

Cyrano de Bergerac Book Notes

Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand

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Author/Context

Edmond Rostand was born in 1868 in Marseilles, France, on what is now known as Rue Edmond-Rostand. Rostand's family was active in the arts, his uncle was a famous composer, his aunt a poet. Rostand always believed that the more flamboyant aspects of his personality came from his paternal grandmother, who was Spanish. An avid student, Edmond excelled at his schoolwork, and was thought of as his school's best poet. After completing college, Rostand pursued a career in writing, while practicing law during the day to appease his family. He gained national attention in 1887 with the publishing of his first book of poetry, *Les Musardises*. The book was dedicated to his fiancée, Rosemonde Gerard, who he married later the same year. The couple had their first child, Maurice, in 1891. Around then, Rostand began to turn his focus towards writing for the theatre.

Between 1886 and 1887 Rostand wrote his most famous play, *Cyrano*. This was followed by *The Eaglet*. In 1900, he received the Legion of Honor from the French government. His health began to fail, and he retired to the Pyrenees, where he convalesced until his health improved. He never really felt comfortable with the attention that fame brought him, and always preferred to be closer to nature. He was called out of semi-retirement by the actor, Le Bargy, who asked him to write a farewell play to close off his career. Rostand's final play, *The Last Night of Don Juan* was well received by the public, and it proved an appropriate end for his career as a playwright. In his final years, horrified by the nightmare of the first World War, Rostand took to writing patriotic poems to inspire his countrymen. He lived just long enough to see the war end, dying only weeks after Armistice Day, in 1918.

Cyrano De Bergerac is the most important of Rostand's plays, and also his most successful. Many consider it to be one of the finest plays that France has ever produced. It was inspired by a real-life figure, who was one of the world's first writers of science-fiction, as well as a famous swordsman and poet. It was a bit of an anachronism when first produced, it was a throwback to the Romantic period of French theater, which ended in the early part of the 19th century. The producers of the play were so sure that it wouldn't succeed that they kept all expenses down to a minimum, forcing Rostand to pay for all the character's period costumes himself - an expense of over one hundred thousand francs. After the first performance of the play, once the curtain had closed, the audience gave it a round of applause that lasted for over an hour. The character of Cyrano has grown into one of the theatre's most beloved roles, and the play is one of the most frequently produced in the world. The play has been adapted into film on more than ten occasions, and its continuing popularity to this day is a tribute to the how universal the themes and characters of the play are.

Bibliography

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Rostand, Edmond and John Murrell, Trans. *Cyrano de Bergerac*, T. Blizzard Publishing Inc., Winnipeg, 1995.

Plot Summary

People come to the theatre in the Hotel de Bourgogne for many reasons - most are there to attend a famous play. Christian is there to find out the name of the woman he's fallen in love with from afar. Cyrano is there to keep the lead actor, Montfleury from performing - which he has forbidden. Christian is told that the woman's name is Roxane, and learns that an evil Nobleman, De Guiche, is attempting to make her his consort. Cyrano appears, shocking most with his unusually large nose. He intimidates Montfleury offstage, but is then insulted by one of De Guiche's friends, Valvert, who doesn't believe that Cyrano is as fierce as everyone says. Cyrano kills Valvert in a duel while composing a poem, and the audience begins to leave. Roxane's chaperone arranges a meeting between Roxanne and Cyrano the next morning. Then, Cyrano hears that a poet friend of his has a hundred assassins waiting for him on the way home, so Cyrano leads the way, offering to fight all of them. A crowd of people follows Cyrano to witness the spectacle.

The next day, Cyrano waits in his friend's bakery for Roxanne to arrive. She is his cousin, but he is secretly in love with her, and always has been. He's too nervous to tell her how he feels, so he writes a letter to give to her. Roxane arrives to talk with Cyrano, confessing that she's fallen in love with someone. Cyrano is happy for a moment, then he realizes that she's talking about Christian, and she wants Cyrano to help Christian get used to the city - since Christian has just joined the Royal Guard, which Cyrano is the most famous member of. Cyrano promises to look after Christian, and then Roxane leaves. The Royal Guard arrives to congratulate Cyrano on defeating the assassins. De Guiche arrives, and offers to become Cyrano's patron, but Cyrano refuses, and De Guiche leaves. Christian, tricked by the other soldiers, makes the mistake of making fun of Cyrano's nose. To everyone's surprise, Cyrano doesn't hurt Christian, but instead asks to speak to him alone. Once they're alone together, Cyrano explains to Christian that Roxane is in love with him, and tells Christian to write her a love letter. Christian doesn't have any skill with words, so Cyrano gives his love letter to Christian and tells him to sign it and give it to Roxane.

It is now a few weeks later. Cyrano and Christian wait outside Roxane's house. Cyrano has been tutoring Christian on intelligent things to say in conversation to Roxane. Christian thinks he's ready to handle it himself, so Cyrano hides in the shadows. When Roxane comes home, Christian can't think of anything to say, and he offends her. Cyrano offers to help Christian again, feeding him things to say from under Roxane's balcony. Christian can't say the words fast enough, though, so Cyrano just does it himself, telling Roxane how much he loves her while pretending to be Christian. He wins her heart, and she invites Christian inside for a kiss. Meanwhile, De Guiche plans to marry Roxane off to someone insignificant so no one will suspect that she's his mistress. He sends over a monk to perform the ceremony, under the mistaken impression that Christian is ugly and unworthy of Roxane. De Guiche comes to see the ceremony, but Cyrano delays him with fantastic stories until it's too late, and Christian has married Roxane. De Guiche realizes that he's been tricked, and sends Cyrano and Christian's regiment off to fight on the front line in the war with Spain.



The Royal Guard is camped outside the walls of a city, besieged by Spanish troops. There is no food and everyone is starving. Cyrano returns from mailing one of the letters he fakes from Christian to Roxane. He sees that the men are weary and low on morale, so he gives a speech to rile them men. De Guiche arrives, and tells the Royal Guard that they are going to be used as sacrificial troops to distract the enemy while the real attack begins. Christian tells Cyrano that he wishes he had time to say goodbye to Roxane. Cyrano gives Christian a farewell letter, one that tells Roxane he'll never see her again. Christian is suddenly suspicious - the letter has tears on it. Why would Cyrano care so much? Roxane arrives in a carriage, bringing food for everyone. De Guiche tries to convince her to leave, but when she insists on staying, he agrees to stay as well. Christian has figured out that Cyrano is in love with Roxane, and that all along the things he's been writing in the letters have been his own feelings. Christian demands to know who Roxane really loves, him, or the person who wrote the letters, so he demands that Cyrano tell her the truth and let her decide. Before Cyrano can tell her, Christian is killed in battle, and Cyrano decides to never tell her. Roxane reads Christian's farewell letter and faints. Cyrano tells De Guiche to take her away from the fight. Cyrano and the remaining Royal Guard prepare themselves for the final attack. The Spanish break through their defenses and the battle begins.

It is fifteen years later in a convent outside of Paris. Roxane lives as a secluded widow. Every week, Cyrano comes to give her news from the world. Two of Cyrano's friends arrive to visit, and privately they confer - Cyrano has been attacked, and he's close to death. Neither one knows how to tell Roxane. They go to check on Cyrano's condition, just as Cyrano comes to visit Roxane. He starts reading her his weekly report, then he grows weak, and asks to see the last letter Christian wrote to her. She gives it to him, and he begins reading it to her. Roxane realizes that Cyrano knows the letter by heart, and she figures out that it was Cyrano writing to her all along. Cyrano admits it, and explains that he's only telling her because he's dying. He asks Roxane if she could mourn both him and Christian in her heart, and she agrees. Cyrano composes one last poem while fencing with an invisible enemy, and then finally, he dies.



Major Characters

Christian: A rural nobleman, Christian comes to Paris to become a Musketeer and join the Royal Guard. He falls in love with Roxane from afar. More beautiful than intelligent, he believes that he isn't witty or clever enough for her, so he enlists Cyrano's help to win her heart.

Cyrano: The titular character, he is a Musketeer equally famous for his nose as his enormous panache. As skilled with his wit as he is with his blade, Cyrano fancies himself the most admirable of all men, but can't believe that any woman could love him because of his huge, ugly nose. He helps Christian by writing love letters to Roxane in Christian's name.

Roxane: Cyrano's cousin, she is an unmarried orphan, the object of many men's affections. She falls in love with Christian because he's so beautiful, and is convinced to marry him by Cyrano's poetry.

Minor Characters

Cuigy: A minor nobleman and hanger-on, always at the fringe of Paris nightlife.

Brissaille: Cuigy's friend, another minor nobleman.

Ligniere: A drunken poet and friend to Cyrano. Cyrano saves him from an ambush.

Ragueneau: The proprietor of a famous bakery and rotisserie, he is known as a patron of the arts, and is also a poet himself. After losing his bakery, he takes on a number of different jobs, including becoming Roxane's butler.

Montfleury: A famous actor, he earns Cyrano's hate by ogling Roxane, the woman Cyrano loves.

