

"URU REX"

a play by:
Alfred "Jarry"

a new translation by: david
copelin / illustrations by
chuck carlson...

Pulp Press

*This translation is dedicated to
Jan Kott and Rik Myslewski
who are Poles apart*

This is a Pulp Book

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CHARACTERS

Pa Ubu	People
Ma Ubu	Michael Federovitch
Captain Sexcrement	Nobles
King Wenceslas	Magistrates
Queen Rosamund	Counsellors
<i>their sons:</i> Boleslas	Financiers
Ladislav	Tax Collectors
Buggerlas	Peasants
General Laski	The Whole Russian Army
Stanislas Leczinski	The Whole Polish Army
Jan Sobieski	Ma Ubu's Guards
Nicholas Rensky	A Captain
Czar Alexis	The Bear
<i>Frigadiers:</i> Pile	The Phynancial Horse
Cootie	The Disembraining Machine
Crotch	The Ship's Master
Conspirators & Soldiers	The Ship's Crew

"The action . . . takes place in Poland, which is to say, Nowhere."

— A. Jarry

ACT ONE

Scene 1

(PA UBU *and* MA UBU)

PA UBU

Sheeyit!

MA UBU

Oh! That's lovely, Pa Ubu. You are a great big gangster.

PA UBU

Why don't I bash your brains in, Ma Ubu!

MA UBU

It's somebody else you should murder, Pa Ubu, not me!

PA UBU

In the name of my green snot, I don't understand.

MA UBU

So, Pa Ubu, you are happy with your destiny?

PA UBU

In the name of my green snot, sheeyit, milady, certainly I'm happy. I have more than enough: captain of dragoons, the King's right-hand man, decorated with the Order of the Red Eagle of Poland, and retired King of Aragon; what more do you want?

MA UBU

What! After being King of Aragon you are happy leading around just fifty hooligans armed with cabbage cutters, when you might replace the crown of Aragon on your noggin with the crown of Poland?

PA UBU

Ah, Ma Ubu, I don't understand a word you're saying.

MA UBU

You are so stupid!

PA UBU

In the name of my green snot, King Wenceslas is still very much alive, and even if he should die, doesn't he have legions of children?

MA UBU

So who's stopping you from rubbing out the whole family and putting yourself in their place?

PA UBU

Ah! Ma Ubu, you dishonor me and you'll wind up in the soup in a minute.

MA UBU

Ha! You poor clod, if I wound up in the soup who would sew up the bottoms of your long johns?

PA UBU

Oh really! And so what? Don't I have an asshole like everyone else?

MA UBU

If I had that asshole I'd want to stick it on a throne. You could grab endless riches, eat haggis any time and cruise the streets in style.

PA UBU

If I were King I'd have a great big sombrero made just like the one I had in Aragon that those filthy Spics stole so shamelessly.

MA UBU

You could also get yourself a parasol and a big cloak which would hang to your heels.

PA UBU

Ah! I give in to the temptation! Buggers of sheeyit, sheeyit of buggers, if I ever meet him in a dark alley he'll have one hell of a fifteen minutes.

MA UBU

Ah! Good, Pa Ubu, now you're really a man.

PA UBU

Oh no! I, captain of dragoons, to assassinate the King of Poland! I'd rather die!

MA UBU

(aside)

Oh sheeyit! *(Aloud)* So you'll keep on begging like a rat, Pa Ubu?

PA UBU

Godsbelly, in the name of my green snot, I'd rather beg like a lean and hungry rat than be rich like a fat and evil cat.

MA UBU

And the sombrero? And the parasol? And the big cloak?

PA UBU

Well, what the hell, Ma Ubu?

(Exit, slamming the door)

MA UBU

Fart, sheeyit, he was hard to get going, but fart, sheeyit, I think I shook him up a little. By the grace of God and myself, maybe in a week I'll be Queen of Poland.



Scene 2

(A room in Pa Ubu's house where a splendid feast is arrayed. PA UBU, MA UBU)

MA UBU

Hey! Our guests are really late.

PA UBU

Yes, in the name of my green snot, I'm dying of hunger. Ma Ubu, you've never looked uglier than you do today. Is it because we have company coming?

MA UBU
(shrugging)

Sheeyit.

PA UBU
(seizing a roast chicken)

Man, I'm hungry. I'll have a bite of bird. I think it's a chicken. Hmm, not bad.

MA UBU

What are you doing, you bum? What will our guests eat?

PA UBU

There'll be plenty left for them. I won't touch another thing. Ma Ubu, go and look out the window to see if our guests are coming.

MA UBU
(going)

I don't see a thing. (Meanwhile, PA UBU steals a filet of veal) Ah! There comes Captain Sexcrement with his henchmen. But what are you eating, Pa Ubu?

PA UBU

Nothing, a little veal.

MA UBU

Ah! The veal! The veal! Veal! He's eaten the veal! Help!

PA UBU

In the name of my green snot, I'll scratch your eyes out!

(The door opens. Enter CAPTAIN SEXCREMENT and his MEN)

MA UBU

Good day, gentlemen, we've awaited you impatiently. Be seated.

SEXCREMENT

Good day, madam. But where in the world is Pa Ubu?

PA UBU

Here I am! Here I am! Damnation, in the name of my green snot, I'm gross enough for sure!

SEXCREMENT

Good day, Pa Ubu. Sit down, fellas.

(They all sit down.)

PA UBU

Oof, a little more and I'd bust my chair.

SEXCREMENT

Hey, Ma Ubu! What are you giving us that's good today?

MA UBU

Here's the menu.

PA UBU

Oh, this is interesting.

MA UBU

Polish soup, wombat cutlets, veal, chicken, *pâté* of dog, pope's nose of turkey, charlotte russe....

PA UBU

Hey, I guess that's enough. Don't tell me there's more to come!

MA UBU
(continuing)

Blockbuster, salad, fruit, dessert, boiled beef, Jerusalem artichokes, cauliflower *à la* sheeyit.

PA UBU

Hey! Do you think I'm some Oriental despot with cash to burn?

MA UBU

Don't listen to him, he's an imbecile.

PA UBU

Hah! I'm going to sharpen my teeth on your calves.

MA UBU

Instead you'll eat, Pa Ubu. Here's the Polish soup.

PA UBU

Bugger, is it bad.

SEXCREMENT

Really, it isn't good.

MA UBU

Pack of Arabs, what do you want?

PA UBU

(striking his forehead)

Oh! I have an idea. I'll be right back.

(UBU goes off)

MA UBU

Gentlemen, we are going to try the veal.

SEXCREMENT

It's very good. I'm finished.

MA UBU

Now try the Pope's noses.

SEXCREMENT

Exquisite, exquisite. Long live Ma Ubu!

ALL

Long live Ma Ubu.

PA UBU

(returning)

And soon you will shout "Long live Pa Ubu!"

(He is holding a toilet brush which he throws onto the table.)

MA UBU

Wretch, what are you doing?

PA UBU

Taste a little. *(Several taste and fall poisoned)* Pass me the wombat cutlets, and I'll serve.

MA UBU

Here they are.

PA UBU

Everybody out! Captain Sexcrement, I must speak with you.

THE OTHERS

Hey! We haven't had any dinner!

PA UBU

What! You haven't had any dinner! Everybody out! Stay here, Sexcrement. *(Nobody moves)* You haven't gone yet? In the name of my green snot, I'll smash you with wombat chops.

(He begins to throw them)

ALL

Oh! Ay-yi-yi! Help! Angels and ministers of grace defend us! Oh pain! I am dead!

PA UBU

Sheeyit, sheeyit, sheeyit! Get out! I am making my point.

ALL

Every man for himself! Wretched Pa Ubu! Traitorous and beggarly swine!

(Exeunt HENCHMEN)

PA UBU

Ah! They've gone. I can breathe again, but I have dined very badly. Come, Sexcrement; did you enjoy your dinner, Captain?

SEXCREMENT

Very much, sir, except for the sheeyit.

PA UBU

Hey, the sheeyit wasn't bad.

MA UBU

Everyone to his own taste.

PA UBU

Captain Sexcrement, I have decided to make you Duke of Lithuania.

SEXCREMENT

What? I thought you were flat broke, Pa Ubu.

PA UBU

In a few days, if you desire, I shall rule Poland.

SEXCREMENT

You are going to kill Wenceslas?

PA UBU

This bugger's nobody's fool, he's guessed it.

SEXCREMENT

If it means killing Wenceslas, okay by me. I am his mortal enemy and I can speak for my men.

PA UBU

(jumping on him to kiss him)

Oh! Oh! Sexcrement, I love you very much!

SEXCREMENT

Hey! You stink, Pa Ubu. Don't you ever bathe?

PA UBU

Hardly ever.

MA UBU

Never.

PA UBU

I'll step on your toes.

MA UBU

Fat sheeyit!

PA UBU

Take off, Sexcrement, I'm finished with you. But by my green snot, I swear by Ma Ubu to make you Duke of Lithuania.

(Exit SEXCREMENT)

MA UBU

But . . .

PA UBU

Shut up, baby doll . . . *(Enter a MESSENGER)* What do you want, sir? Scram, you bore me.

MESSENGER

Sir, you are summoned in the name of the King.

(Exit MESSENGER)

PA UBU

Oh! Sheeyit, great balls of fire, in the name of my green snot, I am found out, my head will be cut off, alas, alas!

MA UBU

What a chicken! And we've no time to lose.

PA UBU

Oh! I have an idea; I'll say it's Ma Ubu and Sexcrement.

MA UBU

Ah! Gross P.U., if you do that . . .

PA UBU

Hey! That's just the ticket!

(Exit UBU)

MA UBU

(running after him)

Oh! Pa Ubu, Pa Ubu. I'll give you some haggis.

PA UBU
(off)

Oh, sheeyit! You're an old haggis yourself.



Scene 3

(The King's palace. KING WENCESLAS surrounded by his OFFICERS. SEXCREMENT. The King's sons: BOLESLAS, LADISLAS, BUGGERLAS. Enter UBU)

PA UBU

Oh! You know it isn't me, it's Ma Ubu and Sexcrement.

KING

What's wrong, Pa Ubu?

SEXCREMENT

He's drunk.

KING

Like me this morning.

PA UBU

Yes, I'm pissed.

KING

Pa Ubu, I wish to reward your numerous services as captain of dragoons, so today I declare you Count of Sandomir.

PA UBU

O mister Wenceslas, I don't know how to thank you.

KING

Don't thank me, Pa Ubu, just come to the big parade tomorrow morning.

PA UBU

I shall be there. Accept, if you please, this little toy flute.

KING

Whatever would I do with a toy flute? I'll give it to Buggerlas.

BUGGERLAS

Is Pa Ubu ever stupid!

