

Lights up in the cathedral. We see the reflections of stained glass on the floor.

Kovalev looks around and finds the church empty...except for his larger than life Nose, who is kneeling and praying, his absurd hat beside him.

Kovalev approaches cautiously, unsure about how to proceed. Kovalev clears his throat. No response. He coughs. No response.

KOVALEV (whispering)

Excuse me. Sir. Excuse me.

The Nose looks up at him.

KOVALEV (whispering louder)

It's very strange to find you here. In church, I mean. Instead of where you belong. On my face.

The Nose rises. He is taller than Kovalev, who is a bit intimidated.

KOVALEV (full voice)

Yes, well. Look for yourself! You see?!?

Kovalev removes the handkerchief to show his lack of nose. His Nose is not impressed.

KOVALEV

I am a man of position. And you are - well, you're my nose. It just isn't done for a man like me to go around town like this. Without you. My nose, I mean. Surely you understand!

The Nose kneels and returns to his prayers.

KOVALEV

Think of the rules and conventions of society! To go about without a nose. It isn't done! It just isn't done. And you, sir, are MY nose! My OWN nose!

Kovalev realizes he is getting nowhere and stomps off just as Karolina has entered the church. She quickly kneels and says a prayer. He sees her and forgets all about his lack of nose.

KOVALEV (whispering loudly)

Why, my dear Madame Varlamovich.

He bows, waving his handkerchief with a flourish. She looks up to see him...sans nose. She screams and quickly exits. Kovalev bursts into tears.

Madame Magda and the unrolled Oksana enter the church.

MADAME MAGDA

Oksana, who is the patron saint of lost animals? Saint Philomena or Saint Nikolai the Wondermaker? Never mind, we'll light candles to both.

She weeps. Kovalev weeps. They weep together. Magda spots the weeping Kovalev and approaches.

MADAME MAGDA

Why, Konstantin Kovalev. I had no idea you loved our little pooch as much as we do! I knew you had a kind soul. Not to worry. I'm sure Fidele will be home soon.

Kovalev quickly dries his tears, tries to blow his nose...but remembers and just uses the handkerchief to cover his face again.

KOVALEV

Yes, yes. Must go. Good day.

SCENE 8

Kovalev rushes out to Nevsky Prospect, looking left and right for his Nose. He spies Teplov, whose hat now sports large feathers.

KOVALEV

Aha! Captain Teplov! Exactly the man I need! Such a catastrophe!

Kovalev still holds the handkerchief to his nose.

TEPLOV

Isn't it, though? What has happened to this town? It was once such an orderly place. But now, the clocks won't keep time. Littering is rampant.

KOVALEV

What? Listen, Captain! (he whispers) Sophie says you are a man with ... connections.

TEPLOV

Connections?

KOVALEV

Please! I must find him! He's - tall.

TEPLOV

Small nose, large nose?

KOVALEV

Large. Very large. Wearing a hat with an absurd feather.

TEPLOV

Feather you say?

They look around. And suddenly it seems hats with absurd feathers are all the rage. Everyone - men and women - is strolling about in hats with absurdly large feathers. Kovalev notices Teplov's befeathered hat. Teplov stares back at him.

TEPLOV

Something wrong?

KOVALEV

Oh, never mind!

He rushes down the street, peering under each hat, each time a little more desperate, hoping to find his nose. He walks into someone leaving a shop. He looks up. The banner portrays a newspaper, its headline reads: "The Whole Truth." Kovalev has an idea and rushes inside.

SCENE 9

Lights up on the newspaper shop.

Inside, a VERY OLD CLERK wearing a pence nez and a tailcoat sits on a stool at a music stand desk - very Charles Dickens. His coat seems to be made entirely of newsprint. Kovalev and rushes to the desk.

KOVALEV

You, sir. I want to take out an advertisement.

OLD CLERK

One moment, please.

KOVALEV (leaning in to whisper)

It's a rather - peculiar advertisement -

OLD CLERK

Yes, yes. One moment.

He flicks the beads of an abacus in a dramatic fashion, adding up the cost of an advertisement. Kovalev doesn't notice the woman ahead of him, weeping into her own handkerchief.

MAGDA

My precious little dog. Poor Fidele!

Kovalev quickly turns away so Magda won't see him. But Oksana does. She shyly waves a flat hand at him. He waves back, but puts his finger to his lips so she won't alert Magda. Oksana nods.

OLD CLERK

That will be one ruble, thirty five kopecks.

Magda hands him the money. Weeping loudly, she and Oksana exit. Oksana waves to Kovalev.

OLD CLERK (calling to her)
And good luck finding him, my dear. Not a lot of dogs in hats running loose these days.

Kovalev comes out of hiding.

KOVALEV
Now sir, about my ad. It's extremely important!

The Clerk rearranges his abacus.
And his desk. Perhaps has a sip
of tea. He takes his time.

