

The Princess Bride

April 7th, 2025

Leo Robinovitch

Westley

Highlights are for you to read out loud.
Yellow highlights are to be read in character.
Green highlights are to be read as narration.

FADE IN ON: A VIDEO GAME ON A COMPUTER SCREEN - The game is in progress. As a sick coughing sound is heard.

CUT TO: THIS KID - lying in bed, coughing. Pale, one sick cookie. Maybe he's seven or eight or nine. He holds a remote in one hand, presses it, and the video game moves a little bit. Then he's hit by another spasm of coughing, puts the remote down.

His room is monochromatic, greys and blues, mildly high-tech. We're in the present day and this is a middle class house, somewhere in the suburbs.

CUT TO: The Kid's MOTHER as she enters, goes to him, fluffs his pillows, kisses him, and briefly feels his forehead. She's worried, it doesn't show. During this

MOTHER: You feeling any better?

THE KID: A little bit.

MOTHER: Guess what.

THE KID: What?

MOTHER: Your grandfather's here.

THE KID: (not overjoyed) Mom, can't you tell him that I'm sick?

MOTHER: You are sick, that's why he's here.

THE KID: He'll pinch my cheek. I hate that.

MOTHER: Maybe he won't.

The Kid shoots her an "I'm sure" look, as we

CUT TO: THE KID'S GRANDFATHER bursting into the room. Kind of ruffled. But the eyes are bright. He has a wrapped package tucked under one arm as he immediately goes to The Kid, pinches his cheek.

GRANDFATHER: Hey! How's the sickie? Heh?

The Kid gives his Mother an "I told you so" look. The Mother ignores it, beats a retreat.

MOTHER: I think I'll leave you two pals.

And she is gone. There's an uncomfortable silence, then...

GRANDFATHER: I brought you a special present.

THE KID: What is it?

GRANDFATHER: Open it up.

The Kid does. He does his best to smile.

THE KID: A book?

GRANDFATHER: That's right. When I was your age, television was called books. And this is a special book. It was the book my father used to read to me when I was sick, and I used to read it to your father. And today, I'm gonna read it to you.

THE KID: Has it got any sports in it?

CUT TO: THE GRANDFATHER - Suddenly passionate.

GRANDFATHER: Are you kidding? Fencing. Fighting. Torture. Revenge. Giants. Monsters. Chases. Escapes. True love. Miracles.

CUT TO: THE TWO OF THEM as the Grandfather sits in a chair by the bed.

THE KID: (manages a shrug) It doesn't sound too bad. I'll try and stay awake.

GRANDFATHER: Oh. Well, thank you very much. It's very nice of you. Your vote of confidence is overwhelming. All right. (Book open now, he begins to read.) The Princess Bride, by S. Morgenstern. Chapter One. Buttercup was raised on a small farm in the country of Florin.

DISSOLVE TO: The story he's reading about, as the monochromatic look of the bedroom is replaced by the dazzling color of the English countryside.

GRANDFATHER: (off-screen) Her favorite pastimes were riding her horse and tormenting the farm boy that worked there. His name was Westley, but she never called him that. (to the kid) Isn't that a wonderful beginning?

THE KID: (off-screen doing his best) Yeah. It's really good.

GRANDFATHER: (off-screen reading) Nothing gave Buttercup as much pleasure as ordering Westley around.

CUT TO: BUTTERCUPS FARM - DAY - BUTTERCUP is standing, holding the reins of her horse, while in the background, WESTLEY, in the stable doorway, looks at her. Buttercup is in her late teens; doesn't care much about clothes and she hates brushing her long hair, so she isn't as attractive as she might be, but she's still probably the most beautiful woman in the world.

BUTTERCUP: Farm boy. Polish my horse's saddle. I want to see my face shining in it by morning.

WESTLEY: (quietly, watching her) As you wish.

Westley is perhaps half a dozen years older than Buttercup. And maybe as handsome as she is beautiful. He gazes at her as she walks away.

GRANDFATHER: (off-screen) "As you wish" was all he ever said to her.

DISSOLVE TO: WESTLEY, outside, chopping wood. Buttercup drops two large buckets near him.

BUTTERCUP: Farm Boy. Fill these with water -- (a beat) --please.

WESTLEY: As you wish.

She leaves; his eyes stay on her. She stops, turns -- he manages to look away as now her eyes stay on him.

GRANDFATHER: (off-screen) That day, she was amazed to discover that when he was saying, "As you wish," what he meant was, "I love you."

DISSOLVE TO: BUTTERCUP IN THE KITCHEN - DUSK - Westley enters with an armload of firewood.

GRANDFATHER: (off-screen) And even more amazing was the day she realized she truly loved him back.

BUTTERCUP: (pointing to a pitcher that she could reach herself) Farm Boy, fetch me that pitcher.

He gets it, hands it to her; they are standing very close to each other gazing into each other's eyes.

WESTLEY: As you wish.

Now he turns, moves outside.

DISSOLVE TO: WESTLEY AND BUTTERCUP, outside his tiny hovel in the red glow of sunset. They are locked in a passionate kiss.

THE KID: (off-screen) -hold it, hold it-

CUT TO: THE KID'S ROOM

THE KID: What is this? Are you trying to trick me? -- Where's the sports? -- Is this a kissing book?

GRANDFATHER: -- wait, just wait --

THE KID: -- well, when does it get good?

GRANDFATHER: Keep your shirt on. Let me read. (reading again) Westley had no money for marriage. So he packed his few belongings and left the farm to seek his fortune across the sea.

CUT TO: WESTLEY AND BUTTERCUP - They stand near the gate to the farm, locked in an embrace.

GRANDFATHER: (off-screen reading) It was a very emotional time for Buttercup --

THE KID: (off-screen groaning) I don't be-leeve this.

BUTTERCUP: I fear I'll never see you again.

WESTLEY: Of course you will.

BUTTERCUP: But what if something happens to you?

WESTLEY: Hear this now: I will come for you.

BUTTERCUP: But how can you be sure?

WESTLEY: This is true love. You think this happens every day?

He smiles at her, she smiles too, throws her arms so tightly around him. They kiss. Then as Westley walks away, Buttercup watches him go.

GRANDFATHER: (off-screen reading) Westley didn't reach his destination. His ship was attacked by the Dread Pirate Roberts, who never left captives alive. When Buttercup got the news that Westley was murdered --

THE KID: (off-screen, perking up a little) -- murdered by pirates is good --

CUT TO: CLOSE UP: Buttercup, staring out the window of her room.

GRANDFATHER: (off-screen) She went into her room and shut the door. And for days, she neither slept nor ate.

BUTTERCUP: (no emotion at all in her voice) I will never love again.

HOLD ON HER FACE, perfect and perfectly sad.

DISSOLVE TO: FLORIN CASTLE - DAY - The main courtyard of Florin replete with townspeople, livestock, and a bustling marketplace.

GRANDFATHER: (off-screen reading) Five years later, the main square of Florin City was filled as never before to hear the announcement of the great Prince Humperdinck's bride-to be.

CUT TO: PRINCE HUMPERDINCK, a man of incredible power and bearing, standing in his royal robes on a castle balcony. Three others standing behind him: an OLD COUPLE with crowns, the aging KING AND QUEEN, and a dark bearded man who seems the Prince's match in strength: this is COUNT RUGEN.

HUMPERDINCK: (raises his hands, starts to speak) My people ... a month from now, our country will have its 500th anniversary. On that sundown, I shall marry a lady who was once a commoner like yourselves -- (pause) -- but perhaps you will not find her common now. Would you like to meet her?

And the answering YESSSS booms like summer thunder.