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Family Plays

EDMOND ROSTAND'S

Cyrano de Bergerac



Drama

Adapted into a one-act play by

I.E. CLARK

Cyrano de Bergerac

Probably the most-loved play in all the world's theatre—now available in a one-act version which retains all the charm and heartbreak of the original by Edmund Rostand.

“I am a student who very much enjoyed playing the parts of Roxane and Gammer Gurton in *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*.”
(Pasco, Wash.)

“Because of the success that we had with your one-act version of ‘*Cyrano*’ last year, we would like to try another one of your plays.” (Pittsburgh, Pa.)

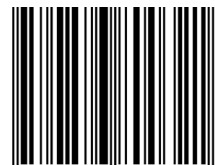
Drama. Adapted by I.E. Clark from the classic by Edmund Rostand.
Cast: 5m., 5w., extras. Long-nosed Cyrano has a sharp sword and a barbed wit, and beneath it all is a tender heart which yearns for Roxane. But she loves Christian. Cyrano's love is so strong that he tries to help Christian win her. These characters bring laughter to audiences of all ages ... and then tears as Cyrano dies in Roxane's arms. This adaptation reduces the five acts to one and utilizes a simple set which will accommodate all the needed scenes. Ideal for assembly programs, classroom demonstrations, contests and festivals, nights of one-acts, and student directing and acting projects. *This adaptation can be staged in any open space—a room, a platform, a lawn, as well as a stage. Place: Paris in the 17th century. Costumes: period. A director's script (prompt book) is available containing drawings of costumes and set, details on all technical aspects of staging and discussion of characterization, plot and theme. It also suggests the complete blocking and full stage directions for all movement and business. Approximate running time: 40 to 45 minutes. Code: CM9.*

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www.FamilyPlays.com

ISBN-10 0-88680-032-3
ISBN-13 978-0-88680-032-1



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Adapted into a One-Act Play

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Printed in the United States of America
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(CYRANO DE BERGERAC)

ISBN: 978-0-88680-032-1

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NOTES ON THE PLAY

Cyrano de Bergerac! The very name brings a tearful smile to one's face.

Poor old Cyrano—such a picture of perfection . . . but such a tragic picture. Poet, philosopher, the best swordsman in France . . . and the longest nose in the world.

There really was a Cyrano, and his life was much like the story which Rostand tells. The real Cyrano was a soldier, a poet, a great swordsman—and he died as the result of a piece of falling timber.

What Rostand has done to the story is to create the world's favorite romance. Here is Cyrano, deeply in love with beautiful Roxane. And Roxane, in her youthful innocence, is infatuated with the handsome face of Christian. Cyrano's love is so deep, so true, that he writes letters for Christian . . . even speaks for Christian beneath Roxane's window . . . because her happiness means more to him than his own. And her innocent heart throbs with the beauty, the sincerity, the undeniable love which the messages convey, never suspecting that they come from anywhere but the heart of her adorable Christian.

The last scene, in which Roxane finally discovers Cyrano's secret love, and realizes—now that it is too late—that it was he whom she loved all along, is one of the most poignant ever staged.

This adaptation of the famous play reduces the five acts to one and utilizes a simple set which will accommodate all the needed scenes. Since this version can be played in 35 to 40 minutes, it makes the play fit numerous situations where the full five-act original won't work, thus bringing this great classic into the lives of many people who would never see the full-length play. Ideal for assembly programs, classroom demonstrations, contests and festivals, nights of one-acts, and student directing and acting projects, this adaptation can be staged in any open space—a room, a platform, a lawn, as well as a stage.

CYRANO DE BERGERAC

Dramatis Personae

Sister Martha

Mother Margaret

Sister Claire

Roxane

Her Duenna

Le Bret

The Cavalier

***The Boor**

Cyrano de Bergerac

***Rageneau**

Christian

Scene: Paris, in the 17th Century

**These parts may be double-cast. The cast may be enlarged by using extras in the theatre scene (page 2) and in the pastry shop scene (page 5), and additional nuns may appear in the convent scenes.*

THE DIRECTOR'S PRODUCTION SCRIPT

Stage directions have been kept to a minimum in this playscript for a specific reason: Many directors encourage their actors and actresses to create their own characterizations without help from the playbook. An imaginative cast member often introduces exciting bits of business and line readings if he is made to do his own thinking. But if printed stage directions do his thinking for him, his own creativity is nearly always stifled. Full stage directions may be found in the Director's Production Script prepared especially for this play.

