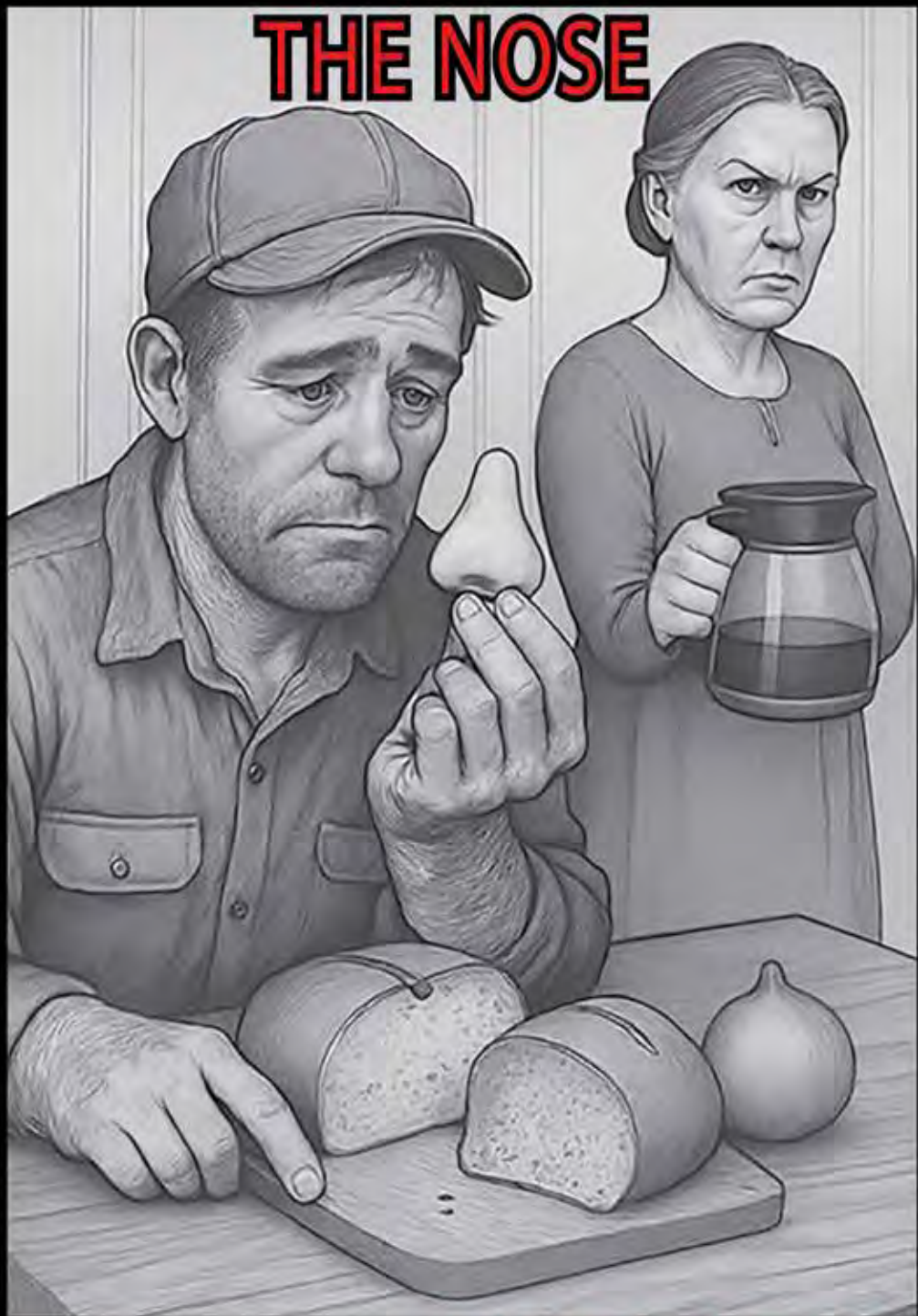


# THE NOSE



*based on the story by* **NIKOLAI GOGOL**

**ADAPTED BY: JEROME TILLER**



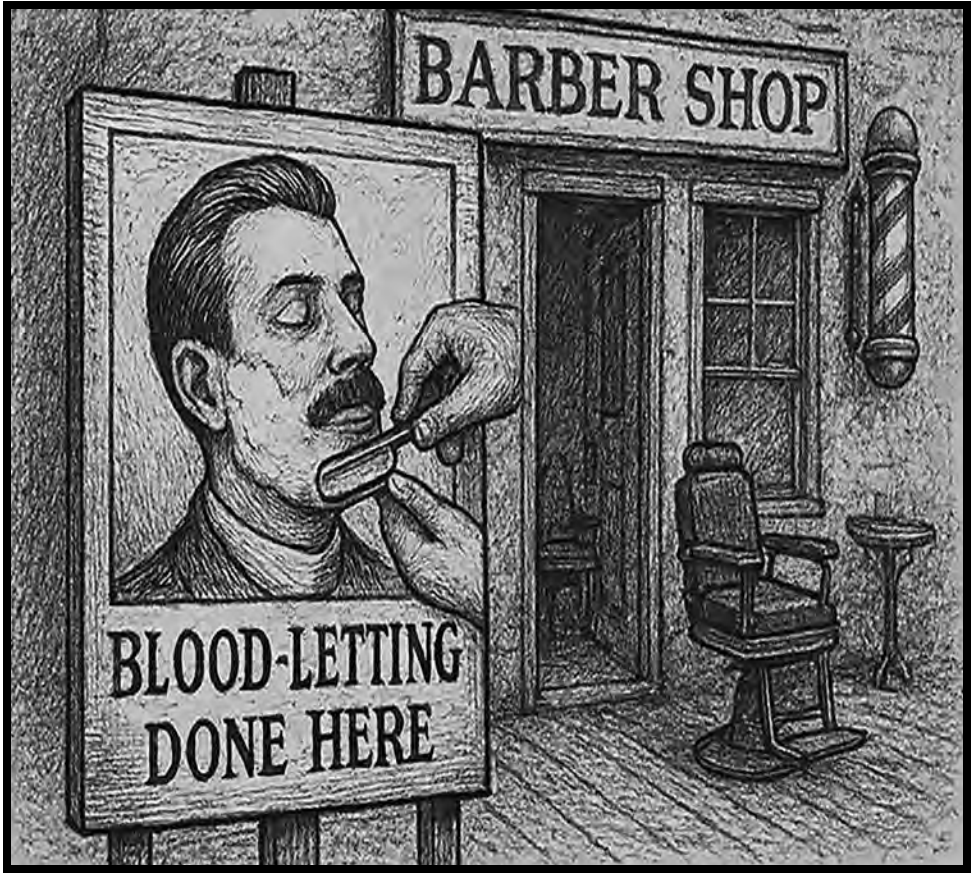
# PREFACE

You are about to read an adaptation that is based on a story by Nikolai Gogol, the great Russian-Ukrainian author. Unlike other stories in the Adapted Classics collection, this adaptation alters much of Gogol's original content for the purpose of creating a modern satire that addresses some of the social issues current at the date of this publication. In addition, unlike all other Adapted Classics stories, this one is not primarily intended for readers in middle school (not to suggest that they too could not understand and enjoy it) but rather for all readers, youth and adults, young and old. However, as always, no changes, large or small, were made with the notion it would improve the text or the story. Gogol's story is truly fantastic. Among other places, the original version of *The Nose* can be found at:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/>

Dedicated to the brave citizens of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis & St. Paul, who are united in their resistance to the uncivil and unlawful actions of the Federal agents who are in their midst this winter of 2026.





On the 25th July, 202—, a very strange occurrence took place in Washington DC. In the Anacostia neighborhood there lived a barber by the name of Peter Pauper. His family's shop was recently foreclosed via the unrelenting incorporation of the economy. So now, upon a sign-board outside his former shop, there is the image of a gentleman with one soaped cheek placed over the inscription 'Blood-letting done here'. The sign was devised by a corporate algorithm to attract more customers than it repels. It repulsed Peter, but so? He is only an employee now and never was a customer.

On this particular morning Peter awoke pretty early. Becoming aware of the smell of fresh-baked bread, he sat up a little in bed, and saw his wife, who had a special partiality for coffee, taking some fresh-baked bread out of the oven.

"Today, Cynthia Pauper," he said, "I do not want any coffee; I should like a fresh loaf of bread with onions."

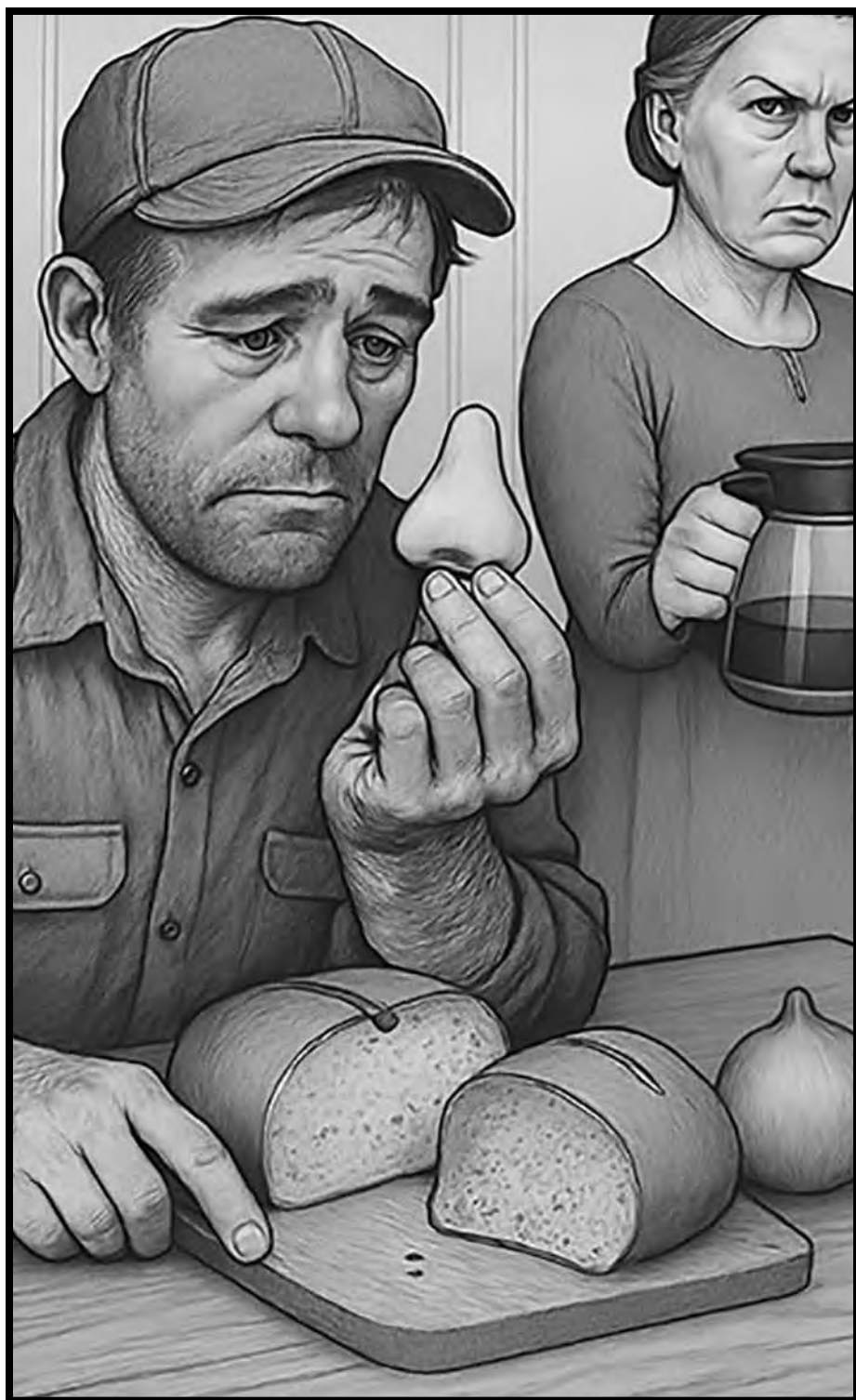
"The blockhead may eat bread and nothing more than bread as far as I am concerned," said his wife mostly to herself; "then I shall have a chance of getting some coffee for myself." She threw a loaf on the table.

