

The Nose

A One-Act Musical for Young Audiences
Based on the story by Nikolai Gogol

1/31/16

© 2014

CHARACTERS:

4 men/ 2 women

Man 1 - Baritone

... KOVALYOV, a mid-level civil servant. 30 - 50.

Man 2 - Bass

... CHIEF OF POLICE, a round, red-faced, thickly-bearded fellow. 40 - 60.

... BORIS, a peasant. 20 - 70.

... PATIENT, a young gentleman. 20 - 50.

Man 3 - Tenor

... THE NOSE. A person-sized nose. Aristocratic and nasal. 30 - 60.

... IVAN, a thief. 20 - 70.

... DOCTOR, a city doctor with roots in the provinces. 20 - 70.

Man 4: B2 - C4 (any voice type)

... INSKIWINSKI, a barber. 20 - 50.

... OLGA'S SERVANT. 20 - 70.

... CLERK (M/F), a newspaper clerk. 40 - 70.

Woman 1 - Mezzo Soprano

... MATROYSHKA, a spirited young servant with a damaged left arm.

15 - 30.

Woman 2 - Soprano

... OLGA BABALOVNA YANKOVA. A bad-tempered lady. 110.

... RADINKA, a peasant. 50 - 70.

Synopsis

Petty bureaucrat Kovalyov has always prided himself on his good looks and laughed at disfigurement in others, but his tune changes when his own nose up and runs away! Disguising itself as a higher ranking bureaucrat with fancy uniform and plumed hat, his nose sets out on a mad dash through Petersburg, and Kovalyov finds that whatever the consequences, he must follow his nose.

TIME & ACTION:

The 1830s. St. Petersburg, Russia.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

01 "A PIMPLE ON HIS NOSE"	Kovalyov, Inskiwinski & Police Chief
02 "NOTHING TO BE SNEEZED AT"	Kovalyov
02.5 "THE ESCAPE" - Underscoring	Instrumental
03 "THE STRANGEST THINGS"	Matroyshka
04 "WHERE'S MY NOSE?"	Kovalyov & Matroyshka
05 "ISN'T IT ROMANTIC?"	Nose & Olga
06 "I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY"	Kovalyov & Nose
07 "THE STRANGEST THINGS [REPRISE]"	Matroyshka
08 "THE STRANGEST THINGS [REPRISE II]"	Matroyshka
09 "TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP"	Doctor
10 "BOXES OF SUGAR"	Police Chief & Nose
11 "DON'T YOU LAUGH"	Matroyshka
12 "I AM KOVALYOV"	Kovalyov & Matroyshka
13 "THE STRANGEST THINGS [FINALE]"	Company

Developmental History:

The Nose won second prize in the 2015 Jackie White Memorial National Children's Playwriting Contest, and was a finalist for the Helen-Jean Play Contest in 2015.

A staged reading featuring Drama Desk award-winner Graham Stevens in the title role was produced on October 25, 2015, at the National Opera Center in New York, NY. The final scene was also presented at Theater Resources Unlimited's How to Write a Musical that Works workshop on Reckoning and Resolution in Spring 2015.

SCENE 1

(A sitting room in St. Petersburg, Russia. There is a chair in the center, a bed facing away from the audience, and a small table with a mirror on it. INSKIWINSKI, a barber, is sleeping in the chair. KOVALYOV enters.)

KOVALYOV

Wake up, Inskiwinski!

INSKIWINSKI

(Sleepy.)

Yes, sir.

(Leaps out of the chair.)

I mean, "Yes, *your honor.*"

KOVALYOV

I am in need a really good shave and hairdo today, for today is the pray that I depose!

INSKIWINSKI

The day that you propose?

KOVALYOV

Yes, well, ah, you know what I mean.

INSKIWINSKI

Come sit down, your honor, and I shall make you beautiful! To whom, if I may ask, do you propose to propose?

(INSKIWINSKI puts curlers in KOVALYOV's hair.)

KOVALYOV

To Olga Babalovna Yankova.

INSKIWINSKI

Hee hee! You're going to propose to that mean old witch, that Baba Yaga? Why, she's a hundred and ten years old!

KOVALYOV

Yes, well, um, I happen to love that old Baba Yaga.

INSKIWINSKI

You love her two hundred thousand rubles.

KOVALYOV

(Very uncomfortable now.)

Yes, well, it's the same thing.

INSKIWINSKI

There is a promotion available in your department, isn't there? I suppose it wouldn't hurt your chances if you were able to grease a few palms...?

KOVALYOV

Are you going to finish my shave or not?

INSKIWINKSI

(Scoops up shaving cream and approaches, then pauses.)

Hee hee!

KOVALYOV

Now see here, I'm not going to put up with your impudence any longer! I am a big, important man - I have reached a mid-level rank in the civil service - and I don't intend to sit here and be laughed at by flunkies.

(INSKIWINSKI hands KOVALYOV the mirror.)

INSKIWINSKI

See for yourself, *your honor*.

KOVALYOV

Oh, good heavens, no.

INSKIWINSKI

Yes!

KOVALYOV

It can't be!

INSKIWINSKI

It is!

(MUSIC: 01 A PIMPLE ON HIS NOSE)

KOVALYOV

HOW DOES THE WORLD TREAT A MAN
WITH A PIMPLE ON HIS NOSE?
HE'S LAUGHED AT AND JEERED AT
EVERYWHERE HE GOES!
I OUGHT TO HIDE MY HEAD IN SHAME,
MOVE AWAY AND CHANGE MY NAME -
BUT THIS IS THE DAY THAT I PROPOSE!
ONLY HOW CAN I PROPOSE
WITH A PIMPLE ON MY NOSE?

INSKIWINSKI

(Enjoying himself thoroughly.)
WITH A PIMPLE ON HIS,
PIMPLE ON HIS,
PIMPLE ON HIS NOSE.

WITH A PIMPLE ON HIS,
PIMPLE ON HIS,
PIMPLE ON HIS -

KOVALYOV

Quiet!

(The door bursts open, and in comes the POLICE CHIEF, a round, red-faced, thickly-bearded fellow.)

POLICE CHIEF

Kovalyov! What, still in your curlers? I haven't had a drop of sugar yet today. Offer me a glass of tea with sugar. Three lumps of sugar!

KOVALYOV

(Instantly obsequious, hiding his face in his hand.)

Certainly, honored sir. Anything for the Chief of Police of all Petersburg. Matroyshka!

POLICE CHIEF

What's the matter with you?

INSKIWINSKI

(Loudly whispering across the room.)

He's got a *pimple on his nose!*

POLICE CHIEF

A pimple on his nose? Hah! Look, it's the size of the Kremlin! Hah hah!

INSKIWINSKI

Hee hee!

POLICE CHIEF

Hah hah hah!

KOVALYOV

(To INSKIWINSKI.)

Quiet, Inskiwinski!

(To POLICE CHIEF.)

Carry on, honored sir.

POLICE CHIEF

Kovalyov, you look ridiculous.