Most directors are so deluged with details of publicity, ticket sales, and house management that they can never find time enough to devote full attention to staging, blocking, and characterization while also trying to design costumes and set, plan the lighting, arrange for sound effects, and solve all the other problems that play directors are heir to. For these harried directors, the I. E. Clark Company provides a Director's Production Script (prompt book) for many of our plays. The Production Script is loaded with detailed help in staging the show.

Costume sketches, a floor plan drawn to scale, drawings of scenery and hard-to-find props, details of make-up, lights, sound, special effects – the Production Script supplies whatever information is needed to stage the play successfully. Also included are full stage directions showing every actor where to be and what to do virtually every moment he is on stage.

To save the director even more time, the Production Script gives information on the background and significance of the play and goes into detail in describing and discussing the characterization of each role.

Experienced directors know how many hours of research must be spent to stage a play successfully. Our Production Scripts save valuable time even for the most experienced director by supplying authenticated details of period, locale, and other factors which the director or an assistant would have to search for if we hadn't supplied them.

If you find life boring, with plenty of time to do all the things you want to do, our Production Scripts won't appeal to you. But if you have discovered the value of using aids and shortcuts which lift the burden of routine, time-consuming work from your shoulders, you will find our Production Scripts are worth their weight in gold.

Each Production Script is the work of a director who staged a successful production of the play.

Our Production Script is an expert at your side during rehearsals

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Rostand's

Cyrano de Bergerac

Adapted by I. E. Clark

[Chapel chimes strike 5 o'clock as curtain rises. MOTHER MARGARET is seated on a bench in front of a small chapel at Stage Right in the garden of a convent. At Left are a table and chairs. SISTER MARTHA and SISTER CLAIRE enter Up Left and cross to her.]*

SISTER MARTHA. Sister Claire spent more time than necessary looking at herself in the mirror.

MOTHER MARGARET. *[To Sister Claire]* It was unbecoming, my child.

SISTER CLAIRE. Sister Martha finished her meal and then went back for another plum. I saw her!

MOTHER MARGARET. *[To Sister Martha]* My child, it was ill done.

SISTER CLAIRE. I merely glanced!

SISTER MARTHA. The plum was about so big! *[Indicating with her fingers the size of a small raisin.]*

MOTHER MARGARET. *[Rising]* This evening, when Monsieur Cyrano comes, I will tell him.

SISTER MARTHA. He will say that nuns are very vain!

SISTER CLAIRE. And very greedy!

MOTHER MARGARET. And really very good.

SISTER CLAIRE. Mother Margaret, is it true that he comes here every Saturday?

MOTHER MARGARET. Yes, ever since his cousin came here to go into mourning.

SISTER MARTHA. He alone can make her smile.

MOTHER MARGARET. Monsieur de Bergerac is a remarkable man...

SISTER CLAIRE. *[Nodding in agreement]* A poet.

SISTER MARTHA. A philosopher!

SISTER CLAIRE. A musician!

* The Director's Production Script gives details for one set which may be converted in seconds to fit each of the scenes in this play.

MOTHER MARGARET. And also a great swordsman, who uses his strength honorably. You might say that everything about Monsieur de Bergerac is perfect—except for...

SISTER MARTHA. His nose. [*Trying to suppress a giggle as she indicates shape of a long, exaggerated nose.*]

SISTER CLAIRE. I remember the first time I saw him [*giggles*]—I thought, “He’s joking!—surely he will take it off in a moment.”

MOTHER MARGARET. But Monsieur de Bergerac does not take it off—and many men in Paris have regretted the day they smiled....

SISTER CLAIRE. Why does he come here so often to see Madame Magdeleine? Is he—is he...?

MOTHER MARGARET. It’s a long story—Monsieur Le Bret has spent hours telling it to me. And yet, it is one from which you might profit. Monsieur Cyrano first came to the attention of Paris one night at the Hotel de Burgogne, where he had gone to see a play....