Le Bret: A good friend to Cyrano, he tries to convince Cyrano to confess his love to Roxane.

De Guiche: A nobleman who covets Roxane. He's already married, so he plans to have Roxane marry his best friend Valvert. When that falls through due to untimely death, he has his uncle, Cardinal Richlieu, order Roxane to marry Christian, under the mistaken impression that he is ugly and that she cares nothing for him. When he finds out about the scam, he sends Christian and Cyrano off to war. Finally he is redeemed when he agrees to fight alongside the Royal Guard at Arras.

Valvert: De Guiche's friend. He makes the unfortunate decision to insult Cyrano, and finds himself skewered both by Cyrano's wit, and his blade.

Lise: Ragueneau's wife, she is singularly uninterested in his fascination with poetry.



Poets: These are the lesser poets that Ragueneau supports with free pastries exchanged for poems, odes, and ballads.

Musketeer: He a friend of Lise, and they are too fond of each other for Cyrano's liking.

Chaperone: Because Roxane is an orphan, she has a chaperone with her in public to protect her virtue until she is married.

Carbon: The Captain of the Royal Guards, he is another good friend of Cyrano's.

Monk: He comes looking for Roxane, bringing a message from De Guiche. He then performs the marriage ceremony for them.

Objects/Places

Paris: The capital of France, the home of the Musketeers, and the setting of play.

Arras: A city in Spain, the Royal Guard are trapped between it and a regiment of Spanish Soldiers.

Moliere's theatre: Moliere's is one of France's most famous playwrights, the idea that he stole from one of Cyrano's plays is rather funny.

Quotes

Quote 1: "1st Marquis: Our adorable little poets have arrived.

2nd Marquis: My dear, do you know them intimately?

1st Marquis: Intimately? At least." Act 1, pg. 18

Quote 2: "What if she turns out to be a prude - or an intellectual? I wouldn't dare speak to her, I don't have the brains. The way people speak and write nowadays makes my head hurt. I'm just an honest, simple, terrified soldier." Act 1, pg. 20

Quote 3: "He's famous for his long - sword." Act 1, pg. 21

Quote 4: "Ragueneau: Cyrano de Bergerac, that specter, that paragon,
That terror of trifles from Norway to Aragon,
Both genius and monster, unique, unexplainable,
He has every quirk and every virtue obtainable.
His clothes? As outlandish as his personality-
Three huge plumes for his hat- 'To hell with frugality!'
Bizarrest of all the birds hatched out of Gascony-
Is your cause a lost one? You've only to ask and he
Will rush to defend you with wit and audacity,
With valour beyond mankind's normal capacity,
This dreamer whose vigour, whose kindness, whose verity
Are great as his nose - God forgive my temerity!-
But truly that nose is the glorious cross he bears,
Like some raging sardonic demon's emboss he wears.
I've heard strangers cry, 'Wait - and we'll see it taken off!'
But that man's nasal destiny cannot be shaken of!" Act 1, pg. 22

Quote 5: "Swine! Did I not forbid you to appear?!" Act 1, pg. 27

Quote 6: "Cyrano: My nose is Gargantuan! You little Pig-snout, you tiny Monkey-Nostrils, you virtually invisible Pekinese-Puss, don't you realize that a nose like mine is both sceptre and orb, a monument to me superiority? A great nose is the banner of a great man, a generous heart, a towering spirit, an expansive soul - such as I unmistakably am, and such as you dare not to dream of being, with your bilious weasel's eyes and no nose to keep them apart! With your face as lacking in all distinction - as lacking, I say, in interest, as lacking in pride, in imagination, in honesty, in lyricism - in a word, as lacking in nose as that other offensively bland expanse at the opposite end of your cringing spine - which I now remove from my sight by stringent application of my boot!" Act 1, pg. 34

Quote 7: "My wit is more polished than your moustache. The truth which I speak strikes more sparks from men's hearts than your spurs do from the cobblestones." Act 1, pg. 36



Quote 8: "Cyrano: Thus I toss my poor hat aside,
And shrug off my threadbare cape,
The crowd's eyes are open wide
And many a mouth is agape,
As I take my sword by the nape
And draw out its form so fine
From which there is no escape,
For tonight, Valvert - you are mine!
Too bad that you chose to deride
This vicious old Bergerac ape
(My teeth are as hard as my hide),
Yet when you are dead I will drape
Your corpse with the finest of crepe,
So that all know your taste was 'divine,'
Though you should have avoided a scrape
With the master - for now, you are mine!
I must find now a sharp rhyme for 'pride'-
You're panting, you're red as a grape!
Is that ardor or terror inside?
What began as a lark, as a jape,
Now concludes with a rout, with a rape,
With your virginal courage supine,
As a puddle on honour's landscape-
Turn around, little girl - you are mine!
Final Chorus:
It's a shame, sir, to alter a shape
As refined, as expensive as thine,
But, to spare you life's endless red tape,
I will edit you - There you are mine!" Act 1, pg. 38-9

Quote 9: "Le Bret: To Pay off a pack of actors - what silliness! Cyrano: Ah, but what style!" Act 1, pg. 40

Quote 10: "Cuigy: But - one hundred- Cyrano: I know. I outnumber them, but I shall go gently with them at first." Act 1, pg. 45

Quote 11: "Does it seem strange: a hundred cutthroats against one poor poet? It is not strange. It is a minimal defense, mademoiselle- (Drawing his sword; quietly.) -when that poet is a friend of Cyrano de Bergerac." Act 1, pg. 47

Quote 12: "Cyrano: I had no worthy opponent. Lise: Lying through you teeth again, as usual! Cyrano: Better than lying through my nose. Now that would be a gargantuan falsehood!" Act 2, pg. 52

Quote 13: "You're a genuinely good man. There aren't many of you left." Act 2, pg. 56

Quote 14: "Roxane: His face is like yours, burning with spirit and imagination. He is proud and noble and young and fearless and beautiful-
Cyrano:(losing all his colour.) Beautiful!
Roxane: Yes. What's wrong?
Cyrano: With me? Nothing. It's only... only... (Displaying his bandaged hand, with a little smile.) This fatal wound." Act 2, pg. 60

Quote 15: "Ragueneau: Is it all over? Cyrano: Just so." Act 2, pg. 62

Quote 16: "(Hand on the hilt of his sword.) I shall mortalize the lot of you!" Act 2, pg. 65

Quote 17: "I would die at the stake rather than change a semi-colon!" Act 2, pg. 67

Quote 18: "De Guiche: Remember: they make formidable enemies.
Cyrano: Do they? Those large empty machines which twist and turn in every gust of fashion?
De Guiche: Beware: they can gather you easily in their lofty arms and hurl you down to the gutter!
Cyrano: Or up, into the stars!" Act 2, pg. 69

Quote 19: "It is addressed to the bravest, the brainiest, the blondest, the most beautiful woman on earth! How could she think it was meant for anyone but her?" Act 2, pg. 78

Quote 20: "De Guiche: You're not totally immune to me, are you? (Roxane smiles cryptically.) Why else would you concoct such a delicious revenge? It must be a gesture of love.
Roxane: Believe me, it is." Act 3, pg. 85

Quote 21: "Cyrano: Yes, it is perfect. Your white gown swathed in the blue-black mantle of night. I am only a voice, and you are a point of light. I may have spoken Beautifully to you in the past-
Roxane: You know you have-
Cyrano: Because I have been forced to speak through-
Roxane: Through what?
Cyrano: Through the whirlwind which your eyes stir up inside me. But now, in this blessed darkness, I feel I am speaking to you for the first time.
Roxane: It's true, even your voice has changed." Act 3. pg. 93

Quote 22: "Cyrano: And what is a kiss, specifically? A pledge properly sealed, a promise seasoned to taste, a vow stamped with the immediacy of a lip, a rosy circle drawn around the verb "to love." A kiss is a message too intimate for the ear, infinity captured in the bee's brief visit to a flower, secular communication with an aftertaste of heaven, the pulse rising from the heart to utter its name on a lover's lip: 'Forever.'" Act 3, pg. 97

Quote 23: "Cyrano: God's whiskers! Your face is hideous as the demon's in my storybook!
De Guiche: (Touching his mask.) You mean this?
Cyrano: (His teeth chattering.) Have I fallen into Hell?



De Guiche: It's only a mask.

Cyrano: (Calming down a little.) So, are you dressed up for Carnival?

De Guiche: (Again trying to step around him.) No, for a rendezvous with a young lady.

Cyrano: (Hanging on to him.) Aha! Then this must be Paris!" Act 3, pg. 97

Quote 24: "Cyrano: I'll do what I can. I cannot promise-

Roxane: Promise me he will be careful!

Cyrano: At the front?

Roxane: Promise me that he won't catch cold!

Cyrano: I'll lend him a blanket.

Roxane: And that he'll be faithful!

Cyrano: He's just taken a vow to do that.

Roxane: And that he will write to me, every single day!

