

CYRANO DE WALKER AND FRIEND

By Ronald K. Burke

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CYRANO DE WALKER & FRIEND

by
Ronald K. Burke, Ph.D.

CHARACTERS

PARK BENCH SITTER
CYRANO DE WALKER

young man early 30s
young man about 35

PROP LIST

NURSE
Newspaper

COSTUMES

Bench Sitter – A young in his early thirties. He is of average weight and height. He wears a tweed sport coat, a plain white shirt, chinos, non-descript shoes, and a garish pink tie unbecfitting the rest of his muted clothing. He is sitting on a park bench enjoying the sunny day, watching people and following with his eyes the flights of the park's many birds. He smiles gently at the people who pass by his bench.

Cyrano de Walker – A young man about thirty-five. He is outfitted in jogger sweats and is neat in his dress. He has an affected disposition but he is not pretentious. He simply enjoys being fancy with his gestures and movements. Cyrano is friendly and love to talk. He is energetic to the pint of being hypertense. One senses he is selective with whom he chooses to converse. He does not miss much, that is, he is very observant in the company of others.

SET REQUIREMENTS

A park bench.

Cyrano de Walker & Friend – Page 3

AT RISE: *It is early afternoon. A cyclorama is in place with the view of a baseball diamond in the park. DL there is a man sitting on a bench that is raked in order to see its occupant. It is BENCH SITTER, HE enjoys the sunny day and smiles to passers-by. HE speaks to no one. Suddenly CYRANO DE WALKER breezes by. HE does a double-take and returns to address BENCH SITTER. HE gives BENCH SITTER the once-over and decides to tease him playfully.*

(Stage lights up full.)

CYRANO: **(mischievously)** Why are you looking at me, Sir? Do you find me an interesting subject of concern? Do I shock you? Are you not used to seeing people promenading in the park?

(BENCH SITTER does not respond. HE displays no concern and turns away from CYRANO.)

CYRANO: **(pressing further)** Why do you stare? Am I unusual, Sir? Do you think me eccentric? I won't hurt you. In point of fact, I have never hurt anyone in my entire life. I am an amiable being.

BENCH SITTER: **(becoming slightly annoyed, turns away)** Now don't get so darn close pal. No -- don't get near me. Not too close, hear? Don't touch me.

CYRANO: **(tries another tack)** I wouldn't blame you if you did sneak a glance.

BENCH SITTER: For cryin' out loud, will you go away?

CYRANO: In point of fact, I think this is a pretty snazzy outfit. Don't you think so, Sir?

BENCH SITTER: **(visibly upset)** Back off, mister. Don't you dare touch me. Don't you dare touch me, Buster.

CYRANO: **(playfully)** Ah. So, I disgust you?

BENCH SITTER: **(leans forward and speaks in a low determined voice)** I didn't say "disgust." I said, "don't-you-dare-touch-me, Buster."

CYRANO: **(inquiringly)** Does my outfit strike you as unattractive? Novel? Strange? Do you think it is overdone? Flamboyant? In point of fact, I think it is rather resplendent.

BENCH SITTER: **(decides to give in and humor CYRANO)** Oh, yes, yes. The pants and shirt look quite nice on you --er --er, Mr. . .

CYRANO: **(quick to oblige and give his name)** I am Cyrano, Cyrano de Walker, my good man. And you are?

Cyrano de Walker & Friend – Page 4

BENCH SITTER: (**warily**) Uh, uh, Harold. My name is Harold. Yes Harold. That's right Harold –Harold, ahh. . .

CYRANO: (**steps on his line**) I am honored to meet you kind Harold, (**bows**) Sir.

BENCH SITTER: Ah, yes Harold. Yes. Yes. Harold will do.

CYRANO: (**moving in closer with increased enthusiasm**) Mr. Harold. Are my walking shoes unsuitable to your taste? Do you think them unfashionable?

BENCH SITTER: (**as pleasant as he can summon up**) Hey, they do it for me.

CYRANO: (**thankful for the honesty**) Well, thank you. Do you look down your nose at me?

BENCH SITTER: No, not in the least.

CYRANO: Perhaps you think I should not be walking in this beautiful park, eh?

BENCH SITTER: Couldn't care less, fella.