[*LIGHTS fade out on NUNS. They exit during the momentary black-out. (See Production Script for quick, simple way to change sets.) We hear crowd noises, and as the LIGHTS dim up we see ROXANE and her DUENNA moving across the stage on the way to their box. Mingled with the crowd noises are such phrases as “How beautiful!”—“What a charming girl,” etc. LE BRET and the CAVALIER stand in front of the door. THE BOOR is milling about among the crowd. As ROXANE passes the CAVALIER and LE BRET they turn and look at her admiringly. THE BOOR leers at her in an ungentlemanly manner.*]

LE BRET. A strawberry set in a peach, and smiling!

CAVALIER. So delicate one wants to protect her in his heart. [*LE BRET and CAVALIER exit. CYRANO’s voice accosts the BOOR from the shadows.*]

CYRANO. [*Unseen*] Face about! [*THE BOOR continues to leer at Roxane, who is now out of sight of the audience.*] Face about, I say...or else tell me why you are staring...[*CYRANO steps into the light*] at my nose!

BOOR. [*Bewildered*] I...?

CYRANO. [*Advancing upon him and posing his profile to the audience*] Do you find my nose unusual?

BOOR. [*Backing away*] Your worship is mistaken.

CYRANO. [*Advancing*] Is it flabby and pendulous, like the nose of an elephant?

BOOR. But I was looking...[*he indicates the direction in which Roxane has disappeared.*]

CYRANO. [*Advancing. THE BOOR keeps backing away until he backs into the table.*] Perhaps you thought it was a peg to hang your hat on!

BOOR. I...

CYRANO. Or that I am advertising a perfumer's shop.

BOOR. Oh...

CYRANO. What is there about my nose that attracts your attention?

BOOR. But I have been careful not so much as to glance at it!

CYRANO. [*Glaring at him, nose to nose*] And why, I pray, should you not look at it?

BOOR. [*Trapped by the table behind him and Cyrano's nose before him*] Oh, Lord!

CYRANO. So it disgusts you? [*Backs away a step*]

BOOR. [*Scurries into the open*] Sir...

CYRANO. Its color strikes you as unwholesome?

BOOR. Sir...

CYRANO. Its shape unfortunate?

BOOR. But far from it!

CYRANO. Then why have you that sympathetic air? [*Nose in profile*] Perhaps monsieur thinks it just a shade too large?

BOOR. Indeed not—no indeed! I think it small—very small—I should have said minute....

CYRANO. What? Accuse me of such a ridiculous defect as a nose too small? Ho!

BOOR. Heavens!

CYRANO. Stupendous, my nose! I am proud of such an appendage! It is the banner of a kindly, courteous, friendly man; one who is witty, liberal, brave—such as I am! [*He grabs THE BOOR by the collar and rubs his hand over THE BOOR's face*] What a flat surface my hand encounters above your neck—devoid of pride!—why, your face has no more nose than that part of your body which now stops my foot! [*CYRANO kicks THE BOOR offstage. CYRANO turns, pleased with himself, and begins strolling casually toward Center. LE BRET, who has been watching from the shadows, steps to CYRANO.*]

LE BRET. Tell me, why do you dislike that man?

CYRANO. He dared to cast his glance on her...her, who—Oh, Le Bret, it was like a worm crawling over a flower!

LE BRET. What? Is it possible...?

CYRANO. [*With a bitter laugh*] That I should love? [*Seriously*] I love.

LE BRET. You never told me....

CYRANO. Whom I love? Come, think a little. What kind of woman would love me with this good nose, which goes before me by a quarter of an hour? Therefore, whom should I choose to love?...Inevitably—the most beautiful that breathes! [*Steps in direction where Roxane has gone.*]

LE BRET. The most beautiful? [*Following CYRANO's eyes to Roxane's box*] Magdeleine Robin, your cousin?

CYRANO. Yes, Roxane.

LE BRET. But what could be better? You love her? Tell her so!

CYRANO. Look at me, dear friend LeBret, and tell me how much hope there is with this protuberance. [*Turning away, XDRC*] I foster no illusions. Oh, sometimes in the violet dusk, I yield to a dreamy mood. In a garden that lies sweetening the hour, my poor great devil of a nose inhales April; and I follow with my eyes some maiden linked to her cavalier. How dear would I hold *her*, walking beside me, like that, slowly, in the soft moonlight. I grow warm—I forget—and then [*he turns to face left, his profile to the audience.*] I see the shadow of my profile upon the garden wall!