Cyrano: (Turns back, looks at her.) That I do promise. With all my heart." Act 3, pg. 107

Quote 25: "Cyrano: There. There is our soul. The same reed, the same fingers which have piped us into combat, call us softly home, in our thoughts. This is no longer the shrill call to attack, it is every shepherd who ever inhabited our land, whispering his sheep to fold. Listen. It is your hillside, your earth, your forest - your younger brother, suntanned under his red woolen cap. It is the green solitude of nights you spent beside the Sordogne. Listen my countrymen. It is our country calling." Act 4, pg. 113

Quote 26: "De Guiche: Nevertheless, I saved the day! Cyrano: You saved your life. At the expense of your honour." Act 4, pg. 116

Quote 27: "From the King of Kings - Love" Act 4, pg. 121

Quote 28: "De Guiche: No! I never intended-

Roxane: Oh, don't take it so hard. I drove into this madness. Every woman needs a little madness in her life.

Cyrano: Remarkable. You're as casual about death as if it were the theatre.

Roxane: I am your cousin, Monsieur de Bergerac." Act 4, Page 123

Quote 29: "Christian: Cyrano?

Cyrano: What now? You look as pale as death.

Christian: She doesn't love me.

Cyrano: What?

Christian: She loves you

Cyrano: What?

Christian: She told me, "I love only your soul."

Cyrano: What?

Christian: You are the soul she loves. And you love her too.

Cyrano: What?

Christian: I know you do.

Cyrano: Yes, I do.

Christian: Madly.

Cyrano: More than that.



Christian: Tell her.

Cyrano: Never.

Christian: Why not?

Cyrano: Tell her? With this face?

Christian: She said, "If you were ugly, I would only love you more."

Cyrano: She said that?

Christian: Yes." Act 4, pg. 133-4

Quote 30: "Cyrano: Roxane-

Roxane: It was you!

Cyrano: No, Roxane, not true-

Roxane: Yes, that is the way my love spoke my name.

Cyrano: No! It was not I-

Roxane: It was always you!

Cyrano: I swear to you-

Roxane: How obvious it is now - the gift you gave him. All those letters, they were you.

Cyrano: No!

Roxane: All those beautiful powerful words, they were you!

Cyrano: No.

Roxane: The voice from the shadows, that was you.

Cyrano: How can I convince you-?

Roxane: You always loved me!

Cyrano: He always loved you!

Roxane: But not as you do!" Act 5, pg. 153

Quote 31: "Ragueneau: Oh, my colleague - we laughed - we laughed-! Cyrano: Well, my greatest victories were won under an assumed name." Act 5, pg. 155

Quote 32: "Cyrano: I know, you will leave me with nothing - neither the laurel nor the rose. Take it all then! There is one possession I take with me from this place. Tonight when I stand before God - and bow low to him, so that my forehead brushes his footstool, the firmament - I will stand again and proudly show Him that one pure possession - which I have never ceased to cherish or to share with all- (Swinging his sword high again.)

-and that is-

(The sword escapes from his grasp. He shudders and falls back. Le Bret and Ragueneau catch him and lower him gently to the earth.)

Roxane: (Rushes to him, kneels, kisses his forehead.) And that is...?

Cyrano: (Opens his eyes, sees her and smiles.) My enormous - panache." Act 5, pg. 157

Topic Tracking: Art and Poetry

Act 1

Art and Poetry 1: Raguneau believes so strongly in the importance of poetry that he uses his position as a baker to support starving poets, allowing them to trade works of poetry for food. He even bartered food for his admission to the theatre.

Art and Poetry 2: Cyrano is so offended by Montfleury's poor performance that he would sooner kill the man than allow him to appear onstage.

Art and Poetry 3: Cyrano believes that life should be lived as if it was a heroic poem - he goes so far as to compose a ballad about a duel as he is duelling, ending the poem as he kills Valvert.

Act 2

Art and Poetry 4: Ragueneau is so obsessed with poetry that he's willing to give away food to reclaim the poems that his wife tried to get rid of.

Art and Poetry 5: Cyrano is a wonderful poet, and he's much too terrified to tell her in person, so he relies on the written word to express his love to her.

Art and Poetry 6: Cyrano is fiercely protective of his plays. He believes that to attack his works of poetry and drama would be far more grievous a crime than anything anyone could do to him.

Act 3

Art and Poetry 7: Christian feels that he has learned enough from Cyrano, and wants to try charming her on his own, but he just doesn't have a poetic or artistic soul, so Roxane sees through his attempts, unimpressed.

Act 5

Art and Poetry 8: Even though Cyrano is dying, and this is his last chance to tell Roxane that he loves her, he still can't come out and say it. He only has the confidence to speak to her through his poetry.



Topic Tracking: Honor

Act 1

Honor 1: Cyrano accepts responsibility for ruining the play, and offers all of his money to the actors to keep them from having to take a loss on the night's theatre performance.

Honor 2: Cyrano so defines himself as a man of honor that he extends that nature to his unbelievable nose, going so far as to verbally attack the Irritable fan's normal nose as being completely inadequate.

Honor 3: Cyrano, a true musketeer and man of honor, prizes his honor above all else. When Valvert insults him, Cyrano does what honor dictates, and kills Valvert.

Act 2

Honor 4: Cyrano can't bear to see his good friend Ragueneau being dishonored by his wife, so he demands that she stop sneaking around with her Musketeer.

Honor 5: After Christian insults him, Cyrano is forced to choose between the two most important things in the world to him - his honor, and his love Roxane. He finally swallows his pride and befriends Christian.

Act 3

Honor 6: Roxane correctly informs De Guiche that the best way to get his revenge on Cyrano would be to keep him out of the war with Spain. Cyrano could never accept the damage to his honor that would result in his being forced to sit aside when everyone else was waging war.

Act 4

Honor 7: Even though they are starving and hopeless, Cyrano manages to rally his troops by appealing to their sense of national pride. He sings their regimental song, and reminds them what honor is.

Honor 8: Cyrano humiliates De Guiche by exposing him as a coward in front of the other men. Cyrano reminds De Guiche that he cannot be a true soldier, a true Frenchman, because he's not willing to put his honor before his life.

Honor 9: Cyrano had promised to tell Roxane the truth and let her decide who she loves. But after Christian is killed, he can't bear to break Roxane's heart by telling her the truth - so for the first time, he breaks his word.

Act 5

Honor 10: Cyrano can't bear the thought of having been killed by an unknown assassin. So he stages a final duel for himself, a heroic struggle in which he strikes down bad principles, until finally, he can't fight any more, and is slain by death.

Topic Tracking: Love

Act 1

Love 1: Christian is eager to duel Valvert in an attempt to prove his love to Roxane, even after he's been told how dangerous Valvert is.

Love 2: Cyrano reveals that he had another reason for threatening Montfleury - he's in love with Roxane, and couldn't bear the lecherous way that Montfleury was looking at her.

Love 3: Cyrano and Christian are both in love with Roxane, but neither feels confident enough to approach her - Cyrano because he's too ugly, and Christian because he's too uncouth.

Act 2

Love 4: Roxane is so blinded by the ideal love she imagines in Christian that she can't even imagine that he isn't the perfect man. She refuses to believe that he couldn't be witless. Cyrano is so in love with Roxane that he'll do anything she asks, even if it helps his competition for her affections.

Act 3

Love 5: Roxane is so obsessed with Christian that she is willing to steal from Cyrano the one thing he would more than anything, an opportunity to go to war.

Love 6: Finally able to throw off his self-loathing by standing in the darkness, pretending to be someone else, Cyrano expresses his love to Roxane. He's able to win her heart - but it's Christian who gets the kiss.

Love 7: Cyrano has accepted that he's lost Roxane forever, but still he wants to connect with her in the only way he can - by writing love letters to her, even if they are in Christian's name.

Act 4

Love 8: Even though she faces almost certain death, Roxane has become so committed to Christian that she's willing to risk her life, even die, so long as she gets to do it with her husband.

Act 5

Love 9: Roxane finally realizes that it was Cyrano she fell in love with from the letters, but it's too late to do anything about it. All she can do is mourn both men as her departed husbands, because truly, it was a combination of the two of them that she loved most of all.

Act 1

There is a theatre set up in the former indoor tennis court of the Hotel de Bourgogne. There is a poster on the wall announcing that tonight's play will be 'La Clorise'. Two Cavaliers barge in without paying and practice fencing in the audience pit. A few stagehands gamble while waiting for the show to start. A Guardsman approaches a Flower Girl and attempts to lure her away for a romantic rendezvous. A middle-class citizen enters with his son, and is disgusted by all the sin and debauchery on display in the theatre. A group of Pages enter, planning to shoot peas at the audience and steal wigs with fishing lines. While the citizen tells his son about the play and its author, a Cutpurse and his assistants work the growing crowd, stealing money and fine articles of clothing. Some minor nobleman enter, including Cuigy and Brissaille. They're disappointed that, in the small crowd, that no one has particularly noticed them: A lamplighter enters and lights the stage, signaling that the play is about to start.