For the sake of propriety, Peter Pauper buttoned his shirt, then grabbed an onion, sat down at the table, and prepared for the task at hand. Assuming a serious expression, he began to cut the bread. After he had cut the loaf in two halves, he looked, and to his great astonishment saw something whitish sticking out of it. He carefully poked round it with his knife, and felt it with his finger.

"Quite firmly fixed!" he murmured. "What can it be?" He plunged his finger into the loaf and drew out—a nose!

Peter Pauper at first let his hands fall from sheer astonishment. After rubbing his eyes, he then began to feel it. A nose, an actual nose it was. Moreover, it seemed to be the nose of an acquaintance! Alarm and terror were depicted in Peter's face, but these feelings were slight in comparison with the disgust which took possession of his wife.

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"Whose nose have you cut off, you monster?" she screamed, her face red with anger. "You scoundrel! You tippler! I myself will report you to the police! Such a rascal! Over time many of your customers have told me that, while you were shaving them, you held them so tightly by the nose that they could hardly sit still."

But Peter Pauper was more dead than alive. He saw at once that this nose could belong to no other than Simon Ziller, a member of the Washington establishment whose face and skull he shaved every Sunday and Wednesday.

"Stop, ! I will wrap it in a piece of cloth and place it in the corner. There it may remain for the present. Later on I will take it away. I need to eat."

"No, not there! Shall I endure an amputated nose in my room? You understand nothing except how to strop the edge of a razor. You know nothing of the duties and obligations of a respectable man. You vagabond! You good-for-nothing! Am I to undertake all responsibility for you at the police-office? Ah, you soap-smearer! You blockhead! Take it away where you like, but don't let it stay under my eyes!"

Peter Pauper stood there flabbergasted. He thought and thought, yet knew not what he thought.

"The devil knows how that happened!" he said at last, scratching his head behind his ear. "Whether I came home drunk last night or not, I really don't know. But in all probability this is quite an extraordinary occurrence. For a loaf of bread is something baked and a nose is something different. I don't understand the matter at all."

## THE NOSE

And Peter Pauper was silent. The thought that the police might find him and arrest him for the unlawful possession of a nose robbed him of all presence of mind. Already he began to have visions of an iron collar and a suit with horizontal stripes—and he trembled all over.

At last he finished dressing himself, and badgered by the unmelodic accompaniment of his wife's emphatic exhortations, he wrapped up the nose in a cloth and exited into the street.

He intended to lose it somewhere—either at somebody's door, or in a public square, or in a narrow alley. But just then, in order to complete his bad luck, he was met by an acquaintance who showered inquiries upon him. "Hullo, Peter Pauper! Whom are you going to shave so early in the morning?" etc., etc., so that he could find no suitable opportunity to do what he wanted. Later on he did let the nose drop, but a hotel doorman bore down on him and said, "Look out! You have let something drop!" and Peter Pauper was obliged to pick it up and put it in his pocket.

A feeling of despair began to take possession of him. As all the more the streets became thronged with people and the merchants began to open their shops, he finally resolved to go to the Francis Scott Key Bridge, where perhaps he might succeed in throwing it into the Potomoc.

But now my conscience is growing a little uneasy that I have not yet given any detailed information about Peter Pauper, an estimable man in many ways.

Like many honest American tradesman, Peter Pauper was a terrible drunkard, and although he shaved other people's faces every day, his own was always unshaved. His shirt (he never wore an tie) was quite mottled, i.e. it had been blue, but became brownish-yellow. The collar was quite shiny, and instead of buttons, only the threads by which some had been fastened were to be seen.

Peter Pauper was a great cynic, and when Simon Ziller, a member of the Washington establishment, said to him, as was his custom while being shaved, "Your hands always smell, Peter Pauper!" the latter answered, "What do they smell of?"

"I don't know, my friend, but they smell very strong."

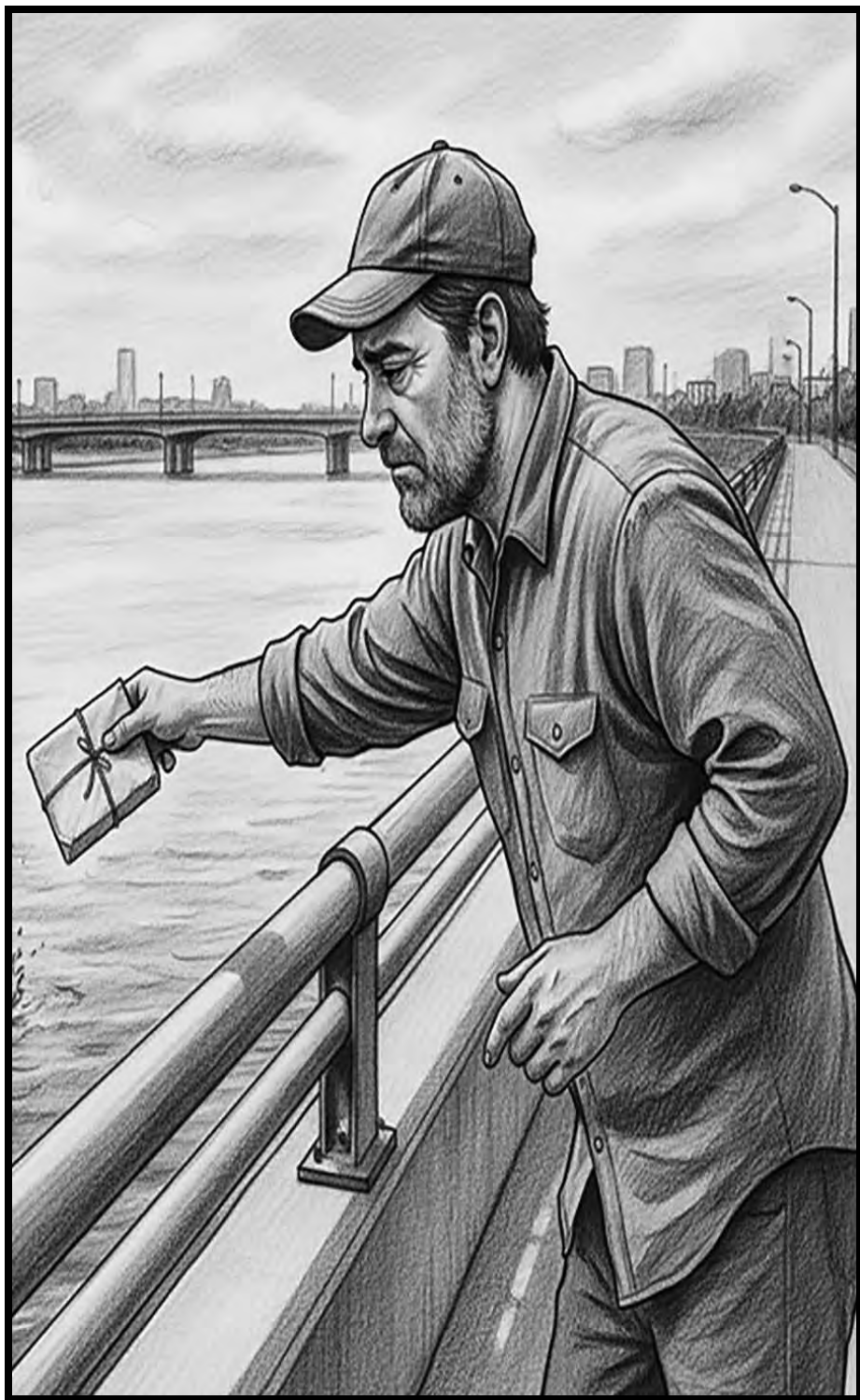
Peter Pauper, after taking a pinch of snuff would then, by way of reprisals, set to work to soap him on the cheek, the upper lip, behind the ears, on the chin, his skull, so nearly everywhere.

This worthy barber man now stood on the Francis Scott Key Bridge with a nose to dispose of. At first he looked round him to ensure aloneness, then leaned on the railings of the bridge as though he wished to look down and see how many fish were swimming past, then secretly threw the nose, wrapped in a little piece of cloth, into the water.

He felt as though a ton of weight had been lifted off him, and he laughed cheerfully. Instead, however, of going to shave any officials, he turned his steps to a building on which a sign-board bore the legend "Teas served here".



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He wanted to have a glass of punch. Suddenly he perceived at the other end of the bridge a police inspector of imposing exterior, with long whiskers, three-cornered hat, and firearm hanging at his side. He nearly fainted. But the police inspector beckoned to him with his hand and said, "Come here, my dear sir."

Peter Pauper, knowing how a gentleman should behave, took his hat off quickly, went towards the police inspector and said, "I hope you are in the best of health."

"Never mind my health. Tell me, my friend, why you were standing on the bridge?"

"By heaven, gracious sir, I was on the way to my customers, and only looked down to see if the river was flowing quickly."

"That is a lie! You won't get out of it like that. Confess the truth."

"I am willing to shave Your Honor two or even three times a week—gratis," answered Peter Pauper.

"No, my friend, don't put yourself out! Three barbers are busy with me already, and they also reckon it a high honor that I let them show me their skill with a straight-edge razor. Now then, out with it! What were you doing there?"

Peter Pauper grew pale. But here the strange episode vanishes in mist, and what further happened is not known.

## THE NOSE

### II

Simon Ziller, a member of the Washington DC establishment, awoke fairly early that morning, and made a droning noise—"Brr! Brr!"—through his lips, as he always did, though he could not say why. He stretched himself, and told his valet to give him a little mirror which was on the table. He wished to look at the heat-boil which had appeared on his nose the previous evening, maybe due to the tight grip his barber had applied while shaving him. But to his great astonishment, he saw that instead of his nose he had a perfectly smooth vacancy on his face. Thoroughly alarmed, he ordered some water to be brought, and he rubbed his eyes with a towel. Sure enough, he no longer had a nose! Then he sprang out of bed and shook himself violently! No—no nose at all any more! He dressed himself and went at once to the police superintendent.

But before proceeding further, we must certainly give the reader some information about Simon Ziller so that you may know what sort of a man this member of the Washington DC establishment really was. These establishment men, who obtain that status by certificates of learning and by fawning, must not be compared with the establishment men of local communities, who are of a very primitive kind. The more learned and fawning establishment men are highly evolved with respect to getting themselves established. The USA is such a wonderful country for the evolution of this type that, for instance, whenever one establishment man is publicly praised, all others from Los Angeles to Miami Beach are able to deflect the praise to themselves.

Simon Ziller had been known as an establishment consort four years previously, and he could hardly believe that he had once felt honored with that title. But no longer. In order to enhance his own importance, he never called himself “consort” but rather “Premier Poobah Accomplice”. And in truth, that’s actually what he was.

“Listen, dearie” he used to say when he met an old woman in the street who sold flowers, “go to my house in Swann Street and ask ‘Does Premier Poobah Accomplice Simon Ziller live here?’ Any child can tell you where it is.” Accordingly, we will sometimes refer to him as Premier Poobah Accomplice Simon Ziller in this account, or Simon Ziller, or simply Simon, or most often Accomplice.

It was his custom to take a daily walk on Pennsylvania Avenue. The collar of his shirt was always remarkably clean and stiff. He wore the same hairless head and face style as is commonly worn nowadays by pale salesman, pale publicists, and pale agents. This hairless style is regarded valuable by all pale establishment men who should blush while playing their games of deception but who know how to control this normally involuntary reaction. It might also be worth mentioning here that Accomplice Simon Ziller wore a number of gold medals, compliments of the Premier Poobah, some of which were engraved with easily recognizable establishment icons, and others with the names of the days of the week to help keep both men properly oriented at a glance.

