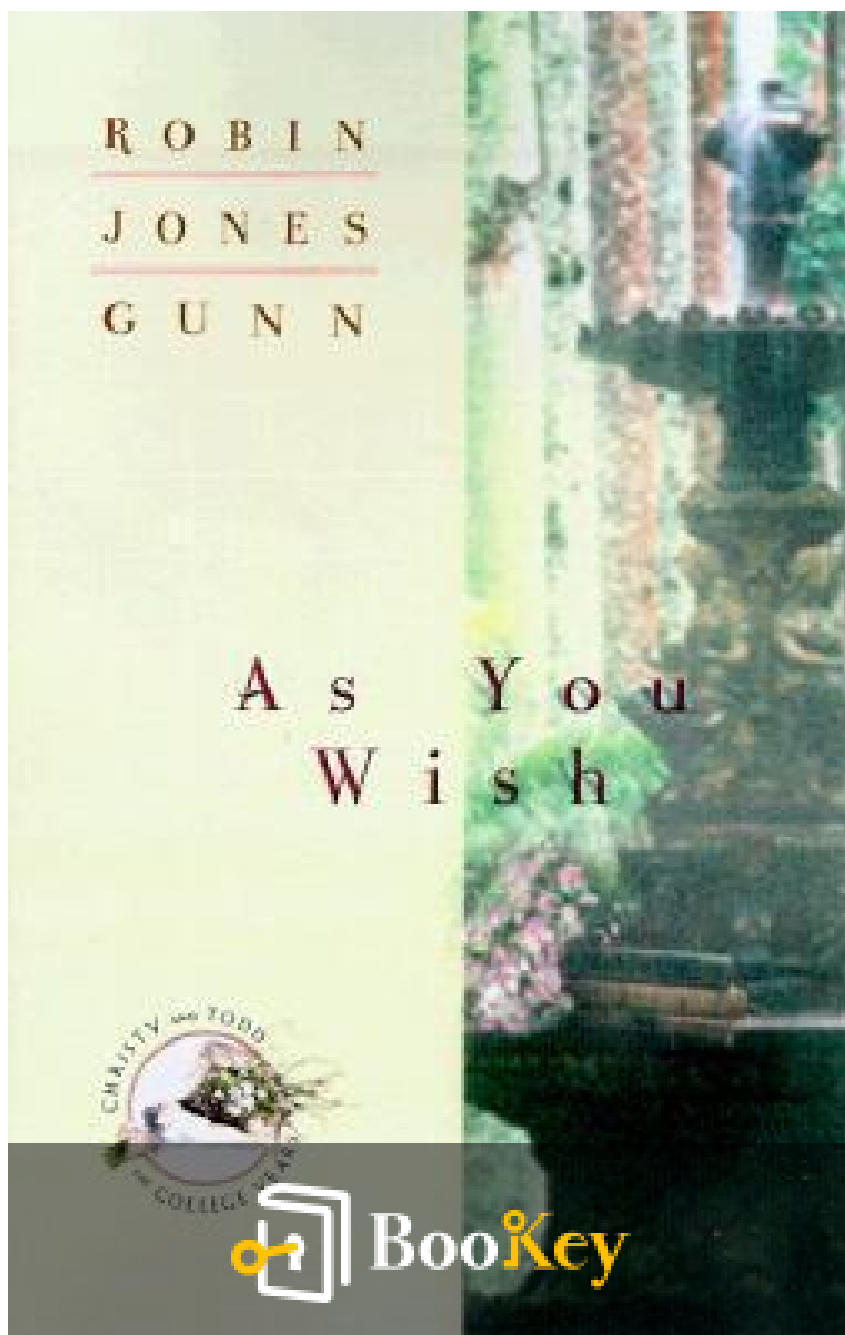


As You Wish PDF (Limited Copy)

Cary Elwes



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As You Wish Summary

Behind-the-scenes tales from the beloved classic, *The Princess Bride*.

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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About the book

In "As You Wish," Cary Elwes invites readers into the delightful world behind the making of the beloved film *The Princess Bride*, celebrated for its humor, romance, and adventure, particularly on its twenty-fifth anniversary. Elwes, who portrayed the charming character Westley, reflects on his experiences working with an extraordinary cast that included the legendary André the Giant, the talented Robin Wright, and the hilarious Billy Crystal, along with the visionary director Rob Reiner.

Throughout the memoir, Elwes shares a series of entertaining and heartfelt anecdotes from the set, capturing the thrill of choreographed sword fights and the comedic exchanges that unfolded among the cast. He highlights the unwavering camaraderie that developed during filming, underscoring the collaborative spirit that became a defining element of the production.