KOVALYOV

I know.

IF I SHOULD GO IN TO WORK
WITH THIS BLIGHT UPON MY SKIN
EACH CLERK THERE WILL SMIRK

AT THE PLIGHT I LANDED IN!
TO GET AWAY FROM THAT DISGRACE,
I'LL WEAR MY STOCKINGS ON MY FACE!
WHEN YOU'RE HIDDEN IN YOUR HOSE
WHERE'S THE PIMPLE ON YOUR NOSE?

(KOVALYOV sticks his face in a stocking, as
INSKIWINSKI and POLICE CHIEF dance.)

INSKIWINSKI & POLICE CHIEF
WHERE'S THE PIMPLE ON YOUR,
PIMPLE ON YOUR,
PIMPLE ON YOUR NOSE?
WHERE'S THE PIMPLE ON YOUR,
PIMPLE ON YOUR,
PIMPLE ON YOUR -

KOVALYOV
(Giving up the effort.)
No.

INSKIWINSKI & POLICE CHIEF
(Finishing the word "nose.")
-SE!

(MATROYSHKA pops her head in at the door.)

MATROYSHKA
You called?

KOVALYOV
A glass of tea for the Chief of Police -

POLICE CHIEF
With four lumps of sugar!

MATROYSHKA
Right away.

KOVALYOV
And, as for me... I am in need of some - ah - makeup.

POLICE CHIEF
Makeup!

KOVALYOV
(With dignity.)
Yes, you see, I have, well, ah, I have, unfortunately, as it
were, I have, ah -

INSKIWINSKI & POLICE CHIEF
He has a *pimple on his nose.*

MATROYSHKA
That little speck?

KOVALYOV
Nevertheless...

MATROYSHKA
I don't have any makeup.

INSKIWINSKI
But I do!

(HE pulls out a medicine chest. MATROYSHKA
exits.)

INSKIWINSKI (CONT'D.)
I HAVE PAINT, POWDER AND PASTE
TO SUIT THE MOST FINICKY TASTE.
TO COVER A PIMPLE
IS REALLY QUITE SIMPLE -
IT'S HARDLY THE WORST I'VE FACED.

FIRST, I THINK
A SPRINKLE OF ZINC,

POLICE CHIEF
AND PEOPLE WILL TALK
IF YOU'RE NOT WEARING CHALK!

INSKIWINSKI
NOW THAT MIGHT SUFFICE,
BUT POWDER FROM RICE
WOULD MAKE YOUR COMPLEXION ESPECIALLY NICE!
A DOLLOP OF CREAM - (DO BE CAREFUL, IT DRIPS!) -
AND MAYBE SOME BEET JUICE TO BRIGHTEN YOUR LIPS!
AND HERE - YOU CAN BORROW THIS BOW!
(HE starts to take a hair bow out of the chest.)

KOVALYOV
No!

POLICE CHIEF
NOW YOU SLAPPED ON SOME PAINT,
NOW YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL AGAIN.

INSKIWINSKI
MISS OLGA WILL FAINT
FOR THE HANDSOMEST OF MEN!

POLICE CHIEF
WITH JUST A DASH OF POWDER THERE
NOW YOU'RE DASHING... DEBONAIR!
FLAWS ARE HARDLY EVEN REAL

WHEN THEY'RE SIMPLE TO CONCEAL.

INSKIWINSKI

THOUGH HE'S LAID UP,
WHEN HE'S MADE-UP
THEN NO PERSON COULD SUPPOSE
THAT HE'D EVER HAD -

KOVALYOV

I NEVER HAD A PIMPLE ON MY NOSE!

INSKIWINSKI & POLICE CHIEF

THERE'S NO PIMPLE ON HIS,
PIMPLE ON HIS,
PIMPLE ON HIS NOSE!

(The music ends. There is a knock on the door.)

KOVALYOV (CONT'D.)

Olga is here! Quick, my hair!

(Playoff and ad lib as INSKIWINSKI quickly removes the curlers from KOVALYOV's hair, in his hurry yanking them so hard that KOVALYOV shrieks. INSKIWINSKI and POLICE CHIEF exit. KOVALYOV opens the door and OLGA BABALOVNA YANKOVA enters. SHE is ancient, and carries a stout cane. KOVALYOV, with one curler still dangling from his hair, rushes to her and kisses her hand.)

KOVALYOV

Ah, Olga Baba Yaga - I mean, Olga Babalovna Yankova, my beauty, my love!

OLGA

What's that? Speak up, young man. I'm a hundred and ten years old!

KOVALYOV

(Loudly)

Olga Babalovna Yankova, you are the darling of my heart. You are the beauty of all of Russia. You are the eighth wonder of the world. You are -

OLGA

What nonsense are you yammering about, you potbellied flea? What did you want to see me about?

KOVALYOV

I want to marry you!

OLGA

What's that?

KOVALYOV

I want to marry you!

OLGA

Speak up, you fool!

KOVALYOV

I WANT TO MARRY YOU!

OLGA

Oh! He wants to marry me! Did you hear that? Isn't that sweet? Now, you just come closer... come closer... closer...

(SHE pounds him on the foot with her cane.)
Now quit your foolery unless you want another whack on the foot. I am a hundred and ten years old, and you are an impudent little puppy. Pfff, kids today.

(SHE yanks the door open. INSKIWINSKI & the POLICE CHIEF fall into the room - THEY have evidentially been peering in the keyhole. SHE steps over them with a muttered "Pfff!" and exits.)

INSKIWINSKI

Hee hee! She really told you off! She really put a flea in your ear! You'll never rise up in the civil service without her two hundred thousand rubles.

KOVALYOV

Quit your mockery, you pop-eyed little chatterbox!

(MUSIC: 02 NOTHING TO BE SNEEZED AT)

I'M A VERY IMPORTANT MAN!
I DEMAND SOME RESPECT!
SO IF YOU HAVE ANY TENDENCIES TO SNEEZE
THEY SHOULD BE
CHECKED!

TAKE A LOOK: I'M NOTHING TO BE SNEEZED AT!
I'VE COME PRETTY FAR.
FROM A PROVINCE HALF-WAY OUT TO NOWHERE
I'M A SHOOTING STAR!
LIKE A ROCKET MY CAREER ASCENDED!
THERE'S NOT FAR TO GO!
SO AM I SIMPLY SOMETHING TO BE SNEEZED AT?
NO! NO!
NO!
NO! NO!
NO!

POLICE CHIEF

Of course, my good fellow, of course. Now, I hate to bring it up at a moment such as this, but I'm afraid I never did get my tea -

KOVALYOV

With sugar.

POLICE CHIEF

With sugar!

KOVALYOV

MATROYSHKA!

(MATROYSHKA enters.)

KOVALYOV

You forgot the glass of tea for the Chief of Police.

POLICE CHIEF

With sugar! Five lumps of sugar! Don't forget the sugar!

MATROYSHKA

Yes, sir.

(As SHE turns to leave, we see that her left arm hangs uselessly by her side. The POLICE CHIEF sees it, too.)