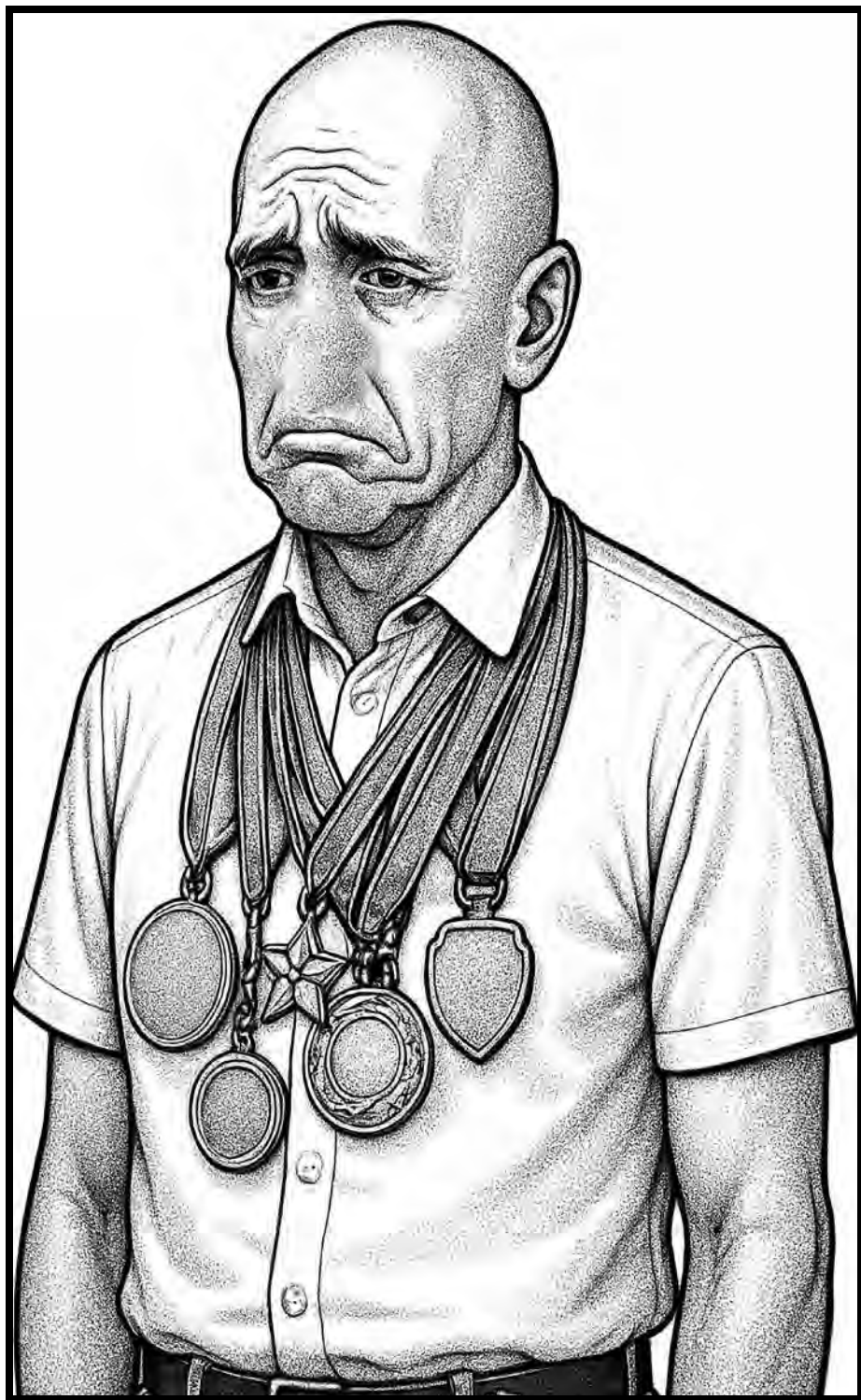
He had originally come to Washington DC to claim the first position that somewhat corresponded to his ambitions—that of a lobbyist—but he was soon discontented with that. Soon good fortune led him directly to the Poobah.

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Moreover, as he was not at all disinclined to marry, good fortune also helped Simon to find a sufficiently short lady who might buttress his reputation, he finding it important to enhance his appearance by disguising his genetic limitations, stature being a big one. Quite accordingly with this, and all other limitations notwithstanding, readers can judge for themselves what the Accomplice's sensations were when he found on his face, instead of a fairly propotional nose, a broad, flat vacancy where his nose had been.

On this day, to magnify his misfortune, not a single private vehicle of any type was to be seen in the street, all due to an obsession the illegitimately elected former premier had with mass transit. Thus, the Accomplice was obliged to either take mass transportation (no way!) or proceed on foot. So he hiked up his slacks, held his handkerchief to his face as though he had a bleeding nose, and began to walk and ponder. "Perhaps it is all only my imagination. I have been having wicked dreams lately. It is impossible that a nose should drop off in such a silly way."

He stepped into a confectioner's shop in order to look into the mirror to confirm his suspicion. Nevertheless, he deemed it fortunate that no customer was in the shop—only small shop-boys were cleaning it out and putting chairs and tables straight. Others with sleepy faces were carrying fresh cakes on trays, and yesterday's newspapers stained with coffee splotches were still lying about. "Thank God no one is here!" he said to himself. "Now I can look at myself leisurely." He stepped gingerly up to a mirror and looked.



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So it is true! What an infernal face!" he exclaimed, and spat with disgust. "If there were only something there instead of the nose, perhaps some other type of human adornment. But there is absolutely nothing there at all."

He bit his lips with vexation, left the confectioner's and resolved, quite contrary to his occasional self-promotional tendency, neither to look nor fake a smile at anyone important on the street. Then suddenly he halted as if rooted to the spot before a door, where something extraordinary happened. An electric scooter drew up at the entrance and a gentleman in uniform jumped off and hurried up the steps. How great was Simon Ziller's terror and astonishment when he saw that it was his own nose!

At this extraordinary sight, everything seemed to turn round with him. He felt as though he could hardly keep upright on his legs. But, trembling all over as though with fever, he resolved to wait till the nose should return to the scooter. After about two minutes the nose actually came out again. It wore a gold-embroidered cape with a high collar, and high-heeled boots. A finely-carved, gilded, and polished walking-stick hung inside his cape. A hat, adorned with a golden-gilded plume, showed that it held the rank of one of the Premier Poobahs's ambassadors. It was likely that it was about to pay a 'duty-call'. It looked round on both sides from the top of the steps, then called out to the scooter "Stand up". It descended the steps rapidly, hopped on the scooter, and rode away.

Poor Simon Ziller nearly lost his reason. He did not know what to think of this extraordinary event. And indeed, how was it possible that this nose, which only yesterday he hosted on his face and which had no ability to function independently, should now do so wearing a gold-embroidered uniform the Premier Poobah had designed for his ambassadors.

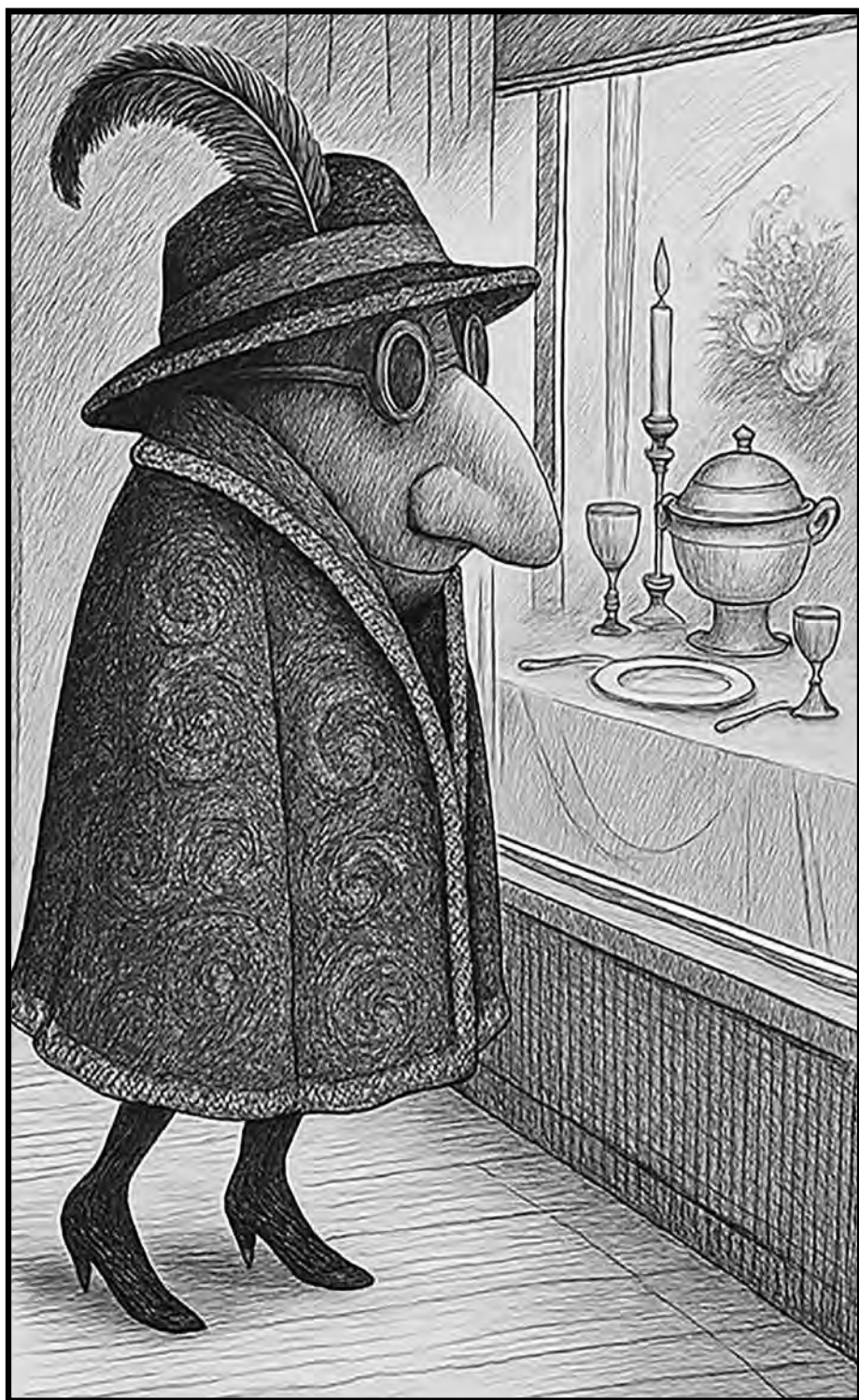
He ran after the scooter, which fortunately had stopped a short way off before it arrived at the entrance to this or that person's (depending on your bias) Center for the Arts. He hurried towards the entrance and pressed through a small crowd of women whose faces were covered in wraps that revealed only their eyes, a recently common fashion choice he always made a point to disparage. But besides these modest ladies, only a few other people lingered in front of the Art Center—hardly anybody ever went there anymore.

Today the Accomplice was so agitated that nothing, not covered faces, not social protests concerning the Center for the Arts, nothing except the feature that was missing on his face bothered him, for this was now all important. But try as he might, he could not determine where his nose went. Nevertheless, he knew he must continue looking for his nose everywhere. Who would do otherwise?

And lo and behold, another sighting did occur. He saw his nose standing before a shop. It seemed half buried in its gold-bordered collar, and was attentively inspecting gold-plated wares displayed in the window.



## THE NOSE



How shall I approach it to do what need be done? Everything it wears—the uniform, the hat, and so on—show that it is an ambassador. But what does that matter.? What’s that to me? I needn’t kow-tow to a mere ambassador! But how the deuce did this happen anyway? How could it be that my nose was appointed ambassador so rapidly, and by whom? The Poobah? Really? And my nose—a mere ambassador? I have looked down this very nose at low-ranking establishment officials like ambassadors for some time now!

He began to cough discreetly near it, but the nose paid him not the least attention.

“Honorable sir,” said Simon Ziller at last, plucking up courage, “honorable sir.”

“What do you want?” asked the nose, and turned round.

“It seems to me strange, most respected sir. I mean, you should know where you belong—yet I find you all of a sudden to be—what? Judge for yourself.”

“Pardon me. I do not understand what you are talking about. Explain yourself more sensibly.”

How shall I make my meaning plainer to him? Then plucking up fresh courage, he continued.