Readers are treated to shared stories from fellow cast members and filmmakers, enriching the narrative with personal insights and behind-the-scenes revelations that showcase not only the challenges and triumphs of the filmmaking process but also the camaraderie and joy that permeated the experience. Through this wealth of anecdotes, Elwes not only celebrates the film's enduring legacy but also encapsulates the magic of being part of a cinematic adventure that has touched the hearts of generations. This memoir is an invitation for fans to re-experience the

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nostalgia and joy associated with *The Princess Bride*, celebrating the timelessness of its charm and the bonds formed during its creation.

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About the author

Cary Elwes, a distinguished English actor, has left an indelible mark on the film industry, primarily known for his memorable performance as Westley in **The Princess Bride**. This cult classic not only defined his early career but also became a significant cultural touchstone, blending fantasy with romance and humor. Born in Westminster, London, Elwes grew up in a creative environment, being the son of a prominent family connected to the arts.

His range as an actor is evident in a variety of film genres. In **Robin Hood: Men in Tights**, he parodies the legendary character of Robin Hood, showcasing his comedic talent. In **Glory**, a historical war film, he delivers a powerful performance as a soldier in the American Civil War, demonstrating his ability to tackle serious roles. Meanwhile, in action-packed films such as **Days of Thunder** and **Twister**, Elwes captivates audiences with his charisma and intensity. He is also well-known for his role in the horror franchise **Saw**, where he played Dr. Lawrence Gordon, a character caught in a chilling moral dilemma.

Currently based in Hollywood, California, Elwes continues to engage with his craft and connect with fans, while balancing family life. His journey through various roles reflects not only his versatility as an actor but also his enduring impact on popular culture. Through his career, Elwes illustrates the dynamic nature of being in the entertainment industry, where one can

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transition between genres while still resonating with audiences around the world.

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Chapter 1 Summary: MEETING ROB

Meeting Rob

Introduction to the Call

In June 1986, Cary Elwes received a note marked "IMPORTANT" from his agent, Harriet Robinson, notifying him of a crucial meeting with director Rob Reiner and producer Andy Scheinman. They were considering him for the pivotal role of Westley in the film adaptation of William Goldman's beloved novel, *The Princess Bride*.

Becoming an Actor

At just twenty-three years old, Cary was on the cusp of his acting career with limited experience under his belt. He had honed his craft at the London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art and gained early exposure by working as a production assistant. His performances in films like *Another Country* and *Lady Jane* caught Reiner's attention and solidified Cary's place in Hollywood's budding talent pool.

The Director's Interest

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Reiner's interest in Cary stemmed from his role in **Lady Jane**, which resonated with both the director and producers. For Cary, this opportunity sparked immense excitement, particularly because he had long admired both the book and its author, William Goldman. **The Princess Bride** had been a cherished story throughout his childhood.

Filming and Production Context

At the time of his meeting with Reiner and Scheinman, Cary was in Berlin filming the indie project **Maschenka**. The somber backdrop of the Chernobyl disaster loomed in the news, adding a layer of tension to the film industry, yet the production of **Maschenka** continued amidst the chaos.

The Audition Experience

While Cary was thrilled about the potential role, anxiety crept in as the reality of an audition set in. Rob reassured him, fostering a relaxed atmosphere, and they conversed with ease, as Cary expressed his affinity for American pop culture.

The Reading

When asked to read a few lines, Cary initially felt apprehensive. However, as he continued, his confidence grew, and Rob's approving nods further

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encouraged him. After the meeting, Cary excitedly relayed the promising news to his agent about the potential role.

The Offer

The next day, Cary was thrilled to receive confirmation that he would play Westley. This decision by Reiner was a bold move, as Cary wasn't yet a recognized name in Hollywood, but Rob believed he embodied the necessary charm and humor essential for the character.

Rob Reiner's Perspective

From Reiner's perspective, Cary was the only actor who successfully blended the wit and appeal needed for Westley. This synergy set the foundation for what would become a landmark collaboration in film history.

Conclusion

Cary's ascent to the role of Westley illustrates a blend of talent, fortuitous timing, and significant industry connections. The excitement and personal ties formed during this pivotal moment not only shaped Cary's career but also laid the groundwork for the iconic film adaptation of *The Princess Bride*.

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Chapter 2 Summary: PRE-PRODUCTION AND MEETING BUTTERCUP

Pre-Production and Meeting Buttercup

Introduction to The Princess Bride

In August 1986, actor Cary Elwes found himself back in London, primed to step into the role of Westley for the beloved film adaptation of William Goldman's novel, **The Princess Bride**. As the production gears turned with cast and crew beginning to unite, a significant read-through of the script was approaching, heightening the excitement surrounding the film.