PA UBU

And now I shall take a powder. *(He falls while turning around)* Oh! Yi! Help! In the name of my green snot, I've busted my gut and cracked my bladder!

KING
(helping him up)

Did you hurt yourself, Pa Ubu?

PA UBU

I certainly did, and I shall surely croak. What will become of Ma Ubu?

KING

We shall provide for her maintenance.

PA UBU

You are so very kind. *(Aside)* Yes, King Wenceslas, but you'll be massacred just the same.

(Exit UBU)



Scene 4

(Ubu's house. The UBs, CROTCH, PILE, COOTIE, SEXCREMENT, CONSPIRATORS, and SOLDIERS)

PA UBU

Hah! My dear friends, it is high time we finalized the plan of the conspiracy. Let everyone give his opinion. If you permit, I will give mine first.

SEXCREMENT

Speak, Pa Ubu.

PA UBU

Well, my friends, my idea is simply to poison the King by slipping some arsenic in his lunch. One nibble and he drops dead, and I'm the King.

ALL

Fie, the filthy pig!

PA UBU

What, you don't like it? Well then, let Sexcrement give his advice.

SEXCREMENT

I think we should whack him with a sword and unseam him from the nave to the chaps.

ALL

Yes! That's noble and valiant!

PA UBU

And what if he kicks you? It comes to my mind that he wears iron shoes to parades and they will hurt like hell. If I'd thought of it in time I'd run denounce you and get myself out of this filthy business. I think he'd pay cash, too.

MA UBU

Oh! Traitor, coward, ugly, servile cheapskate!

ALL

Down with Pa Ubu!

PA UBU

Hey! Gentlemen, keep a civil tongue in your head or you'll wind up in my sheeyit-list. Okay. I agree to expose myself for your sake. That way, Sexcrement, you'll be able to slice the King in two.

SEXCREMENT

Wouldn't it be better to gang up on him all at once, screaming and yelling? That way we'd have a chance to get the troops on our side.

PA UBU

Right then, here it is: I'll try to step on his toes. He'll kick, and I'll say to him: SHEEYIT, and at that signal you'll jump him.

MA UBU

Yes, and as soon as he's dead you'll take his sceptre and crown.

SEXCREMENT

And I and my men will take care of the royal family.

PA UBU

Yes. I suggest you take special pains with young Buggerlas.

(The SOLDIERS leave. PA UBU chases after them and brings them back.)

Gentlemen, we have forgotten an indispensable ceremony. We must swear our oaths to cut and thrust valiantly.

SEXCREMENT

How are we going to do that? We have no priest.

PA UBU

Ma Ubu will take his place.

ALL

Well, okay.

PA UBU

So, do you swear to kill the King good and proper?

ALL

Yes, we swear it! Long live Pa Ubu!





UBUPEX
18/7/73

ACT TWO

Scene 1

(*The King's palace.* KING WENCESLAS,
QUEEN ROSAMUND, BOLESLAS, LAD-
ISLAS, BUGGERLAS)

KING

Master Buggerlas, yesterday morning you were quite cheeky to Mister Ubu, cavalier in my service and Count of Sandomir. For this reason I forbid you to come to my parade.

QUEEN

Wenceslas, even your whole family wouldn't be enough to defend you.

KING

Madam, I never take back what I have decreed. You bore me with your twaddle.

BUGGERLAS

I submit myself, mister father.

QUEEN

Well, sire, is your mind still set on going to that parade?

KING

And why not, madam?

QUEEN

Must I tell you again? Didn't I see him in a dream with a gang of armed men, striking you down and throwing you into the Vistula, while an eagle like the one on the herald of Poland placed the crown on his head?

KING

Whose head?

QUEEN

Pa Ubu's.

KING

What madness! Mr. de Ubu is a very fine gentleman, who would be drawn and quartered to serve me.

QUEEN & BUGGERLAS

What a mistake.

KING

Shut up, you little pig. And as for you, madam, to show how little I fear Mr. Ubu, I am going to the parade as I am, with neither armor nor sword.

QUEEN

O fatal imprudence! I shall not see you alive again.

KING

Come, Ladislas; come, Boleslas.

(They leave. The QUEEN and BUGGERLAS go to the window)

QUEEN & BUGGERLAS

May God and great St. Nicholas guard you.

QUEEN

Buggerlas, come into the chapel with me to pray for your father and brothers.



Scene 2

(The parade ground. The POLISH ARMY, the KING, BOLESLAS, LADISLAS, PA UBU, SEXCREMENT and his MEN, CROTCH, PILE, and COOTIE)

KING

Noble Pa Ubu, you and your retainers follow me closely to inspect the troops.

PA UBU
(to his MEN)

Careful, you guys. *(To the KING)* We are coming, sire, we are coming.

(Ubu's MEN surround the KING)

KING

Ah! Here comes the Danzig regiment of horse guards. Faith, aren't they beautiful.

PA UBU

Do you think so? They look crappy to me. Look at this one. *(To the SOLDIER)* When was the last time you washed your face, you ignoble fool?

KING

But this soldier is quite clean. What's got into you, Pa Ubu?

PA UBU
(stepping on the KING's foot)

There!

KING

Prick!

PA UBU

SHEEYIT!!! Rally 'round me, men!

SEXCREMENT

Hurray! Forward!

(They all stab the KING. A FRIGADIER explodes)

KING

Oh! Help! Holy Virgin, they got me.

BOLESLAS
(to LADISLAS)

What was that? Let's draw our swords.

PA UBU

Ha! I've got the crown. Now let's get the others.

SEXCREMENT

Cut down the traitors!

(The PRINCES run off, chased by the OTHERS)



Scene 3

(The QUEEN, BUGGERLAS)

QUEEN

Well, I feel reassured now.

BUGGERLAS

You have nothing to fear. *(A frightful clamor is heard outside)* Ah! What do I see! Pa Ubu and his men chasing my two brothers.

QUEEN

O my God! Holy Virgin, they are losing, they are losing ground!

BUGGERLAS

The whole army is following Pa Ubu. The King isn't there anymore. Horror! Help!

QUEEN

Boleslas is hit by a bullet! He's dead.

BUGGERLAS

Hey! *(LADISLAS turns around)* Defend yourself. Hurray for Ladislas!

QUEEN

Oh! He's surrounded.

BUGGERLAS

That's the end of him. Sexcrement just cut him in two like a hot dog.

QUEEN

Ah! Alas! Those madmen are in the palace, they're coming up the stairs.

(The noise is louder)

QUEEN & BUGGERLAS

(on their knees)

Dear God, defend us.

BUGGERLAS

Oh! That Pa Ubu! The scoundrel, the wretch, if I could get my hands on him...

(The door is broken down. Enter PA UBU and the SOLDIERS)

PA UBU

Hah? What would you do to me, Buggerlas?

BUGGERLAS

Long live God! I shall defend my mother to the death. The first man to take a step gets it.

PA UBU

Oh! Sexcrement, I'm scared. Let me go home.

A SOLDIER

(advancing)

Give yourself up, Buggerlas!

BUGGERLAS

Here, you crook! There's your reward.

(He breaks his skull)

QUEEN

Stand fast, Buggerlas, stand fast!

SEVERAL

(advancing)

Buggerlas, we promise you your life.

BUGGERLAS

Rascals, drunkards, mercenary filth!

(He twirls his sword like a windmill and makes mincemeat out of them)

PA UBU

Oh! I'm going to be left all alone!

BUGGERLAS

Mother, escape down the secret staircase.

QUEEN

And you, my son, and you?

BUGGERLAS

I'll be right behind you.

PA UBU

Try and catch the Queen. Ah! She got away. As for you, wretch...

(He moves towards BUGGERLAS)

BUGGERLAS

Ha! Long live God! There's my revenge! *(He cuts UBU's suspenders with a terrific blow)* Mother, I'm coming!

(He disappears down the secret stairs)



Scene 4

(A cave in the mountains. Enter BUGGERLAS followed by the QUEEN)

BUGGERLAS

We'll be safe here.

QUEEN

Yes, I think so. Buggerlas, hold me up!

(She falls in the snow)

BUGGERLAS

Ah! Mother, what's the matter?

QUEEN

I am very sick. Buggerlas, believe me, I have only two hours left to live.

BUGGERLAS

What! Have you caught a cold?

QUEEN

How could I withstand so many blows? The King assassinated, our family destroyed, and you, scion of the noblest race that ever wore a sword, forced to hide in the hills like a smuggler.

BUGGERLAS

And by whom, great God! by whom? That vulgar Pa Ubu, adventurer from who knows where, vile scum, shameful vagabond. And when I think that my father decorated him and made him a count, and the villain felt no shame in laying hands on him the very next day!

QUEEN

O Buggerlas! When I remember how happy we were before that Pa Ubu showed up ... but now, alas! Everything has changed.

BUGGERLAS

What can we do? Let us wait in hope and never renounce our rightful claims.

QUEEN

I hope it all turns out well for your sake, my dear child, but I shall not see that happy day.

BUGGERLAS

Oh! What's wrong? She's turning pale, and she's fallen, help! But I am in a desert! O my God! Her heart beats no longer: she is dead. Is it possible? Yet another victim of Pa Ubu! *(He holds his face in his hands and weeps)* O my God! How sad it is to be alone and fourteen years old with a terrible vengeance to wreak. *(He throws a tantrum of violent despair. During this time, the GHOSTS of Wenceslas, Ladislas, Boleslas and Rosamund enter the grotto. Their ANCESTORS accompany them and fill the cave. The oldest approaches BUGGERLAS and rouses him gently)* Ha! What do I see? My whole family, my ancestors ... what miracle is this?

GHOST

Learn, Buggerlas, that during my time on earth I was the noble Mathias of Koenigsberg, the first King and founder of our dynasty. Into thy hands I commit the responsibility for our revenge. (*He gives BUGGERLAS a big sword*) And may this sword I give thee never know repose until it has struck the usurper dead.

(*They disappear, leaving BUGGERLAS in ecstasy*)



Scene 5

(*The King's palace. PA UBU, MA UBU, SEXCREMENT*)

PA UBU

No, I don't want to! Do you want to bankrupt me for the sake of those gluttons?

SEXCREMENT

Oh, come on, Pa Ubu, don't you see that the people are awaiting the fruits of your joyous accession?

MA UBU

If you don't hand out meat and gold you'll be dethroned within two hours.

PA UBU

Meat, *si!* Gold, no!! Slaughter three old horses, that's good enough for those filthy slob.

MA UBU

Slob yourself! Where did I ever get an animal like you?

PA UBU

I repeat, I want to be rich. I won't let go one red cent.

MA UBU

To think we have our hands on all the treasures of Poland.

SEXCREMENT

Yes, and I happen to know there's an immense hoard in the chapel. We'll give it out.

PA UBU

Wretch, don't you dare!

SEXCREMENT

But, Pa Ubu, if you don't give handouts the people won't want to pay their taxes.