POLICE CHIEF

Kovalyov, did you see -

KOVALYOV

Yes, I know.

POLICE CHIEF

Her arm!

KOVALYOV

She manages very well without it.

POLICE CHIEF

Hah! A servant with a useless arm! Hah! It's too funny!

KOVALYOV

Funny?

POLICE CHIEF

Comical!

KOVALYOV

Comical?

POLICE CHIEF

Hysterical! Hah hah!

KOVALYOV

(Weakly.)
Hah, hah.

(MATROYSHKA reenters, holding in her left hand a tray with a glass of tea and a dish of sugar.)

MATROYSHKA

Your tea, sir.

(SHE sets the tray down and turns to leave, but the POLICE CHIEF stops her.)

POLICE CHIEF

Wait a moment.

(To KOVALYOV.)

Watch this!

(To MATROYSHKA.)

So, you take care of Kovalyov's household, do you? You must be his right arm woman.

(HE looks to KOVALYOV for approval. KOVALYOV laughs, weakly.)

Your skirt is beautiful. Did it cost you an arm and a leg - or just an arm?

(KOVALYOV laughs, even more weakly.)

Don't worry about her, Kovalyov - she's 'armless! Hah, hah, hah!

MATROYSHKA

Quit your laughing, you bully!

(SHE grabs the tea tray.)

POLICE CHIEF

Kovalyov! Are you going to let her talk to me like that? To ME? The Chief of Police in all Petersburg, the esteemed and powerful Grigory Bigovich Crookakoff?

KOVALYOV

No, no, of course not. Matroyshka, don't speak to the Police of Chief like that. In fact - in fact - in fact -

(HE looks around, and grabs a pear.)

In fact - here! Catch!

(HE throws the pear to her, but, holding the tea tray in one hand, SHE cannot catch it. SHE drops the tea tray, and it crashes to the floor. SHE begins crying.)

KOVALYOV

(Sympathetically.)

Now, see here, I mean -

(Catching the POLICE CHIEF's eye, suddenly stern.)

- see here! Quit your bawling!

MATROYSHKA

You think you're such a high government official that you can make fun of *me*, but your nose isn't made of gold, either, you mangy old goat! You make me sick. Ugh!

(SHE exits, then pops back in.)

And you can fetch your own tea!

(SHE exits.)

POLICE CHIEF

With sugar!

KOVALYOV

You, you, you - you can't talk to me that way!

(Singing, a cappella)

I'M A VERY IMPORTANT MAN -

POLICE CHIEF

(Cutting KOVALYOV off.)

She's already gone.

KOVALYOV

I'll laugh if I want to laugh! Hah!

POLICE CHIEF

Forget about it, Kovalyov. It's not important. Well, my stomach is bleating like a little lamb so if there's no tea, I'd better be going.

(The POLICE CHIEF exits. Still muttering to himself, KOVALYOV starts toward his bed, which is facing away from the audience.)

KOVALYOV

Can you believe it? Talking that way to me. ME! I'm friends with the Police of Chief of all Petersburg! I am nothing to be sneezed at!

(HE lies down. The lights dim.)

KOVALYOV

(Getting sleepy, yawning and stretching, singing vaguely.)

TAKE A LOOK, I'M NOTHING TO BE SNEEZED AT...

I'M A VERY IMPORTANT MAN...

(HE falls asleep. Silence for a moment, and then mysterious music begins to play.)

(MUSIC: 02.5 NOSE ESCAPE - UNDERSCORING)

(KOVALYOV mumbles in his sleep, thrusts an arm or two about, and turns over, still mumbling. The music grows louder as something - a mouse? - an odd looking mouse! - seems to fall off the bed and scurry across the floor. It - whatever it is - bangs into the door. MATROYSHKA enters.)

MATROYSHKA

Is someone there?

(The thing scurries toward the door, but
MATROYSHKA closes it. The thing hides.)

(MUSIC: 03 THE STRANGEST THINGS)

MATROYSHKA (CONT'D.)

Well, if no one's there, what did you knock for? Kind of
spooky.

SOMETIMES STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN
THINGS YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN.
IF YOU SEARCH FOR REASONS
YOU WILL SEARCH IN VAIN

FOR THE STRANGEST THINGS ARE HAPPENING EVERY DAY, HEY,
HEY!

IT'S A MYSTICAL, A MAGICAL DISPLAY-YAY-YAY.
IF YOU HEAR A KIND OF KNOCKING,
BUT THERE'S NO ONE AT THE DOOR
THEN THERE'S BOUND TO BE TROUBLE, FOR

THE STRANGEST THINGS ARE HAPPENING ALL THE TI-YI-YIME!
IT'S A MARVEL! IT'S AMAZING! IT'S A CRI-YI-YIME.
I'VE HEARD RUMORS OF A HYPNOTIST
WHO PUTS YOU IN A TRANCE
AND A CHAIR THAT DECIDED TO DANCE
A TREPAK!

(SHE dances.)

AY AY AY AY!
AY AY AY AY AY!
THE WORLD IS CRAZY,
WE'RE MAYBE CRAZY, TOO.
WHEN SNOW IS FLYING
THERE'S NO USE TRYING
TO KNOW IF WHAT YOU'RE SEEING IS TRUE.

YOU CAN CLAIM THAT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, ABSUR-HUR-HURD!
YOU CAN SAY YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT, NOT A WOR-HUR-HURD.
BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER,
FOR NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY
STILL THE STRANGEST THINGS ARE HAPPENING EVERY DAY!
THEY'RE HAPPENING EVERY DAY!
HEY!

(MATROYSHKA opens the door. The thing scurries
out after her. Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(The next morning. KOVALYOV's room. KOVALYOV is sleeping. HE wakes, sits up and stretches, back still to the audience. HE makes a "Brrrrr!" sound with his lips. MATROYSHKA enters with a tray of tea.)

KOVALYOV

Matroyshka, bring me a mirror! I must check on that nasty pimple.

(MATROYSHKA hands the mirror to KOVALYOV, then exits. HE looks into the mirror.)

KOVALYOV

What? What kind of a game is this? Someone is playing pranks? Where is it? This is incredible - it can't be - but I seem to have lost my nose.

(HE turns around, and we see that HE has indeed lost his nose. His face where his nose used to be is now perfectly flat.)

There is no wound, I'm not at all injured, it's simply... gone. Matroyshka!

(MATROYSHKA enters.)

MATROYSHKA

Yes, *your honor*?

KOVALYOV

My dear Matroyshka, it's the oddest thing, and I don't know how to say this, but I seem to have lost - I seem to have lost my nose.

MATROYSHKA

(Flatly.)

You lost your nose?

KOVALYOV

Yes, and I don't know where it could have gone. I could swear I went to bed with it last night. It was right here, between my eyes and my mouth.

MATROYSHKA

You lost your *nose*???

(MUSIC: 04 WHERE'S MY NOSE?)