Wardrobe Fitting with Phyllis Dalton

An important aspect of bringing the characters to life was the costume design, a responsibility ably handled by Oscar-winning designer Phyllis Dalton. Elwes received a call to participate in a wardrobe fitting, where he marveled at Dalton's sketches that majestically captured the essence of the story. Most notably, Westley's iconic ensemble, featuring black suede pants, was complemented by a flowing red dress designed for Buttercup, encapsulating the romantic tension of the narrative.

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Creating the Iconic Dread Pirate Roberts Look

During the fitting, Dalton meticulously refined Westley's look, adding a black satin sash that would become emblematic of the Dread Pirate Roberts. This attention to detail extended to discussions about character-specific accents, such as temporary masks that would ensure comfort during filming. Elwes engaged closely with the special effects team, undergoing the preparation of a face mold at Shepperton Studios, a process that deepened his immersion into the dual identity of Westley as the formidable Dread Pirate Roberts.

Rob Reiner's Commitment to Casting

Later, Elwes met with the film's director, Rob Reiner, who energetically introduced him to the talented production team. Reiner's enthusiasm for the cast was palpable, and he highlighted key players such as Billy Crystal and Mandy Patinkin, along with Robin Wright, who was cast as Buttercup. This casting process showcased Reiner's dedication to finding the right actors who could bring the characters' nuances to the screen.

Robin Wright's Arrival as Buttercup

The moment Elwes met Robin Wright marked a pivotal point in his journey. He found her not only stunningly beautiful but also immensely talented,

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which sparked an immediate rapport. Their chemistry was essential for authentically portraying the deep connection between Westley and Buttercup, and Wright's casting was a significant decision that aligned perfectly with Reiner's artistic vision for the film.

Conclusion of the Fitting and Anticipation for Filming

As the whirlwind of fittings and introductions came to an end, Elwes felt a potent mix of excitement and infatuation, eagerly anticipating the filming ahead. This pre-production phase was illuminating, unveiling the film's potential and setting the groundwork for the magical adventure that awaited audiences. Through dedicated design, thoughtful casting, and a shared vision, **The Princess Bride** was positioned to captivate hearts and minds as it stepped into the spotlight.

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Chapter 3 Summary: THE TABLE READ AND MEETING FEZZIK

Chapter 3: The Table Read and Meeting Fezzik

A few days after casting decisions were finalized, the entire ensemble gathered for their inaugural table read at the luxurious Dorchester Hotel in London. The atmosphere was relaxed, filled with laughter and the aroma of snacks. Cary Elwes, who was cast as the dashing Westley, recalls the moment he met the iconic screenwriter William Goldman, known for his wit and storytelling prowess. During their conversation, Cary inquired about the towering character Fezzik.

Director Rob Reiner eagerly shared that André the Giant, a legendary wrestling star known for his immense size and charisma, would portray Fezzik. Cary initially struggled to reconcile the name with a real person, but Goldman quickly emphasized his faith in André's casting, having seen him perform in wrestling matches. Although there were initial doubts regarding André's acting skills, auditions in Paris put those concerns to rest, showcasing his natural ability to embody the gentle giant.

As the table read commenced, Cary felt a wave of anxiety wash over him, surrounded by a cast brimming with talent, including Chris Sarandon as



Prince Humperdinck, Wally Shawn as Vizzini, and Mandy Patinkin as Inigo Montoya. Each actor introduced themselves with a blend of nerves and enthusiasm, and Goldman, expressing his deep emotional connection to the project, highlighted its personal significance to him.

At the heart of **The Princess Bride** is a whimsical story narrated by a grandfather reading to his sick grandson. The plot follows the adventurous romance between Westley and Buttercup, infused with memorable characters like the cunning Prince Humperdinck and the vengeful Inigo Montoya, leading to a humorous and heartwarming reunion.

Post-reading, a wave of applause erupted, signaling an encouraging reception among the cast. They expressed optimism about the project's potential, unaware that it would evolve into a beloved cultural phenomenon. Cary felt immense gratitude to collaborate with such a remarkable group of individuals.

André's formidable size and well-known drinking feats also became a topic of conversation. His larger-than-life persona resonated both on and off the set, often leading to lighthearted anecdotes about his legendary appetite and fondness for cocktails. Beyond his physical presence, it was André's warmth and charm that endeared him to everyone, creating a unique bond on set.

The first table read marked a pivotal moment, setting the stage for an

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extraordinary filmmaking adventure characterized by teamwork and friendship. This chapter captures the excitement, nervous energy, and unique quirks that framed the making of *The Princess Bride*, establishing a foundation for the whimsical tale that was about to unfold.

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Chapter 4: “EN GARDE!”