Ligniere enters with Christian de Neuville. Cuigy notices them, and Ligniere makes introduction. The noblemen gossip quietly about Christian, wondering about his wardrobe and position. Christian has just moved to Paris from the country so that he can join the Royal Guard. The noblemen point out all the other famous or noteworthy people in the crowd, all of whom they're familiar with: "1st Marquis: Our adorable little poets have arrived. 2nd Marquis: My dear, do you know them intimately? 1st Marquis: Intimately? At least." Act 1, pg. 18. Ligniere says he's going to the bar next door for a drink. Christian won't let him leave - he needs Ligniere to tell him the name of a beautiful woman that he's only seen from afar at the theatre. He needs to know what he's getting into before he tries to approach her: "What if she turns out to be a prude - or an intellectual? I wouldn't dare speak to her, I don't have the brains. The way people speak and write nowadays makes my head hurt. I'm just an honest, simple, terrified soldier." Act 1, pg. 20. Ligniere is insistent upon leaving, until he discovers he can get liquor in the theatre.

Ragueneau enters, and is introduced to Christian as the 'Pastry chef to the arts', because of his habit of trading food for poems. He asks if Cyrano is at the show. Ligniere asks why that concerns him. Ragueneau explains that Cyrano has forbidden Montfleury, the lead actor, from appearing onstage for a month - and Montfleury is appearing tonight. The noblemen overhear the conversation, and one asks who Cyrano is, Cuigy replies "He's famous for his long - sword." Act 1, pg. 21. Cuigy calls Le Bret, another of Cyrano's friends, over. They struggle to describe him, then Ligniere asks Ragueneau to recite the poem he's written about Cyrano:

*"Ragueneau: Cyrano de Bergerac, that specter, that paragon,
That terror of trifles from Norway to Aragon,
Both genius and monster, unique, unexplainable,
He has every quirk and every virtue obtainable.
His clothes? As outlandish as his personality-
Three huge plumes for his hat- 'To hell with frugality!'
Bizarrest of all the birds hatched out of Gascony-*



*Is your cause a lost one? You've only to ask and he
Will rush to defend you with wit and audacity,
With valour beyond mankind's normal capacity,
This dreamer whose vigour, whose kindness, whose verity
Are great as his nose - God forgive my temerity!-
But truly that nose is the glorious cross he bears,
Like some raging sardonic demon's emboss he wears.
I've heard strangers cry, 'Wait - and we'll see it taken off!'
But that man's nasal destiny cannot be shaken off!" Act 1, pg. 22*

Topic Tracking: Art and Poetry 1

Everyone agrees that Cyrano is a fierce fighter, and they pity anyone who might mock his nose. Everyone's attention goes to the balcony, as Roxane enters and sits in her private box. Ligniere identifies her to Christian as a cousin to Cyrano, who is refined, noble, and unmarried. Christian is disappointed to learn that she might be too refined for him. De Guiche enters and speaks with Roxane. Ligniere tells Christian that De Guiche is rich and powerful, and plans to marry Roxane to his best friend Valvert, who will overlook De Guiche making time with his wife. Christian walks toward the exit, planning to slap Valvert - challenge him to a duel. Ligniere warns Christian that Valvert is quite a swordsman, and tells him that Roxane is watching him, and he shouldn't do anything rash. While Christian looks up at Roxane, the Cutpurse approaches, ready to rob him. Ligniere leaves, headed for the bar.

Topic Tracking: Love 1

Le Bret and Ragueneau have failed to find Cyrano in the theatre. Maybe he hasn't come, after all. The two noblemen fawn falsely over De Guiche, who ignores them. Christian hears Valvert's name, and reaches for a glove to challenge him with - instead, he catches the Cutpurse about to rob him. The Cutpurse begs for his freedom, and tells Christian that someone has plotted to kill Ligniere in an ambush - one hundred men are waiting for him on his way home from the bar. Christian runs off to look for Ligniere.

The audience all takes their seats, anxious for the show to begin. The middle class citizen has his wig snatched by the Pages with their fishing line. As the play begins, everyone quiets down and behaves. Montfleury walks on stage and begins his performance. From the audience, a Voice is heard: "Swine! Did I not forbid you to appear?!" Act 1, pg. 27 Everyone in the audience is confused for a moment, except for Cuigy and Le Bret, who know what is about to happen. That Audience insists that Montfleury continues, and he does, nervously. The Voice continues to loudly threaten Montfleury as its owner strides through the crowd and climbs onto a chair, revealing himself to be Cyrano - huge nose and all. Montfleury looks to his friend, the minor noblemen, for help, but Cyrano shuts them up with a threat.

Cyrano continues to mock Montfleury's acting ability. The Audience demands that Montfleury continue acting, and tries to boo and shove Cyrano off the stage. Cyrano spins, his hand on his sword, and everyone backs away from him. The audience sings

mockingly, trying to convince Cyrano to leave the stage. They yell insults, and Cyrano insults them back. Finally, when they won't shut up, Cyrano challenges everyone in the audience to a fight - anyone that wishes to challenge him can up onto the stage and fight him. The audience shuts up fast. Cyrano sits calmly on his chair, and gives Montfleury until the count of three claps to leave the stage. Montfleury protests, then disappears on the third clap. The Audience demands that the comedian Jodelet come out. As he does, a Young Man approaches Cyrano, and asks why he hates Montfleury so much. Cyrano replies that he has two reasons: First, because Montfleury is a bad actor. The second is a secret.

Topic Tracking: Art and Poetry 2

The Lead Actor asks Cyrano what they're supposed to do now that the show is cancelled. Cyrano gives him a purse full of gold so that they can return the audience its money, and still make a profit for the evening. An Irritable Fan suggests that Cyrano is in great trouble, because Montfleury has a powerful Patron, and Cyrano has no one to protect him. Cyrano replies that he needs nothing but his sword. The Irritable Fan continues pestering Cyrano, until Cyrano accuses the Fan of staring at his nose. The Fan tries to deny it, but Cyrano presses the issue, refusing to let it go, until:

Topic Tracking: Honor 1

"Cyrano: My nose is Gargantuan! You little Pig-shout, you tiny Monkey-Nostrils, you virtually invisible Pekinese-Puss, don't you realize that a nose like mine is both sceptre and orb, a monument to me superiority? A great nose is the banner of a great man, a generous heart, a towering spirit, an expansive soul - such as I unmistakably am, and such as you dare not to dream of being, with your bilious weasel's eyes and no nose to keep them apart! With your face as lacking in all distinction - as lacking, I say, in interest, as lacking in pride, in imagination, in honesty, in lyricism - in a word, as lacking in nose as that other offensively bland expanse at the opposite end of your cringing spine - which I now remove from my sight by stringent application of my boot!" Act 1, pg. 34

Topic Tracking: Honor 2

Bored with Cyrano's antics, De Guiche and his crowd of minor noblemen walk down from the platform. Trying to impress De Guiche, Valvert decides that he's going to humiliate Cyrano. Valvert tries to do this by calling Cyrano's nose large. Cyrano is unimpressed, and humiliates Valvert by offering many more effective insults that he could have used. He then dismisses Valvert as being pathetic and witless, and dares him to come up with an original insult. Valvert is petrified, and De Guiche tries to drag him away. Valvert attempts to insult Cyrano, by pointing out his lack of fancy dress. Cyrano replies that all of his virtues are on the inside, and outer trappings mean nothing to him: "My wit is more polished than your moustache. The truth which I speak strikes more sparks from men's hearts than your spurs do from the cobblestones." Act 1, pg. 36



Valvert insults Cyrano's mother and calls him a freak. Cyrano challenges Valvert to a duel, and Valvert accepts, spitting and calling Cyrano a 'poet'. Cyrano agrees, and announces that he will compose a ballad during the duel, and as the ballad ends, he will kill Valvert. As they begin to duel, Cyrano matches his fighting to the poem he speaks:

*"Cyrano: Thus I toss my poor hat aside,
And shrug off my threadbare cape,
The crowd's eyes are open wide
And many a mouth is agape,
As I take my sword by the nape
And draw out its form so fine
From which there is no escape,
For tonight, Valvert - you are mine!
Too bad that you chose to deride
This vicious old Bergerac ape
(My teeth are as hard as my hide),
Yet when you are dead I will drape
Your corpse with the finest of crepe,
So that all know your taste was 'divine,'
Though you should have avoided a scrape
With the master - for now, you are mine!
I must find now a sharp rhyme for 'pride'-
You're panting, you're red as a grape!
Is that ardor or terror inside?
What began as a lark, as a jape,
Now concludes with a rout, with a rape,
With your virginal courage supine,
As a puddle on honour's landscape-
Turn around, little girl - you are mine!
Final Chorus:
It's a shame, sir, to alter a shape
As refined, as expensive as thine,
But, to spare you life's endless red tape,
I will edit you - There you are mine!" Act 1, pg. 38-9*

Topic Tracking: Honor 3

Topic Tracking: Art and Poetry 3

Cyrano stabs Valvert, who falls away, and is caught by his entourage. Everyone applauds Cyrano's performance. Even D'Artagnan approaches and congratulates Cyrano on his swordplay. As the theatre begins to clear out, Le Bret and Cyrano step aside. Cyrano refuses a meal, explaining to Le Bret that he can't afford to eat. The purse he threw to the actors was his entire month's allowance. "Le Bret: To Pay off a pack of actors - what silliness! Cyrano: Ah, but what style!" Act 1, pg. 40 A Buffet Attendant offers Cyrano free food, in appreciation of his performance. Cyrano accepts only a grape, half a macaroon, and some water - and the lady's hand, which he kisses. Le Bret scolds Cyrano for being so outrageous, for devoting his life to impressing fools



and making enemies. Cyrano announces that he's finally decided on some direction in his life - he's going to become the most admirable and admired of men. Le Bret asks why Cyrano actually hates Montfleury. Cyrano tells him that Montfleury has a habit of eyeing the women in the gallery lecherously, and he made the mistake of looking at the object of Cyrano's affections, the beautiful Roxane, who he idolizes and loves from afar. Le Bret suggests that Cyrano just tell Roxane how he feels, Cyrano says that he would like to, but he believes that he's too ugly for any woman to love, especially Roxane.

