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The Princess Bride

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Goldman, William. *The Princess Bride*. New York: Harcourt, 2007.

PS3557.O384P7

“The Prince moved to Westley. ‘She loves you,’ the Prince cried. ‘She loves you still and you love her, so think of that – think of this too: in all this world, you might have been happy, genuinely happy. Not one couple in a century has that chance, not really, no matter what the storybooks say, but you could have had it, and so, I would think, no one will ever suffer a loss as great as you...’” – page 260

When Buttercup, the most beautiful girl in the world, both recognizes and verbalizes her love of the farm boy Westley, he leaves to seek his fortune in America promising to send for Buttercup as soon as he is able. However, Buttercup learns of Westley’s death at the hands of the Dread Pirate Roberts. Buttercup is heartbroken, and although she vows she will never love again, she reluctantly agrees to marry Humperdinck, the greatest hunter in the world and Prince of Florin, as well. But before their wedding, Buttercup is kidnapped by a motley trio: a crafty Sicilian, a giant Turk, and a Spanish swordsman, all in the business of revenge. To further complicate Buttercup’s plight, and as inconceivable as it may seem, a strange man in black seems to be following close behind. William Goldman’s modern classic, *The Princess Bride*, is a tale of true love and high fantasy with dry wit and several important life lessons mixed in.

The Princess Bride. Dir. Rob Reiner. Perf. Cary Elwes, Robin Wright, Chris Sarandon, Act III Communications, 1987.

Popular Reading DVD, PS3557.O384P72 2001.

“Has it got any sports in it?”

‘Are you kidding? Fencing, fighting, torture, revenge, giants, monsters, chases, escapes, true love, miracles.’

‘Doesn’t sound too bad. I’ll try and stay awake.’”

In 1987, William Goldman adapted *The Princess Bride* into a screenplay, which follows the print version of his tale fairly faithfully. Like the book, the main story of the film which is centered on the true love and adventures of Westley and Buttercup, is framed by another story: an adult reading the tale to a sick child. This framework is especially effective in the film as using it, Goldman is not only able to communicate the multifaceted main story, but he is also able to unobtrusively interrupt that story to emphasize an idea, to further explain a concept, or to prepare the audience for an upcoming scene. The cast of *The Princess Bride* film is essential in expressing both stories in a seamless and uncomplicated fashion. Cary Elwes is the archetypal hero Westley, Robin Wright plays the amorous, if not so smart, Buttercup, Chris Sarandon is the villainous Humperdinck, and Wallace Shawn, Mandy Patkinson, and Andre the Giant star as Vizzini, Inigo, and Fezzik respectively. In addition to the core characters, Billy Crystal, Carol Kane, Christopher Guest, Fred Savage, and Peter Falk round out the main cast list – each member of which perfectly personifies his or her character from the book. Over time, the film version of *The Princess Bride* has become a cult classic; though wonderful as an individual film, it is truly complementary to Goldman’s print version, easily bringing the fairy tale to life.