“Naturally—besides being a fully formed—uhh, a nearly fully formed—thoroughly virile man, the official you see facing you this very moment is The Premier Poobah Accomplice. Hence, you must admit it is not befitting that I should go about

without a nose. Sure, there are many who could carry on their business without one. But I am always on the look-out for a higher station—you should know that—and despite the high status I have already achieved, it's easily possible I will rise higher still, for I do have time, as I am not yet far removed from my youth. And I have connections. I am acquainted with a world of people in high positions. So you see—I do not know, honorable sir, what you..." (here the Accomplice shrugged his shoulders). "Pardon me, but if one regards the matter from the point of view of duty and honor—you will yourself understand—"

"I understand nothing," answered the nose. "I repeat, please explain yourself sensibly."

"Honorable sir," said Simon Ziller with dignity, "I do not know how I am to understand your words. It seems to me the matter is as clear as possible. Or do you wish—but wait. You must know. You are, after all, my own nose!"

The nose looked at the Accomplice and wrinkled its forehead. "There you are wrong, respected sir. I am myself. Besides, there can be no close relations between us. To judge by the random buttons on your uniform, you must be in a lower department than mine." So saying, the nose turned away.

Simon Ziller was completely puzzled. Lower department? I am assigned to the highest department of all, functioning adroitly as a sycophanting accomplice to the Premier Poobah! My own nose does not know my accomplice-ment? Or at least sense it?

Am I not emanating the distinctive Poobah scent of cologne that both his Premiership and I proudly wear?

He did not know what to do, and still less what to think. At this moment he heard the pleasant rustling of a dress, and there approached an elderly lady wearing a quantity of lace, and by her side, her graceful daughter sporting a light straw hat and robed in a white dress that set off her slender figure to advantage. Behind the ladies marched a tall lackey with long whiskers.

Simon Ziller advanced a few steps, adjusted his collar, arranged his gold seals which hung high on a little gold chain, and with smiling face, he fixed his eyes on the graceful lady. She bowed lightly like a spring flower, and raised up to her brow a little white hand with transparent fingers. He smiled still more when he spied under the brim of her hat a little round chin, and part of her cheek faintly tinted with rose color. She was so dainty and, also built so low to the ground, right-sized. Time to make an impression!

But suddenly he sprang back as though he had been scorched. He remembered that he had nothing but an absolute blank in place of a nose, and tears started to his eyes. He turned round in order to tell the gentleman in uniform that, while he knew he looked to be an ordinary establishment man in appearance, he was far, far, more important than that. He in truth had ascended from an ordinary LA neighborhood to immediately become fully ready for anything. Good out of the gate, yes, but much, much more than that. He was a true self-made man

by instinct. That's because he knew how to get others to build him up even higher than what he was born to be, as excellent as that was. It was evident he had a nose for finding all that it took to advance himself.

But his nose! Oh, no! His nose that was posing as an ambassador was no longer here. While the Accomplice was distracted by the ladies, it had taken the time to go away unnoticed, doubtlessly to continue nosing its way around, and into, and through its demanding affairs.

Its disappearance plunged Simon Ziller into despair. He went back and stood for a moment under a colonnade, looking round him on all sides in hope of perceiving the nose somewhere. He knew and remembered very well that it wore a hat with a plume in it and a gold-embroidered uniform! But he had not noticed the exact shape of the cloak, nor the color of the scooter, nor whether it was a plug-in hybrid or a straight-up electric. Nor even whether a lackey rode on the rear, and, if so, what sort of boots he wore.

Moreover, so many bikes and scooters were passing that it would have been difficult to pick out one scooter from all the rest. But even if he could have, there would have been no means of using his authority to stop it. His normally well-respected, establishment face was powerless without a nose!

And yet, the day was fine and sunny, and now, out of nowhere, an immense crowd appeared. A variegated stream of ladies flowed along the pavement, and there too was his

acquaintance, the Privy House Speaker, whom he addressed 'General' when nobody else was present. And there too was Iago, his intimate friend, who would always lose his stack of coins in low-stakes, staff poker games—intentionally to win favor. And there, beckoning him, was that honorary Vice Premier, a minor one, who had obtained the rank of lifetime exalted establishment man in the Carribean territories.

"Go to the deuce!" said Simon Ziller under his breath. "Hey! Scooter Uberman! Drive me straight to the Superintendent of police." So saying, he got onto the uber scooter (despite it being electric) and continued to shout all the time to the Uberman 'Ride hard!' until they arrived at the police department."

"Is the police superintendent in house?" he asked on entering the front hall.

"No, sir," answered the porter, "he has just gone out."

"Ah, just as I thought!"

"Yes," continued the porter, "he has only just gone out. If you had been a moment earlier you perhaps would have caught him."

Simon Ziller, still holding his handkerchief to his face, remounted the scooter and cried in a despairing voice "Ride on!"

"Where?" asked the Scooter Uberman.

"Straight on!"

"But how? There is nothing but a cross-road here. Shall I go to the right or the left?"

This question made Simon Ziller reflect. In this situation it had seemed necessary to have recourse to the police, not because the affair had anything to do with them directly, but because they usually acted more promptly than other authorities and were freely allowed, even expected, to break the rules when a need arose. But there was no prompt action today. That was lacking.

So he guessed he could dismount, walk back, wait, and deal with the delay! Maybe he'd do that, because he had already decided another option—going to the Department of State where ambassadors are controlled, and therefore a place where he could demand an explanation from anyone he might find there—would be a useless venture. After all, the communication he had received thus far from his nose showed it regarded nothing sacred, so it was just as likely it copped a uniform and lied to him about this 'higher department' as it had pretended not to know it belonged on his face.

But then, just as he was about to go back to the police station, he was overcome by fear. If he didn't act quickly, his rascally snout, who had behaved so disloyally towards him at their first meeting, might take advantage of any delay and quit the city secretly. So he resolved that he needed to turn right at the crossroads and head instead to that loyal national news outlet and tell them the story about the loss of his nose. They would surely agree to describe what had happened to him, and show and carefully describe all the distinctive characteristics of his nose so that anyone who found it might bring it to him at

once, or at least inform him where it was usually spending its time. Having decided on this course, he ordered the Scooter Uberman to turn right liggity-split and ride to the network headquarters in a hurry. All the way he shouted "Quick, you scoundrel! Quick!"

"Yes, sir!" answered the Uberman, standing firm on the scooter and resolutely controlling the handlebar despite the verbal pummeling he was receiving from behind.

At last they arrived, and Simon Ziller, out of breath from his exhortations, rushed into a little room where a bob-haired secretary with spectacles on the bridge of her nose sat at her desk. She removed her headphones and grabbed the pen she had been holding between her teeth. She also tweaked the tip of her nose, maybe to assure herself that it was still there.

"Tell me, who is available now to interview me?" demanded Simon Ziller.

"And why sir would anyone want to interview you?"

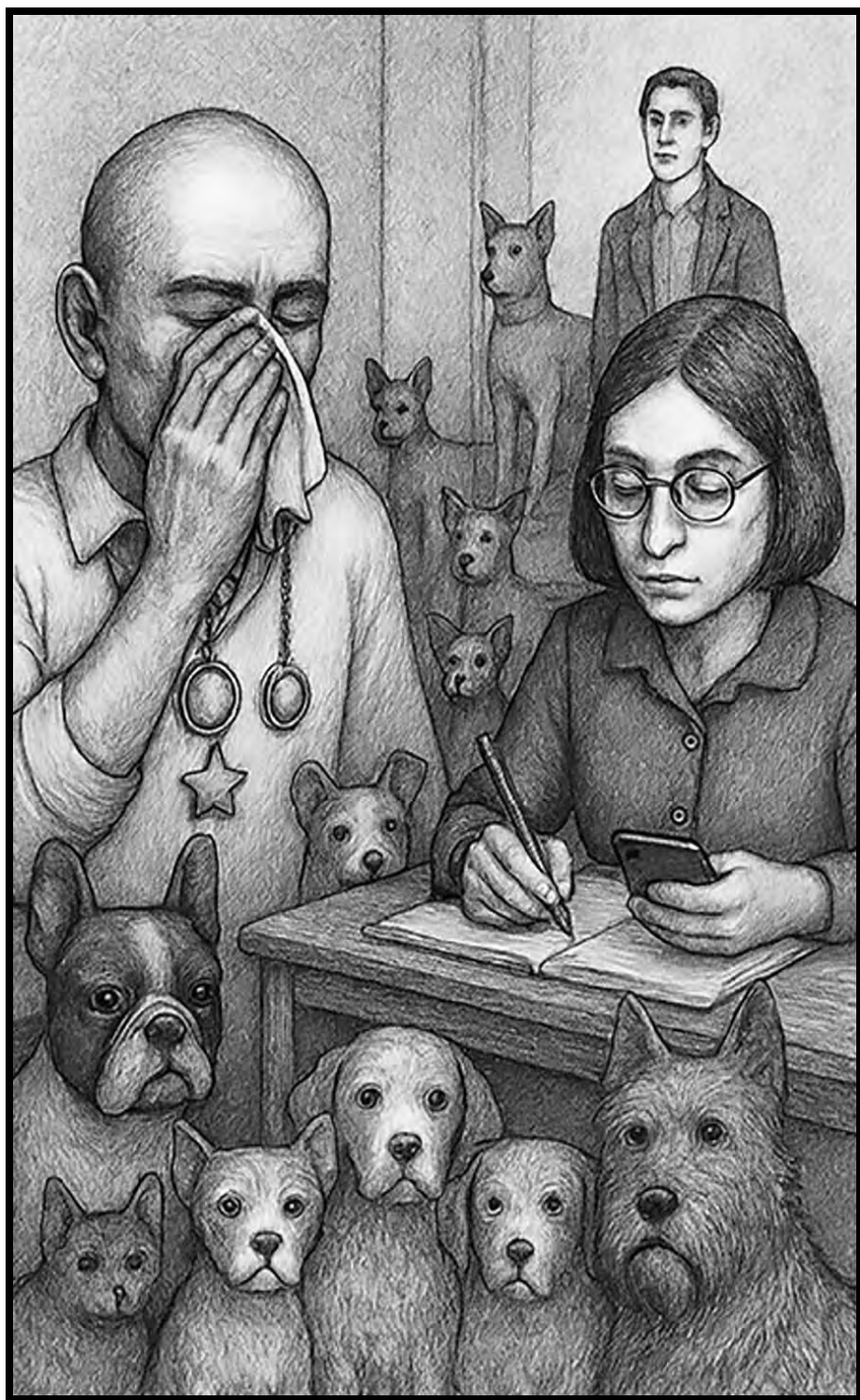
"Can't you see my face? I'm missing my nose. That's why! I need to find it! And besides, don't you know who I am?"

"Have the kindness to wait a minute," answered the secretary, putting down figures with her pencil with one hand, and with the other making a digital move in her solitaire game.

A lackey, whose smart-looking coat showed that he served one of the higher-ups, was standing by the table with a note in his hand and a small dog on a leash. He spoke up in a lively tone to show himself sociable.



## THE NOSE



"Would you believe it, sir, this little dog is really not worth twenty-four bucks at best and, for my own part, I would not give a buck for the mangy mutt. But the CEO is quite gone on it, and she offered a hundred buck reward to anyone who found it. So lucky me—I sniffed out the mangy mutt and earned myself a C-note. To tell you the truth, the tastes of these people in high places are very different from ours. They don't mind giving five hundred or a thousand dollars for a poodle or a pointer, provided it be a good one."

The secretary, who had been listening to the lackey semi-attentively, continued to play the solitaire game on her phone. Meanwhile, on either side of her desk, a number of other dogs had gathered, all of them regularly employed by the network's CEO for their ability to follow a scent and sniff out a good story about any crime perpetrated by an immigrant. Since these dogs were acutely endowed with the olfactory power to sniff out anyone residing for an indefinite period in our country after arriving here from someplace without, they were similarly able to sniff out the adventurous mutts return here from someplace without, and boy did it smell that way.

Since the reception office where they were all collected was very small, it was no wonder the air was very close. But Simon Ziller was not affected by the odor, for he had covered his face with a handkerchief. But, then again, and more important, his nose itself was heaven knew where.