Chapter 4 Summary: The Art of Sword Fighting

In this chapter, Cary Elwes opens up about his journey into the world of sword fighting, revealing that while he was not a standout athlete, he possessed a profound passion for the arts. His excitement is palpable, yet mingled with apprehension about mastering the intricate sword fighting needed for his role in a film heralded as featuring the "Greatest Swordfight in Modern Times."

Elwes reflects on the historical depth of preparation necessary for the fight scenes, recognizing that such expertise demands rigorous study of fencing techniques. Aware of his own limited background in sword fighting—having only taken a few minor lessons—he finds solace in the assurance from director Rob Reiner. Reiner informs him that he will be training alongside experts Peter Diamond and Bob Anderson, both renowned figures in the film industry with impressive credentials in choreography and stunt work.

As the narrative unfolds, Elwes introduces his training teammates and acknowledges Mandy Patinkin, who portrays the character Inigo Montoya. Patinkin shares his own commitment to the craft, having undergone intense training under a Yale fencing coach to authentically embody his role. Elwes

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and Patinkin bond over their shared inexperience with fencing, which ignites a healthy competitive spirit between the two as they pursue improvement.

The training regimen, which kicks off almost immediately after the initial table read, is depicted as both demanding and transformative. Elwes describes the basics of sword mechanics, proper body posture, and rigorous conditioning, pushing his physical limits along the way. Intense practice sessions fluctuate between moments of frustration and small victories, showcasing their determination to master the art of fencing.

Elwes notes how trainers Bob and Peter stress the importance of repetition and memorization in choreographing the fight. They strive to combine the precision of fencing with the fluidity of dance, ensuring that their performances resonate convincingly on screen.

As the chapter progresses, Elwes details the relentless training schedules they adhere to, often overlapping with shooting days, illustrating the relentless effort to perfect their fight scenes. Their shared dedication highlights not only their resolve to evolve into proficient fencers but also the camaraderie that forms between them amidst challenges.

Reflecting on his experiences, Elwes concludes the chapter by acknowledging the humbling nature of his journey. He expresses gratitude for the opportunity to learn from seasoned masters, celebrating the

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transformation he and Patinkin have undergone in their training, both as artists and as friends. This chapter encapsulates the essence of growth, teamwork, and the commitment required to bring the art of sword fighting to life on screen.

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Chapter 5 Summary: WRESTLING R.O.U.S. IN THE FIRE SWAMP

WRESTLING R.O.U.S. IN THE FIRE SWAMP

Introduction to Filming

The chapter opens with Cary Elwes recalling his first day on the set of "The Princess Bride," which began on August 18, 1986. He felt a wave of anxiety as he prepared to take on the iconic role of the Dread Pirate Roberts, a character crucial to his career. Despite moments of self-doubt, a reassuring conversation with director Rob Reiner helped to steady his nerves, setting a positive tone for the adventure ahead.

The Fire Swamp

As Cary steps onto the intricate Fire Swamp set, he is struck by the detailed design and the complexity of filmmaking compared to theater. This experience emphasizes the need for patience and adaptability, as scenes are often shot out of order, creating a unique challenge for the cast and crew.

First Scene Challenges

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Cary recalls the initial scene where he guides Robin Wright's character, Buttercup, through the swamp. The pressure to deliver lines with the appropriate emotion was palpable, with Reiner's insistence on precise delivery adding to Cary's nervousness. Meanwhile, screenwriter Bill Goldman's presence on set added an element of excitement, although it left him feeling slightly out of place during filming.

Stunts and Safety Meetings

The chapter discusses the meticulous planning required for the various stunts, particularly a harrowing scene where Buttercup's dress would catch fire. Both Cary and Robin express a mix of eagerness and trepidation, ultimately choosing to perform the stunt themselves. This decision reflects their commitment to authenticity and adds a sense of personal investment to their roles.

Fire Stunt Occurs

During the intense fire scene, complications arise when Goldman inadvertently disrupts a take after witnessing Robin's dress ignite. His panic momentarily halts production, but the crew quickly resolves the situation, allowing the scene to continue with the flames extinguished efficiently, showcasing the crew's professionalism.

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Quicksand Scene

The narrative shifts to another pivotal stunt involving Buttercup's rescue from quicksand. Cary, eager to enhance the drama of the scene, persuades the director to allow for a daring dive into the quicksand instead of a mundane walk. This decision adds a thrilling dimension to the moment, illustrating Cary's creative commitment to elevating the film.

Encounter with R.O.U.S.

As filming progresses, Cary finds himself interacting with actors in elaborate Rodents of Unusual Size (R.O.U.S.) costumes. Despite initial concerns regarding their believability, the camaraderie among the cast fosters a collaborative environment, allowing rehearsals to transition smoothly.