KOVALYOV

FLAT! WHERE I USED TO HAVE A NOSE, IT'S FLAT!
WHERE I USED TO HAVE A NOSE THAT WAS RESPECTABLE
NOW IT'S SUDDENLY GONE AND GOTTEN UNDETECTABLE!

WHERE IS IT?

HAVE YOU SEEN MY NOSE
ANYWHERE AROUND?
IS IT UNDERNEATH A PILLOWCASE
OR LYING ON THE GROUND?
DID YOU PLAY A PRANK AND HIDE IT?
YOU'LL BE SORRY THAT YOU TRIED IT!

MATRYOSHKA

I didn't take your nose.

KOVALYOV

WELL, THEN WHERE'S MY NOSE?
IS IT UNDERNEATH A CHAIR?
IS IT STUCK IN MY UMBRELLA?

MATROYSHKA

(Joining in the search.)
I'M AFRAID IT ISN'T THERE.

KOVALYOV

SEARCH THE ATTIC AND THE CELLAR!
HOW *COULD* I LOSE MY SMELLER?
NO, I SIMPLY DON'T KNOW HOW!

MAYBE THIS IS ALL A DREAM?
TO SOLVE IT IS A CINCH.
FOR I'LL AWAKEN FROM THE DREAM
WITH JUST ONE LITTLE PINCH!
(HE pinches himself.)

Ow!

WELL, IF IT'S NOT A DREAM THEN
WHERE'S MY NOSE?
DID YOU SEE IT DISAPPEAR?
WHEN I WENT TO BED LAST EVENING
I COULD SWEAR I HAD IT HERE.
AND A FACE WITH BUMPS SO TEENY
IT'S FLATTER THAN A BLINI
IS A THING I WON'T ALLOW!

MATROYSHKA

What's this scrap on the floor?

(SHE picks up a tiny scrap of paper. KOVALYOV
snatches it from her.)

KOVALYOV

It's smaller than a fish egg.

(SHE hands him a magnifying glass, and HE reads.)
Good heavens, it's Olga Babalovna Yankova's address. What
on earth could my nose want with Olga Baba Yaga?

MATROYSHKA

I don't -

KOVAYLOV

I had better find out.

I'VE GOT TO FIND MY NOSE
ANYWHERE IT'S AT!
THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHY IT'S GONE TO
OLGA BABALOVNA'S FLAT.
STILL I'LL STOP IT IN ITS TRAVELS
BEFORE MY LIFE UNRAVELS!
I'LL GO WHEREVER IT GOES!
THOUGH I KNOW IT'S HARD TO SWALLOW
STILL I MUSTN'T SIT AND WALLOW:
I'VE GOT TO FOLLOW MY NOSE!

To Olga Babalovna's, to catch that rascally nose!

(HE grabs his coat and dashes out, placing a
handkerchief over his lack-of-nose as he goes.
Blackout.)

SCENE 3

(The home of OLGA BABALOVNA YANKOVA. It is elegant and richly decorated. OLGA is sitting on a couch. A SERVANT enters.)

SERVANT

May I present His Excellency Mister Nostril Nostrilovich Nozdryov.

(The NOSE enters. It is now a person-sized nose, dressed in an impressive, gold-braided uniform, with a high stand-up collar, plumes on its hat, and a sash.)

OLGA

(Looking for her spectacles.)

What's that? Who are you?

(SHE finds a pair of opera glasses, and looks at him through them.)

Oooh, a man in uniform. A state councillor, no less. Why have I been honored with a visit from such a high official?

(The NOSE kisses her hand.)

NOSE

(In a nasal voice.)

I have heard of your beauty, madam, and I have come to propose.

OLGA

(Giggling.)

To propose? Why, this is all so sudden.

NOSE

Then allow me court you - in French.

(MUSIC: 05 ISN'T IT ROMANTIC?)

*MA PETITE CHÉRIE,
YOU ARE TRÈS JOLIE,
YOU ARE LIKE A SUMMER DAY.
I AM TRÈ S'ENCHANTÉ.*

OLGA

FRENCH! HE'S SPEAKING FRENCH!
ISN'T IT ROMANTIC...?

NOSE

I SAY "JE T'ADORE!"
I LOVE YOU!

OLGA

ENCORE!

NOSE
LET ME STEAL YOUR HEART AWAY,
S'IL VOUS PLAÎT,
EN FRANÇAIS...

OLGA
FRENCH!

OLGA & NOSE
HE'S [I'M] SPEAKING FRENCH!
ISN'T IT ROMANTIC...?

NOSE
And now, *ma chérie*, my little bunny-bunny-boo, I would be
ecstatique if you would grant me *un petit baiser*.
(OLGA looks confused.)
That means "a kiss."

OLGA
Oooh!

(SHE plants a huge kiss right on the tip of the
NOSE. At that moment, KOVALYOV - still holding a
handkerchief over his face - bursts through the
door. HE squeaks.)

KOVALYOV
(Babbling)
You, sir! What is the meaning - I mean to say, what right
have you - I mean to say - it isn't, I mean to say, and your
outfit, sir -

NOSE
(Coldly)
I prefer to be addressed as "Your Excellency." And who,
pray tell, are you?

KOVALYOV
You know werfectly pell who I am, sir.

NOSE
(Correcting)
Your Excellency...

KOVALYOV
Your Excellency.

NOSE
I haven't the faintest idea who you are. Explain yourself.

KOVALYOV

Well! This behavior, Your Excellency, is hardly appropriate, I mean to say, gallivanting around, I mean to say, and dressing up in a fancy uniform, when all the time I have lost you, I mean to say, it's perfectly clear.

NOSE

What is your name, sir? If you do not address me more respectfully, I shall have to speak to your superiors.

KOVALYOV

I'm sorry, Your Excellency, many apologies for any offence, Your Excellency, but, I mean to say -

NOSE

Cease your babbling and explain yourself.

(MUSIC: 06 I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY)

KOVALYOV

Your Excellency... Your Excellency -
WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY,
BUT I'LL SAY IT ANYWAY:
DID YOU THINK IT WAS RIGHT
TO GO RUNNING IN THE NIGHT?
WELL, I TELL YOU, IT WAS WRONG -
(Pointing to where his nose should be.)
THIS IS WHERE YOU BELONG!
NOW COME HOME BEFORE YOU MAKE A SCENE!

NOSE

(Very coldly.)
SIR, YOU'RE TALKING NONSENSE,
AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

KOVALYOV

(Simul.)
WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO
SAY,
BUT I'LL SAY IT ANYWAY:
DID YOU THINK IT WAS RIGHT
TO GO RUNNING IN THE NIGHT?
WELL, I TELL YOU, IT WAS
WRONG -
THIS IS WHERE YOU BELONG!
NOW COME HOME BEFORE YOU MAKE
A SCENE!

NOSE

(Simul.)
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE
TRYING TO SAY.
MAKE YOURSELF MORE CLEAR.
I'VE BEEN PLAGUED BY LUNATICS
LIKE YOU
ALL THROUGH MY CAREER.