"Maam, allow me to ask you—I am in a great hurry," he said at last impatiently.

## THE NOSE

"In a moment! In a moment! I have one last king to place. Ahh, there! I think I've got it. One moment! Ahh, yes there it is. Up he goes. I did it!" said the bob-haired secretary, throwing her head back in delight, her excitement seemingly of interest to most of the dogs and also the lackey.

"Now—what do you wish?" she said, turning to Simon Ziller.

"I wish—I have just been swindled and cheated and have lost track of the perpetrator. I only want you to schedule an immediate interview so I can say to the nation that whoever brings this scoundrel to me will be well-rewarded."

"What is your name, please?"

"You don't know my name? Can't you see who I am?"

"Sir, you are covering your face with a handkerchief."

"That's because it's my nose that has been absconded!"

"And sir, the thief you have lost track of...the perpetrator who you say has run off is...?"

"My nose! It is my nose!"

"I understand that you are upset, sir. But I am asking you about the perpetrator you mentioned. I need details if you want me to approach Mr. Shane Hannibal about an interview."

"It was it! The it is my nose! It is my nose itself that has absconded my nose!"

"Hmm! What a strange name. And this Mr Nose has stolen from you—absconded you say—a considerable sum?"

“Mr Nose? No! Ah, you don’t understand me! It is my own nose which has gone, I don’t know where. The devil has played a trick on me.”

“How has it disappeared? I don’t understand.”

“I can’t tell you how, but the important point is that now it walks about the city impersonating an ambassador. That is why I want you to broadcast that whoever sees it and gets hold of it should lead it to me as soon as possible. Also, consider please, how can I live without such a prominent part of my body? It is not as if it were merely a little toe; I would only have to put my foot in my boot and no one would notice its absence. But a nose is not a little toe in a boot. I cannot face the public like this.”

The secretary compressed her lips and reflected. “No, I cannot arrange an interview,” she said after a long pause.

“What! Why not?”

“Because it might compromise our brand. Suppose everyone could claim that their nose was lost. People already say that fake news and half-truths fill the airwaves. Claiming a nose is walking about pretending to be an ambassador would only buttress such claims.”

“But this is not fake news! There is nothing of that sort in my case.”

“You think not? Listen a minute. Last week there was a case very much like what you are saying, only it was a request for

a paid advertisement in prime time. An official came, just as you have done, bringing us an advertisement to broadcast, the acceptance of which would have earned us a tidy sum. This advertisement simply announced the loss of a black-haired poodle. There did not seem to be anything out of the way in it, and it was merely an advertisement. But it was really a satire—the poodle was meant to represent our ultimate political figure, the leader of the political party we are fully fond of. Disgusting! So we rejected the ad and the great amount of money we could have made if we would have accepted it. It was a satiric advertisement, and one so inflammatory and grossly unpatriotic you couldn't imagine anything worse."

"But I am not talking here of a real or a satiric poodle. It's my own nose, which is almost my own self."

"No, I cannot arrange an interview. Nor even accept an advertisement if that were your desire. Now please leave here and let me get on with my day. "

"But my nose really has disappeared!"

"Then, that sir is a matter for a doctor. There are said to be people in the medical trade who can provide you with any kind of nose you like. But then, I see that you are a witty man and probably like to have your little joke. So be it. Leave me and go have your laugh."

"No, wait a minute! Wait a minute! If not Shane Hannibal, then how about Miriam Bartholomew? She knows me very well and so very highly respects me! "

“So you say, or be that as it may. Ms. Bartholomew has all she can do to keep the spotlight on the Premier Poobah. She would have no interest in commenting on a lost nose.”

All this time, with his handkerchief covering a good share of his face, Simon had been wondering whether he really needed to remove it so that people would have an easier time identifying him as the ultra-important establishment man that he was—The Premier Poobah Accomplice, for crying out loud.

Doesn’t anyone recognize my manner, my voice, or the height of my high, intelligent forehead leading to my smooth, roomy skull? And the combination of all my attributes— isn’t that enough for them to recognize exactly who I am? This just can’t be! I am familiar to almost all the world and, more to the point, certainly to the employees and regular viewers of this news outlet, the one that supports every Premier Poobah idea and statement, all of which originated from me, his Accomplice, as everybody knows. They came from me, right here! Me myself! I have spent my entire life concealing the larger part of my inner self from the public eye. Now do I need to expose the lesser part (though maybe not exactly the smaller part) of my physical self at this unfortunate juncture in order to reveal my important identity—now—without my nose on my face? Okay—it seems that I do.

“But I swear to you on my word of honor, I am a man of inestimable importance and need an immediate interview for the sake, not chiefly for myself, but for the sake of the entire populace of this great land of ours. You will see. Look directly

at my face yourself." Ziller began to pull the handkerchief away from his face.

"You don't need to put yourself out!" responded the secretary, one palm out signalling stop while the practiced fingertips of her other hand took a pinch of snuff. She then snorted the snuff with both nostrils, just as she has been doing for years to keep her spirits up, but only because cigarette smoking had been scorned years ago and because packs of smokes were now grossly unaffordable.

"All the same, if you don't mind," she added with a shrug and suddenly renewed vigor and a touch of genuine curiosity. "I guess I should like to have a look at it."

The Accomplice removed the handkerchief from his face.

"It certainly does look odd," said the secretary. "It is perfectly flat like a freshly fried pancake. Yet it is hardly credible. Who are you?"

"You must know, nose or no nose! Very well. You are continuing to hesitate? You seem to have decided to refuse to alert our nation about my terrible loss? Well, I am grateful for being particularly onto you and am glad this incident will provide me the pleasure of making your life miserable in due time (the Accomplice, you see, does not shrink even in the face of utter, noseless humiliation)."

"It certainly would not be difficult to advertise it, I suppose," directly replied the secretary. "I do not see what good it would

do you. However, if you lay so much importance on it, you should apply to someone who has a skilful pen so that she can describe it as a curious, natural freak, and publish the article in the 'Northern Bee' (here she took another pinch) for the benefit of youthful readers (she wiped her nose), or simply as a matter worthy of arousing public curiosity."

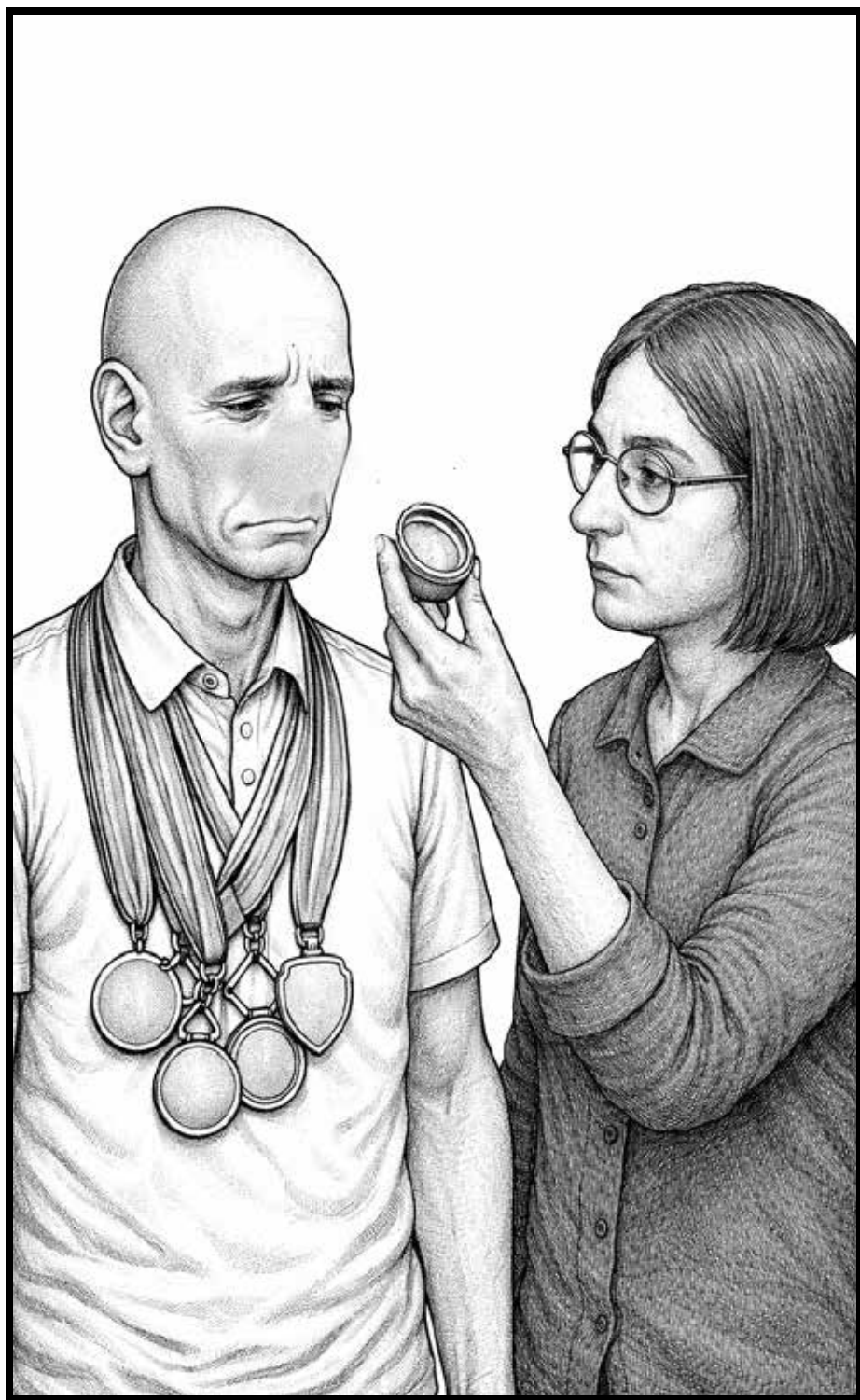
The Accomplice felt completely discouraged. He let his eyes fall absent-mindedly on a daily paper in which theatrical performances were advertised. Reading there the name of an actress whom he knew to be pretty, he involuntarily smiled, and his hand sought his pocket to see if he had a blue ticket—for, in Simon Ziller's opinion, a superior establishment man like himself should not take a lesser-priced seat. But once more the thought of his lost nose suddenly spoiled everything.

The secretary herself now seemed touched at his difficult position. Desiring to console him, she tried to express her sympathy by a few polite words. "I much regret," she said, "your extraordinary mishap. Will you not try a pinch of snuff? It clears the head, banishes depression, and is a good preventive against hemorrhoids."

So saying, she reached her snuff-box out to Simon Ziller, skilfully concealing at the same time the cover, which was adorned with the portrait of some lady or other.

This act, quite innocent in itself, exasperated Simon Ziller. "I don't understand what you find to joke about in the matter," he exclaimed angrily. "Don't you see that I lack precisely the essential feature for taking snuff? The devil take your snuff-box. I don't want to look at snuff now, not even the best, and certainly not your vile brand!"





So saying, he left the network office in a state of profound irritation, and went back to try the Superintendent of police. He arrived just as this law enforcement dignitary was reclining on his couch while saying to himself with a sigh of satisfaction, "Yes, I shall make a nice little sum out of that."

It might be expected, therefore, that the Accomplice's visit would be quite inopportune.

This police superintendent was a great patron of all the arts and industries, but what he liked above everything else was legal currency in large denominations. "It is a thing," he used to say, "to which it is not easy to find an equivalent—it requires no food, it does not take up much room, it stays in one's pocket until wanted, and if it falls, it is not broken."

The Superintendent accorded Simon Ziller a fairly frigid reception, saying that the afternoon was not the best time to come with a case, as nature required one to rest a little after eating, and that respectable people did not have their noses stolen.

The last allusion was too direct. We must remember that Simon Ziller was a very sensitive man. He did not mind anything said against him as an individual, but he could not endure any reflection on his rank or social position. He even believed that in comedies, high or low, one might allow attacks on subordinates, but never on their seniors. In keeping with this, he had decided the recent late night comedy attacks on himself and The Premier Poohbah should be prohibited by law (and he had made this a goal of theirs and a work in progress)!