Lost Actor and Resolution

On the final day of shooting in the swamp, a crisis unfolds when the actor portraying a R.O.U.S. goes missing. Panic ensues, but he is eventually found after an unexpected night involving the police. His return is met with relief and humor, bringing a chaotic but memorable end to the swamp sequences.

Conclusion

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The chapter beautifully encapsulates the filmmaking journey behind "The Princess Bride," blending humor and camaraderie with the behind-the-scenes realities of movie production. It showcases the delicate balance of artistry, safety, and spontaneity that characters and crew navigated while bringing this beloved story to life.

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Chapter 6 Summary: **STORMING THE CASTLE AND BEING MOSTLY DEAD**

Storming the Castle and Being Mostly Dead

Location Shift to Derbyshire

On September 1st, after a brief weekend break, the film crew relocated to the picturesque Peak District in Derbyshire to capture key scenes for *The Princess Bride* at the historic Haddon Hall. This 11th-century manor, steeped in history and linked to notable figures like William the Conqueror and Henry VIII, provided a rich backdrop that mirrored the film's romantic and adventurous narrative.

Awe and Nostalgia at Haddon Hall

Upon arriving at Haddon Hall, the author felt a wave of nostalgia, recalling previous filming experiences for *Lady Jane*. The current residents, the Manners family, welcomed the crew warmly, helping to foster an inviting atmosphere. The hall's stunning medieval architecture contributed significantly to the enchanting quality of the film, elevating the crew's excitement as they began filming.

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Filming Experiences

Shooting on location in such a historically significant setting offered a vibrant change from the confines of a soundstage. With art director Richard Holland and set decorator Maggie Gray leading the charge, the crew skillfully transformed Haddon Hall into Prince Humperdinck's castle, which enriched the film's fairy-tale essence and authenticity.

Memorable On-set Moments

The crew encountered challenges while filming a pivotal scene featuring Westley, described as “mostly dead.” A humorous and unexpected moment arose when André the Giant emitted a loud fart, breaking the tension and reducing the entire cast and crew to fits of laughter. This light-hearted incident did not deter the crew, and they ultimately succeeded in capturing the scene.

André the Giant’s Influence

André the Giant, known for his towering physique and gentle demeanor, left a lasting impression on everyone around him. Despite his health struggles due to acromegaly, he maintained a cheerful disposition that fostered camaraderie among the cast. His presence not only relaxed the atmosphere on set but also helped bridge connections among the crew.

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Pasta and Culinary Highlights

Catering became a hot topic on set, with director Rob Reiner expressing surprise at the British custom of tea breaks. Complaints about the limited catering, which primarily featured chapati, prompted André to step in and provide delectable French cuisine, further solidifying his role as the heart of the crew and winning their affection.

Conclusion

The Derbyshire filming experience was marked by its historical significance and personal interactions, highlighting the collaborative nature of filmmaking. André's warmth, humor, and culinary contributions played a significant part in creating unforgettable memories, reinforcing the bond among the cast and crew and adding depth to the film's legacy.

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Chapter 7 Summary: ROB'S TRAVELING CIRCUS

Rob's Traveling Circus: A Glimpse Behind the Scenes of *The Princess Bride*

Life on a Movie Set

Filming a movie, especially during extended location shoots, transforms into an extraordinary experience, akin to a grand circus. The crew becomes a tight-knit community, bound together by the challenge and excitement of creating something meaningful, often in remote settings far from home.

The Experience of Filming *The Princess Bride*

The Princess Bride was not just any film; it became a whimsical adventure that captivated its cast and crew. This remarkable production was filled with eccentric characters and fantastical elements, making the journey feel more like a shared odyssey than a typical work environment.

Cast and Director Dynamics

The upbeat atmosphere of the set can be attributed significantly to the directing style of Rob Reiner. Known for his encouraging and uplifting

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demeanor, Rob fostered a spirit of collaboration and creativity. Unlike other directors who might thrive on creating tension, he cultivated joy, allowing the cast to bond deeply and thrive in their performances.

Challenges of Working Outdoors

Filming in the unpredictable weather of the UK presented challenges that tested Rob's patience. However, these moments also revealed the strength of the team. The cast and crew learned to uplift each other during difficult times, reinforcing their bond and resilience as a family unit.

Creating a Community

As the production progressed, the spirit of camaraderie blossomed. The cast and crew often gathered in Rob's hotel suite for meals and engaging activities, reminiscent of carefree summer camp days. These interactions became foundational to their shared experience, solidifying friendships that extended beyond the set.

Rob's Lightheartedness

Rob's playful embrace of the local culture further enhanced the upbeat dynamic of the production. He humorously took to traditional pastimes like darts and sheepdog trials, which allowed him to connect deeply with the

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crew. His childlike enthusiasm and lighthearted approach were infectious, contributing significantly to the overall joy and creativity of *The Princess Bride*'s production.