OLD CLERK
Yes, yes. Right away. Now, Mr. Impatient. What can I do for you?

KOVALEV
I want to place an ad.

OLD CLERK
(dripping with sarcasm) Really? (he quickly runs down his list) Item for sale?

KOVALEV
No, not that.

OLD CLERK
Position wanted?

KOVALEV
No, no.

OLD CLERK
Lost and found?

KOVALEV
Yes, exactly! "Whoever apprehends this knave will be richly rewarded."

The Old Clerk scribbles and counts on the abacus.

OLD CLERK
Richly rewarded. Good. Now. Was it a large sum of money?

KOVALEV

Not money! He ran off with -

OLD CLERK

Your wife!

KOVALEV

No.

OLD CLERK

Your daughter! Ah, the scandal of it all!

KOVALEV

No, no, no!

OLD CLERK

Don't tell me he ran off with your own mother!

KOVALEV

No! He ran off with my -

Kovalev points to his lack of
nose, hidden behind the
handkerchief he holds to his face
with one beringed hand.

OLD CLERK

Your handkerchief. He ran off with your handkerchief!

KOVALEV

Argh!

OLD CLERK

Your ring? No, wait, don't tell me. I'll get it.

Kovalev is exasperated.

KOVALEV

My nose! He ran off with my nose!

OLD CLERK

Ah hah! Yes. Terrible. Scandalous. Now. This Mr. Nose.
Is that N-O-S-E or K-N-O-W-S?

KOVALEV

No! Not Mr. Nose. MY nose! My nose. My very own nose.
Look, you fool! It's gone. Run away. Disappeared.

OLD CLERK

A missing nose. Most unusual.

KOVALEV

I'm glad you agree. So you'll run my ad?

OLD CLERK

Sorry. Can't do it.

KOVALEV

What?!?

OLD CLERK

Can't run your ad.

KOVALEV

Why not?

OLD CLERK

Reputation of the paper. People will say, "There you go again. Making up stories. Whatever happened to The Whole Truth?"

KOVALEV

But it IS the truth! See for yourself!

Kovalev whips away the hanky. The Old Clerk takes a close look.

OLD CLERK

Very interesting. Flat as a pancake.

KOVALEV

See! So you'll print the advertisement? Yes?

OLD CLERK

No. Sorry. You know, it's really more poetry than "reportage." Aha! I have it. You should commission a sonnet, or perhaps a haiku. Hmm. (counting syllables)

"Focus on my face
It is missing, very sad
Please help find my nose."

KOVALEV

I don't want a poem. I want my nose!

OLD CLERK

So many things rhyme with nose - rose, bows, doze, crows...

The Old Clerk takes out a snuff
box, snorts a bit, sneezes, then
offers it to Kovalev.

OLD CLERK

Care for a pinch?

KOVALEV

Well! There's no need to joke about it!

SCENE 10

Nevsky Prospect.

Sophie and Teplov sit at a sidewalk café with Medji. Karolina and Ivan are strolling, avoiding Teplov. Ivan sports a black eye and bruises. The Servant enters.

SERVANT

What happened to you, my friend? Walk into another door? (Ivan shrugs) Have you heard, Karolina Varlamovich?

KAROLINA

Heard what?

SERVANT

A nose. The size of bear. Running all over town.

Karolina and Ivan exchange glances. He quakes in his boots.

KAROLINA

A nose the size of a bear? Absurd.

SERVANT

It is most certainly true.

KAROLINA

Sounds to me like the tale of the dancing chairs on Konyushenaya Street.

They move on. And sure enough, at the sidewalk café, Sophie, Teplov, and Medji rise. As they leave, THEIR CHAIRS become animated and begin to dance about.

The chairs perform a delightful duet, which attracts the attention of several amazed townsfolk. Teplov turns around to see the dancing chairs. He clears his throat in a threatening manner.

The chairs quickly return to their more mundane function at the table of the sidewalk café. Teplov nods his approval.

SOPHIE

Tell me again! About the time your life was in danger and you escaped by -

He kisses a hand.

TEPLOV

Sophie, my sweet. About my stories. You must never, ever tell anyone -

SOPHIE

Teplov. You know me. My lips are sealed.

She presents her lips to him. He kisses her lightly. And then he tries to unseal those lips, which is a bit more than Sophie had in mind.

Our GAGGLE OF GOSSIPS enters, spreading the word.

GOSSIPS

They say his uniform weighs more than an ox, so heavy it is with gold embroidery. No! And his hat is so extravagant with feathers, Magda the Milliner herself is jealous.

Sophie pulls away.

SOPHIE

What is everyone talking about?

TEPLOV

Does it matter? Come, we're late.

They exit.

Kovalev enters. He notices the buzz around him on Nevsky Prospect, and assumes everyone is making fun of him. And perhaps they are.

Madame Magda and Oksana enter.

MADAME MAGDA

Fidele! Fidele, where are you, my sweet little pooch?