NOSE

Either make yourself clear or leave at once.

KOVALYOV

Your Excellency... Your Excellency - Don't you see, you are a part of me!

NOSE

That's ridiculous. I am myself. Now come to the point.
You stink of cabbage, and I think I might be allergic.

(The NOSE is beginning to sniffle.)

KOVALYOV

Now, look here:

I'M A VERY IMPORTANT MAN!
I DEMAND SOME RESPECT!
SO IF YOU HAVE ANY TENDENCIES TO SNEEZE
THEY SHOULD BE
CHECKED!

NOSE

(The NOSE is sniffing louder and louder.)
Ahh... ahhh...

KOVALYOV

(Hastily)
TAKE A LOOK: I'M NOTHING TO BE SNEEZED AT!

NOSE

Ahh... ahh... ahh... choo!

(The NOSE sneezes in KOVALYOV's face. KOVALYOV is
stunned. The NOSE pulls out a gigantic
handkerchief and begins blowing noisily. KOVALYOV
takes out a handkerchief and begins to clean
himself off.)

NOSE

Come, *ma chérie*. Allow me to offer you a ride in my
droshky.

(To KOVALYOV)

Adieu.

OLGA

Dosvedanya, you slimy toad.

(SHE whacks him on the foot with her cane. The
NOSE and OLGA exit. KOVALYOV stands dazed for a
moment, then runs after them.)

KOVALYOV

Come back here, you - you - Your Excellency!

(HE runs out the door, and the scene begins to
change. As the scene changes, MATROYSHKA enters
at the side.)

(MUSIC: 07 THE STRANGEST THINGS [REPRISE])

MATROYSHKA

THE STRANGEST THINGS ARE HAPPENING EVERY DAY, HEY, HEY!
HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE NOSE WHO RAN AWAY-YAY-YAY?
HE WENT RUNNING ALL THROUGH PETERSBURG
AND CUTTING QUITE A DASH
WITH HIS PLUMES, AND HIS COLLAR, AND SASH!

(The NOSE and OLGA enter. THEY dance. KOVALYOV runs on, and tries to catch the NOSE, but the NOSE jumps out of his reach. KOVALYOV trips and falls. The NOSE and OLGA exit. KOVALYOV sits up, rubbing his head. HE decides where to go next, puts his handkerchief back over his lack-of-nose, and exits.)

MATROYSHKA

YOU CAN CLAIM THAT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, ABSUR-HUR-HURD!
YOU CAN SAY YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT, NOT A WOR-HUR-HURD.
BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER,
FOR NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY
STILL THE STRANGEST THINGS ARE HAPPENING EVERY DAY!
THEY'RE HAPPENING EVERY DAY!
HEY!

(MATROYSHKA exits. The scene is changed, and we are in a newspaper office.)

SCENE 4

(A newspaper office, with a desk and a bench against one wall. At one end of the bench sits BORIS, holding a boot sole; at the other end, IVAN, holding a boot without a sole; and in the middle, RADINKA, who has a box at her feet. The box has several evenly spaced round holes in it. [Optional: Include two schoolchildren.] A bespectacled CLERK is sitting behind the desk. HE takes a brown paper parcel from below the counter, sets it down on the desk, and unwraps it with relish. From it, HE takes out a cucumber. HE selects a saltshaker, rubs his hands with glee, and begins salting the cucumber. KOVALYOV enters, still holding the handkerchief over his face.)

KOVALYOV

(Loudly)

Who takes the advertisements here?

(The CLERK looks up. More quietly)

Oh, ah, good morning. I need to place an advertisement in your newspaper.

CLERK

Not so fast, my little troika. All those people want to publish advertisements, too. You'll have to wait your turn.

(The CLERK lifts the cucumber to his mouth, and takes a big bite. It makes a loud crunching noise. HE holds the bitten end out to KOVALYOV.)

Salted cucumber?

KOVALYOV

(Hastily.)

No thank you.

(The CLERK takes another bite of cucumber, and sits happily chewing it at length. KOVALYOV reluctantly goes to the bench, and sits in the only available place, between BORIS and RADINKA.)

BORIS

(Indicating KOVALYOV's handkerchief.)

So, I see you have come prepared for the stink here.

KOVALYOV

Stink? Does something stink?

BORIS

Does something stink, he says?!

(BORIS, RADINKA and IVAN laugh.)

BORIS

What are you advertising for, you with the cold in your nose?

KOVALYOV

Nose? Oh, er, yes. I mean, no. I am advertising for - well, it's confidential.

BORIS

A secret, eh? Me, I am looking for the rest of my boot.

KOVALYOV

Your boot?

BORIS

Yes. Some scoundrel stole my boot, and only left me the sole.

(HE holds up the sole, right in KOVALYOV's face. KOVALYOV flinches and turns away.)

KOVALYOV

And you?

IVAN

I came across this wonderful boot, which I am selling for almost nothing. It's a fine, well-made boot, in perfect condition - except that it's missing a sole. Only fifty kopeks!

KOVALYOV

(To RADINKA)

And you?

RADINKA

Can't you smell it? I'm selling old Snortka here!
(SHE pats the box.)

KOVALYOV

And Snortka is...

RADINKA

He can't smell Snortka!

(SHE cackles with laughter.)

You must have an awful cold in the head, mister, if you can't smell a pig!

KOVALYOV

(Springing up.)

A pig!

RADINKA

A pig! You know, khryoo-khryoo, oink oink!

(SHE grunts like a pig.)
And he'd just been rolling around in the mud before I put
him in the box.

(KOVALYOV runs up to the desk.)

KOVALYOV
Listen... I must demand... I'm a high government official! -
I am not accustomed to - did you know she had a pig?

CLERK
One moment!
(HE pops the rest of the cucumber in his mouth.)
You were saying?

KOVALYOV
This is... this is an emergency - I simply cannot wait any
longer, or the scoundrel may escape the city for good, and
then how should I ever smell a pig again?

CLERK
And who is the scoundrel? Is it a servant of yours?

KOVALYOV
A servant? That wouldn't be half so bad. No, it's my *nose*
that's gone!

CLERK
Hm, strange name. And how much money did this Mr. Nose
steal?

KOVALYOV
Not "Mr. Nose" - *my* nose. You don't understand? It's my
own nose that's missing!

CLERK
How did it disappear?

KOVALYOV
I can't tell you how, but the important point is that it now
walks about the city, pretending to be a state councillor
and wearing a plumed hat. Consider, how can I live without
such a prominent part of my body? It would be all right if
I were a nobody, but I'm too important to wander around
without any nose at all - why, it wouldn't be woper!

CLERK
(Flatly.)
I can't print your advertisement.

KOVALYOV
What? Why not?

CLERK

Because it's simply too absurd. And we print enough lies in our paper already...

KOVALYOV

You think this is false? Do you think I'm *lying*? If you insist, I will *show* you.

CLERK

Why put yourself out?

(Curiosity getting the better of him.)

All the same, if you don't mind...