## THE NOSE

The Superintendent's reception of him hurt his feelings so much that he raised his head proudly, and said with dignity, "After such insulting expressions on your part, I have nothing more to say." And he left the place.

He reached his house quite wearied out. It was already growing dark. After all his fruitless search, his room seemed to him melancholy and even ugly. In the vestibule he saw Marvin his valet stretched on the leather couch and amusing himself by spitting seeds at the ceiling, which he did very cleverly, hitting every time the same spot. His servant's equanimity enraged him; he struck him on the forehead with his hat, and said, "You good-for-nothing, you are always playing the fool!"

Marvin rose quickly and hastened to take off his master's Friday medal.

Once in his room, the Accomplice, tired and depressed, threw himself in an armchair and, after sighing a while, began to soliloquise: In heaven's name, why should such a misfortune befall me? If I had lost an arm or a leg, it would be less insupportable. But a man without a nose! Devil take it—what is he good for? He is only fit to be thrown out of the window. If it had been taken from me in war, or if I had lost it by my own fault! But it has disappeared inexplicably.

But no! It is impossible. It is incredible that a nose can disappear like that—quite incredible. I must be dreaming, or suffering from some hallucination. Perhaps I swallowed a

trumpet flower beverage or whatever elixir my wife keeps by her bedside to forget herself or me, whichever one, she has never said. That fool Marvin must have forgotten to take it away after she had imbibed all she could stand of it. Then I must have swallowed it unknowingly thinking it was my own something, which I would never overuse, me being a man of moderation, just like my Poobah. That would mean the elixir was some very strong stuff that I took by mistake. I need to talk to my wife about it when she returns home from her overseas podcast adventure to Mexico, or from whatever else she does wherever else she goes.

In order to find out whether he really was in his wife's orbit, the Accomplice pinched himself so hard that he involuntarily uttered a cry. The pain convinced him that he was quite present. He walked slowly to the looking-glass. At first he closed his eyes, hoping to see his nose suddenly in its proper place. But on opening them, he started back. "What a hideous sight! It was really incomprehensible. I might easily lose a button, one of my gold medals, a watch, or something similar. But a loss like this! And in one's own dwelling!"

After considering all the circumstances, Premier Poobah Accomplice Simon Ziller felt inclined to suppose the cause of all his trouble should be laid at the door of Madame Podtotchina, the State of Affair's wife, who wished that he be wed to her very lanky daughter. This had happened slightly before he had found a lady nearer to his own size (and, more acceptably, even shorter). At first he had readily cooperated with the Madame by

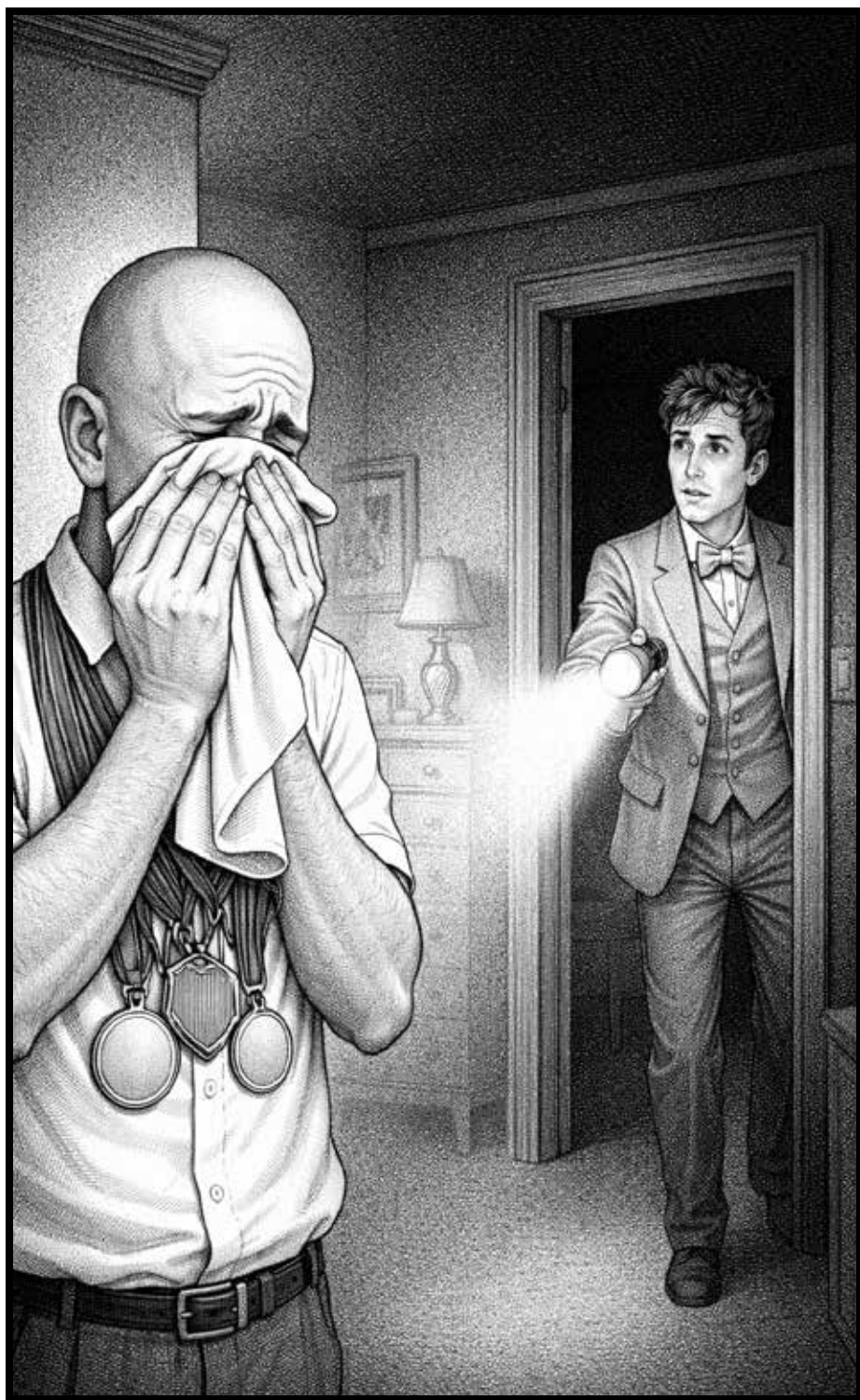
courting her daughter, but always avoided getting to the point of the problem with their relationship.

But when the lady one day told him point-blank that she wished him to marry her daughter, he had to draw back, declaring that he was still too young, and that he had to serve the Poobah about four years more before he would be forty-four. This must be the reason why the lady, in revenge, had resolved to bring him into disgrace, and had hired two sorceresses for that object.

This had to be it. For one thing was absolutely certain—his nose had not been cut off—no one had entered his room. As for Peter Pauper—he had been shaved by him on Wednesday, and during that day and all of Thursday his nose had been there. This he knew, for he well-remembered orienting himself with his Thursday medal more than once. Moreover, if his nose had been cut off, he would naturally have felt pain, and doubtless the wound would not have healed so quickly, nor would the surface have been as flat as a pancake.

All kinds of plans passed through his head: should he bring a legal action against the wife of the State of Affairs, wed to an officer who by rank was technically superior to him, or should he go directly to her and charge her openly with her treachery?

His reflections were interrupted by a sudden light, which shone through the chinks of the door, showing that Marvin had lit the faux-wax candles in the vestibule. Soon Marvin himself came in with his flashlight. Simon Ziller quickly seized a handkerchief and covered the place where his nose had been the evening before, so that his blockhead of a servant might not gape with his mouth wide open when he saw his master's extraordinary appearance.



But only a moment passed before they both heard a demanding knock upon the entrance door. Then, scarcely had Marvin returned to the vestibule to answer the knock before a stranger's voice was heard at the door to his room.

"Does Premier Poobah Accomplice Simon Ziller live here?" it asked.

"Come in!" said the Accomplice, rising rapidly and opening the door.

He saw a police official of pleasant appearance, with grey whiskers and fairly full cheeks—the same who at the commencement of this story was standing at the end of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. "You have lost your nose?" he asked.

"Exactly so."

"It has just been found."

"What—do you say?" stammered Simon Ziller.

Joy had suddenly paralysed his tongue. He stared at the police commissary on whose cheeks and full lips fell the flickering light of the faux-wax candles that also adorned some of his room.

"How was it?" he asked at last.

"By a very singular chance. It has been arrested just as it was getting into a plane for Rigamarole. Its passport had been made out some time ago in the name of an official, and what is still more strange, I myself took it at first for a real gentleman. Fortunately I had my glasses with me, and then I saw at once

that it was a nose. I am shortsighted, you know, and as you stand before me I cannot distinguish your nose, your beard, or anything else. My mother-in-law can hardly see at all."

Simon Ziller was beside himself with excitement. "Where is it? Where? I will hasten there at once."

"Don't put yourself out. Knowing that you need it, I have brought it with me. Another singular thing is that the principal culprit in the matter is a scoundrel of a barber living in Anacostia, who is now safely locked up. I had long suspected him of drunkenness and theft—only the day before yesterday he stole some buttons in a shop. Your nose is quite uninjured." So saying, the police commissary put his hand in his pocket and brought out the nose wrapped up in paper.

"Yes, yes, that is it!" exclaimed Simon Ziller. "Will you not stay and drink a cup of tea with me?"

"I should like to very much, but I cannot. I must go at once to the House of Correction. The cost of living is very high nowadays. My mother-in-law lives with me, and there are several children. The eldest is very hopeful and intelligent, but I have no means for their education."

After the commissary's departure, Simon Ziller remained for some time plunged in a kind of vague reverie, and did not recover full consciousness for several moments, so great was the effect of this unexpected good news. He placed the recovered nose carefully in the palm of his hand, and examined it again with the greatest attention.



"Yes, this is it!" he said to himself. "Here is the heat-boil on the left side, which came out yesterday." And he nearly laughed aloud with delight.

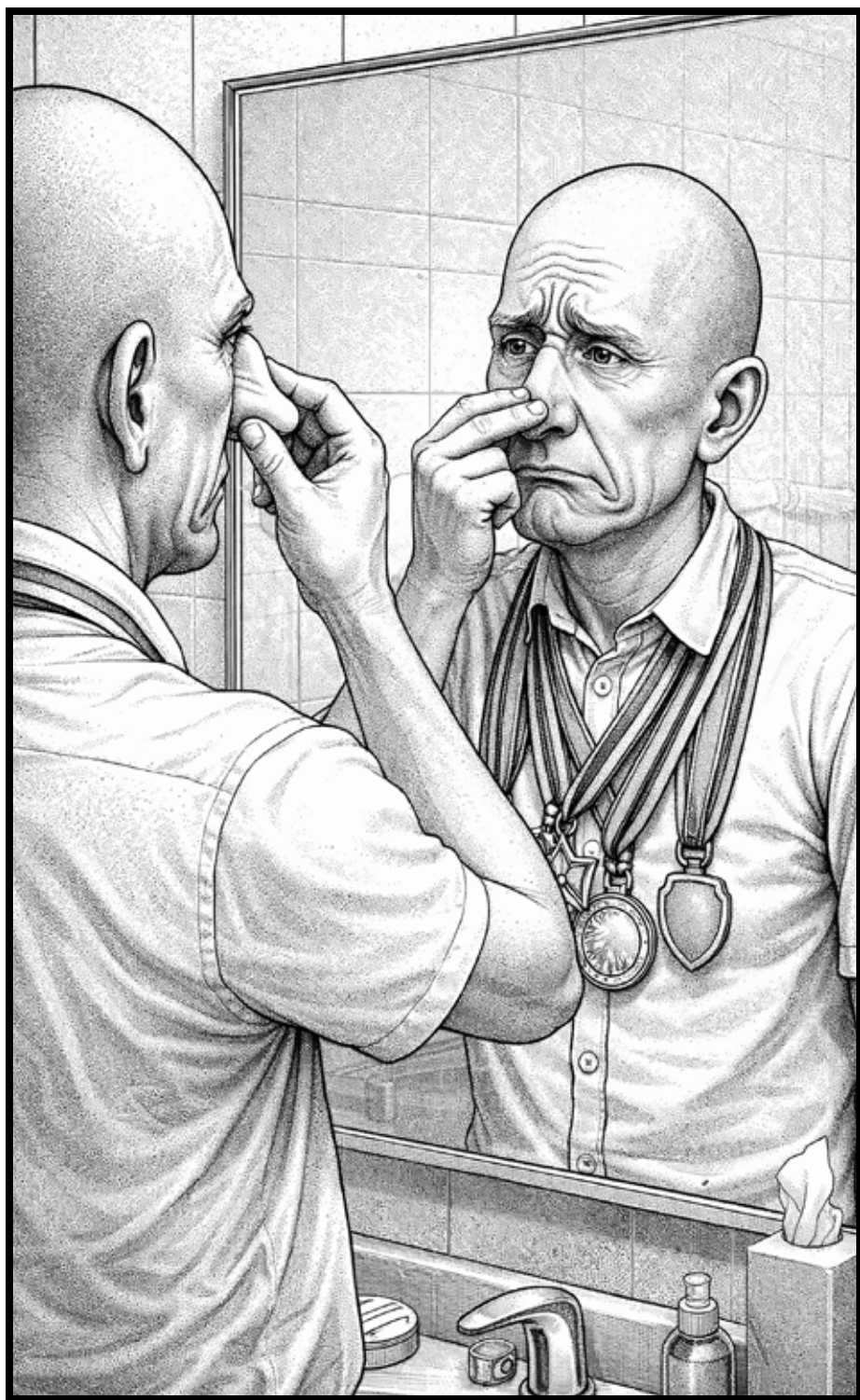
But nothing is permanent in this world. Joy in the second moment of its arrival is already less keen than in the first, is still fainter in the third, and finishes by coalescing with our normal mental state, just as the circles the fall of a pebble form on the surface of water gradually die away. Simon Ziller began to meditate and saw that his difficulties were not yet over. His nose had been recovered, but it had to be joined onto his face again in its proper place.