Topic Tracking: Love 2

Roxane's Chaperone enters, and asks if Cyrano might be free to meet with Roxane tomorrow in private. Cyrano is flustered and doesn't know how to respond - he suggests that they meet in Ragueneau's bakery shop. The Chaperone agrees, and sets the meeting for Seven AM, then leaves. Cyrano is ecstatic, he wants to prove his vigor and virtue before his meeting with Roxane, but he doesn't know how to do it. Just then, Cuigy, Brissaile, and some military men drag a drunk Ligniere into the theatre. Ligniere tells Cyrano about the ambush, and asks if he can sleep at Cyrano's house. Cyrano announces that he will go along with Ligniere to protect him. "Cuigy: But - one hundred- Cyrano: I know. I outnumber them, but I shall go gently with them at first." Act 1, pg. 45 Le Bret is skeptical, but Cyrano ignores him, reminding everyone that he wants no help - even if there are a thousand men waiting for Ligniere. The actors and musicians are so impressed that they follow Cyrano out onto the street, excited by the spectacle about to unfold before them. Quietly, Cyrano explains the situation to the Soubrette, Georgette: "Does it seem strange: a hundred cutthroats against one poor poet? It is not strange. It is a minimal defense, mademoiselle- (Drawing his sword; quietly.) -when that poet is a friend of Cyrano de Bergerac." Act 1, pg. 47

Topic Tracking: Love 3

Act 2

Ragueneau's pastry shop and rotisserie is abuzz with movement. Chefs and Apprentices scurry around, cooking pastries and birds. Ragueneau sits at a cluttered desk, working on a poem. He directs the chefs on the finer points of cooking while counting off poetic meter on his fingers. An apprentice chef approaches with a gift - a lyre made of pastry. Ragueneau is impressed, and pays the Apprentice for his ingenuity. Ragueneau's wife, Lise enters, quite unimpressed with the Lyre. She hands him some paper bags. Ragueneau is horrified to discover that Lise has crafted the bags out of the poetry that his friends have used to pay for food. Two Youngsters buy three raisin tarts, and Ragueneau can't bear to give away any of the paper bags. Finally he chooses one, and wraps it around the tarts - but the second his wife's back is turned, he offers the Youngsters another three tarts in exchange for the bag.

Topic Tracking: Art and Poetry 4

Cyrano enters the pastry shop and demands to know the time. He discovers that he still has an hour to wait before Roxane arrives. Ragueneau congratulates Cyrano on his spectacular duel the night before. Lise notices that Cyrano's hand is injured. She asks who his 'worthy opponent' was: "Cyrano: I had no worthy opponent. Lise: Lying through you teeth again, as usual! Cyrano: Better than lying through my nose. Now that would be a gargantuan falsehood!" Act 2, pg. 52 Cyrano asks Ragueneau to ensure that when Roxane arrives the two of them can have some time alone. Ragueneau offers to do what he can, but warns Cyrano that some Poets are arriving for breakfast. Cyrano demands a pen. A Musketeer enters, and is treated warmly by Lise. Cyrano debates just writing Roxane a letter so that he can express his feelings without having to talk to her. Try as he might, though, he can't express his feelings on paper. He redoubles his efforts.

Topic Tracking: Art and Poetry 5

The Poets enter, excitedly talking about the remains of a massacre the night before, where a lone man had slain eight assassins in the street. Lise asks the Musketeer about it, and he falsely implies that he was responsible. While Ragueneau regales the poets with his latest work, a poem about making an Almond Tart, Cyrano struggles to put his feelings for Roxane into the letter. After the poem is done, the Poets congratulate Ragueneau and resume eating his free food. Cyrano compliments Ragueneau on supporting the poets: "You're a genuinely good man. There aren't many of you left." Act 2, pg. 56 After Ragueneau goes back to the poets, Cyrano calls Lise over - she has to tear herself away from the Musketeer's embrace. Cyrano tells Lise that he doesn't like the way she's insulting her husband. Lise is offended and retreats, asking her Musketeer to confront Cyrano - the Musketeer defers, a little afraid of Cyrano.

Topic Tracking: Honor 4



Cyrano sees Roxane approaching. He signals to Ragueneau, who moves the Poets into another room. Roxane and her Chaperone enter. Cyrano takes the Chaperone aside and hands her the poetry-covered bags, filled with pastries. He shoos her out the door so he can have some time alone with Roxane. Roxane thanks Cyrano for killing Valvert at the theatre - she dreaded the idea of being forced to marry him, and knew all about De Guiche's plan. They reminisce about her childhood visits to his home in Bergerac, where they would play, a Queen and her Soldier. She notices the cut on his hand, and ask what happened. He changes the subject and asks why she wanted to see him. Roxane announces that she's in love with someone. He's shocked, unable to say anything but 'Aha' as she explains that the person she's in love with doesn't know yet, and that she thinks he's in love with her, but just too shy to say. She goes on to tell Cyrano that the man she loves is just like him, a Royal Guard, in the same regiment - exactly like Cyrano, except for one thing:

"Roxane: His face is like yours, burning with spirit and imagination. He is proud and noble and young and fearless and beautiful-

Cyrano:(losing all his colour.) Beautiful!

Roxane: Yes. What's wrong?

Cyrano: With me? Nothing. It's only... only... (Displaying his bandaged hand, with a little smile.) This fatal wound." Act 2, pg. 60

Roxane tells Cyrano that they haven't actually met, just seen each other at the theatre. She has found out that his name is Christian and that he has just joined Cyrano's regiment. Cyrano starts to ask how she could be in love with a man that she's barely met, when the Chaperone enters. He shoos her back out, suggesting that she read the poems. Cyrano asks what Roxane will do if, despite his beauty, Christian turns out to be a witless scoundrel. She refuses to even consider the possibility. Cyrano asks why Roxane wanted to see him. She'd heard that Cyrano's regiment is very hard on new recruits if they aren't from Gascony, and she want Cyrano to befriend Christian, and act as his protector. Through clenched teeth, Cyrano promises to do it. She asks Cyrano to make sure that Christian writes to her. She tells Cyrano that she loves him as if he were her brother, then leaves. Cyrano is left staring at the floor, broken. Ragueneau peeks in: "Ragueneau: Is it all over? Cyrano: Just so." Act 2, pg. 62

Topic Tracking: Love 4

Carbon De Castel-Jaloux enters dramatically. He congratulates Cyrano on last night's battle, and asks him to come across the street, where the rest of the regiment is drinking in his honour. Cyrano refuses, but that doesn't stop Carbon. He loudly announces that Cyrano is hiding in the bakery, and dozens of Soldiers and Officers rush across into the Bakery to congratulate him. Cyrano thanks them. Le Bret enters, telling Cyrano that there is a huge crowd waiting in the street to celebrate him, led by the witnesses to his fight the night before. Cyrano finds him surrounded by well-wishers: Marquis who want to be his friend, a Journalist who wants to tell his story, and the crowd outside constantly chants his name. Countless poets want to immortalize him in verse, and Cyrano replies: *"(Hand on the hilt of his sword.) I shall mortalize the lot of you!"* Act 2, pg. 65 More people flood into the shop, including Cuigy, Brissaile and De



Guiche. De Guiche praises Cyrano somewhat half-heartedly. Cyrano doesn't respond. De Guiche makes an off-handed comment about Cyrano's regiment, after which Carbon insists that Cyrano sings the regimental song that he composed. It bores De Guiche.