(KOVALYOV, attempting to avoid being seen by the curious stares of the others in the room, removes his handkerchief.)

CLERK

It's perfectly flat, like a freshly fried pancake.

(Looking closely through his spectacles.)

Really... really... really... flat.

(KOVALYOV puts the handkerchief back.)

KOVALYOV

So now you can't possibly refuse to print the advertisement. Thank you so much, and it's been a real pleasure meeting you.

CLERK

Still can't print it.

KOVALYOV

What? After I showed you -?

CLERK

Too absurd. Nobody would believe it. Better to go see a doctor about it, see if he can fix you up.

KOVALYOV

But I want my nose!

RADINKA

Maybe you're better off without it. I think Snortka found more than mud to roll in today!

(BORIS and IVAN spring up and move farther away from her.)

CLERK

(Apologetic, HE retrieves another cucumber from under the desk and holds it out to KOVALYOV.)

I am so sorry, sir, to not have been able to assist you further. Salted cucumber?

KOVALYOV

(With dignity.)

I prefer to be addressed as "your honor." And *no thank you*.

(HE storms out. BORIS looks at IVAN.)

BORIS

MY BOOT!

(IVAN runs out, BORIS chasing him. The set begins to change to a DOCTOR's office. MATROYSHKA enters.)

(MUSIC: 08 THE STRANGEST THINGS [REPRISE II])

MATROYSHKA

THE STRANGEST THINGS ARE RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYE-YI-YIES
BUT TO PRINT THEM IN THE PAPER LOOKS LIKE LIES-YI-YIES.
WHEN A CLERK WILL EAT A CUCUMBER AND COOLLY TELL YOU
"NO,"
THEN IT'S OFF TO THE DOCTOR YOU GO.

YOU SEE A DOCTOR, I THINK IT'S UNDERSTOOD
THAT SMELL OR SIGHT OFF,
HE'LL HELP YOU RIGHT OFF -
THAT IS IF THE PHYSICIAN IS GOOD...

(MATROYSHKA exits, the DOCTOR enters, and then next scene begins.)

SCENE 5

(A doctor's office. A DOCTOR enters as the set changes, brushing his teeth and humming the chorus of "TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP." HE goes to a basin which has appeared, and, in time with the last note of the music, spits. A PATIENT enters.)

PATIENT

Doctor, I need your help. I had oysters for dinner, and now I feel like I'm about to be sick to my stomach.

(Clutching his stomach, the PATIENT reaches for the basin, just in case.)

DOCTOR

Have you tried rubbing turpentine on it?

PATIENT

On my stomach? Aren't you going to give me drops?

DOCTOR

You want drops, go to the chemist! Me, I know better.

(HE sits the PATIENT down in a chair.)

(MUSIC: 09 TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP)

DOCTOR (CONT'D.)

THERE WERE PLENTY OF USEFUL THINGS
I LEARNED WHILE AT MEDICAL SCHOOL
BUT WHEN I WANT TO CRUSH A
DISEASE, HERE IN RUSSIA,
I FOLLOW BABUSHKA'S RULE:

(During the chorus, the DOCTOR collects turpentine, lard and soap, and thrusts them into the PATIENT's unwilling arms.)

TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!
TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!
THE THREE THINGS TO TRY WHEN YOU'VE GIVEN UP HOPE:
ARE TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!

IF YOU SWALLOWED YOUR OYSTERS RAW
AND YOUR STOMACH YOU'RE LIKELY TO LOSE
THERE ISN'T A QUESTION:
TO CURE INDIGESTION
THERE'S ONLY THREE THINGS TO USE:

(HE begins slathering the PATIENT's stomach with the three substances with one hand.)

TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!

(With the other hand, HE begins brushing his teeth with a different toothbrush. The next words are, as a result, quite indistinct.)

TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!

(HE gurgles during the next words.)

THE THREE THINGS TO TRY WHEN YOU'VE GIVEN UP HOPE:
ARE TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!

(HE spits. The PATIENT rises and tries to escape while the DOCTOR is distracted. The DOCTOR calls him back with the following words.)

OF COURSE YOU COULD ALWAYS TRY
WHAT MEDICAL SCIENCE TEACHES.
IF YOUR BODY'S BERSERK
SO THE CURE DOESN'T WORK,
THAT'S RIGHT: I'VE GOT LEECHES!

BUT IF YOU'RE STRICKEN BY GOUT OR COUGH
OR MOST ANY AILMENT AT ALL
IF BY CHANCE I DON'T KILL YOU
I PROMISE TO BILL YOU
RIGHT AFTER I PAY A CALL
WITH

TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!

(The DOCTOR begins brushing his teeth with two brushes at once. The next lines are indistinct.)

TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!
THE THREE THINGS TO TRY WHEN YOU'VE GIVEN UP HOPE:

(HE pauses brushing, foaming at the mouth, to sing joyfully.)

TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!

(HE spits. The PATIENT makes his escape, clutching his stomach and mouth. KOVALYOV enters.)

KOVALYOV

Doctor, I have come to you because I have lost my nose.

DOCTOR

Sit in the chair!

(HE approaches KOVALYOV, and looks at the empty space on his face. HE lifts KOVALYOV's chin, lowers his chin, and gives him a flick of the fingers where his nose was.)

KOVALYOV

Ow!

DOCTOR

Don't wiggle so! Turn right!

(KOVALYOV turns his head right.)

DOCTOR

Turn left!

(KOVALYOV turns his head to the left.)

DOCTOR

Very good.

(The DOCTOR again flicks his fingers where KOVALYOV's nose was.)

KOVALYOV

OW! ... Well, Doctor?

DOCTOR

I have discovered the problem. You have lost your nose.

(The DOCTOR takes two toothbrushes from his pocket, carefully selects one, and begins brushing his teeth again.)

KOVALYOV

Can't you help me? You must have some extra noses in jars. Even if you could just glue one on with paste -

DOCTOR

(Pausing his brushing)

I'm saving those. Have you tried rubbing the spot with lard?

KOVALYOV

No.

DOCTOR

Or slathering it with soap?

KOVALYOV

No.

DOCTOR

Or bathing it in turpentine?

KOVALYOV

No!

DOCTOR

Ah well, you're better off as you are anyway. Now, wash the spot with cold water, eat an apple a day, brush your teeth every fifteen minutes, and you will be just as well off as if you had a nose.

(HE spits in his basin and puts away his toothbrush.)

I'll send you my bill.

(HE pulls out a different toothbrush, and begins brushing while escorting KOVALYOV to the door. HE sings, once again indistinctly.)

TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!

KOVALYOV

But my nose...!

(The DOCTOR sings louder.)

DOCTOR

TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!

KOVALYOV

Even if you just pasted one on...!

(The DOCTOR pauses his brushing, to give it all HE's got, pushing the protesting KOVALYOV out the door.)

DOCTOR

THE THREE THINGS TO TRY WHEN YOU'VE GIVEN UP HOPE:
ARE TURPENTINE, LARD, AND SOAP!