But suppose it couldn't be done? As he put this question to himself, Simon Ziller grew pale. With a feeling of indescribable dread, he rushed towards his master bathroom. He stood before the mirror in order that he might not place his nose crookedly on his face. His hands trembled.

Very carefully he placed it where it had been before. Horror! It did not remain there. He held it to his mouth and warmed it a little with his breath, and then placed it there again, but it would not hold.

"Hold on, you stupid!" he said.

The nose seemed to be made of wood, but when it fell into the sink, it landed and bounced as though it were a rubber wine stopper. The Accomplice's face began to twitch feverishly. "Is it possible that it won't stick?" he asked himself, full of alarm. But however often he tried, all his efforts were in vain.



## THE NOSE

He called Marvin, and sent him to fetch the doctor who occupied the finest flat in the mansion. This doctor was a man of imposing appearance who had magnificent black whiskers and a healthy wife. He ate fresh apples every morning and cleaned his teeth with extreme care, using five different tooth-brushes for three-quarters of an hour daily.

The doctor came immediately. After having asked the Accomplice when this misfortune had happened, he raised his chin and gave him a hard flick with his finger just where the nose had been, in such a way that the Accomplice suddenly threw his head back and struck it on the wall. The doctor said that did not matter. Then, making him turn his face to the right, he felt the vacant place and said "Hmm!" Then he gave him another hard flick with his finger so that the Accomplice started like a horse whose teeth were being examined. After this experiment, the doctor shook his head and said, "No, it cannot be done. Rather remain as you are, lest something worse happen. Certainly one could replace it at once. But I assure you, the remedy would be worse than the disease."

"All very fine, but how am I to go on without a nose?" answered Simon Ziller. "There is nothing worse than that. How can I show myself with such a villainous appearance? I go into good society, and this evening I am invited to two parties. I know several ladies, among them Mrs Cruzaway, the wife of that bigwig senator who is off on another vacation, and also Madame Podtotchina—although after what she has

done, I don't want to have anything to do with her except through the agency of the police."

"I beg you," continued Simon Ziller in a supplicating tone, "find some way or other of replacing it! Even if it is not quite firm, as long as it holds at all. I can keep it in place sometimes with my hand, whenever there is any risk. Besides, I do not even dance, so that it is not likely to be injured by any sudden movement. As to your fee, be in no anxiety about that. I can well afford it."

"Believe me," answered the doctor in a voice which was neither too high nor too low, but soft and almost magnetic, "I do not treat patients from love of gain. That would be contrary to my principles and to my art. It is true that I accept fees, but that is only not to hurt my patients' feelings by refusing them. I could certainly replace your nose, but I assure you on my word of honor, it would only make matters worse. Rather let Nature do her own work. Wash the place often with cold water, and I assure you that even without a nose, you will be just as well as if you had one. As to the nose itself, I advise you to have it preserved in a bottle of spirits, or, still better, of warm vinegar mixed with two spoonfuls of brandy. And then you can sell it at a good price. I would be willing to take it myself, provided you do not ask too much."

"No, no, I shall not sell it at any price. I would rather it were lost again."

"Excuse me," said the doctor, taking his leave. "I hoped to be useful to you, but I can do nothing more. You are at any rate convinced of my good-will." So saying, the doctor left the room with a dignified air.

Simon Ziller did not even notice his departure. Eyes down, absorbed in a profound reverie, he looked easily past the space that his nose once occupied and only saw the empty space where his Friday badge had been. Saturday would come soon enough.

The next day he resolved, before bringing a formal action, to write to the Colonel's wife and determine whether she would not see to it that, without further dispute, the noble feature she had deprived him of be attached securely to his face forthwith.

The letter ran as follows:

To Madame Alexandra Podtotchina,

I hardly understand your method of action. Be sure that your adopting such a course has thus far gained you nothing, nor will it help you succeed in making me marry your daughter. Believe me, the story of my nose has become well known, and I know it is you and no one else who played the principal part in it. Its unexpected separation from the place which it occupied, its flight and its appearances sometimes in the disguise of an official, sometimes in proper configuration, are nothing but the consequence of unholy spells employed by you or by persons who, like you, are addicted to such honorable

pursuits. On my part, I wish to inform you, that if the above-mentioned nose is not restored today to its proper place, I shall be obliged to have recourse to legal procedure.

For the rest, with all respect, I have the honor to be your humble servant,

Premier Poohbah Accomplice, Simon Ziller.

The reply was not long in coming, and was as follows:

Premier Poohbah Accomplice, Simon Ziller,

Your letter has profoundly astonished me. I must confess that I had not expected such unjust reproaches on your part. I assure you that the official of whom you speak has not been at my house, either disguised or in his proper person. It is true that Philip Peter Potantchikoff has paid visits at my house, and though he has actually asked for my daughter's hand, and was a man of good breeding, respectable and intelligent, I never gave him any hope.

Again, you say something about a nose. If you intend to imply by that I wished to snub you, i.e. to meet you with a refusal, I am very astonished because, as you well know, I was quite of the opposite mind. If after this you wish to ask for my daughter's hand, I should be glad to gratify you, for such has also been the object of my most fervent desire, in the hope of the accomplishment of which, I remain, yours most sincerely,

Alexandra Podtotchina.

"No," said Simon Ziller, after having perused the letter carefully, "she is certainly not guilty. It is impossible. Such a letter could not be written by a criminal (this exalted establishment man was experienced in such matters, for lately he had been closely following the swelling number of criminal investigations progressing throughout the nation). But then how and by what trick of fate has the thing happened?" he said to himself with a gesture of discouragement. "The devil must be at the bottom of it."

Meanwhile the rumor of this extraordinary event had spread all over and, as is generally the case, not without numerous additions. At this period there is a general disposition to believe in nearly anything, factual evidence be damned. For instance, the public had recently been impressed by the power of magnetism to improve one's complexion. And then the story of the flying flowerpots along H Street was also still quite recent. So there was nothing astonishing in hearing soon afterwards that the Premier Poohbah Accomplice Simon Ziller's nose was to be seen walking every day at three o'clock on Pennsylvania Avenue. The crowd of curious spectators which gathered there daily was enormous.

On one occasion someone spread a report that the nose was seen shopping in the Nutin-u-Need Department Store, and immediately the place was besieged by such a crowd that the police had to interfere and establish order. A certain speculator with a grave, whiskered face, who sold cakes from his food truck at a nearby theatre, quickly began trafficking in some

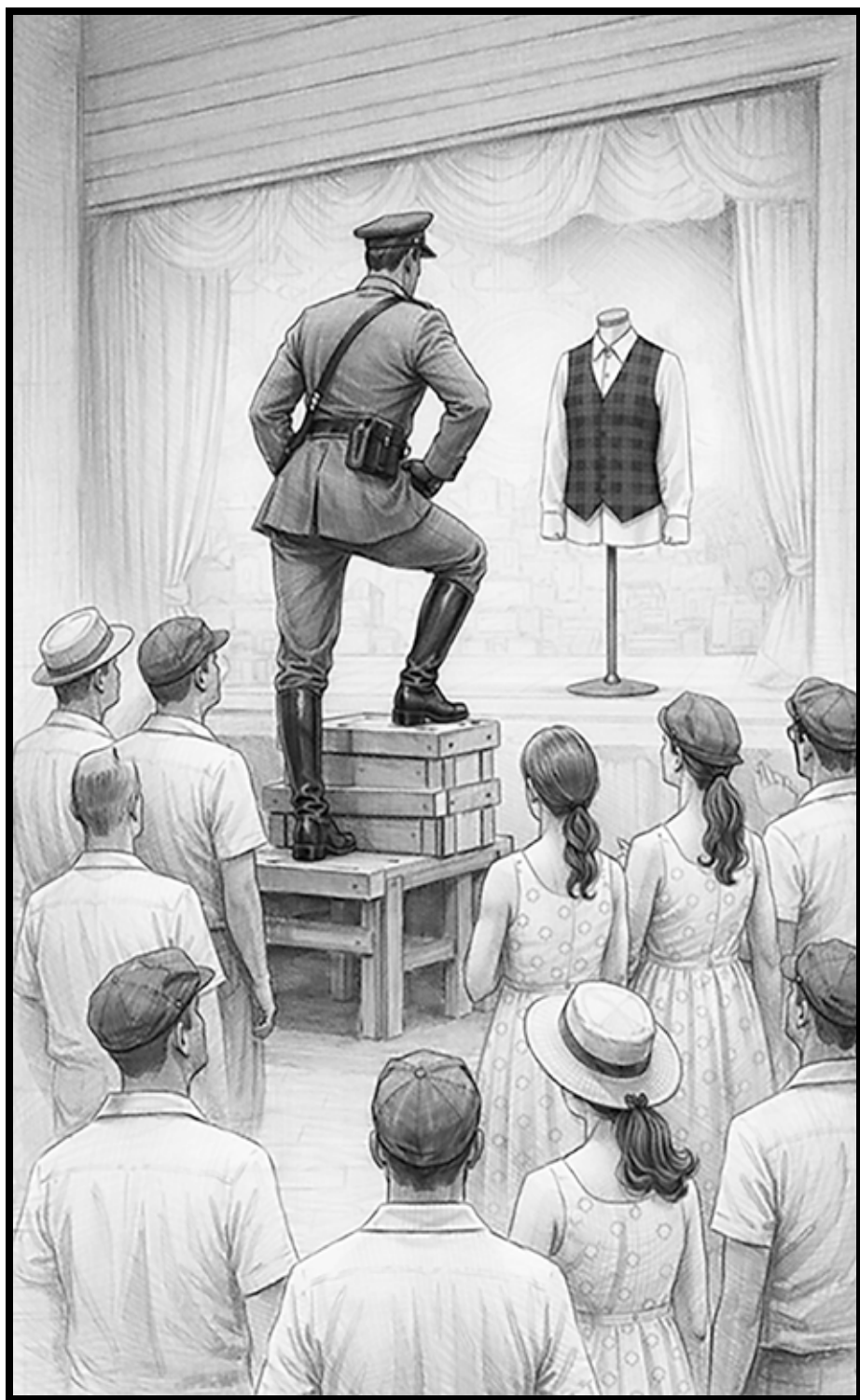
strong wooden benches that he had made. He placed them before the window of the store, and obligingly invited the public to stand on them and look in, for the modest charge of twenty-five dollars a minute.