After Cyrano has finished singing, De Guiche offers to become his patron. Cyrano refuses. De Guiche suggests that if Cyrano becomes his poet, he can introduce him to his uncle, Cardinal Richelieu. Le Bret reminds Cyrano that with De Guiche's backing he could see his plays produced! De Guiche offers to show the plays to his uncle, who can perhaps edit them a little. Cyrano is offended: "I would die at the stake rather than change a semi-colon!" Act 2, pg. 67 A Young Guard enters, carrying the hats of the men Cyrano battled the night before. Cuigy wonders who hired the assassins. De Guiche reveals that it was him. He wanted to kill Ligniere because he was sick of being insulted in poems and songs. Cyrano drops the hats at De Guiche's feet and suggests he return them to his thugs. De Guiche is offended - just before leaving furiously, he threatens Cyrano, comparing him to don Quixote and the windmills, but Cyrano's wit turns the metaphor against De Guiche:

"De Guiche: Remember: they make formidable enemies.

Cyrano: Do they? Those large empty machines which twist and turn in every gust of fashion?

De Guiche: Beware: they can gather you easily in their lofty arms and hurl you down to the gutter!

Cyrano: Or up, into the stars!" Act 2, pg. 69

Topic Tracking: Art and Poetry 6

De Guiche storms out angrily, effectively ending the party. The crowd thins out and the remaining soldiers sit and begin to eat. Le Bret is furious - he demands to know why Cyrano would go out of his way to offend such a powerful man - a potential Patron. Cyrano responds in an extended speech that to write for money, to write for others, deadens the poet's art, it removes the fire and the passion. He would rather be a beggar writing for himself than a rich poet working for some faceless nobleman, listening to critics and editors. Le Bret asks why Cyrano prefers enemies to friends - Cyrano responds that he trusts enemies. Friends can betray you, but you always know what an enemy wants. Le Bret suggests that Cyrano is just upset because Roxane doesn't love him, but Cyrano won't respond. Christian is in the bakery, sitting on his own, being ostracized by the other Soldiers. They warn him never to mention the word 'Nose'. Christian assumes it's just part of the hazing, and when Cyrano begins the story of his battle, Christian makes a subtle jab about Cyrano's nose. Cyrano asks who said 'nose', and is told that it's Christian. He controls his anger, and continues the story. Then Christian makes another joke about his nose. Cyrano fights to control himself as Christian continues making jokes about his nose. All the other soldiers wait for the other shoe to drop, but Cyrano holds it in. Finally, he can't take it any more, and he demands that everyone leave him alone with Christian.

Topic Tracking: Honor 5



The soldiers reluctantly leave, hating to miss the fight. Once they're alone, Cyrano embraces Christian, and explains that he's the almost-brother of the woman Christian loves. Christian apologizes for his insults. Cyrano informs Christian that Roxane will be expecting a letter from him. Christian tells Cyrano that he has no wit when it comes to matters of love - he's hopeless. Cyrano tells Christian that put together they are the perfect man, one with both wit and beauty. Christian doesn't understand, so Cyrano explains it to him - he will give Christian things to say, things that will win Roxane's heart. Christian asks what Cyrano will get out of it. Cyrano claims that it will entertain him - maybe he'll write a play about it. Christian wonders how he'll be able to write a letter before this evening. Cyrano hands Christian the letter he wrote to Roxane, and tells him to sign his name to it. Christian asks if it is appropriate for Roxane. Cyrano responds, somewhat sadly: "It is addressed to the bravest, the brainiest, the blondest, the most beautiful woman on earth! How could she think it was meant for anyone but her?" Act 2, pg. 78 The two men embrace, friends. A few of the Guards peek back in and see this, confused. Assuming that Cyrano has turned coward, the Musketeer walks over to Cyrano and insults his nose while calling him a coward. Cyrano waits for a second, then punches the Musketeer out. Everyone cheers.

Act 3

Roxane's Chaperone sits on a bench below the balcony of Roxane's house. Ragueneau tells her the story of how his wife left him and he tried to kill himself - but Cyrano saved his life and got him a job as Roxane's butler. The Chaperone yells into the house, trying to hurry Roxane so they won't be late for the seminar they're going to on the subject of unrequited love. Cyrano enters, trying to teach two musicians how to better play their instruments. Roxane hears Cyrano downstairs and asks him to wait. Cyrano send the musicians off to play outside Montfleury's house. Roxane comes out of her house, and discusses Christian with Cyrano. She tells Cyrano that Christian's poetic soul is just as beautiful as his face. She praises his letters, and Cyrano acts indifferent. Roxane believes it's simply jealousy over Christian's poetic ability. The Chaperone announces that De Guiche is approaching. Roxane hurries Cyrano into the house to keep him from causing trouble.

De Guiche enters and announces that he's leaving for the war. Roxane doesn't care. De Guiche mentions that he is the supreme commander of their forces, and that he'll be personally commanding the Royal Guard. Roxane is suddenly fearful for Christian, but she covers it up. She asks De Guiche if his plan is to get revenge on Cyrano by sending him to battle. De Guiche smiles. Roxane suggests a 'better' revenge - she tells De Guiche that Cyrano will be destroyed if his regiment is left behind while everyone else goes to war. De Guiche approaches Roxane:

"De Guiche: You're not totally immune to me, are you? (Roxane smiles cryptically.) Why else would you concoct such a delicious revenge? It must be a gesture of love.

Roxane: Believe me, it is." Act 3, pg. 85

De Guiche gets rid of the letter and suggests to Roxane that she should accompany him into a monastery where they can consummate their relationship. Roxane refuses, telling him that she couldn't love a man unless he was courageous. De Guiche leaves for the war. Roxane warns her Chaperone not to tell Cyrano any of this - he really would hate to miss the war. Cyrano comes back out of the mansion. Roxane tells Cyrano that she's expecting Christian, and asks Cyrano to keep him there until after the lecture is done. Cyrano asks Roxane what subject she'll be asking Christian to talk about tonight. She replies 'Love'. Cyrano agrees not to give Christian any warning. Roxane goes with the Chaperone into the house across the street.

Topic Tracking: Honor 6

Topic Tracking: Love 5

Christian steps out of the shadows. Cyrano starts to tell him what to say, but Christian refuses. He's convinced that she loves him enough that he can just be himself. The door across the street opens - Roxane has missed the seminar. Christian loses his nerve and begs Cyrano to stay with him. Cyrano refuses, and hides in the shadows under the balcony. After everyone has left, Christian and Roxane sit on the bench, and she tells him that she's ready to hear him speak on love. Christian tries, but he can't come up



with anything better than just telling her he loves her. Roxane gets frustrated. Christian tries to put his love into words, but can't, and Roxane slams the door in his face.

Topic Tracking: Art and Poetry 7

Christian begs Cyrano for help, but Cyrano refuses, saying it's too late to coach him. Christian pleads, and Cyrano has an idea. He positions Christian in front of the balcony, while he stands under it, so he can prompt him. The musicians re-enter, having been chased off by Montfleury. Cyrano tells them to stand in the street and play if they see anyone coming. Christian gets Roxane's attention, and convinces her to listen to him for a moment - he tells her of his love, repeating lines whispered by Cyrano. Roxane asks why he speaks so haltingly. Cyrano drags Christian aside and takes his place, standing enough in the shadows that Roxane can't tell it's him. He makes excuses for his awkwardness, and they verbally spar until Cyrano can explain why he must stay in the darkness:

"Cyrano: Yes, it is perfect. Your white gown swathed in the blue-black mantle of night. I am only a voice, and you are a point of light. I may have spoken Beautifully to you in the past-

Roxane: You know you have-

Cyrano: Because I have been forced to speak through-

Roxane: Through what?

Cyrano: Through the whirlwind which your eyes stir up inside me. But now, in this blessed darkness, I feel I am speaking to you for the first time.

Roxane: It's true, even your voice has changed." Act 3, pg. 93

Cyrano explains his true feelings for Roxane - she is shocked by the power of his words, she had no idea that Christian felt so strongly about her. He explains that everything pales next to love. Subtlety has no place holding it back, wit only serves to drain its power. He is completely obsessed with her, everything she does is perfection in his eyes. He wants nothing but to convince her of his love for her, and to know that she feels it to. Roxane tells him that she loves him. Cyrano announces that he can die now, there's nothing left to live for. Christian tells Cyrano to ask for a kiss. Roxane hears it, and asks if he demands the kiss. Cyrano tries to cover while trying to get Christian to keep his mouth shut. Just then the musicians play a tune. Roxane goes back inside, and Cyrano watches a Monk enter. The monk announces that he's looking for Roxane's house. Cyrano tells him it's up the street. Christian tells Cyrano that he wants a kiss from Roxane. Cyrano tells him that he doesn't deserve it, but agrees that it's inevitable. Roxane steps back onto the balcony and asks if he still wants the kiss.