CYRANO: Perhaps you see me as a curiosity who is out of joint with the rest of the patrons in this sylvan setting?

BENCH SITTER: (**starting to get petulant**) Look, Cyrano de Walker, Sir. Will you back off please?

CYRANO: Are you suggesting I leave this recreational area? (**now teasing him**) I wonder, should I succumb to your desire--in point of fact?

BENCH SITTER: That is not my desire, *in point of fact*. I do not care what you do in this park. You can walk wherever you wish.

CYRANO: (**moves in close to HAROLD**) Why, thank you very much, kind Harold, Sir.

BENCH SITTER: Just leave me alone and don't stand so close to me. Don't touch me. Stop annoying me.

CYRANO: (**backing off a little but moving in again as he speaks**) Did you think my gait awkward? Do I bounce? Do I mince? (**HE moves in closer to the bench**)

BENCH SITTER: I told you-- I could care less, fella.

CYRANO: (**almost in his face**) Do you discern a wiggle? Am I a weirdo of nature? Do I twitch? Do you think me deranged? Do I repulse you, Harold?

(Now CYRANO is on bended knee.)

BENCH SITTER: (**stage whispering and looking all around**) For Pete's sake, man –get the heck off your knees. People are wondering about you.

CYRANO: (**pleading and holding HAROLD's arm**) Do I repulse you, Harold? Do I? Tell me, please. Do I?

Cyrano de Walker & Friend – Page 5

BENCH SITTER: **(stands up and speaks in a threatening tone. HE is embarrassed)** Stand up, will you? For crying our loud-- get up? What do you think you're doing? Get up, man.

CYRANO: Oh, I suppose I can stand up if you wish. Don't be put out of sorts now Harold.

BENCH SITTER: **(beratingly)** Now, look. You go ahead and do what pleases you. Go ahead. Walk in the park. Walk wherever you wish, but not anywhere near me.

CYRANO: Why, thank you for the permission to enjoy this park, Sir.

BENCH SITTER: As a matter of fact, I walk here too.

CYRANO: Ah, my new found friend Harold, I find you to be an extraordinary example of humanity.

BENCH SITTER: Walk all you want, but not anywhere near me.

CYRANO: I think we could be long-lasting companions.

BENCH SITTER: I also walk in this park. But I warn you, don't get close to me.

CYRANO: Well, let me make one thing clear. Your remark, "I also walk in this park," is not too imaginative or creative. You do not thrust and parry with much skill.

CYRANO: **(takes a pause, paces, and then speaks pedantically)** Your remark, "I also walk in this park," is not inspirational. It tells me nothing about you. I would like to know many things about you.

BENCH SITTER: What could you possibly want to know about me?

CYRANO: Let me see. What about your personality?

BENCH SITTER: Yeah, what about it?

CYRANO: Are you witty? Are you vain? Do you walk in the rain? Do you love life? Do you laugh at yourself? Are you filled with joy? Are you filled with anger? Do you sing in the shower?

BENCH SITTER: Boy, you sure are some piece of work. You're frustrating to say the least.

CYRANO: Are you in pain? Are you a conformist? Are you a non-conformist? Do you love the ladies? Do you recite poetry?

BENCH SITTER: That is none of your business, hear?

CYRANO: Harold, don't be so secretive. Are you a vegan? What are your politics? Liberal? Conservative? Other?

BENCH SITTER: When are you going to back off mister?

CYRANO: **(sits next to HAROLD but jumps up right away to speak)** Tell me. Are you a spiritual person? Do you meditate? Do you have a strong social conscience?

BENCH SITTER: Again. Back off. Don't get so close to me.

CYRANO: What about the arts? Do you like Mozart, Beethoven, U-2? Monet? Picasso? Michelangelo? Maybe Andy Warhol? Jackson Pollack?

Cyrano de Walker & Friend – Page 6

BENCH SITTER: Oh man, go away will you please? You're getting on my nerves.

CYRANO: In point of fact, Harold. What are you about? No, my new acquaintance, it is insufficient to say: "I also walk in this park." That tells me nothing about you or your walk. What do you think about when you stroll these winding pathways? **(continuing to be pedantic and ostentatious)** You could have been much more descriptive about your walk, Sir, in point of fact.

BENCH SITTER: **(derisively)** Oh, is that so? Well, I'll be darned.