PA UBU

Is that a fact?

MA UBU

Yes, yes!

PA UBU

Oh, in that case I agree to everything. Scramble together three millions, barbecue one hundred fifty steers and sheep. As long as I get my share!

(*Exeunt*)



Scene 6

(*The palace courtyard full of PEOPLE. PA UBU crowned, MA UBU, SEXCREMENT, FLUNKEYS loaded with platters of meat*)

PEOPLE

There's the King! Long live the King! Hurrah!

PA UBU
(*throwing gold*)

Here you are, here's some for you. I don't get much fun out of giving away money, but you know it was Ma Ubu's idea. At least promise me you'll pay your taxes.

ALL

Yes, yes!

SEXCREMENT

Ma Ubu, look at the way they're fighting over that gold. What a battle.

MA UBU

It's truly horrible. Pfui! There's one with his skull stove in.

PA UBU

What a show, what a show! Bring some more gilded strongboxes.

SEXCREMENT

Why don't we organize a race?

PA UBU

Yes, that's an idea. (*To the PEOPLE*) My friends, you see this gilded strongbox. It holds three hundred thousand rose nobles, good high-grade Polish cash. Let those who want to race get down at that end of the courtyard. You'll start when I wave my hanky and the first one home gets the strongbox. As for those who don't win, the consolation prize will be this other strongbox, to be shared among you.

ALL

All right! Long live Pa Ubu! What a good King! We had nothing like this in Wenceslas' day.

PA UBU

(*to MA UBU, with joy*)

Listen to them! (*The whole CROWD forms a line at the end of the courtyard*) One, two, three! Are you ready?

ALL

Yes, yes!

PA UBU

GO!

(*They run, knocking each other down. Screams and tumult*)

SEXCREMENT

Here they come, here they come!

PA UBU

Hey, the first one's losing ground.

MA UBU

No, he's gaining again.

SEXCREMENT

Oh, he lost, he lost! Finished! It's the other one!

(*The second MAN gets there first*)

ALL

Hurray for Michael Federovitch, hurray for Michael Federovitch.

MICHAEL

Sire, I really don't know how to thank Your Majesty....

PA UBU

Oh, my dear friend, it's nothing. Take your strongbox home, Michael, and you others can share the second box. One coin to a customer until it's all gone.

ALL

Long live Michael Federovitch! Long live Pa Ubu!

PA UBU

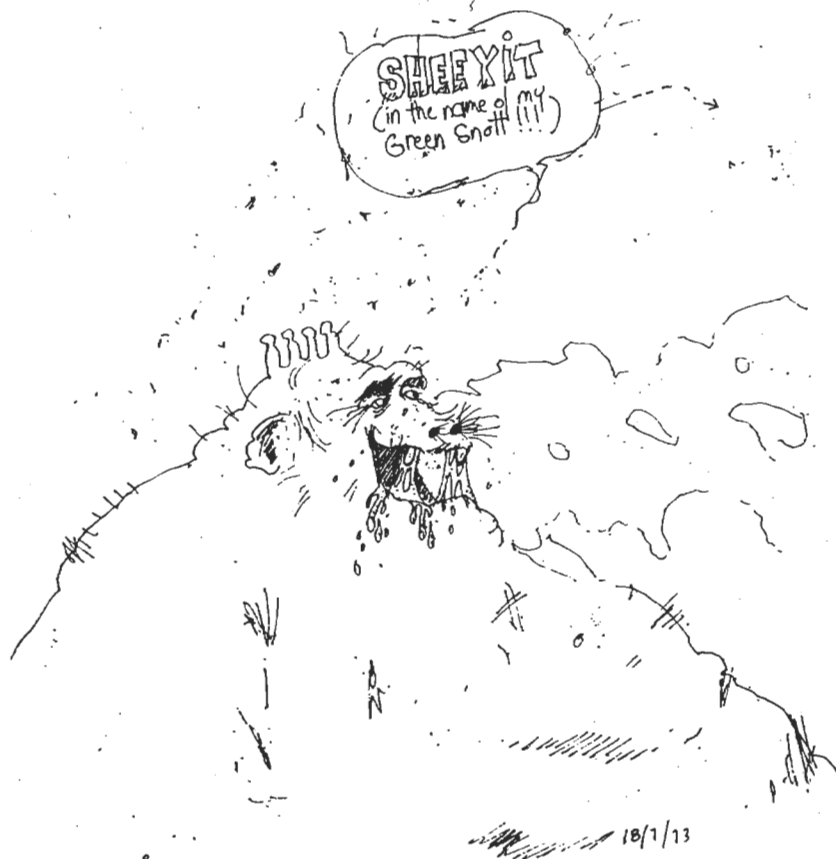
Now, my friends, come and get it! Today I open to you the gates of my palace, come and honor my table!

ALL

Inside! Inside! Long live Pa Ubu! He's the noblest of sovereigns!

(*They enter the palace. The noise of the orgy goes on until the next day*)





UBUREX
UBU REX

ACT THREE

Scene 1
(The palace. PA UBU, MA UBU)

PA UBU

In the name of my green snot, here I am King of the castle. I've already caught myself an ulcer and they're bringing me my big sombrero.

MA UBU

What's it made of, Pa Ubu? It's no use being Kings if we don't watch our pennies.

PA UBU

Madam my female, it's made of sheepskin with a buckle and straps of dogskin.

MA UBU

Now, that's beautiful. But it's even more beautiful to be Kings.

PA UBU

Yup, you were right, Ma Ubu.

MA UBU

We owe a great deal to the Duke of Lithuania.

PA UBU

Who's he?

MA UBU

Hah? Captain Sexcrement.

PA UBU

Ma Ubu, please don't mention that buffroon to me. Now that I don't need him any more, let his stomach growl its worst, he'll never get his dukedom.

MA UBU

That's a bad mistake, Pa Ubu. He'll rebel against you.

PA UBU

Oh, I really pity the little man. I worry about him as much as I worry about Buggerlas.

MA UBU

Huh! You think you've heard the last of Buggerlas?

PA UBU

Saber of finance, of course! What could that little fourteen-year-old creep do to me?

MA UBU

Pa Ubu, pay attention to what I'm telling you. Believe me, you should try to get the support of Buggerlas by acts of kindness.

PA UBU

Give away more money? Ha! Not a chance. You've already made me waste a good twenty-two million.

MA UBU

Have it your way, Pa Ubu. He'll fix your wagon.

PA UBU

Well, you'll get it up the axle with me.

MA UBU

Listen, as I say, I feel sure that young Buggerlas will win in the end, because he has Right on his side.

PA UBU

Ah, crap! Isn't Wrong worth the same as Right? Ha! You're insulting me, Ma Ubu, and I'm going to cut you to pieces.

(MA UBU runs out, chased by UBU)



Scene 2

(The Great Hall of the palace. PA UBU, MA UBU, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, CROTCH, PILE, COOTIE, NOBLES in chairs, FINANCIERS, JUDGES, CLERKS. In *oubliette*)

PA UBU

Bring the strongbox of the Nobles and the hook of the Nobles, and the knife of the Nobles and the book of the Nobles. Then bring the Nobles.

(The NOBLES are brutally shoved forward)

MA UBU

I beg you, Pa Ubu, take it easy.

PA UBU

I have the honor to announce to you that in order to enrich the kingdom I am going to liquidate all the Nobles and expropriate their goods.

NOBLES

Horrors! Help us, people and soldiers!

PA UBU

Bring the first Noble and hand me the Nobles' hook. Those who are condemned to death will be dropped down the hole. They'll fall into the dungeons of the pigstickers and there in the torture chamber they will be disembained. (To the NOBLE) Who are you, buffroon?

FIRST NOBLE

Count of Vitebsk.

PA UBU

What are your revenues?

FIRST NOBLE

Three million zlotys.

PA UBU

Guilty!

(He takes the NOBLE with the hook and drops him down the hole)

MA UBU

What vile ferocity!

PA UBU

Second Noble, who are you? (*No answer*) Will you answer me, buffroon?

SECOND NOBLE

Grand Duke of Posen.

PA UBU

Excellent, excellent! No further questions. Down the hatch. Third Noble, who are you? You have an ugly mug.

THIRD NOBLE

Duke of Corand and of the cities of Riga, Revel, and Mitau.

PA UBU

Very good! Very good! You don't own anything else?

THIRD NOBLE

Nothing.

PA UBU

Then down the hatch. Fourth Noble, who are you?

FOURTH NOBLE

Prince of Podolia.

PA UBU

What are your revenues?

FOURTH NOBLE

I'm flat broke.

PA UBU

That dirty word! Down the hatch! Fifth Noble, who are you?

FIFTH NOBLE

Margrave of Thorn, Palatine of Polock.

PA UBU

That ain't much. Got anything else?

FIFTH NOBLE

That was enough for me.

PA UBU

Well, better something than nothing. Down the hatch. What's bugging you, Ma Ubu?

MA UBU

You are too harsh, Pa Ubu.

PA UBU

Hah! I'm getting rich. I am going to have MY list of MY holdings read to me. Clerk, read MY list of MY holdings.

CLERK

County of Sandomir....

PA UBU

Start with the principalities, stupid bugger!

CLERK

Principality of Podolia, grand duchy of Posen, duchy of Corland; county of Sandomir, county of Vitebsk, palatinate of Polock, margraviate of Thorn.

PA UBU

And what else?

CLERK

That's it.

PA UBU

What do you mean, that's it? Oh well, in that case, push the Nobles forward. Since I'll never be rich enough, I'll have all the Nobles bumped off and get all their vacant holdings. Get on with it, drop all the Nobles down the hatch. (*The NOBLES are all pushed into the oubliette*) Hurry up, faster, I want to make some laws now.

SEVERAL

This we've got to see.

PA UBU

First I am going to reform justice, and then we'll go on to finances.

SEVERAL JUDGES

We are opposed to any changes.

PA UBU

Sheeyit. First of all, the judges get no more salary.

JUDGES

And what will we live on? We are poor.

PA UBU

You'll have the fines you collect and the goods of those sentenced to death.

JUDGE

Horrors.

ANOTHER

Infamy.

THIRD JUDGE

Scandal.

FOURTH JUDGE

Indignity.

ALL

We refuse to judge under such conditions.

PA UBU

Magistrates down the hatch!

(They struggle in vain)

MA UBU

Hey, what are you doing, Pa Ubu? Who will dispense with justice now?

PA UBU

Me, of course! You'll see how it works out.

MA UBU

Yeah, that'll be a great mess.

PA UBU

Come on now, quiet, Bitchykins. Gentlemen, we shall now proceed to matters financial.

FINANCIERS

There is nothing to be changed.

PA UBU

What? *I* want to change everything. First of all, I intend to keep half of all taxes myself.