Kovalev hides his lack of nose as
Magda approaches. Oksana waves.

MADAME MAGDA

Oh, Konstantin Kovalev! It's all most distressing. When
Fidele comes home and things are back to normal, we must
talk about the marriage contract between you and my
daughter.

KOVALEV

Madame Magda, I'm afraid I have my own problems at the
moment.

Meanwhile, our Gaggle of Gossips
cross the stage in search of the
Nose.

GOSSIPS

I see him! Oh, you were right! Such magnificent gold
embellishments. And that collar! I wonder if my tailor
can fashion something for me? Do you think he's available?
If he is, he's mine, my dear!

Kovalev and Madame Magda are
surrounded by the crowd.

KOVALEV

Later. We shall speak later.

He pushes his way offstage as the
crowd continues to buzz about the
Nose.

GOSSIPS

The Nose. The Nose! The nose. SUCH a nostril!

MADAME MAGDA

Fidele. Fidele! Has anyone seen my little dog? Sweet
little thing with a lovely pink hat?

GOSSIPS

What's she yapping about? She lost her pooch. Not that sweet little creature with the cunning hats! Poor Magda! Poor Fidele! I lost a kitten once. Never got over it.

The Nose meanwhile has entered, expecting great acclaim. But the town is distracted. The Nose is irritated that he's lost the spotlight.

POLKAN

Madame Magda, listen! Is that your little dog?

We hear Fidele's plaintive yap.

MADAME MAGDA

Fidele! She's in trouble! I know it! Fidele, where are you?

GOSSIPS

The well. The town well. I heard the splash!

We see the shadow projection of the town well and a number of townfolk surrounding it.

POLKAN

Fidele must have fallen down the well!

MADAME MAGDA

My poor Fidele! What can we do? Who can save her? Who is brave enough to rescue her?

The Nose has a wonderful idea. He will save the dog and re-establish his hero status in the town. He dashes offstage.

We see in the projection the townsfolk part and the Nose enters. He takes off his coat and hat and gestures. In his Peanuts voice, he tells everyone to stand back and dives into the well. We hear the splash. Perhaps water even splashes out of the well.

Fidele yaps. The townsfolk are alarmed. Then they cheer.

POLKAN

He's got her, Madame Magda. He's got her!

We see the nose climb out of the well, Fidele in his "arms."
Someone helps him put on his coat and hat.

MADAME MAGDA

My little Fidele!

The Nose grandly enters, carrying Fidele in his arms. He is followed by most of the town.

GOSSIPS

He's done it! He's accomplished the impossible, saving the little lost dog! How remarkable! He can do anything!

MADAME MAGDA

Fidele! My poor, sweet Fidele!

Dog and owner are reunited, to much yapping and kisses.

MADAME MAGDA

You, sir, are a hero! An absolute hero. Love your hat, by the way.

The Nose bows modestly. Magda puts the dog down.

MADAME MAGDA

I would love to introduce you to my daughter...

Teplov enters with Sophie and Medji. Medji rushes over to Fidele. They smell each other and do other doggie things.

MADAME MAGDA

Captain Teplov! This man is a hero. He single handedly recovered my little lost dog!

TEPLOV

Congratulations, sir. If more of our countrymen were as heroic as you, there would be no need for people like me.

SOPHIE

Sir, forgive me for saying so, but aren't you - a nose?

TEPLOV

A nose?!? This is most irregular. Sir, I'm afraid I must ask you to come with me. Immediately. That's all, ladies and gentlemen. Move along. Nothing to see here.

Teplov escorts the Nose offstage,
much to the dismay of the crowd.

SCENE 11

The lights come up on Kovalev, completely dressed, tossing and turning in his bed.

His Servant enters with the morning cup of coffee. Kovalev keeps his back turned to us and the Servant.

SERVANT

Good morning, sir. Did you sleep well?

KOVALEV

What do you think!?!

SERVANT

It's a cold morning, sir. I've brought your coffee. Nice and hot. Is there anything else, sir? A mirror, perhaps?

KOVALEV

You needn't joke about it!

SERVANT

No, sir.

KOVALEV

Get out. Get out!

SERVANT

Yes, sir.

He sets the cup of coffee down next to the hand mirror and exits. Kovalev is agitated. He picks up the cup of coffee. Again, we can't see his face. Kovalev sees the mirror and cautiously picks it up. He slowly turns around to the audience, the mirror hiding his nose. His face slowly brightens into a smile.

KOVALEV

It's back!

He reveals the returned nose to the audience. Kovalev can't quite believe it. He looks away, then looks again into the mirror. He tweaks his nose, then grabs it harder to make sure it's really attached.

KOVALEV

Ouch!

He's thrilled and begins to dance about the room. He waltzes the hand mirror.

KOVALEV

It's back, it's back, it's back! You lovely, lovely thing, you. You're back where you belong.