Topic Tracking: Love 6

"Cyrano: And what is a kiss, specifically? A pledge properly sealed, a promise seasoned to taste, a vow stamped with the immediacy of a lip, a rosy circle drawn around the verb "to love." A kiss is a message too intimate for the ear, infinity captured in the bee's brief visit to a flower, secular communication with an aftertaste of heaven, the pulse rising from the heart to utter its name on a lover's lip: 'Forever.'" Act 3, pg. 97



Roxane tells him to climb up to the balcony and claim his prize. Cyrano pushes Christian to the balcony, telling him to go for it. Christian panics, says he doesn't deserve the kiss - Cyrano shoves him. Christian finally climbs the balcony and kisses Roxane. Repeatedly. Cyrano can barely stand it - his heart is torn apart. Just then, the music plays, alerting Cyrano that the Monk is back. Cyrano claim confusion about the name the monk asked for in the first place. Christian, Ragueneau and Roxane come out the front door. The Monk gives Roxane a letter, which she reads aloud. De Guiche says that he sent the army ahead, but he stayed behind so he could see her again, encouraged by her smile. The letter also gives her a command - she must have the Monk marry her to Christian that very night. The monk hesitate to marry them when he sees how beautiful Christian is, but Roxane bribes him to continue. Roxane asks Cyrano to keep De Guiche from arriving long enough for the wedding to finish - fifteen minutes. Cyrano promises that he will. Everyone but Cyrano goes inside.

Cyrano ponders how he can delay De Guiche. Cyrano climbs up onto a wall beside the house and prepares to fall from it. De Guiche enters, wearing a mask. As De Guiche reaches the house, Cyrano dives off the wall, swings on a branch, and falls onto the ground in front of him. Cyrano pretends to be dazed, asking De Guiche where and when he is. He claims to have just fallen from the moon, and he speaks with a strange voice so De Guiche won't recognize him. De Guiche keeps trying to push past him, but Cyrano refuses to let him, using any excuse to keep talking:

"Cyrano: God's whiskers! Your face is hideous as the demon's in my storybook!

De Guiche: (Touching his mask.) You mean this?

Cyrano: (His teeth chattering.) Have I fallen into Hell?

De Guiche: It's only a mask.

Cyrano: (Calming down a little.) So, are you dressed up for Carnival?

De Guiche: (Again trying to step around him.) No, for a rendezvous with a young lady.

Cyrano: (Hanging on to him.) Aha! Then this must be Paris!" Act 3, pg. 97

De Guiche keeps trying to get past Cyrano, but Cyrano keeps stepping in front of him and telling tall tales of meeting all the constellations - and being attacked by most of them. Cyrano finally manages to interest De Guiche when he says that he invented six separate methods of space travel. First, he covered himself with vials of dew, and when the sun hit him, he lifted into the air, just like dew evaporates. Then he constructed a makeshift balloon out of a cedar log and mirrors. Third, he built a giant metal grasshopper that leapt into the sky. Fourth, he smoked so much that he was able to fill a sphere with it, then rode the sphere into the sky. Fifth, he covered himself in the blood of beasts, so that the full moon would cause him to shake into the sky. Finally, he lay down on a piece of metal, then threw a magnet into the air - the metal rose to meet the magnet, which he caught, and then threw again, until he was in outer space. He begins to tell the now-fascinated De Guiche a seventh method, but then he stops and returns to his normal voice, telling De Guiche that it no longer matters - fifteen minutes are up, and the wedding is over. De Guiche sees the couple come out with the Monk and realizes he's been fooled. He gives the orders to Christian, and tells him to deliver them to the Royal Guard immediately - depriving him of a wedding night. Cyrano tries to drag Christian away from Roxane, and Roxane makes Cyrano promise to protect him:



"Cyrano: I'll do what I can. I cannot promise-

Roxane: Promise me he will be careful!

Cyrano: At the front?

Roxane: Promise me that he won't catch cold!

Cyrano: I'll lend him a blanket.

Roxane: And that he'll be faithful!

Cyrano: He's just taken a vow to do that.

Roxane: And that he will write to me, every single day!

Cyrano: (Turns back, looks at her.) That I do promise. With all my heart." Act 3, pg. 107

Topic Tracking: Love 7

Act 4

The Royal guards have besieged Arras, but find themselves besieged from behind by another group of Spanish Soldiers. Their encampment is trapped between. Carbon, Le Bret, and Christian are there, as well as other Sentries and Guards. All the men are starving and tired, and they don't know how much longer they can hold out. There is a series of musket shots near their walls. The guards start to arm themselves, fearing an attack - Carbon tells them it's just Cyrano, running through the battlefield. Once he's inside safely, Carbon tells Cyrano that it's insane for him to risk his life just to mail a letter every day. Cyrano responds that he promised. He then goes to his tent to write another letter. The sun comes up, and the men begin to wake, complaining about their hunger. Carbon tries to lure Cyrano from his tent so that he can rally the troops. Finally Cyrano comes out, and asks the soldiers what their complaints are. No matter what they say, he crafts a witty response to shut them up. He reminds them that it's better to die in the field of battle than in a sick bed. The men still complain about their hunger. Cyrano singles one of them out - a musician, and tells him to play a tune on his fife:

"Cyrano: There. There is our soul. The same reed, the same fingers which have piped us into combat, call us softly home, in our thoughts. This is no longer the shrill call to attack, it is every shepherd who ever inhabited our land, whispering his sheep to fold. Listen. It is your hillside, your earth, your forest - your younger brother, suntanned under his red woolen cap. It is the green solitude of nights you spent beside the Sordogne. Listen my countrymen. It is our country calling." Act 4, pg. 113

Topic Tracking: Honor 7

After Cyrano finishes speaking, all the men are somber, tears in their eyes. Carbon worries they've been softened. Cyrano replies that they've been reminded of what they're fighting for - after a drum roll, they're all ready to fight. A guard announces that De Guiche is coming. The men talk about him resentfully, sick of his haughty attitude and pretension. Cyrano tells everyone to relax. They do. De Guiche arrives, and is sickened that the Royal Guard doesn't have more respect for him. He tries to have them disciplined, but Carbon reminds him that the Royal Guard is made up of noblemen, all volunteers - they don't have to follow orders except in battle. De Guiche tries to inspire the troops with a heroic tale - he lost control of his horse, and was headed for enemy camp, so he jumped off his horse and threw away the white scarf that identified his rank. He then snuck back into camp. Cyrano reminds De Guiche that Henry the 4th rode into the enemy ranks, and would never have given up his white plume. "De Guiche: Nevertheless, I saved the day! Cyrano: You saved your life. At the expense of your honour." Act 4, pg. 116 Cyrano asks for the white scarf, saying that if De Guiche doesn't have the guts, he'll be happy to lead the troops into battle. De Guiche reminds Cyrano that the enemy has the scarf - no one could get it back. Cyrano takes the scarf out of his pocket. He offers it to De Guiche.

Topic Tracking: Honor 8



De Guiche glares at the Guards, then takes the scarf and waves it over the top of the battlements. He explains that he has a traitor in the Spanish ranks, and that he had to signal him with a white flag. De Guiche explains his plan: A number of troops have snuck away to get the food, supplies and reinforcements that the French army needs, but their flank has been left unguarded. De Guiche's traitor can arrange for the Spanish attack to strike a certain regiment, and De Guiche has just signaled them to attack the Royal Guards. He tells Carbon that the Royal Guard will have to hold off the Spaniards for an entire day. They will probably all be killed. Cyrano suggests that De Guiche is just trying to get revenge on him. De Guiche admits that he is - he's tired of the Royal Guards showing him up, and he hopes they're all killed.

The Guards prepare for battle. Cyrano walks over to Christian, who is staring off into space. He tells Cyrano that he wishes he had more time - that he could say goodbye to Roxane. Cyrano tells Christian that he's anticipated this, and that he'd just finished writing Christian's farewell letter. Christian reads the letter, and notices that it's smudged with tears. Cyrano explains that to make the letter more believable as a farewell, he had to cry on it. Christian is suddenly suspicious - he takes the letter and reads it again. A Sentinel announces that a Carriage is coming over the battlefield. The driver says it's bearing a message from the King. De Guiche prepares himself. As the carriage arrives, the driver climbs down - it's Ragueneau, in disguise. Everyone salutes the carriage, and Roxane steps out. De Guiche is confused. Isn't she bringing a message from the King? She says she does, "From the King of Kings - Love" Act 4, pg. 121 They ask how she got there - Roxane responds that all she did was have the carriage move slowly through the enemy ranks. When someone tried to stop her, she just told them that she was on her way to visit her lover, and they let her through. Christian is happy to see her, but insists that she must leave, as does everyone else. They tell her that the regiment is going to be sacrificed. She announces that she's willing to die as long as it's along with her husband.

Topic Tracking: Love 8

"De Guiche: No! I never intended-

Roxane: Oh, don't take it so hard. I drove into this madness. Every woman needs a little madness in her life.

Cyrano: Remarkable. You're as casual about death as if it were the theatre.