FINANCIERS

And with a straight face!

PA UBU

Gentlemen, we shall establish a tax of ten per cent on property, another on commerce and industry, a third on marriages and a fourth on deaths, of fifteen zlotys each.

FIRST FINANCIER

But that's ridiculous, Pa Ubu.

SECOND FINANCIER

It's absurd.

THIRD FINANCIER

There's no rhyme or reason to it.

PA UBU

Contempt of court! Financiers down the hatch!

(The FINANCIERS are shoved down the hole)

MA UBU

Well, really. Pa Ubu, you're some King. You're killing everybody.

PA UBU

Ah, sheeyit.

MA UBU

No more justice, no more finances.

PA UBU

Have no fear, baby doll, I'll go myself from village to village to collect the taxes.



Scene 3

(A peasant's cottage in the Warsaw area. Several PEASANTS are gathered)

A PEASANT
(entering)

Have I got news for you. The King is dead, the dukes are too, and young Buggerlas and his mother are in hiding in the mountains. And that's not all: Pa Ubu has seized the throne.

SECOND PEASANT

I know plenty more. I just come from Cracow, where I seen them drag the bodies of more than three hundred Nobles and five hundred judges who were killed, and it looks like taxes will be doubled and that Pa Ubu will come collect them himself!

ALL

Great God! What will become of us? Pa Ubu is a horrible pig and they say his family is just as abominable.

A PEASANT

Hey, listen. Wouldn't you say there was a knock at the door?

PA UBU
(off)

Horny cornhole! Open up, in the name of my sheeyit, by St. John, St. Peter, and St. Nicholas! Open up, raber of finance, belly of finance, I have come to gather the taxes! *(The door is smashed open. Enter UBU and a legion of TAX COLLECTORS)* Which of you is the oldest? *(A PEASANT steps up)* What's your name?

PEASANT

Stanislas Leczinski.

PA UBU

Well, horny cornhole, listen good. If you don't, these gents will cut off your carens. Well, are you going to listen?

STANISLAS

But Your Excellency hasn't said anything yet.

PA UBU

What? I've been talking for an hour. Did you think I came here to preach in the wilderness?

STANISLAS

Such thoughts are far from my mind.

PA UBU

I have come, you see, to tell you, order you, and signify to you that you are to produce and promptly exhibit your finances. If you don't, you'll get it in the neck. Let's go, gentlemen of the Phynancial Phrigade, wagon up the Phynancial Wagon.

(The wagon is brought)

STANISLAS

Sire, we are only registered for one hundred fifty-two zlotys, which we already paid nearly six weeks ago on St. Matthew's Day.

PA UBU

That's quite possible, but I have changed the government and I had the newspaper print that everybody would pay all taxes twice. Those designated at our later convenience will pay three times. With that system, I'll make a fast buck, then I'll kill everybody and I'll go away.

PEASANTS

Mr. Ubu, we beg of you, have mercy on us. We are poor citizens.

PA UBU

I don't care. Feed the kitty.

PEASANTS

We cannot, we have already paid.

PA UBU

Pay up! Or up my hole you go, with torture and decollation of the neck and head! Horny cornhole, maybe I am the King!

PEASANTS

Ha! So that's the way it is! To arms! Long live Buggerlas, by the grace of God, King of Poland and Lithuania!

PA UBU

Forward, Gentlemen of Finance, do your duty.

(A battle. The house is destroyed and old STANISLAS runs off alone across the plains. UBU stays behind to gather up the finances)



Scene 4

(A dungeon in the fortress of Thorn. SEXCREMENT in chains, PA UBU)

PA UBU

Ha! Citizen, here's the way it is. You wanted me to pay you what I owed you, and because I didn't feel like it, you revolted. You plotted against me and there you are in the jug. Horny finance, it serves you right, and the joke is so good that you'll die laughing.

SEXCREMENT

Take care, Pa Ubu. In the five days you've been King, you have committed more than enough murders to damn all the saints in Paradise. The blood of the King and his Nobles cries for revenge and those cries will be heard.

PA UBU

Ha! My dear friend, your tongue is well-hung. I don't doubt that if you were to escape there might be complications, but I don't believe the dungeons of Thorn have ever let go any of the brave lads entrusted to their care. So let me say good night. I invite you to sleep with your legs crossed, because the rats here dance a nice sarabande.

(UBU leaves. FLUNKEYS come and lock all the doors)



Scene 5

(The palace in Moscow. CZAR ALEXIS and his COURT, SEXCREMENT)

CZAR

So you are the infamous adventurer who took part in the murder of our cousin Wenceslas?

SEXCREMENT

Sire, forgive me. I was forced in spite of myself by Pa Ubu.

CZAR

Oh! You frightful liar! Well, what do you want?

SEXCREMENT

Pa Ubu had me imprisoned on trumped-up conspiracy charges. I managed to escape and I rode five days and five nights on horseback across the steppes to come and implore your gracious mercy.

CZAR

What do you bring me as proof of your submission?

SEXCREMENT

My adventurer's sword and a detailed map of the city of Thorn.

CZAR

I'll take the sword, but by St. George, burn this map; I do not wish to owe my victory to treason.

SEXCREMENT

One of the sons of Wenceslas, young Biggerlas, is still alive. I'll do my best to restore him to the throne.

CZAR

What was your rank in the Polish army?

SEXCREMENT

I commanded the Fifth Regiment of the Vilna dragoons under Wenceslas and a whole company in the service of Pa Ubu.

CZAR

That's fine. I name you sub-lieutenant in the Tenth Regiment of Cossacks, and watch you don't betray us. If you fight well, you'll be rewarded.

SEXCREMENT

I am not lacking in courage, sire.

CZAR

Okay, beat it.

(Exit SEXCREMENT)



Scene 6

(Ubu's Council Chamber. PA UBU,
MA UBU, COUNSELLORS)

PA UBU

Gentlemen, the session will come to order, so listen closely and keep quiet. First we'll do the financial stuff and then we'll discuss a little system I invented to bring good weather and keep the rain away.

A COUNSELLOR

Very good, Mr. Ubu.

MA UBU

What a stupid sot.

PA UBU

Lady of my sheeyit, watch it, because I will not suffer your inanities. As I was saying to you gentlemen, the finances are going passably well. A considerable number of piggy-bank dicks prowl the streets every morning and the Frigadiers are doing great work. Everywhere you look all you see is burned-out houses and people bent double under the weight of our phynances.

THE COUNSELLOR

And the new taxes, Mr. Ubu, are they doing well?

MA UBU

Not a bit. The marriage tax has only produced eleven cents so far, even though Pa Ubu is after people everywhere to force them to marry.

PA UBU

Saber of finance, horn of my cornhole, milady financier, I have carens to talk with and you a mouth to hear with... (Laughter) No, that ain't it. You're making me screw it up. It's your fault I'm so stupid. Ah, belly of Ubu! (A MESSENGER enters) Oh great, now what's he got there? Beat it, creep, or up my hole with neck stretching and leg twisting it will be.

MA UBU

Ha! He made it outside again. But there's a letter.

PA UBU

Read it. I think I'm losing my mind, or maybe I don't know how to read. Hurry up, Bitchykins, it must be from Sexcrement.

MA UBU

Exactly. He says the Czar was very hospitable, that he's going to invade your Estates to enthrone Biggerlas, and that *you* will be killed.

PA UBU

Oh, oh! I'm scared! I'm scared! Ah! I think I'm going to die. Oh, poor man that I am, what will become of me, great God? That wicked man is going to kill me. St. Anthony and all the saints, protect me, I will give you phynances and I'll burn candles for you. Lord, what will become of me?

(UBU cries and sobs)

MA UBU

There is only one step to take, Pa Ubu.

PA UBU

What's that, my love?

MA UBU

War!!

ALL

Long live God! Now that's nobility!

PA UBU

Yeah, it means more knocks for me.

FIRST COUNSELLOR

Quick, let's run and organize the army.

SECOND COUNSELLOR

And get the rations together.

THIRD COUNSELLOR

And prepare the artillery and the fortresses.

FOURTH COUNSELLOR

And take money for the troops.

PA UBU

Ah! No, not that! I'm going to kill *you*. I don't want to give out any money. There's another big spender. I used to get paid to make war, but now I'd have to pay for it myself. No. In the name of my green snot, let's go to war, since it turns you on so much, but let's not spend a cent.

ALL

Hurray for war!



Scene 7

*(The camp at Warsaw. The UBs,
SOLDIERS, FRIGADIERS)*

SOLDIERS & FRIGADIERS

Long live Poland! Long live Pa Ubu!

PA UBU

Ah! Ma Ubu, give me my breastplate and my little wooden stick. I'll soon have so much junk weighing on me that I won't be able to walk if they chase me.

MA UBU

Fie, the coward.

PA UBU

Ha! That sheeyit-saber won't stand still and the financial hook won't hang right! I'll never be ready, and the Russians are advancing and they'll kill me.

A SOLDIER

Lord Ubu, there's the earens-shears falling off.

PA UBU

I'll kill you with the sheeyit-hook and the nosepicker.

MA UBU

He's so handsome with his helmet and his breastplate. You'd think it was an armored pumpkin.

PA UBU

Ah! I shall mount my horse. Gentlemen, bring the phynancial horse.

MA UBU

Pa Ubu, your horse could never carry you now. He hasn't eaten in five days and he's nearly dead.

PA UBU

Oh, that's wonderful! They make me pay twelve cents a day for that nag and she can't even carry me. You couldn't care less, belly of Ubu!

Or maybe you're stealing from me? (MA UBU *blushes and lowers her eyes*) In that case, bring me another animal, but I just won't go on foot, horny cornhole! (*They bring an enormous HORSE*) I shall now amount. Oh! Sit down, for heaven's sake! I'm going to fall off! (*The HORSE runs off*) Ah! Stop this animal, my God! I'll fall off and die dead!

MA UBU

What an imbecile he is. Ah, he's in the saddle. Oh, now he's fallen on the ground.

PA UBU

Horny enema, I'm half dead. But what the hell, I'm off to war and I'll kill them all. If anyone doesn't march straight ahead, he'd better be careful. I'll shove him up my hole with twisting of his nose and teeth and extraction of his tongue.

MA UBU

Good luck, Mr. Ubu.

PA UBU

I almost forgot to tell you that I make you Regent. But I've got the book of finances and so much the worse for you if you steal from me. I'm leaving Frigidier Crotch' to help you. Adieu, Ma Ubu.

MA UBU

Adieu, Pa Ubu. Kill the Czar good.