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Chapter 8: TRUE WUV

TRUE WUV

Meeting Robin Wright

In a reflective moment, Cary Elwes reminisces about meeting Robin Wright for the first time. He was immediately struck by her exceptional talent, sense of humor, and striking beauty. Despite being new to the industry compared to the seasoned Wright, Cary was impressed by her flawless British accent and her remarkable comedic timing, which set the stage for a strong professional bond.

Common Interests

While on location in Sheffield for **The Princess Bride**, Cary and Robin discovered a shared passion for British comedy. Their camaraderie deepened as they exchanged recommendations, with Cary introducing Robin to the works of Michael Palin and Robin introducing Cary to the sketch comedy series **SCTV**. These shared interests not only enhanced their friendship but also contributed to a comfortable working atmosphere.

Robin's Role as Buttercup

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Cary takes a moment to reflect on Robin's portrayal of Buttercup, the film's leading lady. He argues that her performance is often underrated, as it requires her to traverse significant emotional landscapes. Despite the comedic tone of the film, Robin approached her role with depth and sincerity, delivering a heartfelt performance without resorting to overacting—a testament to her skill as an actress.

Praise from Co-Stars

The admiration for Robin extends beyond Cary. Co-stars Christopher Guest and Wallace Shawn echo similar sentiments, praising her professionalism, discipline, and inherent charm. They all felt a protective instinct toward her, which contributed to the palpable chemistry among the cast. This emotional connection not only enriched their personal experiences but also translated effectively to their performances on screen.

Lasting Friendship

Cary concludes by reflecting on the enduring friendship he has with Robin, which has blossomed over the years since their time on set. He notes how her talent has continued to flourish, evidenced by her acclaimed role in **House of Cards**. Robin, for her part, expresses her unwavering affection for Cary, cementing the bond they forged during their collaborative journey

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in film. This mutual respect and friendship stand as a highlight of their shared experience, showcasing the lasting impact of their time together.

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Chapter 9 Summary: VIZZINI AND MIRACLE MAX

Chapter 9: Vizzini and Miracle Max

This chapter delves into the comedic brilliance that Wallace Shawn and Billy Crystal brought to the film *The Princess Bride*, showcasing how their performances infused humor into the narrative.

Wallace Shawn as Vizzini

- **Background and Personality:** Wallace Shawn, renowned for his sharp intellect, holds a history degree from Harvard. Despite his polite, mild-mannered demeanor, he initially doubted whether he could fulfill the role of Vizzini, fearing he might not be able to meet the lofty expectations set for the character.
- **Casting and Performance:** Although hesitant to audition due to self-doubt, Shawn ultimately grabbed the opportunity and delivered a memorable performance. Throughout filming, he battled anxiety, convinced that he would be replaced by more established actors, such as Danny DeVito.
- **Key Scenes:** One standout moment is the "Battle of Wits," where

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Vizzini's clever dialogue challenged Shawn. Despite his worries, his portrayal left an indelible mark—his delivery became quotable and beloved by fans.

- **Personal Anecdotes:** Support from co-stars and director Rob Reiner helped alleviate Shawn's insecurities. Their camaraderie highlighted the comic relief that Shawn brought to the story, which was warmly received by audiences.

Billy Crystal as Miracle Max

- **Character Creation and Makeup:** Billy Crystal, as Miracle Max, introduced a unique comedic flavor that diverged from the film's other tones. Collaborating with makeup artist Peter Montagna, Crystal designed a character that melded personal influences with the traditions of comedic greats.

- **Filming Experience:** Known for his improvisational skills, Crystal infused the scenes with spontaneous humor, creating memorable lines and delightful ad-libs. Alongside Carol Kane, who played Valerie, their interactions transformed a brief scene into a highlight of the film.

- **On-Set Dynamics:** The filming set was vibrant, filled with laughter, as Crystal's humor often spiraled into comedic chaos, complicating some



takes. The dynamic between Crystal and Kane energized their scenes, solidifying them as iconic moments in cinematic history.

Impact of *The Princess Bride*

- **Legacy:** The characters of Vizzini and Miracle Max have become some of the most quoted and cherished elements of *The Princess Bride*. Their comedic influence not only enriched the film but also ensured its lasting relevance across generations, resonating with audiences and inspiring real-life connections.

- **Reflections:** Shawn and Crystal's experiences during filming exemplified the joy and camaraderie among the cast, enhancing the film's whimsical essence and appeal.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates how Wallace Shawn and Billy Crystal's unique interpretations of Vizzini and Miracle Max contributed significantly to the humor and charm of *The Princess Bride*. Their performances helped solidify the film's status as a timeless classic, celebrated for its wit and heart.

