong turn. Goldman interjects again to say that he has his own ideas about how the book ends. Goldman feels that the four companions do escape and have other adventures together. However, Buttercup eventually loses her looks, Fezzik loses a fight, Inigo is beat by a young boy and



Westley cannot sleep because he constantly worries about Humperdinck finding them. Although Goldman believes in love, he knows that life is not fair.

## Chapter Eight, Honeymoon: Pages 307- 317 Analysis

This section is one of closure and new adventures. Inigo's final fight with Count Rugen is cinematic in its telling. Readers familiar with the movie will easily replay the scene in their minds as they shout Inigo's greeting over and over again. Inigo's defeat of the six-fingered man restores the reader's wavering faith that life truly is fair and bad guys do not win in the end. As the reader sails on a near euphoric high out of the billiard room and into Humperdinck's chamber, his faith is once again rocked. Westley has the opportunity to be rid of Humperdinck once and for all. His decision to let the Prince live is noble and frustrating at the same time. The reader wants retribution to continue. Either the Prince should suffer the Pain or be put to death. At the same time, Humperdinck has really done nothing wrong that would call for such drastic measures. He has not murdered anyone, unless the reader counts Westley, and he has only behaved according to his own skewed sense of justice. The reader agrees with Goldman's father's decision to end the book with "happily ever after." For over three hundred pages the reader has been on a roller coaster of emotion and is ready for some rest. The inconclusive conclusion makes the reader weary.



# Buttercup's Baby: An Explanation and Chapter One, Fezzik Dies

## Buttercup's Baby: An Explanation and Chapter One, Fezzik Dies Summary

Goldman says that he only abridged the first chapter of *Buttercup's Baby* because that was all he was allowed to do. A legal battle with Morgenstern's estate prevented him from doing anything more with *The Princess Bride* or *Buttercup's Baby*. Goldman moved on to other endeavors, and it is not until he becomes a grandfather that *Buttercup's Baby* resurfaces. His grandson, Willy, asks to hear the sequel to *The Princess Bride*. After more arguing with Morgenstern's lawyers, Goldman obtains permission to abridge the first chapter of *Buttercup's Baby*.

The first chapter of *Buttercup's Baby* is broken into four sections. The first focuses on Fezzik and Waverly on One Tree Island. Fezzik is trying to climb a 15,000 foot mountain in pursuit of a madman who has stolen *Buttercup's* baby. At the top Fezzik manages to catch up with the madman just as the stranger flips Waverly into the air sending her flying over the edge of the mountain. Fezzik has no choice but to dive into thin air after her.

The second section spends time in the past with Inigo long before he began his quest for the six-fingered man. During his training to become a master fencer, Inigo spends time training in Italy with Piccoli. While staying with Piccoli, Inigo is visited by a young woman named Giuliette. Inigo tells Giuliette that a girl like her kept him company in his dreams while he traveled the world. He feels affection for her but cannot marry her because he must focus on his quest. For three days the girl returns and tells Inigo that he has less chance of winning her love than the day before. She asks if Inigo has skill with a sword and he performs a series of dazzling moves for her. Giuliette says that he has done well but how does he plan to make money and support her once he has killed the six-fingered man. Giuliette bids him good-bye leaving Inigo with an aching heart. Inigo does not see her again until the night of the ball. Giuliette comes and sneaks him into the castle. She tells Inigo to hide before the Count sees him, but it is too late and the Count confronts Inigo. It turns out that the Count is Giuliette's father. Inigo thought she was the daughter of a servant. The Count does not kill Inigo and Giuliette takes that as a sign that her father likes Inigo. Giuliette tells Inigo that she poses as a servant so as to find the truth. Many men ask for her hand in marriage but only to get her money. All Giuliette desires is love. The couple dances the night away and for the first time since his father's death Inigo feels happy. Here the section ends. Goldman is disappointed with this section because nothing happens but Stephen King and the Florinese professor felt it should be included in the story.

The third section tells about the four companions' escape from Florin Castle, their arrival on One Tree Island, and Waverly's birth. The section begins the same way *The Princess*





Bride ends. Fezzik pulls Inigo and Westley onto his horse because they are both losing consciousness. As he leans over to pull Westley onto his horse he inadvertently turns his horse down the wrong fork in the road. Soon the horses come to a halt, their way blocked by a wall of trees. Just as all appears lost, the pirates from Westley's ship burst through the trees to fight off Humperdinck and the Brute Squad. Once safely on board the *Revenge*, a medic looks at Inigo as Pierre, second in command, takes care of Westley. When Westley regains consciousness Pierre says they will have to leave the ship because Humperdinck's armada is following. Westley says they will go to One Tree Island. In order to reach the uninhabited island, Westley, Inigo, and Buttercup are chained to Fezzik. Fezzik then rows as close as he can to the island before abandoning the vessel and swimming through a whirlpool. Once on shore the four spend two days unconscious from exhaustion and their wounds.