PA UBU

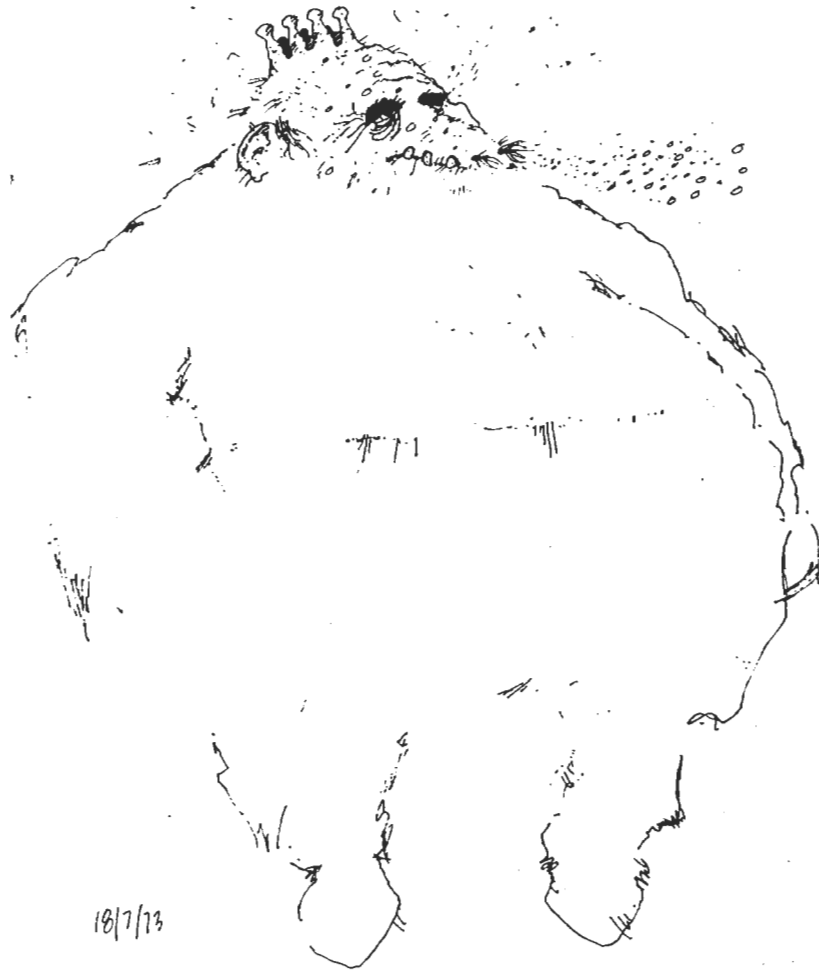
You bet. Twisting of nose and teeth, tongue extraction, and mashing the little wooden stick in his earens.

(*The ARMY moves off to the sound of fanfares*)

MA UBU

(*alone*)

Now that that fat puppet is gone, let's try and get down to business, kill Buggerlas, and get our hands on the treasure.



ACT FOUR

Scene 1

*(The crypt of the old Kings of
Poland in the Warsaw Cathedral)*

MA UBU

Wherever is that treasure? Not one of these paving stones sounds hollow, even though, I counted just thirteen stones behind the tomb of Ladislas the Great, going along the wall. There isn't a thing. They must have lied to me. Wait a minute: it sounds hollow here. To work, Ma Ubu. Courage! We'll loosen the stone. It's stuck in there pretty good. Let's try the financial hook, it'll do its job yet. There we are! Look at the gold, right in the middle of all those Kings' bones. Well, everything into our sack! Hah? What noise is that? Could anybody still be alive in these old tombs? No, it's nothing. Let's hurry and take it all. This money will be better off in the light of day than in the vaults of the old princes. Let's put the stone back. What? That noise again. This place gives me the willies. I'll take the rest of the gold some other time. I'll come back tomorrow.

A VOICE

(from the tomb of Jan Sigismund)

Never, Ma Ubu!

*(Frightened, MA UBU runs out carrying the
stolen gold through the secret door)*



Scene 2

*(The marketplace of Warsaw. BUGGERLAS and
his PARTISANS, PEOPLE, and SOLDIERS)*

BUGGERLAS

Forward, my friends! Long live Wenceslas and Poland! That old rascal Pa Ubu is out of town, and all that's left is that witch Ma Ubu with her Frigadier. I am offering myself as your leader to re-establish the line of my fathers.

ALL

Long live Buggerlas!

BUGGERLAS

And we will repeal all the taxes imposed by that frightful Pa Ub.

ALL

Hurray! Forward! Let's run to the palace and massacre that gang.

BUGGERLAS

Hey! There's Ma Ubu and her guards coming out on the front steps.

MA UBU

What do you wish, gentlemen? Ah! It's Buggerlas!

(The CROWD throws stones)

FIRST GUARD

All the windows are broken.

SECOND GUARD

St. George, they knocked me out.

THIRD GUARD

Bluebelly, I'm dying.

BUGGERLAS

Throw those rocks, friends.

FRIGADIER CROTCH

Hon! So that's how it is!

*(He draws his sword and attacks, creating a
terrible carnage)*

BUGGERLAS

Just the two of us! Fight back, you yellow thug.

(They fight)

CROTCH

I am dead!

BUGGERLAS

Victory, my friends! Now for Ma Ubu! (*Trumpets sound*) Ah! Here come the Nobles. Let's go, let's catch that evil harpy!

ALL

That'll pass the time till we can strangle that old bandit Ubu!

(MA UBU *escapes, chased by all the POLES. Gunshots and a hail of rocks*)



Scene 3

(*The POLISH ARMY on the march in the Ukraine*)

PA UBU

Shove it above it and love it! We're going to perish, as we are tired and dying of thirst. Sire soldier, be so kind as to carry our financial helmet, and you, sire lancer, take care of the sheeyit-shears and the enema stick so that we may comfort our person, because, as I say, we are tired.

(*The SOLDIERS obey*)

PILE

Ho! Mista! It's funny, I don't see any Russians.

PA UBU

It is regrettable that the state of our finances does not permit us to have a carriage big enough to hold us, because out of fear of demolishing our mount, we've come the whole way on foot, leading our horse by the bridle. But on our way back to Poland, we imagine, by means of our skill in physic and helped by the genius of our counsellors, we'll have a glider big enough to carry the whole army.

COOTIE

There's Nicholas Rensky running up to us.

PA UBU

What's on the boy's mind?

RENSKY

All is lost. Sire, the Poles revolted, Crotch was killed, and Ma Ubu has fled to the mountains.

PA UBU

Bird of darkness, beast of bad luck, owl unhornified! Where did you drag up that nonsense? Another one gone loony. Who pulled that little caper? Buggerlas, I bet. Where are you coming from?

RENSKY

From Warsaw, noble Lord.

PA UBU

Boy of my sheeyit, if I believed all of that I'd turn the whole army around. But, lord lad, you've got more rank on your shoulders than brains and you must have dreamed those stupidities. Go up to the front lines, my boy, the Russians are not far away and we will soon have to shoot off our firearms, loaded with as much sheeyit as with phynances and physic.

GENERAL LASKI

Pa Ubu, don't you see the Russians in the plain?

PA UBU

It's true, it's the Russians! I'm in a fine spot here. If only there were a way to get out of here, but no, not a one, and we're on high ground and exposed to all the bullets.

THE ARMY

The Russians! The enemy!

PA UBU

Okay, gentlemen, let's get ourselves set for the battle. We are going to stay on the hill; let us not be so stupid as to go down there. I will plant myself in the middle like a living citadel and you others will revolve around me. I must recommend that you stick as many bullets in the rifles as they will hold, since eight bullets can kill eight Russians and that's eight less will be after my ass. We'll put the infantry at the bottom of the hill to take the brunt of the Russians and kill them a little, the cavalry behind and ready to jump into the fray, while the artillery will ring this windmill you see here and bombard the whole pile. As for ourself, we will take a stand inside the windmill and shoot

with the phynance-pistol out the window. The enema stick will bar the door, and if anyone tries to get in he'd better be leery of the sheeyit-hook.

OFFICERS

Sire Ubu, your orders will be carried out.

PA UBU

Ha, that's fine, we'll beat them. What time is it?

GENERAL LASKI

Eleven A.M.

PA UBU

Okay, let's have lunch, since the Russians won't attack before noon. Tell the soldiers, Lord General, to do their business and to warble the Financial Song.

(LASKI goes)

SOLDIERS & FRIGADIERS

Long live Pa Ubu, our great Financier!

Ting, ting, ting;
Ting, ting, ting;
Ting, ting, tating!

PA UBU

O, they're great lads, I adore them. (A Russian cannonball hits and breaks an arm of the windmill) Ah! I'm scared! Sire God, I'm dead! But no, I haven't got a scratch.

(Enter a CAPTAIN)

CAPTAIN

Sire Ubu, the Russians are attacking.

PA UBU

Well, so what? What do you want me to do about it? I didn't order them to attack. Anyway, Gentlemen of Finance, let us prepare for combat.

GENERAL LASKI

Another cannonball!

PA UBU

Ah! I can't stand it! It's raining lead and iron up here and we might get our precious person damaged. Let's go down.

(Enter the RUSSIAN ARMY. The POLES run down and the battle begins. They disappear into clouds of smoke at the foot of the hill)

A RUSSIAN
(striking)

For God and the Czar!

RENSKY

Ah! I am dead!

PA UBU

Forward! And you, Mister, just let me catch you, because you hurt me, do you understand? You drunken bum! With that gun that won't shoot!

THE RUSSIAN

Is that so? Watch this!

(He shoots at UBU)

PA UBU

Ah! Oh! I'm wounded, I'm holed, I'm perforated, I'm funeralized, I'm buried! Oh well, anyway. Ha! I've got him! (UBU tears the RUSSIAN to pieces) There! Now start something!

GENERAL LASKI

Forward, give it the big push, let's get past the ditch. Victory is ours!

PA UBU

You think so? So far I've got more lumps than laurels on my head.

THE RUSSIANS

Hurrah! Make room for the Czar!

(The CZAR arrives, with SEXCREMENT in disguise)

A POLE

Ah! Lord, every man for himself, there's the Czar!

ANOTHER POLE

Oh, my God, he's over the ditch!

THIRD POLE

Wham, bam! There's four gone, thanks to that big bugger of a lieutenant.

SEXCREMENT

Ha! So you others haven't had enough! There, Jan Sobiejski, that takes care of you! Now for the rest!

(He massacres the POLES)

PA UBU

Advance, my friends. Catch that character! Crush the Muscovites to pulp! Victory is ours! Long live the Red Eagle!

ALL

Forward! Hurrah! God's crank! Catch the big prick.

SEXCREMENT

By St. George, I fell down.

PA UBU

(recognizing him)

Ah! It's you, Sexcrement! Ah, my friend. We are very happy to find you again, and so is the whole company. I'm going to have you broiled slowly. Gentlemen of Finance, light a fire. Oh! Ah! Oh! I am dead. I've been hit by at least a cannonball. Ah, my God, forgive me my sins. Yep, it's a cannonball, all right.