CYRANO: Now take me for instance, as I travel these trodden tracks, I try to recall what famous people said about walking.

BENCH SITTER: **(again sarcastic)** Well, my, my, my. Isn't that just grand?

CYRANO: For instance, think of the following: As I move along I may reflect on the ghost in *Hamlet* who informed the young Dane, "I am thy father's spirit doom'd for a certain term to walk the night."

BENCH SITTER: **(moves to the other end of the bench and looks up at CYRANO quizzically)** Well I'll be darned.

CYRANO: Again, as I tramp along I may become spiritual and think to myself, as did the poet William Cowper, "Oh, for a closer walk with God."

BENCH SITTER: **(in a sing-song manner)** My, my, my, my, my.

CYRANO: **(obviously having fun at this drollery)** Even more – I may entertain myself in a melodramatic manner and recall the *Ancient Mariner* who mused:

"Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread."

BENCH SITTER: **(completely baffled by this man)** What in the world are you all about anyway, buddy? Huh? What's goin' on?

(CYRANO is pacing back and forth as HE lectures HAROLD for his lack of creativity, HE takes long strides to emphasize the act of walking in the park. HAROLD is overwhelmed with this guy who has intruded on his quiet time of sitting on the bench.)

CYRANO: **(obtrusively)** And while I am comforted by my thoughts, I think amusingly of Sir Walter Scott who wrote: "His morning walk was beneath the elms in the church yard; "for death" he said **(at this point CYRANO changes his mood at the very mention of death)** had been his next door neighbor for so many years that he had no

Cyrano de Walker & Friend – Page 7

apology for dropping the acquaintance. **(puts his hands together as in prayer and places them on his lips. HE scowls and looks at the ground)**

BENCH SITTER: **(shows a state of complete confusion and continues to stare at CYRANO)** Hey, are you all right? Take it easy huh. Maybe you should sit down and rest and relax for a while. Sit there and keep your distance. And don't touch me, you hear?

CYRANO: **(HE sits at the other end of the bench and speaks in a curt matter-of-fact tone)** Harold. . . do you read?

BENCH SITTER: Oh yes, I read quite a lot actually.

CYRANO: Well now. One never knows does one?

BENCH SITTER: What do you mean by "one never knows does one?"

CYRANO: Oh, you know. You can never judge a book. . . yada, yada, yada.

BENCH SITTER: Yes. I recognized most of the authors you mentioned.

CYRANO: Oh you did, did you? Why that's terrific. **(pause)** This could be the beginning of a long-lasting friendship.

BENCH SITTER: **(warily)** Now don't get carried away Cyrano. Don't be surprised at this turn of events. And don't touch me, hear?

CYRANO: **(turns facing HAROLD and looks him up and down)** Don't worry, I won't touch you. You're very careful aren't you?

BENCH SITTER: I'm just covering all the bases understand. Now don't get too close to me.

CYRANO: **(suddenly HE snaps his fingers and jumps up from the bench, HE remembers another verse)** Yes, yes. What is more, I will think of my faith and recollect the twenty-third psalm: "Yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." **(CYRANO leans in closer to HAROLD to continue his discourse. HE tries to put his hand on HAROLD's shoulder, but it is pushed away.)** Listen closely, my dear new friend, while I give you good reason to be clever.

BENCH SITTER: Clever, shmever. Just back off, hear me?

CYRANO: In any event, the verses I have spoken are ones you can say when you walk in the park. I believe they are much more interesting than "I walk here too," in point of fact.

BENCH SITTER: Look, you weirdo, don't "dear new friend" me, you hear? Back off! Back off! I said, *in point of fact*, keep your hands to yourself. Keep your distance.

CYRANO: **(ignoring the outburst)** Ah, but did not Rudyard Kipling declare, "that we, with Thee may walk uncowed by fear or favor of the crowd."

Cyrano de Walker & Friend – Page 8

BENCH SITTER: Keep your distance. Hear me? Don't touch me. Don't touch me, puleez. (*almost loses it, but regains composure*) I'm warning you to stay over there away from me.

CYRANO: (*HAROLD's blowups have no impact on CYRANO, so undaunted he persists*) Still further, I could instruct myself with Alexander Pope's admonition, "not to go back is somewhat to advance and men must *walk* at least before they dance."

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