One evening Westley and Buttercup make love for the first time. Nine months go by quickly and Buttercup is preparing to give birth to the child she is sure is a boy. Buttercup endures nearly three days of labor. She is in intense pain and Westley does his best to distract her. In the fiftieth hour of labor, Inigo and Westley realize Buttercup is dying. Fezzik comes crashing out of his hiding spot in the woods with a crazed look on his face. Fezzik begins barking orders for water to be brought and Inigo's sword to be sterilized. Fezzik then cuts Buttercup open and brings forth a baby girl.

The fourth and final section returns to Fezzik as he tries to rescue Waverly from a strange madman. Fezzik uses his cupped hands and kicks his feet as if swimming to close the distance between himself and Waverly. They are plummeting towards the rocks at the base of the Island. From her birth Fezzik and Waverly always had a special bond. He knew when she was tired, sick, or hungry even before she knew. They played games together and everything always ended happily. Fezzik manages to reach out and pull Waverly into his arms. He then rolls to his back and flattens out with the hope of absorbing the impact of the rocks and saving Waverly from death. The section ends here. Goldman interjects one last time to say that Willy's comment after hearing this part was that he did not believe Fezzik dies. Goldman does not believe it either.

## **Buttercup's Baby: An Explanation and Chapter One, Fezzik Dies Analysis**

Goldman is so intriguingly deceitful that the reader continues to hover on the edge of belief. Goldman further supports the authenticity of his work by mentioning famous author Stephen King and then describing his heart-warming relationship with Jason's young son. Only the truly incredulous reader determined to know the truth will seek the facts outside of the book. The reader content to enjoy Goldman's genius and his excellent storytelling will continue to go along with the entire ploy.

Goldman does not gently lead the reader into Fezzik's death, but confronts the reader immediately with these new events. Unlike most of the other chapters in the book, Goldman does not engage in a great deal of explanation. The reader is left wondering where Fezzik is, who the child is, who the madman is, and why should Fezzik be the

one to die. This short section is extremely unfair; however, that appears to be Goldman's continuous theme: life is not fair. There is no fairness in Fezzik dying and none in not knowing if Waverly really does perish on the rocks.



# Characters

## Buttercup

Buttercup is intended to be the heroine of the story, although the reader may wonder if she is actually heroic. Buttercup is born to a pair of poor farmers living in the Florin countryside. She is a tomboyish child who never bothers to wash herself. Buttercup's favorite activities are riding her horse and tormenting the family's farm boy. Buttercup asks the farm boy to perform numerous tasks throughout the day ranging from difficult to ridiculous. Each time the farm boy answers, "As you wish." Buttercup is nearly sixteen when she finally realizes that she loves the farm boy and that his simple answer is his way of telling her that he loves her too.

Despite Buttercup's unkempt appearance, she is extremely beautiful. Once she begins to engage in regular hygiene her beauty shines forth and men travel great distances to glimpse her. Buttercup appears ignorant of the effect of her looks on other men since she is concerned only with pleasing Westley, the farm boy. Even during her period of mourning and her years spent in Humperdinck's castle Buttercup continues to ensure that her beauty remains as it was the last time Westley saw her.

Other than her appearance, Buttercup does not have many stunning attributes. She is not intelligent or literate. Buttercup is the perfect embodiment of the damsel in distress archetype. She does not actively seek ways to procure her own release from the Prince and stands helplessly to the side while Westley battles R.O.U.S.s in the Fire Swamp. Buttercup follows along while the virile men lead and only asserts herself once while at the gate as they are making their escape. Even then the act seems to come from something outside herself and she appears a bit surprised at her own brashness. To the modern reader Buttercup is a source of frustration because of her lack of character. However, in a story about true love she is the perfect woman to fill the role.

## Farm Boy/Westley/Man in Black/Dread Pirate Roberts

Westley is considered the hero of the story. Although, like Buttercup, the reader truly wonders about Westley's heroism. Westley is an evolving character who undergoes several transformations. In the beginning he is the simple farm boy considered illiterate and good for nothing more than slopping animals. The reader and Buttercup are both surprised to learn that Westley spends his free time reading and is quite intelligent. Westley's training as a hero begins on board the pirate ship Revenge. There is something captivating about Westley that even the Dread Pirate Roberts cannot ignore. Under Roberts' tutelage, Westley matures into the heroic Man in Black.

The Man in Black is certainly a heroic figure. There appears to be nothing that can stop him from achieving his goals. No cliff, no sword, no brute strength, no razor sharp wit prevents Westley from regaining Buttercup. However, Buttercup's own character flaws



separate them again and eventually break Westley's spirit. Once Westley is thrown into the fifth level of the Zoo of Death he begins a regression from which he never truly recovers. Over several months Westley's body, mind, and soul are beaten down until he dies. True love and Miracle Max's pill bring Westley back to a sort of half-life, but he does not completely recover. Although Westley's brain functions much as it used to and his heart still yearns for Buttercup, there is the sense that something is not quite the same about him.

## Inigo Montoya

Inigo Montoya is a wiry, focused, drunken Spaniard who readers love. Inigo is born in a small village in Spain where he lives with his father. Inigo's mother died giving birth but he does not lack for love. Inigo and his father, Domingo, have a very strong bond. They live quietly and comfortably in a small hut where Domingo makes swords. Domingo is a very skilled craftsman but chooses to keep his skill a secret. Inigo worships his father and when Domingo is slaughtered by the six-fingered man, Inigo does as any good son would and seeks revenge. Avenging his father's murder becomes Inigo's sole purpose in life and for many years he does nothing but learn to fence and search for the six-fingered man.

