

The play I am planning for the fall is by Shakespeare, but I'm going to assign an audition piece from *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand. (Rostand was French, so this is in translation.) The character Cyrano has an enormous nose that makes him ugly. In performance, an actor would wear a prosthetic nose for a spectacular makeup job to get this effect, so in auditions you should pretend that this huge nose is plastered on your face, not that you're talking about your real nose.

This passage is very long and I do not want anyone to recite the whole thing. Instead, choose parts of it to memorize and perform. When choosing, it is fine to skip through it; for example, you might do the lines pertaining to curious, gracious, and emphatic without doing the parts in between. The descriptive words (such as curious, gracious, and emphatic) *are* part of the spoken lines. How much to memorize? That's up to you, partly depending on how large of a speaking part you're hoping to have in our fall play, but the most ambitious of you should not go for more than half this monologue. The minimum would be to include at least two descriptors to show variety. I'm including the Viscount dialogue at the beginning just to give you a little bit of context; that won't be part of what you perform.

Girls --- There are female parts in the fall play, but for auditions I decided for everyone to do Cyrano. In doing this monologue, you don't have to pretend to be a man; you can do it as a female version of Cyrano.

\*\*\*\*\*

Excerpt from "Cyrano de Bergerac" by Edmond Rostand

**Cyrano's Monologue describing his own nose**

**THE VISCOUNT:** No one? But wait! I'll treat him to. . .one of my quips! . . .

See here! . . . (He goes up to Cyrano, who is watching him, and with a conceited air): Sir, your nose is. . .hmm. . .it is. . .very big!

**CYRANO** (gravely): Very!

**THE VISCOUNT** (laughing): Ha!

**CYRANO** (imperturbably): Is that all? . . .

**THE VISCOUNT:** What do you mean?

**CYRANO:** Ah no! young blade! That was a trifle short!

You might have said at least a hundred things

By varying the tone. . .like this, suppose,. . .

*Aggressive:* 'Sir, if I had such a nose I'd amputate it!'

*Friendly:* 'When you sup It must annoy you, dipping in your cup;

You need a drinking-bowl of special shape!'

*Descriptive:* 'Tis a rock!. . .a peak!. . .a cape! --

A cape, forsooth! 'Tis a peninsular!'

*Curious:* 'How serves that oblong capsular?'

For scissor-sheath? Or pot to hold your ink?'

*Gracious*: 'You love the little birds, I think?

I see you've managed with a fond research

To find their tiny claws a roomy perch!'

*Truculent*: 'When you smoke your pipe. . .suppose

That the tobacco-smoke spouts from your nose--

Do not the neighbors, as the fumes rise higher,

Cry terror-struck: "The chimney is afire"?''

*Considerate*: 'Take care,. . .your head bowed low

By such a weight. . .lest head o'er heels you go!'

*Tender*: 'Pray get a small umbrella made,

Lest its bright color in the sun should fade!'

*Pedantic*: 'That beast Aristophanes Names Hippocamelelephantoles

Must have possessed just such a solid lump

Of flesh and bone, beneath his forehead's bump!'

*Cavalier*: 'The last fashion, friend, that hook?

To hang your hat on? 'Tis a useful crook!'

*Emphatic*: 'No wind, O majestic nose,

Can give THEE cold!--save when the mistral blows!'

*Dramatic*: 'When it bleeds, what a Red Sea!'

*Admiring*: 'Sign for a perfumery!'

*Lyric*: 'Is this a conch?. . .a Triton you?'

*Simple*: 'When is the monument on view?'

*Rustic*: 'That thing a nose? Marry-come-up!

'Tis a dwarf pumpkin, or a prize turnip!'

*Military*: 'Point against cavalry!'

*Practical*: 'Put it in a lottery!

Assuredly 'twould be the biggest prize!'

*Or. . .parodying Pyramus*' sighs. . .

'Behold the nose that mars the harmony

Of its master's phiz! blushing its treachery!'