Roxane: I am your cousin, Monsieur de Bergerac." Act 4, Page 123

Roxane tells De Guiche to leave. He offers to take her with him, but she refuses. De Guiche leaves, knowing the attack will come soon. Carbon introduces Roxane to all the soldiers, and she gives them her handkerchief to use as a banner. Roxane then announces that her coachman is Ragueneau, and they've brought food enough for everyone. While the men feast, Cyrano tries to take Christian aside to talk before he talks to Roxane, but Roxane has Christian help her hand out the food. Le Bret announces that De Guiche is coming back. They quickly hide all the food. De Guiche tells them that he can only spare one cannon to defend themselves. He asks Roxane to come away with him, and when she refuses, he announces that he will be staying to fight as well. The other Guards begin to respect De Guiche a little. Carbon organizes



the troops, getting them ready for the coming battle. Cyrano takes Christian aside, and explains to him that there were many more letters than he knew about. Christian thought there were only letters when the mail came through, but Cyrano tells Christian that he's been sneaking out behind enemy lines, sending off two letters every day. Cyrano tries to claim that he was doing it on Christian's behalf, but Christian has figured out that Cyrano loves Roxane as well. Before they can talk, Roxane comes down to talk to Christian, and Cyrano runs to his tent. Christian asks why Roxane came to the front, she replies that it was because of his letters. She tells him that she truly loved him ever since that night he spoke to her from under the balcony. Christian nearly breaks down as he realizes that Roxane doesn't really love him, she loves the poet who wrote the letters and spoke to her on the balcony. Christian tells her that he preferred it when they loved each other from afar, but Roxane says it's much better now that she's seen into his soul, and she would love him even if he were horribly ugly. Christian tries to hide his heartbreak. He asks Roxane to comfort the men, and then he goes to speak to Cyrano:

"Christian: Cyrano?

Cyrano: What now? You look as pale as death.

Christian: She doesn't love me.

Cyrano: What?

Christian: She loves you.

Cyrano: What?

Christian: She told me, 'I love only your soul.'

Cyrano: What?

Christian: You are the soul she loves. And you love her too.

Cyrano: What?

Christian: I know you do.

Cyrano: Yes, I do.

Christian: Madly.

Cyrano: More than that.

Christian: Tell her.

Cyrano: Never.

Christian: Why not?

Cyrano: Tell her? With this face?

Christian: She said, 'If you were ugly, I would only love you more.'

Cyrano: She said that?

Christian: Yes." Act 4, pg. 133-4

Christian demands that Cyrano tell her and they let her decide who she loves. Cyrano refuses. Christian wants to know why Cyrano thinks that his ugliness means he should be unhappy. Cyrano asks Christian why he thinks that his lack of wit means he shouldn't be loved. Christian can't bear to be half a man any more, he leaves, telling Cyrano to talk to Roxane while he's gone. Roxane comes to talk to Cyrano, after Christian tells her that he has a secret. Cyrano asks her if it's true, that she would love Christian even if he was a freak. She assures him that she would. He's about to tell her when Le Bret rushes in and whispers something to Cyrano. Roxane asks what the secret is. Cyrano tells her that the secret was that Christian was always the bravest soldier. Roxane realizes that Christian has just been killed. She breaks down in tears, repeating his name. The

Guards fire at the approaching troops. Cyrano goes to the dying Christian and tells him that Roxane knows everything, and that she chose him. Christian dies.

Topic Tracking: Honor 9

As the battle grows more fierce, Roxane finds Cyrano's farewell letter in Christian's pocket. She reads it, and then faints. De Guiche announces that the reinforcements have arrived. The Spanish forces try to surrender, but the Guards refuse. Cyrano tells De Guiche to take Roxane to safety. Roxane, De Guiche, and Ragueneau leave. The battle turns against the Guards. Carbon stumbles in, mortally wounded. Cyrano rallies his troops around Roxane's handkerchief stuck atop a lance. Spanish Soldiers and Musketeers climb on top of the ramparts and fire into the camp, killing many of the Guards. The Spanish troops flood into the camp, and engage the remaining Royal Guards in hand-to-hand combat.

Act 5

It is fifteen years later, in a convent outside of Paris. Three nuns, Sister Claire, Sister Marthe, and Mother Marguerite talk, establishing that after Christian died, Roxane lost all love of life, and moved to the convent, and that Cyrano comes to visit her every Saturday. All of the nuns are fond of Cyrano, but they've heard from his friend Le Bret that he's poor, and often doesn't eat for days at a time. He's too proud to ask for help from any of his friends. Roxane enters, wearing a widow's clothing. She walks with De Guiche, now a duke. The nuns leave to give them some privacy. De Guiche asks Roxane if she has forgiven him. She says that she's forgiven everything. She wears the final letter next to her heart, and she says that it feels like Christian never died, because his love is always with her. De Guiche asks about Cyrano. Roxane tells him that Cyrano visits her with perfect regularity. Le Bret enters, and Roxane asks about Cyrano. Le Bret says he spends most of his time writing and starving himself - making new enemies, as always. De Guiche says goodbye, and mentions how much he envies Cyrano - a man who lived without compromise. He then turns to Le Bret and tells him that he fears people might be plotting against Cyrano, he recommends that Cyrano keep under the radar. Le Bret doubts that Cyrano will ever play it safe.

A Nun enters, and announces that Ragueneau has arrived. He rushes in to tell Roxane something, but she leaves with De Guiche before he can. Ragueneau asks if he should tell Roxane that Cyrano has been injured. As he walked down the street, someone pushed a log out a window, and it struck his head. Ragueneau suspects foul play. A doctor has been to see Cyrano, and it doesn't look good. Le Bret and Ragueneau leave to go see Cyrano. Roxane reenters and sees them leaving. Marthe and Claire enter, carrying Cyrano's chair. They place it under his tree. The bells tolls Six O'clock. Cyrano enters, looking pale, his hat pulled low, covering the bandages on his head. He apologizes for being late, and tells her that he was delayed by a persistent creditors. Roxane doesn't realize that he's talking about death. Cyrano jokes with Marthe about eating meat on Friday. They joke with each other, then Marthe leaves. Cyrano begins giving Roxane's the week's news, as he does every week. As he reaches the end of the week, he spaces out, and Roxane is concerned. He tells her it's nothing more than an old war wound from the siege of Arras. Roxane tells Cyrano that she feels a little better every day, and she still wears the last letter around her neck. Cyrano asks to read it. Cyrano reads the letter, which is about saying goodbye to Roxane, knowing that he will never see her again. He puts all his heart and soul into the reading, and Roxane recognizes his voice from the night under the balcony. She realizes that Cyrano isn't reading the letter - there isn't any light. He's reciting it from memory. She confronts him.

Topic Tracking: Art and Poetry 8

"Cyrano: Roxane-

Roxane: It was you!

Cyrano: No, Roxane, not true-

Roxane: Yes, that is the way my love spoke my name.

Cyrano: No! It was not I-



Roxane: It was always you!

Cyrano: I swear to you-

Roxane: How obvious it is now - the gift you gave him. All those letters, they were you.

Cyrano: No!

Roxane: All those beautiful powerful words, they were you!

Cyrano: No.

Roxane: The voice from the shadows, that was you.

Cyrano: How can I convince you-?

Roxane: You always loved me!

Cyrano: He always loved you!

Roxane: But not as you do!" Act 5, pg. 153

Roxane asks why Cyrano finally decided to tell her. Le Bret and Ragueneau re-enter. Cyrano finishes his weekly report. The last item: Cyrano de Bergerac has been murdered by an assassin. Cyrano tells them not to worry about him - his death has some poetry to it. He asks Ragueneau what his job is. Ragueneau says that he works at Moliere's theatre, and that Moliere stole a scene from one of Cyrano's plays. Cyrano asks if the scene worked: "Ragueneau: Oh, my colleague - we laughed - we laughed-! Cyrano: Well, my greatest victories were won under an assumed name." Act 5, pg. 155 Roxane tries to go to the nuns for help, but Cyrano stops her, telling her that he doesn't want her to miss the last scene. Roxane apologizes for making his life so miserable, but Cyrano tells her that she was all he could hope for. Cyrano tells her that he feels his life slipping away, that the sky and the moon are calling him. Le Bret refuses to accept Cyrano dying such a plain death. Cyrano decides to compose a final poem. When it's finished, he asks Roxane for one favor - could she mourn both him and Christian, could she think of herself as both their widows? Roxane agrees. Cyrano feels himself slipping away, but he refuses to sit or relax. He draws his sword and begins to duel with death. He speaks to it, slashing his sword through the air, striking down dishonesty, corruption, and prejudice. He refuses to surrender, fighting on faster and faster until he almost collapses.

Topic Tracking: Love 9

Topic Tracking: Honor 10

"Cyrano: I know, you will leave me with nothing - neither the laurel nor the rose. Take it all then! There is one possession I take with me from this place. Tonight when I stand before God - and bow low to him, so that my forehead brushes his footstool, the firmament - I will stand again and proudly show Him that one pure possession - which I have never ceased to cherish or to share with all-

(Swinging his sword high again.)

-and that is-

(The sword escapes from his grasp. He shudders and falls back. Le Bret and Ragueneau catch him and lower him gently to the earth.)

Roxane: (Rushes to him, kneels, kisses his forehead.) And that is...?

Cyrano: (Opens his eyes, sees her and smiles.) My enormous - panache." Act 5, pg. 157

He dies.