Inigo's quest is bittersweet. The loyalty and love exhibited by Inigo is intense and palpable. The reader cheers for Inigo throughout his search and encourages him in moments of despair. However, once Inigo achieves his goal he has nothing else to do. A brief mention is made of a woman he loves, but Inigo cannot return to her because Humperdinck is searching for them all. Inigo is like Westley—since his quest ends he becomes less of a hero. Inigo seems to fade into the background along with Buttercup and Westley. Even his friendship with Fezzik is not often mentioned once they arrive on One Tree Island. Inigo continues to live on in the hearts of readers who enjoy his swashbuckling personality and rhyming friendship with Fezzik.

## Fezzik

Fezzik is a Turk. He is a giant but the most gentle giant that ever existed. Fezzik's simple mind is not naturally inclined to violence. Instead, Fezzik enjoys rhymes and is delighted that Inigo encourages this habit rather than laugh at Fezzik. Fezzik does not lead but is a natural follower. He does tend to question some of the instructions given to him by Vizzini but rarely deviates from a specific plan. The few times when Fezzik acts without being told what to do, he is either angry or distracted and events unfurl without his knowledge.

Fezzik and Inigo spend more time in the forefront of the action than Westley or Buttercup. Without Fezzik and Inigo's search for Westley the two lovers would not have been reunited, and the story would have had a very different ending. For this reason Fezzik is more heroic than Westley. The narrator of Buttercup's Baby does not specifically state that Fezzik dies saving Waverly, but the assumption is posed. The



reader wonders where Westley was at the time or whether Westley is still living. Fezzik's heroism is quiet and unnoticed. Fezzik is who he is and through that gentle nature, he captures the hearts of all who encounter him. Perhaps the loss of the gentle giant is greater than that of Westley because Fezzik exhibits true and pure love for all his friends.

## Prince Humperdinck

Physically Humperdinck resembles a man's man. He is stocky with a barrel chest and muscular. The Prince's size and short stature mean that he must walk like a crab in a sideways motion. Humperdinck's only real passion is hunting. He does not care to assume the throne and he enjoys waging war on neighboring countries, but more than anything he loves the thrill of the hunt. In order to maintain his pastime and remain close to home, Humperdinck commissions Rugen to build the Zoo of Death and fill it with every manner of ferocious beast available.

Humperdinck's hunting skills are mentioned several times throughout the story. Buttercup says that the Prince can track a falcon on a cloudy day. Humperdinck is so arrogant about his ability to hunt that he decides to use his skill to plan a war that will rid him of a wife. According to the law of the country, Humperdinck must marry and produce an heir once his father passes on. However, Humperdinck has no interest in marriage, as a family will only impede his hunting. Humperdinck's first attempt at murdering Buttercup fails and he takes matters into his own hands. The reader may begin to believe that Humperdinck begins to actually care for Buttercup as their courtship is long and drawn out. The reader should instead recognize that this is only a testament to his hunting prowess. A great hunter exhibits extreme patience while waiting for the perfect moment to kill. Humperdinck waits a lifetime for the perfect prey to put in the fifth level of the zoo of death. When Westley escapes, the loss of such an adversary is unbearable to the Prince, and the reader is certain that Humperdinck will spend the rest of his life tracking the escapees.

## Count Rugen/Six Fingered Man

Count Rugen is the only Count in Florin. The title was given to him by Prince Humperdinck since Rugen is the Prince's only friend. The Count is central to the plot for two different reasons. Rugen is the man who discovers Buttercup's beauty and tells the Prince about her. Rugen is also known as the Six Fingered Man. He has six fingers on his right hand. Count Rugen is the same man that Inigo is searching for to avenge his father's murder. The connection between Rugen and Inigo and Buttercup creates a natural bridge between Inigo and Buttercup for their later companionship.

The Count's favorite pastime is researching pain. He is writing a book about the effects of pain and how much pain a person can tolerate. Rugen is the mastermind behind the construction of the Zoo of Death and spends his free time in the fifth level building a



machine to use in his pain research. When Westley is brought to the fifth level, Rugen is overjoyed that a promising test subject has finally been found.

From the encounter with Inigo's father the reader learns that the Count is cold-hearted and brutal. Although he appears quiet, Rugen is a cunning mastermind who brings order to Humperdinck's whims. However, at the heart of Rugen lies a coward. When confronted by Inigo, Rugen turns and flees. The Count is intelligent enough to realize that he has met a master capable of defeating him. Perhaps Rugen is feeling a bit defeated after seeing Westley alive and is concerned that he is losing his abilities. Rugen dies pleading for his life at the point of the sword he commissioned.

## Vizzini

Vizzini is Sicilian with an angelic face that belies his sly demeanor. Vizzini has a humpback due to having one leg shorter than the other, but is very quick for his deformity. Vizzini is a brilliant mastermind who enjoys torturing others. Vizzini is hired by Humperdinck to kidnap Buttercup and stage a war between Florin and Guilder. He is cunning, intelligent, and bold. However, Vizzini's wit is no match for the Man in Black and he loses his life in a battle of wits.