LE BRET. My friend.... You weep?

CYRANO. God forbid!—a tear rolling all the way down this nose!

LE BRET. I have seen girls admire your courage and enjoy your wit. Be brave, speak to her. Who knows, she may...

CYRANO. Laugh in my face! That is the only thing on earth I fear. [*The DUENNA has entered and come up behind Cyrano.*]

DUENNA. Monsieur?

CYRANO. [*Turning—he blanches and stutters*] Ah, my God!... her duenna!

DUENNA. [*Curtsyng*] Somebody wishes to know of her valorous cousin where one may, in private, see him.

CYRANO. [*Losing his senses*] Where?...I...but...ah, my God!

DUENNA. Hurry, if you please.

CYRANO. At...at...at Ragueneau's...the pastrycook's.

DUENNA. He lodges?

CYRANO. In...in Rue...Rue St. Honore.

DUENNA. [*Curtsyng and retiring*] We will be there. Do not fail. At seven tomorrow. [*Exit.*]

CYRANO. I'll not fail. [*Clutching LeBret's arm*] To me...from her ...a meeting!

LE BRET. Now will you be calm?

CYRANO. Now I shall be frenetical. I have ten hearts and twenty arms... I cannot now be satisfied with duelling dwarfs... giants are what I want!

CAVALIER. [*Entering in great fright, running to Cyrano*] Monsieur Cyrano, this note bids me beware...a hundred men against me... they threaten to attack me...Porte de Nesle...must pass it to get home. Monsieur, let me come and sleep under your roof.

CYRANO. A hundred, did you say? You shall sleep at home.

CAVALIER. But...

CYRANO. I swear to tuck you in your bed tonight myself. Follow at a distance. You may look on. [*Strides toward exit*]

CAVALIER. But a hundred men...

CYRANO. Are not one man too many for my mood tonight!
 [*Strides out, followed by CAVALIER and LE BRET.*]

[*A musical bridge—perhaps sounds of sword fighting—would be appropriate as lights dim out. The sounds fade, and then, after a brief pause, we hear the jangling of a door bell. The sun rises on RAGUENEAU in chef's hat carrying a tray containing a basket of pastries and glasses of water in preparation for the day's business. The bell jangles indignantly. RAGUENEAU sets the tray on the table and adjusts the chairs, licks his fingers, and runs to the door muttering "Barely daybreak!" CYRANO strides brusquely in.*]

CYRANO. What time is it?

RAGUENEAU. [*Bowing with eager deference*] A quarter to seven.
 [*CYRANO sighs, looks toward the door and paces nervously, wiping his forehead with his right hand, revealing an unbandaged cut.*] What's that on your hand?

CYRANO. [*Pacing*] Nothing. A scratch.

RAGUENEAU. Did you have another fight last night?

CYRANO. It is nothing, I tell you. [*Looking toward door*] What time is it?

RAGUENEAU. Ten minutes to seven.

CYRANO. I am expecting someone. You will leave us alone in here. [*Paces*] The time?

RAGUENEAU. Nearly seven.

[*The bell jangles.*]

CYRANO. [*Impatiently signaling Ragueneau to leave the room*] Now—psst.

[*RAGUENEAU shrugs and exits as ROXANE, masked, comes through the door, followed by her DUENNA.*]

CYRANO. Welcome! [*Grabbing the basket of pastries and approaching the Duenna*] Madame, may I have a word?

DUENNA. Have a dozen.

CYRANO. Are you fond of sweets?

DUENNA. To the point of indigestion!

CYRANO. [*Looking through basket of pastries*] Good! Here are some almond cookies, eclairs, fruit cake, and tarts—with jam.

DUENNA. Ah!

CYRANO. [*Handing her the basket and guiding her to the entrance*] Do me the favor of eating these in the street.

DUENNA. But...

CYRANO. [*Pushing her out*] And do not come back until you have finished every crumb. [*He turns toward ROXANE. They are both obviously stiff and nervous.*] Blessed forevermore is this hour which you chose to come to tell me...to tell me...?