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Chapter 10 Summary: A COUPLE OF MISHAPS

Chapter 10: A Couple of Mishaps

Overview of Filmmaking Safety

Filmmaking is an exciting yet perilous venture, particularly for those in front of the camera. To mitigate risks, productions typically implement safety protocols, featuring the guidance of stunt coordinators who ensure the well-being of the cast and crew. Nevertheless, accidents can occur, as Cary Elwes discovered during the filming of **The Princess Bride**.

The First Injury

While on location in Derbyshire, Elwes found himself drawn into a playful challenge from the legendary André the Giant, who encouraged him to test out an ATV. Ignoring safety precautions, Elwes took the plunge, only to face disaster when his foot became pinned beneath the vehicle. Initially downplaying the injury, he soon realized that he had likely fractured a toe.

Covering Up the Injury

Concerned that reporting his injury might risk his role in the film, Elwes

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opted not to disclose the incident to director Rob Reiner. Instead, he sought assistance from a medic who fashionably splinted his toe, while Elwes grimaced in silence, struggling through the discomfort to avoid disrupting the filming schedule.

Confrontation with Rob Reiner

Upon returning to the set, Elwes was confronted by Reiner, who had learned about the injury. Reiner conveyed disappointment over Elwes' choice to conceal the truth, stressing the importance of transparency regarding health and safety matters on set. Despite the scare, Reiner reassured Elwes of his integral role in the production.

The Second Mishap

Weeks later, disaster struck again as Elwes was filming a fight scene with Chris Guest. In an unfortunate turn of events, Guest accidentally cut Elwes with a real sword, resulting in a significant head injury that required stitches. The unexpected nature of the injury lent an authentic edge to the scene, as Elwes briefly lost consciousness, capturing a visceral moment on camera.

Conclusion and Lessons Learned

Through these harrowing experiences, Elwes came to understand the critical

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importance of risk management in filmmaking and the need for honest communication with directors and crew members. His injuries led to adjustments in filming techniques, as creative editing and thorough rehearsals were employed to mitigate the impact of his situation. Ultimately, these challenges imparted invaluable lessons about responsibility and communication in the film industry.

Personal Reflection

In a heartwarming twist, Elwes was surprised with a birthday celebration on set, surrounded by his film family. This moment of joy and camaraderie served to remind him that, despite the misfortunes encountered, the supportive environment among his colleagues was a vital component of the filmmaking process.

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Chapter 11 Summary: THE GREATEST SWORDFIGHT IN MODERN TIMES

The Greatest Swordfight in Modern Times

Reflection on Favorite Scenes

Cary Elwes shares the challenge of choosing a favorite moment from *The Princess Bride*, highlighting the iconic swordfight between Inigo Montoya and the Man in Black. The duel, a key scene in the film, was recognized from the outset as a pivotal highlight, setting the stage for an epic confrontation.

Training and Preparation

To bring this memorable duel to life, both Elwes (the Man in Black) and Mandy Patinkin (Inigo Montoya) underwent intense training with fight choreographers Bob Anderson and Peter Diamond. They utilized carbon fiber blades to minimize injury during rehearsals, fostering a childlike wonder amidst the grandeur of the castle backdrop. Even Christopher Guest, who portrayed Count Rugen, joined in the rigorous practice, further solidifying the camaraderie among the cast.

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Challenges and Adjustments

Despite months of preparation, the initial swordfight lasted only one minute and twenty-three seconds, a duration deemed insufficient for a scene titled "The Greatest Swordfight in Modern Times." In response, director Rob Reiner urged the actors to expand the sequence, prompting a new round of grueling training and creative choreography adjustments.

Collaborative Enhancement

Elwes recounts brainstorming sessions with Mandy and other cast members, during which they drew inspiration from classic swashbuckling films. Together, they integrated new techniques, including acrobatics and inventive swordplay, to elevate the duel's excitement and complexity in accordance with Reiner's vision.

Filming the Duel

Filming commenced on November 10, charged with palpable excitement. Throughout the process, Elwes and Mandy executed their choreography under the keen observation of the crew, including celebrated author William Goldman. Their goal was to capture not just the thrilling physical action, but also the sharp dialogue that punctuated this climactic moment.

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Precision and Improvisation

Elwes notes the precision required in fencing, emphasizing the essential synchrony of eye contact and communication to perform complex maneuvers safely. Mandy adds that the thrill of improvisation during filming allowed them to showcase their skills and adapt to the dynamic nature of the duel.

The Final Performance

Ultimately, the swordfight extended to over three minutes, artfully blending clever exchanges of dialogue with the choreography. After countless takes, the culmination of their hard work satisfied Reiner's ambitious expectations, forging a scene destined to become a hallmark of cinematic history.

