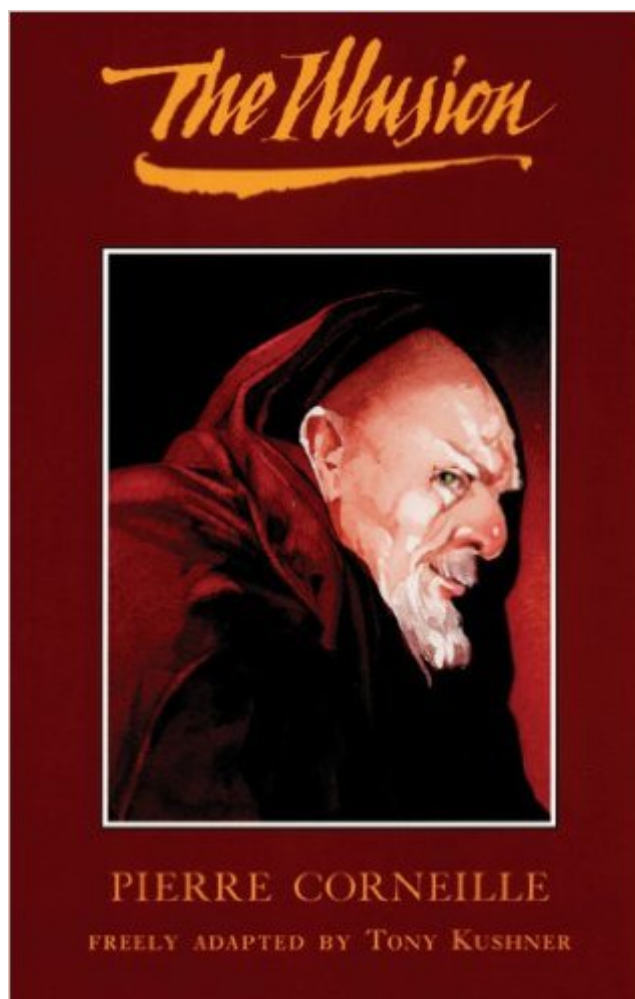


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# The Illusion (TCG Translations)



## Synopsis

• The most lavish and picturesque special effects are what come out of the mouths of the people onstage • Mr. Kushner makes words sing, swoon and somersault as no other living American playwright does. • Ben Brantley, New York Times • Rapture comes naturally to playwright Tony Kushner, and in *The Illusion*, he plants a big swoony kiss on the lips of the theater. • Nelson Pressley, Washington Post • [The Illusion] certainly has the stamp of Kushner's delight in language. This is a modern interpretation, filled with energy, colour and humour. • Telegraph (UK) • Fantastical tribute to the magic of theater • You may resist its charms at first, but soon enough you soften and, intoxicated by Kushner's language and swayed by the music of his ideas, you submit to *The Illusion's* ravishments. • TimeOut New York • Tony Kushner's adaptation of *The Illusion* triumphs as a thoroughly modern rendering of Pierre Corneille's neoclassical French comedy while featuring the exquisite wordplay, beguiling comedy and fierce intelligence found in all of Kushner's work. An enchanting argument for the power of theatrical imagination over reality, *The Illusion* weaves obsession and caprice, romance and murder, fact and fiction, into an enticing exploration of the greatest illusion of all • love.

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## Customer Reviews

This spring, we will be performing Tony Kushner's adaptation of "The Illusion" at my high school. I could not have asked for a better play. Besides the fact that I'll be playing Pridament (a wonderful

boost to my ego), the play itself is genius. I was under its spell starting on page one, and didn't stop enjoying it until the twist ending and startling conclusion. It is the prime example of a perfect play: stylized, with your typical hero-heroine-rival-clown setup. Comic dialogue, a tragic, heartbreaking theme, and most of the sensual delights of a traditional sex farce. The story outline is simple: a desperate, depressed, dying lawyer (Pridament of Avignon) visits the cave of the magician Alcandre. His dying wish is to find his only son, whom he had banished fifteen years before. With the help of Alcandre and his servant, the tortured deaf-mute Amanuensis, Pridament sees several visions of his son's life over the past years. He witnesses three different visions, all of which involve his son, a lover and her scheming maid, and a vengeful rival. Most of the action of the play takes place within these visions, with Alcandre and Pridament simply watching from the outside. But when this play really shines is within the short scenes between the father, magician, and servant. The characterizations of all three, especially of the Amanuensis (a mostly silent role), are key to the theme of the play. The diction of this play is phenomenal. Written completely in free poetic verse, it has the most extensive vocabulary of any play I have read. Full of alliteration, allusion, rhyme and bizarre sentence structure, *The Illusion* truly lives up to its name. "He doesn't speak because he has no tongue..." "If not in this life, than in the next."

This is an excellent and very performable version of Corneille's play. It is an adaptation and not just a mere translation. It is an early work of Kushner, who most recently turned his translating and adaptation skills to a highly successful version of Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*, performed recently in a significant production in NY. BTW, Mr. Helbig, what part of *Angels in America* is BLOATED? It might not be perfect, but dramaturgically it is VERY tightly constructed. Kushner maintains this while telling an epic and sweeping story in a highly theatrical manner that is consistently compelling and interesting. If anything, it's too brief, and that's after 7 hours!

I loved this play! I first saw it in college, and it was very moving, funny, and interesting. It doesn't hurt that we had a fantastic cast. I love the spooky elements of Alcandre and Pridamant's meeting- I love the translation of this play, by the genius Tony Kushner. There's a timeless element of the *Illusion* of life in the theatre, as well as death and surprise and twist endings.

After enjoying the plays of Moliere, I came across a little gem of a play in French that really intrigued me. My French is rusty but the first 20 pages had wet my appetite so when the Kindle version became available I decided to try out my first play version of this masterpiece. Once I started

reading I was caught up in what was and was not and the twists and finished the book in one evening totally beguiled with the contents that I as theatre director am considering this work for production within the next two years. I highly recommend this translation of the work by Moliere.

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