(HE closes the door in KOVALYOV's face and spits in the basin. Blackout.)

SCENE 6

(The POLICE CHIEF's home. The POLICE CHIEF hastily goes to the couch and strikes a relaxed pose. KOVALYOV enters, holding the handkerchief over his lack-of-nose.)

POLICE CHIEF

Ah, Kovalyov, my friend! Come in, come in!

KOVALYOV

Yes, ah, I've come today about a professional matter...

POLICE CHIEF

What's a professional matter between friends?

KOVALYOV

You see, I'm in terrible trouble and, you being the Police of Chief -

POLICE CHIEF

The Chief of Police -

KOVALYOV

Yes, yes, well, you see - I've lost my nose.

(KOVALYOV reveals his flat face.)

POLICE CHIEF

Lost your nose? Hah! You look ridiculous! Hah hah!

KOVALYOV

Yes, I know, and that's why I need your help. I need the police to catch my nose, before it skips town!

POLICE CHIEF

You need my help, eh? Well, I'd love to help you, only I'm afraid I haven't got anything to put in my tea besides cream and lemon. Have you, possibly, brought anything with you?

(HE tries to peer behind KOVALYOV's back, and in his pockets.)

KOVALYOV

I'm sorry, I don't understand...

(MUSIC: 10 BOXES OF SUGAR)

POLICE CHIEF

Why, it's perfectly simple!

WHEN BOXES OF SUGAR ARE GIVEN TO ME

I FEEL JUST AS HAPPY AS HAPPY CAN BE!

AND WHEN I FEEL HAPPY, I WORK TWICE AS WELL!

SO HERE'S MY ADVICE, IF YOU WANT TO SMELL:
(On "Smell," HE indicates his nose.)

SEND BOXES OF SUGAR! BOXES OF SUGAR!
IT'S BOXES OF SUGAR THAT HELP ME FIGHT CRIME!
SO IF YOU WILL SEND 'EM
THE RULES? WE CAN BEND 'EM!
BUT IF YOU DON'T SEND 'EM, I DON'T HAVE THE TIME.

SO SEND BOXES OF SUGAR! BOXES OF SUGAR!
THOSE SWEET LITTLE NUGGETS ARE WHAT I'M ABOUT!
THEY GIVE ME THE FEELING
I'LL BOUNCE OFF THE CEILING!
SO SEND ME SOME SUGAR, AND I'LL HELP YOU OUT.

IS IT WRONG TO LIKE A BIT OF SWEETNESS
IN YOUR BITTER TEA?
I'M AN HONEST MAN - I DON'T TAKE BRIBES!
BUT I'LL HELP YOU IF YOU HELP ME

(KOVALYOV briefly joins in, uncertainly.)

POLICE CHIEF & KOVALYOV
WITH BOXES OF SUGAR! BOXES OF SUGAR!

POLICE CHIEF
I'LL TAKE IT IN BARRELS, OR EVEN A CRATE!
I'LL CATCH EV'RY VILLAIN
AND GIVE 'EM A GRILLIN'!
'CAUSE WHEN I'VE GOT SUGAR, I'M DOING GREAT!

KOVALYOV
Oh, er, well, that is to say - I'm afraid I didn't bring any
boxes of sugar.

POLICE CHIEF
Well, then I'm afraid I can't help you. As they say, let
each man pick his own nose.

(Noticing the phrase)
Pick his own nose! Hah!

KOVALYOV
But please, honored sir, may I ask you -

POLICE CHIEF
Go ahead and ask anything, my friend! I could never accuse
you of being too nose-y!

(HE laughs.)

KOVALYOV

Honored sir, as my friend, one would think that if I were in trouble - and I am in dreadful trouble - as my friend, honored sir -

POLICE CHIEF

(Offering a handkerchief.)

Would you like a handkerchief, Kovalyov? I'm afraid your nose is running! Hah hah!

KOVALYOV

Please! -

POLICE CHIEF

(Suddenly HE sits back, feigning great lethargy.)
I'm sorry, but I'm dreadfully tired.

WITH NO BOXES OF SUGAR, NO BOXES OF SUGAR
WHEN I WANT COOKIES, THERE'S NOTHING TO COOK.
IF YOU WANT YOUR NOSE BACK
I HOPE THAT IT GROWS BACK
BECAUSE WITHOUT SUGAR, I CAN'T HELP YOU LOOK.

(HE appears to fall asleep in his chair. KOVALYOV stamps angrily and exits. The POLICE CHIEF furtively opens his eyes. HE sees KOVALYOV is gone, and sits up. From behind the couch, the NOSE emerges.)

NOSE

Well done, sir. And here are two boxes of sugar, as agreed.

POLICE CHIEF

Thank you, Your Excellency. It's been a pleasure doing business with you.

POLICE CHIEF & NOSE

BOXES OF SUGAR! BOXES OF SUGAR!
IT'S BOXES OF SUGAR THAT HELP ME/HIM FIGHT CRIME!
SO IF YOU WILL SEND 'EM
THE RULES? WE CAN BEND 'EM!
BUT IF YOU DON'T SEND 'EM, I/HE DON'T HAVE THE TIME!

(Blackout.)

SCENE 7

(KOVALYOV's room. KOVALYOV enters.)

KOVALYOV

Well, that's it. Everything is at an end. Pack up, Kovalyov! It's back to the provinces with you.

(HE begins disconsolately putting things in a suitcase. MATROYSHKA enters.)

Matroyshka! You're still here?

MATROYSHKA

Where should I be?

KOVALYOV

Oh, thank heavens. The newspapers scorn me, the authorities will not lift their little finger, all of my friends abandon me - but you, loyal Matroyshka, you will help me.

MATROYSHKA

You laughed at me.

KOVALYOV

I pay your salary!

MATROYSHKA

And I dust your chair. I do not find your nose.

KOVALYOV

You've got to help me. I'm begging you.

MATROYSHKA

You laughed at me.

KOVALYOV

(Defiant)

And I'd do it again. Hah!

(MUSIC: 11 DON'T YOU LAUGH)

MATROYSHKA

DON'T YOU LAUGH! DON'T YOU LAUGH!
I TELL YOU ON YOUR OWN BEHALF
THOUGH I KNOW WHERE YOU PICKED UP THAT SOCIAL CUE.
YOU'D THINK WITH ALL YOUR AIRS AND MONEY
YOU WOULD KNOW THIS ISN'T FUNNY!
DON'T YOU LAUGH: IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU.

DO YOU LAUGH WHEN YOU CUT YOUR FINGER?
DO YOU LAUGH WHEN YOU STUB YOUR TOE?
DO YOU LAUGH WHEN YOU FIND
YOU'RE REALLY IN A BIND
AND YOU CAN'T PAY THE MONEY THAT YOU OWE?

NO!

DO YOU LAUGH IF YOU BREAK YOUR ANKLE
THOUGH IT LOOKS RATHER COMICALLY ASKEW?
DON'T YOU LAUGH? DON'T YOU LAUGH?
DON'T YOU LAUGH? DON'T YOU LAUGH?
IT'S ALWAYS FUNNY TILL IT HAPPENS TO YOU!