## Miracle Max and Valerie

Miracle Max is King Lotharon's ex-miracle man. William Goldman tells the reader in one of his interruptions that Max was fired by the Prince. This sore spot has rubbed on Max for nearly three years by the time Inigo and Fezzik bring Westley for a cure. Max is excited by the idea of helping to undermine Prince Humperdinck. Max's wife is Valerie. Valerie is not an actual witch but since every miracle man needs a good witch, Valerie learns enough magic to pass herself off as a witch. The couple have been married for a very long time and their relationship reflects their history. They yell at each other and yet support one another in their work.

## The Albino

The Albino is the caretaker of the Zoo of Death. He is the only other person allowed to enter the Zoo besides Rugen and the Prince. The Albino does not speak often, but after Westley has spent some time chained in the fifth level the Albino tries to aid him. The Albino says it would be better if Westley just did what the Prince asked of him. There is the sense that the Albino likes Westley and does not want to see him come to harm. Fezzik knocks the Albino unconscious when he and Inigo arrive at the Zoo to rescue Westley. The Albino is hidden in the bushes with a wheelbarrow over him and that is the last the reader hears about this mysterious character.



## Waverly

Waverly is Buttercup and Westley's daughter. Waverly is born on One Tree Island where the four companions seek refuge from Prince Humperdinck. Buttercup goes into distress during labor, and Fezzik shows amazing skill by performing an emergency cesarean section on Buttercup to save her and the baby. From the moment of Waverly's birth she has a special bond with Fezzik. He becomes her bodyguard and playmate. Little information is given regarding Waverly's appearance, mannerism, or age.

## King Lotharon and Queen Bella

King Lotharon is King of Florin and Humperdinck's father. He is very old and no longer competent to rule the kingdom. Lotharon talks in incoherent mumbles that only the Queen seems capable of deciphering. Queen Bella is Lotharon's second wife. She is shaped like a gumdrop, and although the kingdom loves her, Humperdinck despises her simply because all stepmothers are meant to be evil. Bella speaks for the King since no one else is capable of understanding his mumbles.

## William Goldman

William Goldman is the author of *The Princess Bride*. He is in his mid-forties, married with one son. William's regular job is adapting books for use on the movie screen, but his passion is writing original stories. William is the author but also a character within the story. His frequent interruptions of the narrative tell his own story. Through these interludes the reader learns about Goldman's personal feelings, his relationships with his wife and son, and how he matures over the course of writing the incarnations of *The Princess Bride*. Goldman tries to present himself as a person outside the story, but the reader quickly realizes that this story is as much about a young boy being read to by his father as it is about true love.

## William Goldman's Father

William Goldman's father is not a literate man. He is a laborer who works very hard to provide for his family. When William falls ill with pneumonia, his father reads him *The Princess Bride*. For years William hears the story only in his father's voice. He does not realize how intelligent his father was until his own son shuns *The Princess Bride*. William then discovers that his father had abridged Morgenstern's work as he read aloud. *The Princess Bride* as William remembers it is full of true love and action adventure. His father cut out all the satirical material that composed the original text.

## **S. Morgenstern**

S. Morgenstern is the supposed writer of *The Princess Bride*. There is little evidence that S. Morgenstern is a real person, and it is more likely that William Goldman created him as an integral piece of his own masterful plotline. The reader fully believes that Morgenstern a real person. However, the realization that he is simply another character in Goldman's book adds a whole new level of intrigue.





# Objects/Places

## Cliffs of Insanity

The Cliffs of Insanity are located on the Guilder side of Florin Channel. Although they are the most direct route between the two countries, no one uses them for travel. The cliffs rise a thousand feet into the sky from the water and are sheer rock.

## The Fire Swamp

The Fire Swamp is so named because gas bubbles in the earth spontaneously catch fire and burst into flame. The Florin/Guilder Fire Swamp has some unique features. The Fire Swamp is inhabited by R.O.U.S.s and has spots of Snow Sand. Westley and Buttercup flee into the Fire Swamp out of necessity and are caught on the other side by Prince Humperdinck.

## Florin

Florin is where most of the main characters are from and where much of the action takes place. Prince Humperdinck is the prince of Florin.

## Guilder

Guilder is the neighboring country to Florin. The two countries are sworn enemies.

## Zoo of Death

The Zoo of Death was constructed by Count Rugen at Prince Humperdinck's bidding. The Zoo consists of five levels, each one filled with animals of a particular ferocity. As the levels descend deeper into the ground the animals become more lethal. The fifth level is kept empty because the Prince has yet to find a creature worthy of being housed in the level meant for the most dangerous of all animals. The Man in Black is thrown here to be tortured by the Count and the Prince.

## R.O.U.S

R.O.U.S. stands for Rodents of Unusual Size. These large rodents inhabit the Fire Swamp and can be ferocious. Westley is attacked by several R.O.U.S.s but manages to defeat them and escape with only a few wounds to his shoulder.



## The Four White Horses

Prince Humperdinck is especially proud of the four white horses he has raised. Whenever he goes hunting he takes all four and switches horses as one gets tired so that he never has to stop to rest. Fezzik finds the four whites as he wanders the castle after losing Westley and Inigo. Fezzik brings the horses with him and the four companions make their escape on the Prince's prized animals.

