

ACT 2.9 (Characters: Carbon, Christian, Cyrano, Cadet)

CHRISTIAN Captain!

CARBON Sir!

CHRISTIAN Pray, what skills it best to do To Southerners who swagger?

CARBON Give them proof that one may be a Northerner, yet brave!

CHRISTIAN I thank you.

FIRST CADET *(to Cyrano)* Now the tale!

CADETS The tale!

CYRANO [*coming toward them*] The tale? Well! I went all alone to meet the band. The moon was shining, clock-like, full in the sky, when, suddenly, some careful clockwright passed a cloud of cotton-wool across the case that held this silver watch. And, presto! The night was inky black, and all the quays were hidden in the murky dark. Gadsooks! One could see nothing further. . . .

CHRISTIAN Than one's nose!

(Silence. All slowly rise, looking in terror at Cyrano, who has stopped in surprise.)

CYRANO Who in the world is that?

CADET *(whispering)* It is a man who joined today.

CYRANO *(making a step toward Christian)* Today?

CARBON *(in a low voice)* Yes. His name is The Baron de Neuvil. . . .

CYRANO Oh, yes. Well. . . . Good! It is well. I. . . . What said I?
MURDEROUS! *(Then continues calmly.)* That it was dark. On I went, thinking, 'For a knavish cause I may provoke some great man, some great prince, who certainly could break. . . .

CHRISTIAN My nose!. . .
(Everyone starts up. Christian balances on his chair.)

CYRANO *(in a choked voice)* My teeth! Who would break my teeth, and I, imprudent-like, was poking. . . .

CHRISTIAN My nose!

CYRANO My finger in the crack between the tree and bark! He may prove strong and rap me. . . .

CHRISTIAN Over the nose. . .

CYRANO (*wiping his forehead*) Over the knuckles! Ay! But I cried, 'Forward, Gascon! Duty calls! On, Cyrano!' And thus I ventured on. When, from the shadow, came. . . .

CHRISTIAN A crack over the nose.

CYRANO I parry it—find myself. . . .

CHRISTIAN Nose to nose. . . .

CYRANO (*bounding on to him*) Heaven and earth!
(*All the Gascons leap up to see, but when he is close to Christian he controls himself and continues*) . . .With a hundred brawling men who stank. . .

CHRISTIAN A noseful!

CYRANO (*angry, but smiling*) I leapt out, head well down. . . .

CHRISTIAN Nosing the wind!

CYRANO I charge! Gore two, impale one—and run him through. One aims at me -- Pow! and I punch. . . .

CHRISTIAN: His nose!

CYRANO (*bursting out*) Out! All of you!

(*The cadets rush to the doors.*)

CADET The tiger wakes!

CYRANO Every man, out! Leave me alone with him!

CADET We shall find him minced fine, minced into hash in a big pastry!