SEXCREMENT

It's a cap pistol.

PA UBU

Ah! Putting me on again! Up my hole!

(UBU jumps on SEXCREMENT and tears him apart)

GENERAL LASKI

Pa Ubu, we are advancing on all fronts.

PA UBU

I can see that. I can't go on, I'm riddled with kicks. I'd like to sit down on the ground. Oh! My bottle.

GENERAL LASKI

Go take the Czar's bottle, Pa Ubu.

PA UBU

Yeah! I'm on my way this second. Let's go! Sheeyit-saber, do your duty, and you, financial hook, no lagging behind. Let the enema rod work in generous emulation and share with the little wooden stick the honor of massacring, digging into, and exploiting the Muscovite emperor. Forward, our mister financial horse!

(UBU hurls himself at the CZAR)

A RUSSIAN OFFICER

On guard, your Majesty!

PA UBU

There's for you! Oh! Ow! Ah! Oh, what the hell. Ah! Sir, pardon, leave me alone. Oh, but I didn't do it on purpose! *(UBU runs away, chased by the CZAR)* Holy Virgin, that madman's chasing me. What did I ever do, great God! Ha! Lovely, there's still that ditch to get across. Ah! I feel him behind me and the ditch up ahead! Courage! Let's shut our eyes!

(UBU jumps the ditch. The CZAR falls in)

CZAR

Oh, great! I'm trapped!

POLES

Hurrah! The Czar is beaten!

PA UBU

Ah, I hardly dare turn around! He's in the ditch. Well, that's nicely done. They're hitting him. Go on, Poles, go at him hammer and tongs, the wretch has a strong back! I don't dare look at him. And yet our prediction came completely true, the enema stick has performed marvels. None can doubt that I'd have killed him altogether if an inexplicable terror had not come to combat and annul in us the effects of our courage. But we were forced to turn tail suddenly, and we owe

our salvation only to our equestrian skill, as well as to the solidity of the hocks of our financial horse, whose rapidity is equalled only by that solidity, yet whose lightness makes him famous, and of course to the depth of the ditch which managed to work its way quite nicely under the feet of this enemy of the present-and-accounted-for Master of Phynance. That's a beautiful speech, but nobody's listening. Let's go. Good, it's starting again.

(The Russian DRAGOONS make a charge and free the CZAR)

GENERAL LASKI

This time it's a stampede.

PA UBU

Ah! Here's the chance to get our toes out of the crud. Now then, gentlemen of Poland, charge! I mean, retreat!

POLES

Every man for himself!

PA UBU

Let's go! On our way. What a mob of people, what a rush, what a multitude, how can I get out of this mess? *(UBU is jostled)* Ah! Hey, you! Watch it, or you'll run afoul of the boiling valor of the Master of Phynances. Ah! He's gone. Let's take off, and fast, while Laski can't see us.

(Exit UBU. The CZAR and the RUSSIAN ARMY chase away the POLES)



Scene 4

(A cavern in Lithuania. It is snowing. PA UBU, PILE, COOTIE)

PA UBU

Agh! This weather's only fit for dogs. It's freezing enough to crack your pebbles, and the person of the Master of Finances finds itself quite injured by it.

PILE

Hon! Mista Ubu, have you recovered from your terror and your running?

PA UBU

Yes! I'm not afraid any more, but I still have the runs.

COOTIE

(aside)

What a swine!

PA UBU

Eh! Sir Cootie, how is your earen?

COOTIE

Mista, it's as good as it can be, seeing as how it's bad. By consequence of which the lead makes it tilt towards the ground and I can't get the bullet out.

PA UBU

Well, serves you right! You always wanted to beat up on other people. I exhibited the greatest valor, and without exposing myself I massacred four enemies with my own hands, not to mention all those who were already dead that we killed over again.

COOTIE

Pile, do you know what happened to little Rensky?

PILE

He got a bullet in the head.

PA UBU

Just as the poppy and the dandelion, in the flower of their age, are mowed down by the pitiless mower of the pitiless Mower who pitilessly mowes their pitiful mugs, so it was with little Rensky. Though he fought well, he got his poppy popped, and there were too many Russians.

PILE & COOTIE

Hon! Mista!

AN ECHO

Hrrron!

PILE

What's that? Let's arm ourselves with our arms.

PA UBU

Oh, good heavens, no. More Russians, I bet. I've had enough of them! Well, it's all simple enough. If they catch me I'll shove 'em up my hole.

(Enter a BEAR)

COOTIE

Hon, Mista Financier!

PA UBU

Oh! Say, just look at the little bow-wow. Isn't he sweet, oh, yes.

PILE

Look out! Wow, what a huge bear. Where's my bullets?

PA UBU

A bear! Ah! The atrocious beast! Oh, I've been eaten up, poor man. May God protect me. And he's coming after me! No, it's Cootie he's going for. Ah, I can breathe again.

(The BEAR jumps on COOTIE. PILE attacks it with a knife. UBU takes refuge on a boulder)

COOTIE

Come on, Pile, come on! Help, Mista Ubu!

PA UBU

Nothing doing! Get yourself out, buddy. At the moment we are saying our Pater Noster. Everyone gets et when it's his turn.

PILE

I've got him, I'm holding on.

COOTIE

Hold tight, pal, he's starting to let me go.

PA UBU

Sanctificetur nomen tuum.

COOTIE

Yellow bugger!

PILE

Ah! Now he's biting me! O Lord, save us, I am dead.

PA UBU

Fiat voluntas tua!

COOTIE

Ha! Now I've wounded him.

PILE

Hurrah! He's losing blood.

(The FRIGADIERS shout, the BEAR bellows with pain, and UBU mutters on)

COOTIE

Hold him tight while I get my explosive knuckleduster.

PA UBU

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie.

PILE

Got it yet? I can't hold on much longer.

PA UBU

Sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.

COOTIE

Ah! I've got it.

(An explosion. The BEAR falls dead)

PILE & COOTIE

Victory!

PA UBU

Sed libera nos a malo. Amen. Well, is he good and dead? Can I come down off my rock?

PILE
(*spitefully*)

Whenever you like.

PA UBU
(*descending*)

You may flatter yourselves that if you are still alive to crunch the snow of Lithuania under your feet, you owe it to the magnanimous virtue of the Master of Finances, who exerted himself, exhausted himself, and strained his voice reciting paternosters for your salvation, and who wielded the spiritual sword of prayer with as much courage as did you with skill the temporal sword of the present-and-accounted-for Frigadier Cootie's explosive knuckleduster. We even pushed our devotion to the limit, for we did not hesitate to climb on a very high boulder so that our prayers might have a shorter journey to heaven.

PILE

Revolting ass!

PA UBU

This is a fat one. Thanks to me, you have something to eat. What a belly, gentlemen! The Greeks would have had more elbow room in there than in the wooden horse, and it was touch-and-go, dear friends, whether or not we were going to verify his interior capacity with our own eyes.

PILE

I'm starved. What's to eat?

COOTIE

The bear!

PA UBU

Agh! You poor devils, are you going to eat him raw? We don't have anything to make a fire with.

PILE

Don't we have our gun flints?

PA UBU

Say, that's right. And I think that not too far away there's a little wood where there must be some dry branches. Go get some, Sire Cootie.

(COOTIE: *moves off across the snow*)

PILE

And now, Sire Ubu, go cut up the bear.

PA UBU

Oh, no! Maybe he isn't dead. But you're already half-eaten and bitten all over, so it's just up your alley. I'm going to start a fire while we wait for him to bring some wood. (PILE *starts to skin the BEAR*) Oh! Look out! He moved.

PILE

But Sire Ubu, he's already quite cold.

PA UBU

That's a pity: it would have been better to eat him warm. The Master of Finances is going to get heartburn.

PILE
(*aside*)

Disgusting. (*Loud*) Help us a little, Mr. Ubu, I can't do the whole job by myself.

PA UBU

No. *I* don't want to do anything! I'm tired, damn straight!

COOTIE
(*returning*)

What snow, my friends, you'd think you were in Castile or at the North Pole. Night is beginning to fall. In an hour it'll be dark. Let's hurry up while we can still see.

PA UBU

Yes, Pile, do you hear that? Hurry up. Hurry up, both of you! Skewer the animal, cook the animal, *I* am hungry!

PILE

Ah! That's too much, by God! You do some work or else you get nothing, do you hear that, glutton!

PA UBU

Oh, that's fine with me. I can just as well eat him raw, he'll end up getting you, not me. And anyway, I'm sleepy.

COOTIE

What can you do, Pile? Let's make dinner ourselves. He won't get any, that's all. Or maybe we could give him the bones.

PILE

Okay. Ah, there's a good fire.

PA UBU

Oh! That's lovely, it's warm now. But I see Russians everywhere. What a retreat, great God! Ah!

(UBU falls asleep)

COOTIE

I'd like to know if what Rensky was saying is true, if Ma Ubu really is dethroned. There'd be nothing impossible about that.

PILE

Let's finish making supper.

COOTIE

No, we have more important things to discuss. I think it would be a good idea to find out the truth of that news.

PILE

Right. Should we abandon Pa Ubu or stay with him?

COOTIE

Night brings counsel. Let's sleep on it. We'll decide tomorrow what we should do.

PILE

No, it's better to use the night to cover our getaway.

COOTIE

Then let's go.