## Holocaust Cloak

Fezzik must find a Holocaust cloak for Miracle Max so that a resurrection pill can be made to revive Westley. Fezzik keeps the cloak and uses it again when he, Inigo and Westley storm the castle on the night of the wedding. The Holocaust cloak protects Fezzik from fire.

## Horse

Buttercup loves to ride her horse everyday. She creatively names her steed, Horse.

## The Pirate Ship Revenge

The Dread Pirate Robert's ship is named Revenge. The Revenge is waiting for the four companions after they flee Florin Castle.

## One Tree Island

Westley, Buttercup, Inigo, and Fezzik are not safe anywhere after they escape Humperdinck's castle. Westley suggests they seek refuge on One Tree Island, which is surrounded by a whirlpool that only Fezzik is strong enough to swim across safely. One Tree Island is where Waverly is born.

## The Six Fingered Sword

Inigo's father is commissioned by Count Rugen, the Six Fingered Man, to manufacture a sword made for his unique characteristic. For one year Domingo slaves over the sword before completing it to perfection. The Six Fingered Man is not impressed by the sword and refuses to pay the agreed upon price. When Domingo refuses to hand over the sword, Rugen kills him. Inigo takes the six fingered sword, trains many years with it, and uses it to finally exact revenge on the Count.



## Snow Sand

Snow Sand is powdery and pulls a person under very quickly. Once under, a person continues to sink and dies by suffocation.

## The Machine

Count Rugen constructs The Machine for use in his research on the effects of pain. The Machine is a series of tubes and suction cups that are attached inside and outside of a man's body. Rugen can then turn The Machine on and suck up to twenty years of a man's life away.



## Social Concerns And Themes

The story of Buttercup and Westley, the princess bride and the Dread Pirate Roberts, respectively, is in the form of a fairy tale originally recorded by S. Morgenstern and written for a contemporary audience by William Goldman. The novel is a "modern" fairy tale with everything the modern world has come to expect in a story.

But in the manner of old fairy tales the place and the time of the action are not specified.

The Princess Bride reflects the violence and the absurdities of the modern world; there are fist fights, sword fights, instruments of torture, poisonings, disfigurements, and death. In addition to these elements, the world of the novel is populated with misfits: a giant with tremendous strength, a hunchback with great intelligence, a scarred Spaniard with only his father's revenge on his mind, an albino, and an unlikely princess with an unlikely rescuer.

The theme of the novel centers on the trials and tribulations of true love.

Love is not idealized, but it is lasting.

Buttercup never ceases to love Westley even though she fears him dead at one point and even though she bickers with him immediately after she finds out he is alive.



## Techniques/Literary Precedents

The roots of the fairy tale stretch back to a time before literature, when storytelling was essentially an oral form. The theme of *The Princess Bride* is a common one in fairy tales: the lover of a beautiful woman must show his courage and valor to save her from a fate worse than death.

Unlike most fairy tales, however, *The Princess Bride* has a distinctly modern tone. It contains modern sarcasm and the narrative is frequently interrupted by the secondary narrator, Goldman, who muses on the story as merely fairy tale and establishes a distance between reader and story. This distancing is an apology of sorts for the violence and the absurdity of a story that often lampoons traditional fairy tale conventions.



# Themes

## True Love

The cover of the book tells the reader that S. Morgenstern is presenting a "classic tale of true love." Immediately the reader assumes that the true love refers to that between a man and a woman. However, in *The Princess Bride* there are several kinds of true love and the point of the story is "true" love. True as used in *The Princess Bride* refers to purity. The more pure and unadulterated one's love for another is, the more true the love.

Buttercup is a filthy child in her outward appearance. Some readers may feel that she is also blemished inwardly since she torments the Farm Boy for pleasure. Westley sees past the grime and disrespect to the beauty growing underneath. The simple Farm Boy understands that Buttercup is still learning how to be a good person. He patiently waits for her to grow into her body and her soul. Westley knows from very early on that he loves Buttercup. Westley's love is pure because it comes not as a result of her appearance, but from recognizing the true person.

Buttercup comes to love Westley purely, but her realization does not occur until much later. Even though Buttercup announces that she loves Westley when she is seventeen, it is not until she has spent three years with the Prince, regained and re-lost Westley that she understands the depth of her love. When Buttercup is faced with the prospect of spending eternity with another, she fully understands the importance of love. This is the point in the story where she tells Humperdinck she will kill herself if he insists that they marry. Buttercup feels that it would be better to be dead and remain pure to Westley than to be alive and sully the sanctity of love.

Buttercup and Westley love truly because they are pure in their affection for one another. Despite their many years apart, they remain connected through the bonds of love. Even death cannot separate those who experience true love.

## Revenge

One usually assumes that revenge cannot be associated with love; however, true love often motivates revenge. Inigo knows true love for his father. Although most children love their parents with a wholehearted, open love, Inigo's love surpasses this kind of love. Even at the age of ten Inigo understands integrity, honesty and respect.