Conclusion

Both Elwes and Mandy reflect fondly on their unforgettable experience, expressing pride in their performances and the collaborative spirit that crafted what they proudly deem "The Greatest Swordfight in Modern Times." Through their dedication, the scene not only captured a moment of thrilling action but also resonated with heart, humor, and timeless storytelling.

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Chapter 12: ALL GOOD THINGS . . .

In Chapter 12, titled "ALL GOOD THINGS . . .", Cary Elwes offers a poignant reflection on the contrasts of life, emphasizing how moments of triumph can be swiftly followed by sorrow. After wrapping up a crucial sword-fighting scene in **The Princess Bride**, Cary pays a heartfelt visit to his grandfather, Billy McLean, who is gravely ill. Their close bond is evident as Cary reminisces about Billy's vibrant life, including his military service and his serendipitous meeting with famed author Ian Fleming, which imbued Cary's childhood with a sense of adventure and wonder.

During this emotional hospital visit, Cary shares amusing anecdotes from the film's production and conveys his deep love for his grandfather, culminating in a touching moment that echoes the phrase "As You Wish," a significant line from **The Princess Bride**. Tragically, Billy passes away the following morning, leaving Cary to navigate the grief with the support of his cast and crew.

As filming nears its end, Cary prepares to shoot his final scene — a romantic kiss between his character, Westley, and Buttercup, played by Robin Wright. This moment is infused with lightheartedness, as the two actors share laughs, amusingly asking for multiple takes to capture the perfect shot.

The final day of filming is steeped in emotion, filled with heartfelt

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exchanges, hugs, and expressions of gratitude among the cast. Cary reflects on the special camaraderie he developed with Robin and his fellow actors, grappling with the uncertainty of the film's future success even as they celebrate their collaborative journey.

Ultimately, this chapter encapsulates the bittersweet essence of filmmaking — the friendships forged and the inevitable endings — while reinforcing the idea that even as "all good things come to an end," the cherished memories endure forever.

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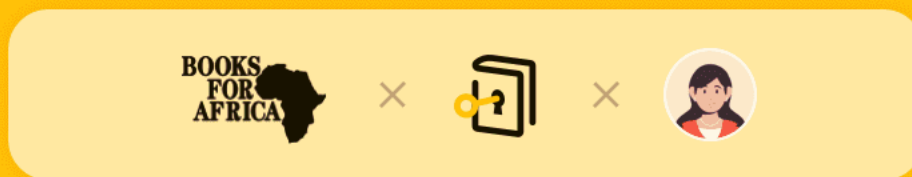




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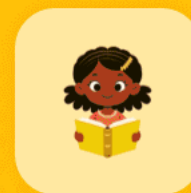
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Chapter 13 Summary: A FAIRY-TALE ENDING

Chapter 13: A Fairy-Tale Ending

In this chapter, we explore the post-production journey and cultural impact of **The Princess Bride**, a film that would go on to achieve legendary status despite its rocky initial release.

The film, originally slated for a summer debut, faced delays due to extensive editing. However, once a rough cut was revealed, consensus among early viewers, including Cary Elwes, was positive. They found it to be both heartwarming and humorous, and the film received acclaim at the Toronto International Film Festival, winning the People's Choice Award, highlighting its early potential to resonate with audiences.

Despite this initial praise, the marketing campaign stumbled. Early promotional materials focused on superficial aspects and failed to capture the essence of the film. This misrepresentation, which leaned towards branding the film as merely a children's adventure, obscured its broad appeal across audiences of all ages. While subsequent marketing efforts improved, mixed critical opinions on the film's genre fusion persisted, complicating its reception.

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Critics were divided; reputable publications such as *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The New York Times* applauded the film's sincerity and sheer entertainment value. Conversely, some commentators felt it strayed too far from traditional fairy tale norms, prompting skepticism. Nonetheless, test screenings showcased positive reactions, demonstrating the film's promise even amidst its perceived shortcomings.

In the aftermath of its lackluster box office debut, *The Princess Bride* found an unexpected resurrection in the VHS market. Word of mouth generated a dedicated fanbase, including notable admirers like Pope John Paul II and President Clinton, both of whom expressed their fondness for the film during personal meetings with Elwes.

As time passed, the film's quotes and memorable themes began to resonate more deeply with audiences, propelling it into cultural relevance and establishing it as a beloved classic. The cast reflected on their experiences and the friendships formed during the filming, expressing gratitude for the unique bond they shared throughout the creative process.

In conclusion, *The Princess Bride* endures as a beloved film that speaks to generations of viewers. Its masterful blend of comedy and adventure offers a timeless storyline, celebrated not just for its charming characters and iconic lines but also for the genuine camaraderie of its creators. This chapter encapsulates the film's transformation from a shaky release to a cherished

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cultural phenomenon.

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