(They leave)

PA UBU

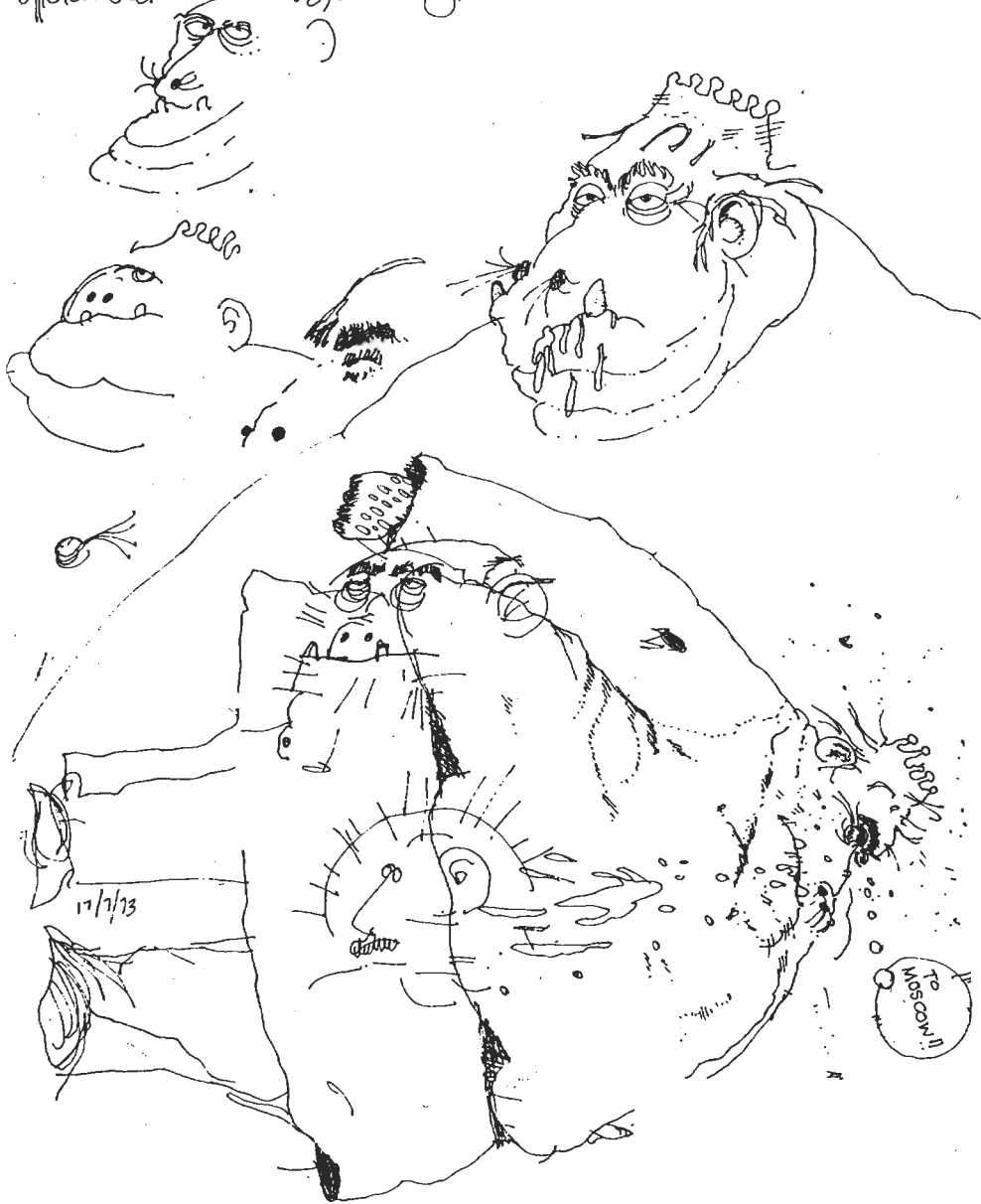
(in his sleep)

Ah! Sire Russian dragoon, be careful, don't shoot in this direction, there are people here. Ah! There's Sexcrement. Is he ever bad news, just like a bear. And now Buggerlas is on top of me! The bear, the bear! Ah! He's down! How hard life is, great God! I don't want to do anything. Go away, Buggerlas. Do you hear, fool? There's Rensky now, and the Czar. Oh! They are going to beat me up! And Ma Upew! Where did you get all that gold? You've stolen my gold, bitch, you've been rummaging in my tomb in the Warsaw cathedral, near the Moon. I have been dead for a long time. Buggerlas killed me and I am buried in Warsaw near Ladislas the Great, in Cracow near Jan Sigismund, and also in Thorn, in the dungeon with Sexcrement! There he is again. Go away, accursed bear. You look like Sexcrement. Do you hear that, beast of Satan? No, he doesn't hear, the Frigadiers cut off his earens. Disembrain 'em, kill 'em, cut off the earens, pull out the finance and drink yourself to death, that's the life for the Frigadiers. It's the happiness of the Master of Finance.

(UBU quiets down and sleeps)



He is championing the bit to take on more official business from his official bed - c.b.c. describing president N-'s recent illness.



ACT FIVE

Scene 1

(The cavern. Before dawn. PA UBU asleep.
Enter MA UBU without seeing him. Complete
darkness.)

MA UBU

Finally I've found some shelter. I am alone here, nothing wrong with that. What a frantic race, to cross the whole of Poland in four days! All my bad luck hit me at once. As soon as that fat ass is out of the way, I go to the crypt for a little cash. Right after that I just miss getting stoned by that Biggerlas and his zanies. I lose my cavalier, Frigidier Crotch, who was so enamored of my charms that he shuddered with joy at the sight of me, and even, I was told, when he didn't see me, which is the height of tenderness. He would have had himself cut in two for me, the poor boy. He proved that by getting cut in quarters by Biggerlas. Bim bam, thank you Ma'am! Ah! I could die. Then finally I take off, chased by that furious mob. I get out of the palace, I get to the Vistula, and all the bridges are guarded. I swim across the river to tire out my persecutors. From every direction the Nobles gather and chase me. I am nearly done in a thousand times, smothered by a ring of Poles desperate to get me. Finally I tricked them, and after four days of running through the snow of what used to be my kingdom, I manage to find refuge here. I haven't had anything to eat or drink these four days. Biggerlas was hot on my tail. . . well, I'm safe now. Ah! I am dead with cold and fatigue. But I'd really like to know what has become of my fat clown. I mean my very respectable spouse. Man, did I take his finances. Man, did I steal his zlotys. Man, did I ever swindle him. And his financial horse dying of hunger: the poor devil didn't see oats very often. Ah! Such a good story. But alas! I lost my treasure. It's in Warsaw and anyone who wants it can have it.

PA UBU
(beginning to awaken)

Catch Ma Ubu! Cut off her earens!

MA UBU

Oh, God! Where am I? I'm losing my mind. Oh! Lord, no!
Thanks be to heaven, I think I see
Mister Pa Ubu sleeping next to me.
Let's play it cool. Well, my fat fellow, did you sleep well?

PA UBU

Terrible! That bear was damn tough! In the battle of the roughs and the toughs the roughs have completely devoured and eaten the toughs, as you will see when daylight comes. Do you hear, noble Frigidiers?

MA UBU

What's he spluttering? He's even more stupid than when he left. Who's he mad at?

PA UBU

Cootie, Pile, answer me, bag of sheeyit! Where are you? Oh! I'm afraid. But somebody spoke. Who was talking? I don't suppose it was the bear. Sheeyit! Where are my matches? Ah, I lost them on the battlefield.

MA UBU

(aside)

Let's take advantage of the situation and the darkness. We'll pretend to be a supernatural apparition and make him promise to forgive us our trespasses.

PA UBU

Now, by Saint Anthony! I hear a voice! God's crank! I'll be hanged.

MA UBU

(deepening her voice)

Yes, Mr. Ubu, there is in fact a Voice, and the trumpet of the Archangel who shall quicken the dead out of the dust and ashes of the end of time would sound no different! Listen to this stern Voice. It is that of St. Gabriel, whose counsel is nothing but good.

PA UBU

Oh, come off it!

MA UBU

Do not interrupt me, or I shall fall silent, and that will be the end of your gross gut!

PA UBU

Ah! My cornhole! I'll shut up, I won't say another word. Go on, Mrs. Apparition.

MA UBU

We were saying, Mr. Ubu., that you are a fat fellow.

PA UBU

Yes, really, quite right, very fat.

MA UBU

Be silent, God damn it!

PA UBU

Oh! Angels don't swear!

MA UBU

(aside)

Sheeyit! *(Continuing)* Are you married, Mr. Ubu?

PA UBU

Perfectly, to the last of the battle-axes.

MA UBU

You mean that she is a charming lady.

PA UBU

A horror. She has claws everywhere. You don't know which way to get at her.

MA UBU

You must get at her by gentleness, Sire Ubu, and if you get at her that way you will see that she is at least the equal of the Venus of Samothrace.

PA UBU

Yes, she does have a salmon face.

MA UBU

You are not listening, Mr. Ubu; lend us a more attentive ear. (*Aside*) We'd better hurry, it's nearly sunrise... Mr. Ubu, your wife is adorable and delicious, she doesn't have one single fault.

PA UBU

You are mistaken, there is not one single fault she doesn't have.

MA UBU

Silence there! Your wife is not unfaithful to you.

PA UBU

I'd like to see anyone who could fall for her. She's a harpy!

MA UBU

She doesn't drink!

PA UBU

Not since I hid the key to the winecellar. Before, she was sloshed by seven A.M. and she perfumed herself with brandy. Now that she uses patchouli she doesn't smell any worse. It's all the same to me. But now I'm the only one sloshed!

MA UBU

Stupid character! Your wife doesn't steal your gold.

PA UBU

No? How strange.

MA UBU

She doesn't embezzle a cent!

PA UBU

Proved by our noble and unfortunate Phynancial horse, who after going without food for three months had to spend the whole campaign being dragged by the bridle across the Ukraine? And then, poor beast, he died with his shoes on!

MA UBU

This is all lies. Your wife is a paragon, and you are such a monster!

PA UBU

This is all true. My wife is a hussy and what a haggis you are!

MA UBU

Watch your step, Pa Ubu.

PA UBU

Ah! That's right, I forgot whom I was speaking to. No, I didn't say that!

MA UBU

You killed Wenceslas.

PA UBU

That certainly isn't *my* fault. Ma Ubu wanted me to.

MA UBU

You had Ladislas and Boleslas killed.

PA UBU

Tough berries for them! They were trying to hit me!

MA UBU

You broke your promise to Sexcrement and later on you killed him.

PA UBU

Better me than him to rule in Lithuania. At the moment it is neither one nor the other, so you see it's no fault of mine.

MA UBU

There is only one way for you to secure forgiveness for all your misdeeds.

PA UBU

What is it? I am quite disposed to become a holy man. I want to be a bishop and see my name on the calendar.

MA UBU

You must forgive Ma Ubu for having snitched a little money.

PA UBU

Well, there you are! I shall pardon her as soon as she's given me everything back, when she's had a good licking and when she's resurrected my financial horse.

MA UBU

He's batty about that horse! Ah! I am lost, the sun is rising.

PA UBU

Well, now I am happy to know for sure that my dear wife has been robbing me. And I have it from a reliable source. *Omnis a Deo scientia*, which means, *Omnis*, all; *a Deo*, knowledge; *scientia*, comes from God. There is the explanation of the phenomenon. But Milady Apparition is not saying anything. What can I give her to comfort herself with? What she had to say was very amusing. Well, it's daylight. Ah! Lord, in the name of my financial horse; it's Ma Ubu!

MA UBU
(*shamelessly*)

That is not true. I am going to excommunicate you.

PA UBU

Hah! You slut!

MA UBU

Such impiety.

PA UBU

Ah, that's too much. I can see very well that it's you, you stupid hellkite. What the hell are you doing here?

MA UBU

Crotch is dead and the Poles chased me out.

PA UBU

It was the Russians chased *me* out. Great minds meet again!

MA UBU

You mean to say that a great mind met an ass!

PA UBU

Ho! Well, it's going to meet a flying squirrel now.