Inigo's father chooses not to market his skill at swordmaking because he is a humble man who does not desire riches. Dominigo's love of swordmaking is a pure love. He chooses to make swords for the love and challenge of the craft, not because he wants great wealth like Yeste. Inigo has learned the difference between doing something for the right and wrong reasons. This knowledge prompts him to challenge the six-fingered



man despite being young and inexperienced. The six-fingered man's fatal mistake is in discounting the young boy's love for his father.

Inigo pours himself into learning how to fence. He studies all the great masters; he trains under all types of conditions, and he is careful not to let outside distractions deter him from his quest. Inigo has the chance to experience the type of love shared by Buttercup and Westley. Giuliette is similar to Westley because she poses as someone lesser than her reality. Giuliette seeks a lover who cares for her not because of who she is and in spite of her family name. Inigo cannot release himself from the pure bond that leads him to avenge his father's murder. To give up his quest now would be to sully his father's memory, much the same way as Buttercup's marriage to Humperdinck would taint the love she holds for Westley. Inigo's intense love and respect fuel him to push on through years of frustration and despair. Inigo is always true to the spirit of his father and does not use trickery to achieve his goal. Inigo conducts himself with the utmost dignity and integrity even as he cuts out Count Rugen's heart. The end of the six-fingered man is quite fitting considering that he of all people never made proper use of his heart. The heart is also symbolic. Inigo removes the vessel from the man who killed his father; if he could now place it in Domingo's chest, he would, restoring to life the one thing he loved above all else.

## Unlikely Companions

Inigo, Fezzik, Buttercup, and Westley come together as four friends who should never have been matched to one another. The mismatched group is brought together because of other unlikely acquaintances. Inigo and Fezzik meet because of Vizzini. Vizzini's personal ideals are markedly different from those of his employees; however, he works as middle man to create a lasting friendship between Fezzik and Inigo. The awkwardness exhibited by Inigo and Fezzik individually bonds them together. Inigo encourages Fezzik's rhymes and Fezzik gives Inigo brute strength. The two of them form a comical duo that instantly captures the reader's heart.

While still partnered with Vizzini, Inigo and Fezzik make the acquaintance of Buttercup. They are hired assassins working to murder the Princess and stage a war between Florin and Guilder. Fezzik is in favor of killing Buttercup immediately, while Inigo does not care to murder her at all. Buttercup does not spend much time with the two criminals, since she is spirited away by Vizzini leaving Inigo and Fezzik to battle her lost love. First Inigo and Fezzik are supposed to kill Buttercup, and then they are supposed to kill Westley disguised as the Man in Black. Westley changes from their target to their comrade when Inigo learns that the six-fingered man is in Florin. Westley possesses the brains that Inigo needs to finally obtain his revenge. If Buttercup had not been engaged to Prince Humperdinck, whose best friend is the Count, then Inigo might never have fulfilled his quest. Westley, Buttercup and Inigo all need Fezzik in order to make their escape from the castle and gain safety on One Tree Island.

Each character's story is presented separately so the reader is given plenty of time to get acquainted with each of them individually. Slowly their stories become intertwined

and at places tangled. The overlay of plot lines is intriguing and the way the friendship evolves is interesting. There is rarely a mention of betrayal or past unsavory encounters. Instead the characters remain true to their respectful ideals and accept the others for who they are. Their friendship is pure and represents another kind of true love portrayed in the story.





# Style

## Point of View

The story changes time and point of view. The story of *The Princess Bride* is told from the point of view of the omniscient narrator. The narrator is someone other than William Goldman or S. Morgenstern. The narrator carries the reader between events moving back and forth with ease. The reader views the action as if watching over the characters' shoulders without being involved. Although the reader feels close to the action, the reader does not know the thoughts of the characters unless the narrator reveals them. The reader knows only what the narrator chooses to report; however, the reader does not feel detached from the action of the story. The narrator uses warm, engaging narration that brings the reader into the story.

Because of the closeness the reader experiences with the story, the reader is often abruptly shaken when William Goldman interrupts. Goldman often interjects himself into the tale to discuss his personal feelings or to mention that Morgenstern included a large section of material Goldman edited out. The reader must disengage from the story and readjust to receive what Goldman has to report. Goldman usually transitions the reader neatly back into the story. However, there are a few places where the reader must re-read several times to figure out where Goldman has stopped speaking and the narrator has returned.

## Setting

The main setting of the book is Florin and Guilder. These neighboring countries are not real geographic locations. However, the author contends that Florin and Guilder are real places that one can visit. The countries are separated by a channel and the Cliffs of Insanity prevent voyagers from sailing directly between Florin to Guilder. Both countries have a similar geographical landscape featuring cliffs, mountain ranges, and green farmland. One unique feature is the Fire Swamp, which is a dense, swampy forest where unusually large rodents lurk, gas bubbles burst into flame, and snow sand silently suffocates the unsuspecting.

Action also takes place in several buildings. Buttercup and Westley live on a small farm on the outskirts of Florin. Florin Castle is Prince Humperdinck's residence. The castle is expansive and features a maze of corridors. In a far corner of the castle garden is the Zoo of Death. The Zoo houses several levels of dangerous animals obtained for the Prince's hunting pleasure. The Thieves Quarter is another part of the grounds surrounding the castle. The Quarter is inhabited by criminals and is a place for the less desirable members of Florin to find fun and drink. When all the adventures to be found around Florin are exhausted, the action shifts to One Tree Island. The island is surrounded by a whirlpool that is impossible for everyone, except Fezzik, to navigate. The entire landscape possesses a fairy tale quality.