KOVALYOV

Be reasonable. Every man must learn to laugh at himself.

MATROYSHKA

DID YOU LAUGH WHEN YOU GOT A PIMPLE?
DID YOU LAUGH, OR WAS THAT A FROWN?
DID YOU LAUGH WHEN YOU TRIED
TO GET YOURSELF A BRIDE
AND EVEN BABA YAGA TURNED YOU DOWN?

DO YOU LAUGH WHEN YOUR NOSE GOES MISSING
AND YOUR FRIENDS GO AND LEAVE YOU IN THE STEW?
DON'T YOU LAUGH? DON'T YOU LAUGH?
DON'T YOU LAUGH? DON'T YOU LAUGH?
IT'S ALWAYS FUNNY TILL IT HAPPENS TO YOU!

(SHE exits. OLGA enters. KOVALYOV quickly covers
his face with his handkerchief. OLGA stomps her
cane on the floor.)

OLGA

Kovalyov, I demand you do something about that nose of yours
at once!

KOVALYOV

Ahah! Then you admit he is *my* nose?!

OLGA

And you should be ashamed of him. He deserted me - ME!
Because now he is friends with the high and mighty Chief of
Police, he thinks he is too good for Russia. To France, he
must go! To Paris! The scoundrel!

KOVALYOV

Then he is gone.

OLGA

And he took from me two of my finest boxes of soap. Well,
why are you standing there like a pot of boiling onions? Go
after him!

KOVALYOV

Olga, may I ask you a question? What do I look like to you?

OLGA

A fool.

(KOVALYOV removes the handkerchief.)

KOVALYOV

And now?

OLGA

Still a fool. And one who is wasting my time.

KOVALYOV

Olga Babalovna Yankova - thank you.

(The POLICE CHIEF enters. HE drags behind him the NOSE.)

POLICE CHIEF

Look who I caught, hiding in a coach bound for Moscow? Hey, Kovalyov, got your nose!

NOSE

How dare you, sir. Unhand me at once. Don't you know who I am? I'm a very important man!

KOVALYOV

Don't want him. Take him away.

POLICE CHIEF, OLGA & NOSE

What?

KOVALYOV

Don't want him. What do I need to smell? Nobody sends me flowers, and, to tell you the truth, Petersburg in the summer does not smell very good. But I do thank you for catching him. I know "thank you" doesn't butter your bread -

POLICE CHIEF

- Or sugar my tea! -

KOVALYOV

- So what made you go to all the trouble of doing your job?

POLICE CHIEF

The sugar that scoundrel brought me was terrible. It tasted like soap. But, my friend, are you telling me that you want to walk around looking like a... freak?

KOVALYOV

Don't care.

POLICE CHIEF

But people will laugh.

(MUSIC: 12 I AM KOVALYOV)

KOVALYOV

Then you know what I will say to them?
I AM KOVALYOV!
I AM A MAN!
I AM NOT YOUR OWN DOORMAT!
I AM KOVALYOV!
I HAVE NO NOSE!
NOW WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT?!
BACK IN THE SUMMERS I'D SMELL A STENCH!
AND IN THE WINTERS IT ALWAYS FROZE!
SO QUIT YOUR LAUGHING -
I'M DOING GREAT!
I AM KOVALYOV,
I HAVE NO NOSE!

(MATROYSHKA enters, and stands at the door
watching.)

KOVALYOV

You find out who your friends are when you are in trouble,
and you, Crookakoff, are no friend of mine. You can forget
about putting in a good word for me. You are a bully.

POLICE CHIEF

How dare you? I am the Chief of Police of all Petersburg -

KOVALYOV

AND I AM KOVALYOV!
I'M NOT A CHIEF,
BUT I'M ALSO NOT A LOUT.
I AM KOVALYOV!
I HAVE NO TEA,
AND MY SUGAR JUST RAN OUT.

POLICE CHIEF

Well, I -

KOVALYOV & MATROYSHKA

SO YOU AND "NOSEY" CAN GO CLEAR OFF,
BEFORE THIS MEETING CAN COME TO BLOWS.

KOVALYOV

I'M FINE WITHOUT YOU.
I'M NOT ASHAMED!
I AM KOVALYOV,
I HAVE NO NOSE!

(KOVALYOV and MATROYSHKA push the POLICE CHIEF out
the door. Music continues under as KOVALYOV turns
to the NOSE.)

KOVALYOV

Now, as for you, *your excellency* -

(The NOSE suddenly runs at KOVALYOV and head butts him in the stomach. HE falls behind a couch, and the NOSE goes down after him. THEY struggle, mostly out of sight. MATROYSHKA and OLGA ad lib consternation and encouragement. Finally KOVALYOV emerges from behind the couch - his nose small again and in place!)

KOVALYOV

Would you believe it? He just leapt right on!

OLGA

(To KOVALYOV's nose, sarcastic.)

Well, *mon cher*, I hope you enjoy *Paree*. And a little word to the wise - next time you go running around speaking French to beautiful women, don't forget to comb the hair in your nostrils.

MATROYSHKA

Well, I guess that's that. Your nose is back in place, and everything is back to normal.

KOVALYOV

But this is absurd! There is much that is improbable in this story. How the nose can be big, and then small, and to disguise itself as a state councillor, and it was running away, and then it jumped back onto my face. What a lot of nonsense! If I hadn't seen it myself, I wouldn't believe a word.

(MUSIC: 13 THE STRANGEST THINGS [FINALE])

MATROYSHKA

SOMETIMES STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN
THINGS YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN.
IF YOU SEARCH FOR REASONS
YOU WILL SEARCH IN VAIN

MATROYSHKA, KOVALYOV & OLGA

FOR THE STRANGEST THINGS MAY HAPPEN BY DESI-AY-AYGN,
AS TO HOW AND WHY, YOUR GUESS IS GOOD AS MI-AY-AYNE.

OLGA

THAT A NOSE COULD CATCH A PRIZE LIKE ME, THEN TELL HER
AU REVOIR,^{*}
WELL, IT'S FRANKLY A LITTLE BIZARRE.

* Pronounced to rhyme with "bizarre."

(ALL enter.)

ALL

AY AY AY AY!
AY AY AY AY AY!
THE WORLD IS CRAZY,
WITH NOSES BIG AS MEN!

KOVALYOV

ACCOUNTS MAY DIFFER
BUT HERE'S MY SNIFFER.
I DON'T INTEND TO LOSE IT AGAIN.

ALL

YOU CAN CLAIM THAT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, ABSUR-HUR-HURD!
YOU CAN SAY YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT, NOT A WOR-HUR-HURD.
BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER,
FOR NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY
STILL THE STRANGEST THINGS ARE HAPPENING EVERY DAY!
THEY'RE HAPPENING EVERY DAY!
HEY! HEY!

(THE END.)