A veteran colonel, leaving his house earlier than usual expressly for the purpose of seeing the nose, had the greatest difficulty in elbowing his way through the crowd to get his turn on the bench. To his great indignation, however, he saw nothing much through the store window but an ordinary flannel waistcoat and a colored photograph representing a young woman modeling lingerie while an elegant youth in a waistcoat with large lapels gaped at her from behind a tree. The picture (very nice) had hung in the same place for more than ten years, and the colonel had admired it many times wishing that he could somehow be that elegant youth. But on this day it was not what he expected to see, so he went off, growling savagely to himself, "How can such fools let themselves be excited by such idiotic stories as that of a walking nose?"

Then another rumor got abroad, to the effect that the nose of Premier Poohbah Accomplice Simon Ziller was in the habit of walking not on the Pennsylvania Avenue but in Rock Creek Park. Some students of the Academy of Surgery went there on purpose to see it. Even a high-born lady emailed the keeper of the gardens asking him to show her privileged children this rare phenomenon, and to give them some suitable instruction on the occasion.



## THE NOSE



All these incidents were eagerly noted by digital nitwits who reported them over the internet. And even the friendly television network that had declined to interview the Accomplice was closely following this story as it played out (as they just then happened to be very short of anecdotes adapted to amuse ladies and gentlemen). However, the few solid, sober people who occasioned that network were very much displeased. One gentleman asserted with great indignation that he could not understand how such absurdities could spread abroad in our enlightened age, and he was astonished the Government had not directed their attention to the matter. This gentleman evidently belonged to the category of those people who wish the Government to interfere in everything, even in their daily quarrels with their wives. But here the course of events is again obscured by a veil.

### III

Strange events happen in this world, events which are sometimes entirely improbable. The same nose which had masqueraded as an ambassador and caused so much sensation in the town was found one morning in its proper place, i.e. between the cheeks of Premier Poobah Accomplice Simon Ziller as if nothing had happened.

This occurred on the 17th of July. On awaking, the Accomplice looked by chance into a mirror and perceived a nose. He quickly put his hand to it. It was there beyond a doubt!

"Oh!" exclaimed Simon Ziller. For sheer joy, he was fixing to dance (so to speak) barefooted across his room, but the

entrance of Marvin prevented him. Simon told him to bring water, and after washing himself, he looked again in the glass. The nose was there! Then he dried his face with a towel and looked again. Yes, there was no mistake about it!

"Look here, Marvin, it seems to me that I have a heat-boil on my nose," he said to his valet.

And he thought to himself at the same time, "That will be a nice business if Marvin says to me 'No, sir, not only is there no boil, but your nose itself is not there!'"

But Marvin answered, "There is nothing, sir. I can see no boil on your nose."

"Good! Good!" exclaimed the Accomplice, snapping his fingers with delight.

At this moment the barber, Peter Pauper, put his head in at the door, but as timidly as a cat which has just been beaten for stealing tuna from a dinner plate.

"Tell me first, are your hands clean?" asked Simon Ziller when he saw him.

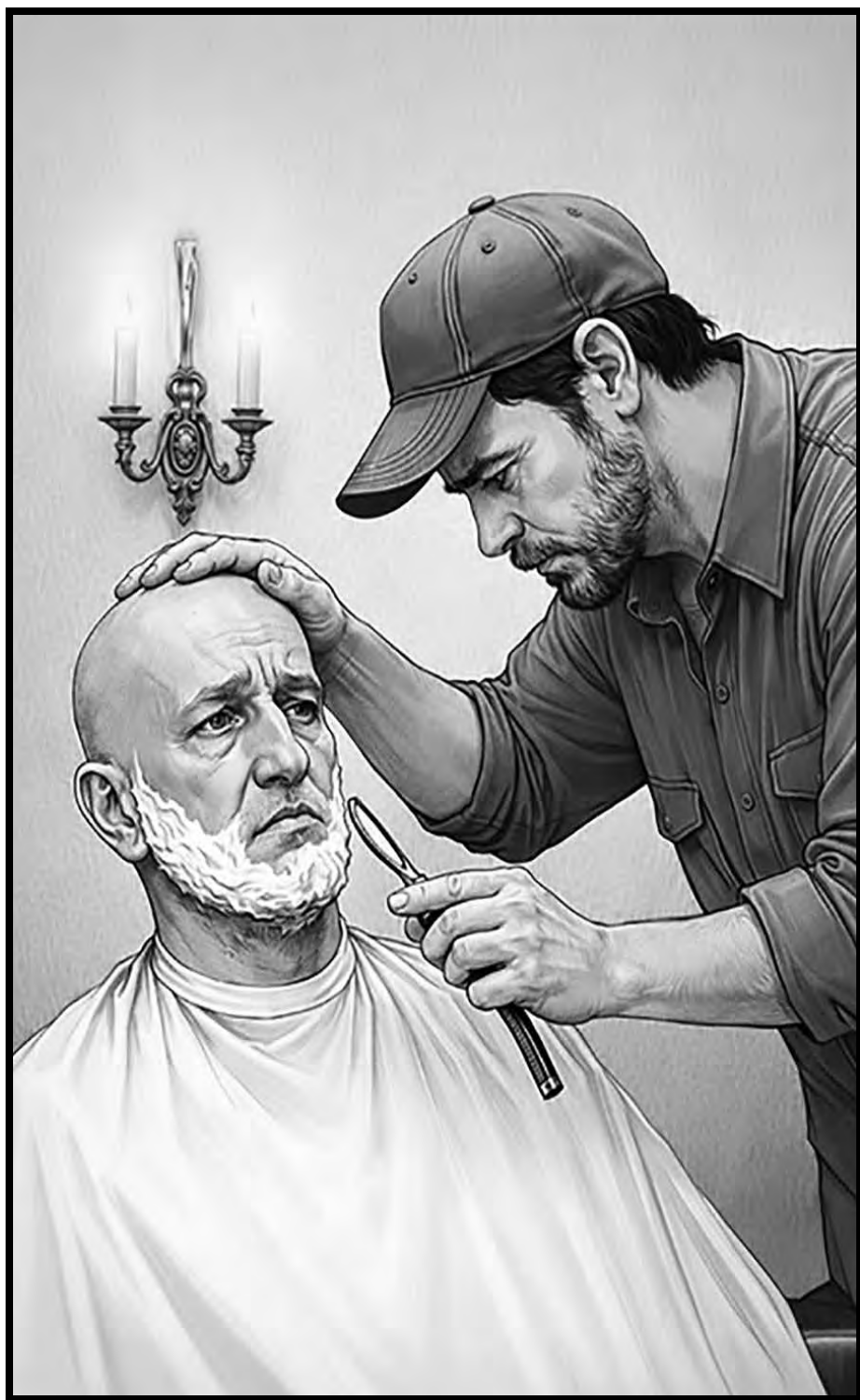
"Yes, sir."

"You lie."

"I swear they are perfectly clean, sir."

"Very well; then come here."

Simon Ziller seated himself. Peter Pauper tied a sheet under the Accomplice's chin and around his body, and in the twinkling of an eye covered the whiskers on his cheeks and the sides of his skull with a copious amount of creamy lather.



"There it is!" said the barber to himself, as he glanced at the nose. Then he bent his head a little and examined it from one side. "Yes, it actually is the nose—really, when one thinks——" he continued, pursuing his mental soliloquy and still looking at it. Then quite gently, with infinite precaution, he raised two fingers in the air in order to take hold of it by the extremity, as he was accustomed to do.

"Now then, take care!" Simon Ziller exclaimed.

Peter Pauper let his arm fall and felt more embarrassed than he ever had in his life. At last he began to pass the razor very lightly over the Accomplice's chin, and even though it was very difficult to shave him without using his olfactory organ as a point of support, he succeeded by placing his wrinkled hand against the Accomplice's skull, thus overcoming all obstacles and bringing his task to a safe conclusion.

When the barber had finished, Simon Ziller hastened to dress himself, summoned an uber scooter and rode straight to a confectioner's. As he entered it, he ordered a cup of chocolate. He then stepped straight to the mirror—the nose was there! He then regarded with a satirical expression two officers who were in the shop, one of whom possessed a nose not much larger than a waistcoat button. Ridiculously small!

As he proceeded randomly and unremarkably along his way through the streets of DC, the Accomplice said to himself, "If the Premier Poobah does not burst into laughter at the sight of me, that is a most certain sign that everything is in its accustomed place."

And the Premier Poobah, who had just returned from an extended overseas golf trip, did not laugh. Looking totally lost and clueless, he had nothing to say that made any sense at all. "Very good!" thought Simon Ziller. "Back to normal!"

As he returned, he met Madame Podtotchina with her daughter. He accosted them, and they responded very graciously. The conversation lasted a long time, during which he took more than one pinch of snuff, saying to himself, "No, you haven't caught me yet, coquettes that you are! And as to the daughter, I shan't marry her at all. You see, I already have one of your gender, but less than my own size and a breeze for me to control—seemingly."

After that, when he wasn't directly serving the Premier Poohbah, the accomplice resumed his walks on Pennsylvania Avenue and his visits to the theatre as if nothing had happened. His nose also remained in its place as if it had never quitted him. For awhile he was sometimes seen to be smiling and in a good humor. But soon enough he completely reverted back to his old ways, and his natural, loathsome disposition was restored in full.

#### IV

Such was the occurrence which took place in the grand capital of our USA nation and, as it is, the grand capital of our hidden empire of wealth monopolization, extending here, there, everywhere, and even into space. In considering the account carefully, we do see however that there is a good deal that looks improbable about it.

## THE NOSE

To speak of just a few, there was first the strange disappearance of the nose, then its appearance in different places under the guise of an Ambassador, and then Simon Ziller failing to understand that one cannot decently send out an alert for a lost nose. This last one befuddles me. I certainly do not mean to say Simon Ziller would have been made to pay too much for an advertisement if indeed he would have chosen to take that approach—the sum would have been a mere trifle for him—he is after all the Premier Poohbah's Accomplice. But totally ignoring that, in my opinion any effort to publicize such a case as this one is not proper nor befitting the dignity of an establishment man.

Another difficulty is—how was the nose found in the baked loaf, and how did Peter Pauper himself—no, I'll just drop that. I don't understand it at all!

But to me the most incomprehensible thing is how authors can choose such subjects for their stories. That really surpasses my understanding. In the first place, no advantage results from it for the country; and in the second place, no harm results either. All the same, when one reflects on it well, there really is something to be found in the matter after all. Whatever may be said to the contrary, such cases do occur—rarely, it is true, but now and then actually.

*the end*





# NIKOLAI GOGOL

Nikolai Gogol was a Russian of Ukrainian origin who wrote novels, short-stories, and plays in the mid-nineteenth century. He routinely used grotesque elements in his works, and is also known for mastering defamiliarization, the technique that presents common things in strange ways. It can even be said Gogol made up a whole new genre—what would later be called magical realism. Gogol's lines burst with wit and whimsy, but also suggest an ominous darkness at their core. His work was so unique in style that in Russia, Gogol's name is as important as Shakespeare's—his influence transformed Russian art just as Shakespeare's writing changed the face of English drama and language.

Of all Gogol's stories, *The Nose*, published in 1836, is regarded as the most difficult to interpret. It seems to be nothing more than a delightful piece of nonsense, but always there is a nagging sense it is much more than that. The story tricks us, for it seems to make logical sense, then it does not, then it reverses back to reality so that once again the story seems to make logical sense. And so on and on as the story unfolds. These constantly confusing and non-confusing episodes in *The Nose*, along with similar material in his other works, have led some literary critics to label Gogol an absurdist due to his penchant for suggesting that we live in a world without meaning. Others, however, call him a realist for showing readers that everyday life is packed with perceptive illusions that deceive us, and it's only our human ability to adapt to illusion that saves us from being in a constant state of confusion. One way or the other, or maybe both, *The Nose* established the type of writing Gogol would specialize in for the rest of his working life: funny satire with a surreal or supernatural twist.

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