## Language and Meaning

The basic language of *The Princess Bride* is not difficult to understand and follow. Goldman does not utilize flowery language to describe his story, but presents the tale through clear and concise narrative. The reader easily follows the storyline, although frequent interruptions by Goldman and references to the fictional S. Morgenstern disrupt the flow of the story. Goldman's use of Morgenstern creates some confusion for the reader. Goldman presents enough "facts" about Morgenstern and the original *Princess Bride* to create a sliver of belief within the reader. The inclusion of Morgenstern and the interplay between the real and imagined authors gives the story deeper meaning than just a fairy tale romance.

Goldman presents a story about the damsel in distress, the man who loves her, a son trying to avenge a father, and an unlikely group of friends. However, his story is not as simple as all that. The reader can certainly read *The Princess Bride* choosing only to focus on the "good parts," but to do so would leave a large portion of the story untold. Morgenstern becomes the curtain behind which Goldman can hide while still voicing his opinion. Goldman speaks through Morgenstern to comment on true love, fairness, bonds of friendship, arrogance, and the importance of family. Young readers will discover only the action adventure that the fictional Goldman did in his childhood. Older readers will enjoy reading a serious book that makes them feel like a child again.

## Structure

The book is composed of two books in one. The first book is the entire *Princess Bride*. The second part is the first chapter of the sequel to *The Princess Bride*, *Buttercup's Baby*. *The Princess Bride* begins with an introduction by William Goldman that tells how he came to abridge S. Morgenstern's original work. The book contains eight chapters. Each chapter is titled with the number spelled out and a short one word title. Several of the chapters are lengthy but can be broken down into coherent, manageable sections. There are a couple chapters that are only a page or two in length. Goldman insists that these chapters in Morgenstern were very long but that he edited them extensively because there was not a great deal of interesting information in them. Only the first chapter of *Buttercup's Baby* is given. Goldman gives an introduction telling the reader why he only provided the first chapter. The chapter itself is broken into four sections. The first and last section connect with each other to tell a complete story. The middle two sections present a flashback focused on Inigo and relate the events that happened to Buttercup and Westley following their escape from Florin Castle. The book abruptly ends after this chapter.



## Quotes

"What she liked to do, preferred above all else really, was to ride her horse and taunt the farm boy." One, pg. 37

"'It was Roberts,' her father said. 'The Dread Pirate Roberts.' 'Oh,' Buttercup said. 'The one who never leaves survivors.'" One, pg. 61

"The Great Square of Florin City was filled as never before, awaiting the introduction of Prince Humperdinck's bride-to-be, Princess Buttercup of Hammersmith." Five, pg. 87

"'You are trying to kidnap what I have rightfully stolen, and I think it quite ungentlemanly.'" Five, pg. 153

"'I am no one to be trifled with,' replied the man in black. 'That is all you ever need to know.'" Five, pg. 159

"Words followed her. Whispered from far, weak and warm and familiar. 'As...you...wish...'" Five, pg. 164

"'I always think everything is a trap until proven otherwise,' the Prince answered. 'Which is why I'm still alive.'" Five, pg. 169

"Then Buttercup said it: 'I can live without love.' And with that she left Westley alone." Five, pg. 191

"That night, they began to torture Westley. Count Rugen did the actual pain inducing; the Prince simply say by, asking questions out loud, inwardly admiring the Count's skill." Six, pg. 216

"But his father had to be revenged. And the man in black would figure out how. That was enough for Inigo." Six, pg. 254

"'Tr...ooooo..luv...'" Fezzik grabbed onto Inigo in panic and they both pivoted, staring at the man in black, who was silent again." Seven, pg. 277

"Buttercup, for her part, felt no excitement whatsoever. She had, in fact, never remembered such a wonderful feeling of calm. Her Westley was coming; that was her world." Seven, pg. 293

"'Hello, my name is Inigo Montoya; you killed my father; prepare to die.'" Eight, pg. 309

"'Not if we promise to outlive each other, and I make that promise now.'" Eight, pg. 316

"Fezzik had no choice. He dove into space after her, gave up his life for the child. . ." 1. Fezzik, pg. 352



". . . Buttercup was wrong, it was a girl, and here at last she came, pink and white like a candy stick-" Buttercup and Westley, pg. 394

# Adaptations

Act II Communications Presentations of Nelson Entertainment released a film version of *The Princess Bride* in 1987. Goldman wrote the screenplay, and consequently it is very close to the novel. The film was produced by Norman Lear and directed by Rob Reiner.

Fred Savage starred as the boy — the young Goldman in the novel — to whom the story was read by his grandfather played by Peter Falk. (The grandfather role was changed from the novel. In it, young Goldman's father read the story.) Westley was played by Cary Elwes and Buttercup by Robin Wright. The film has a small cult following.



## Topics for Discussion

William Goldman says that he is simply abridging S. Morgenstern's tale. Do you believe that Morgenstern is real or is he fictional? What evidence does the book provide to support your answer?

Many readers are familiar with the film version of *The Princess Bride*. Discuss some of the differences between the movie and the book. Do you like or dislike the changes? Why?

Goldman constantly interrupts the narrative to note that he has cut out a section of the Morgenstern. He then tells the reader what that section involved, how he feels about it, the argument he had with his editor over cutting it, and then returns the reader to the story. How do you feel about these interruptions? What purpose do they serve within the story?

Goldman says that Morgenstern's original work is a satire of the Florinese government and History. Do you view Goldman's "abridgment" as a satire? If so, a satire of what and why?

Do you view Westley as the hero of the story? Support your answer with examples from the text.

What role do Fezzik and Inigo play in the story? Are they simply comic relief, sidekicks to the debonair Westley, or heroes central to the plot?

How are Vizzini and Prince Humperdinck alike? What is their ultimate downfall?

How do you view Buttercup? Is she worthy of Westley's affections? Why or why not?



## Related Titles

The Silent Gondoliers (1983) is another example of Goldman's attempt to adapt traditional genres to modern form. The Princess Bride appropriates the form of the fairy tale, while The Silent Gondoliers is in the shorter, more compact form of a fable. Both works succeed as vehicles through which Goldman (in the voice of the fictitious S. Morgenstern) can satirize both the literary forms themselves and the modern values that are so humorously contrasted with the expected traditional values of fairy tales or fables.

The central character is Luigi, a gondolier with a "goony smile." S. Morgenstern, the narrator, translates the Italian word as "goony" since no other is quite right in English, or so Morgenstern claims. Luigi's father is a gondolier. Even as a child, Luigi sneaks out to practice his steering in the Grand Canal late at night while the city of Venice sleeps. Often near dawn, young Luigi takes a shortcut home through SPLAT Corner. Years later when he goes to Gondolier's school, a cruel teacher, John the Bastard, who is almost an archetypal figure in this work, prematurely forces Luigi to steer a gondola through SPLAT corner. Luigi successfully maneuvers the boat through, thus exemplifying the competent student, who bests a cruel teacher who is determined to maintain the upper hand.

As in all fables, plot supercedes characterization, and theme supercedes plot. The reader gains little insight into the emotions or motivations of the characters. Except for maintaining his goony smile, Luigi shows little reaction to any of the things that happen to him. His determination to learn to sing is made ironic by his finding a voice teacher called The Pickle. The Pickle is over a hundred years old and completely deaf, so he can only instruct Luigi in vocal techniques without judging voice quality. Luigi never learns to sing on key; he just learns to project his awful voice better.

The reason the gondoliers are now silent becomes clear: Luigi performs an act that requires courage and skill. In deference to his heroic actions, the gondoliers of Venice imitate Luigi's singing until the people riding in the gondolas stop requesting songs. In their unselfish action is seen the unselfish protection society sometimes provides a person for an act of bravery.

The Silent Gondoliers is a contemporary fable written by Goldman under the name of S. Morgenstern. This short fictional work blends historical fact and fictional characters to provide a tale about the gondoliers of Venice.

These gondoliers, according to the fable, spend years rigorously training for their profession. They are, after their studies, expert steersmen who, at some time in the past, possessed golden voices and could outdo even the legendary Caruso with their singing.

But the silent gondolier, who possesses a tragic flaw — a complete lack of musical ability — cannot learn to sing, and only his unbelievable courage allows him to prevail.



The moral and theme, therefore, is that each must know his or her weakness, struggle to improve, and ultimately accept what life has given and rely on strengths.

Woven into the story is the irony that even the myths of the modern world are filled with absurdity. Reality is not simple; neither is fable.

S. Morgenstern, the narrator, reports his investigations of these "historical events." His motivation is simple: since he remembers a time in his childhood when gondoliers' voices rang through the Grand Canal, he wishes to discover the reasons that the singing stopped.

Morgenstern interviews descendants of the singing gondoliers and pieces together the story of the sour-voiced gondolier and his heroic feat of braving the worst storm ever to save the gondoliers' prized church from being destroyed by fire.

The pseudo-journalistic style increases the irony of the story, since the fable appears to take on a historical reality. The semblance of history is reinforced by references to Enrico Caruso, whom one gondolier easily outsang, Willie Mays, Joe Di Maggio, Mark Spitz, and others. This juxtaposition of history and myth is comic because the reader can see Luigi and the other gondoliers as merely caricatures.

Luigi's goony smile is indicative of his goony voice and his strange life. The fable reflects a reality that S. Morgenstern would have us believe is obvious in daily life.

Goldman's literary predecessor in this short moralistic work of fiction is Aesop, whose fables deal with personified animals. Unlike Aesop, Goldman's fable is set in a real place: Venice exists, as do the gondoliers of Venice.

Goldman does not state a moral, however; it remains only vaguely implied and is ambiguous at best. Readers search for the moral of *The Silent Gondoliers* because they recognize the story as a fable, and fables are supposed to have a clear-cut moral. The absence of a state moral is perhaps Goldman's final comment on the ambiguities and uncertainties of the modern world.





# Copyright Information

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