(UBU *throws the BEAR at her*)

MA UBU
(*falling under the BEAR's weight*)

Ah! Great God! Horrors! Ah! I am dying! I am smothered! He's biting me! He's swallowing me! He's digesting me!

PA UBU

He's dead, grotesque! Oh! But maybe not really. Ah! Lord! No, he's not dead, let's get away. (*Climbing back on his rock*) *Pater noster qui es...*

MA UBU
(*freeing herself*)

So! Where is he?

PA UBU

Oh, Lord! She's still there. So there's no way of getting rid of the stupid creature. Is that bear dead?

MA UBU

Yeah, you silly ass, it's already good and cold. How did it get here?

PA UBU
(*confused*)

I don't know. Ah! Yes, I do know. He wanted to eat Pile and Cootie and I killed him with one blow of my paternoster.

MA UBU

Pile, Cootie, paternoster? What does that mean? He's crazy, my finance!

PA UBU

It's the exact truth! And you are an idiot, Lady Grossboobs.

MA UBU

Tell me about the campaign, Pa Ubu.

PA UBU

Oh, hell, no. It's too long. All I know is, despite my incontestable gallantry everybody beat me.

MA UBU

What, even the Poles?

PA UBU

They screamed "Long live Wenceslas and Buggerlas!" I got the impression they wanted to draw and quarter me. Oh! The madmen. And then they killed Rensky.

MA UBU

I couldn't care less. You know that Buggerlas killed Frigadier Crotch.

PA UBU

I couldn't care less! And then they killed poor Laski.

MA UBU

I couldn't care less!

PA UBU

Oh! Well, anyway, come here, you slut! On your knees before your master! (*He grabs her and makes her kneel*) You will suffer the ultimate torture!

MA UBU

Ho, ho, Mr. Ubu!

PA UBU

Oh! Oh! Oh! Now are you finished? I am just warming up. Twisting of the nose, pulling out the hair, penetration of the little wooden stick into the earens, extraction of the brain through the fingernails, laceration of the spinal column (if only that would remove the spines from her personality), not to mention the opening of the bladder, and for a grand finale, a new rendition of the great separation of St. John the Baptist's head from his body, all of which is drawn from the holiest scriptures, from the Old as well as from the New Testament, collated, corrected, and perfected by the present-and-accounted-for Master of Finances! How does that grab you, dingleberry?

(He tears her apart)

MA UBU

Mercy, Mr. Ubu!

*(A terrific din at the opening of the cavern.
Enter BUGGERLAS and his SOLDIERS)*

BUGGERLAS

Forward, my friends! Long live Poland!

PA UBU

Oh! Oh! Wait a bit, Mr. Polack, wait until I'm through with Madam my lesser half!

BUGGERLAS
(bitting UBU)

There, coward, beggar, desperado, miscreant, Moslem!

PA UBU
(riposting)

There! Polack, drunkard, bastard, buzzard, Tartar, fathead, cockroach, stool-pigeon, greaseball, communist!

MA UBU
(joining in)

There, cunuch, pig, felon, ham, rascal, sloven, bedspread!

(The SOLDIERS attack the UBs, who defend themselves as best they can)

PA UBU

Gods! What reinforcements!

MA UBU

We have feet too, you Polish Poles.

PA UBU

In the name of my green snot, will it never end, at the end of the end? Another one? Ah! If only my phynancial horse was here!

BUGGERLAS

Hit 'em again, hit 'em again, harder, harder!

A VOICE
(*outside*)

Long live Pa Ubu, our great Financier!

PA UBU

Ah! There they are. Hurrah! Here come the Ubuist Fathers. Carry on, get in here, we need you, Financial gentlemen!

(*Enter the FRIGADIERS to join the battle*)

COOTIE

Head for the hills, you Poles!

PILE

Hanh! So we meet again, Mista of the Finances. Forward, fight fiercely. Try to reach the entrance, or else we're out all we have to do is run like hell.

PA UBU

Oh! That's the hardest I can hit. Ouch, he plays pretty rough!

BUGGERLAS

God! I am wounded.

STANISLAS LECZINSKI

It's just a scratch, sire.

BUGGERLAS

I'm just dizzy, that's all.

JAN SOBIESKI

Let's get 'em, they're at the mouth, the slobs.

COOTIE

We're making it! By consequence of which I can see the sky!

PILE

Make haste, Sire Ubu!

PA UBU

Ah! I'm making in my pants. Forward, horny cornhole! Kill 'em, bleed 'em, skin 'em, slaughter 'em, belly of Ubu! Ah! It's getting easier.

COOTIE

There's only two still guarding the entrance.

PA UBU

(*knocking them out with blows of the dead BEAR*)

An-a-one, an-a-two! Oof! I'm outside! Let's get out of here! Follow me, you others, and move it!



Scene 2

(*The snow-covered province of Livonia. The UBs and their FOLLOWERS, in flight*)

PA UBU

Ah! I think they've given up trying to catch us.

MA UBU

Yeah, Buggerlas went to have himself crowned.

PA UBU

I don't envy him that crown.

MA UBU

You ain't just whistlin' "Dixie," Pa Ubu.

(*They disappear into the distance*)



Scene 3

(*The bridge of a ship skimming the Baltic. PA UBU, his GANG, the Ship's MASTER, and the CREW*)

MASTER

Ah! What a beautiful breeze!

PA UBU

It is a fact that we are escaping with a rapidity verging on the prodigious. We must be making a million knots an hour, and these

knots are so well tied that once done, they cannot be undone. Of course, we have a tail wind.

PILE

What a sad imbecile.

(A squall begins. The ship heels over and the sea whitens)

PA UBU

Oh! Ah! God! Now we're capsizing. And it's leaning over, your boat's going to fall in!

MASTER

Everyone to leeward, set the foresail.

PA UBU

Ah! No, not that! Don't, all put yourselves on one side! That's imprudent. What if the wind changes direction? Everybody sinks to the bottom and we're all fish bait.

MASTER

Fall off!

PA UBU

No, no, don't fall off, we'll never get there and I want to get there, I'm in a hurry. Don't fall off, do you hear! It's your fault, you brutish captain, if we don't make it. We've got to get there! Oh well, I'll take command. Prepare to turn about! God! Drop the anchor! Tack with the wind in front, tack with the wind in back. Hoist the sails, reef the sails, helm up, helm down, helm sideways! See, it's going great. Bring the ship athwart the waves and we'll be perfect.

(Everybody screams with laughter. The breeze freshens)

MASTER

Haul down the main jib, reef the topsails.

PA UBU

That's not bad, it's even good! Do you hear, Mr. Crew? All down for ape chips, reefers, and tonsils! *(Several die of laughter. A wave is shipped)* Oh! What a deluge! That's the effect of the maneuvers we commanded.

MA UBU & PILE

Navigation is a delicious thing.

(Another wave is shipped)

PILE
(drenched)

Renounce Satan and all his pomp.

PA UBU

Sire waiter, pomp us a drink.

(They all sit down)

MA UBU

Ah! How delightful to see sweet France again, our old friends, and our castle of Mondragon.

PA UBU

Whee! We'll be there soon. We're just passing the castle of Elsinore.

PILE

I feel all perked up at the thought of seeing my dear Spain again.

COOTIE

Yes, and we'll astound our comrades with tales of our marvelous adventures.

PA UBU

That's for sure! And I shall get myself named Master of Finances in Paris.

MA UBU

Just the ticket. Oh, what a bumpy ride!

COOTIE

It's nothing, we just rounded the Elsinore peninsula.

PILE

And now our noble vessel flies swiftly over the somber waves of the North Sea.

PA UBU

Fierce and inhospitable sea which washes the country called Germany,
so named because the inhabitants thereof are always germinating.

MA UBU

That's what I call erudition. They say it's a lovely land.

PA UBU

Gentlemen: it may be beautiful, but it can't equal Poland. Without
Poland, there would be no spit and Polish!

CURTAIN



THE FIRST POLISH JOKE

NOTE

Ubu Rex is a translation of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, the first of a series of plays and fragments concerning Pa Ubu and his adventures. The world *première* of Jarry's infamous work took place in Paris in 1896; it provoked a riot in the theatre, and a storm of critical reaction and controversy. Though Jarry died in 1907, his example and influence has been powerful in contemporary French (and international) letters: Antonin Artaud named his theatre after Jarry, and the latter's literary followers founded an organization, dedicated to the appreciation, art and science of Ubuism, known as the *Collège de Pataphysique*. Several modern writers are members of this society, among them Eugène Ionesco.

Yet another version of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*? Why? There are already several translations available, and they're probably a lot easier to find than the Pulp Press edition, unless you patronize only the most discerning bookstores. But if you are reading this, then you have taken much trouble, for which I thank you, or you have been extremely lucky. Either way, I hope that you have enjoyed reading *Ubu Rex* as much as I enjoyed doing the first English Canadian version of the play.

But to answer the question: the more generally accessible adaptations of *Ubu* seem to me to betray the essence of Jarry's work even as they seek to define it, largely because they appear to be intended for a *reading* public alone. The various cutenesses, failures to find suitable English equivalents for character names or important words, and general lack of balls in earlier translations are annoying enough on the printed page, but any idea of theatrical production of such versions immediately puts their shortcomings in a graver light. Jarry, after all, meant *Ubu Roi* for the stage; *Ubu Rex* seeks the same home. The critical paraphernalia that surrounds the history of *Ubu*'s debut in 1896, in a passionate and faction-ridden Paris theatre, is available elsewhere, and *Ubu*'s honored place as a recognized ancestor of the Theatre of the Absurd (according to Martin Esslin, Robert Brustein, and others) seems assured. The critical and historical importance of the play cannot be too much stressed.

And yet . . . that is not all there is. If it were, *Ubu Rex*, with its crude structure, sophomoric parodies of *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and nineteenth-century heroic drama, its vulgar and opaque style, and its aggressive frivolity, would by now be little more than a curio, a Gallic *Gorboduc*. But *Ubu* lives, somehow, and will continue to live as long as our theatre and our politics are dominated by the venal, brutal *bourgeoisie* of which King Ubu and his gross Queen are mirror images, not merely cartoon-figure burlesques. Pa Ubu is not only King Turd, as G. Legman would have it: he is King Appetite, King Capital, King Totalitarian, King Consumet. *Ubu Rex* is nothing if not an alimentary tract. And we who still gobble, swallow, digest, and defecate have much Ubu in us, as individuals, as members of a visibly and childishy corrupt society. *Ubu Rex* is a comic nightmare, a surreal vision of a greasy, tacky, incompetent world, a plastic souvenir of the ruthlessness hidden just beneath the surface of every bland and mean-spirited compromise. Jarry knew this; he found Ubu within himself, and then he slowly *became* Ubu as he drank himself to death. But Ubu did not become Jarry; Ubu survived, only to reappear elsewhere. The anticlimax of the play's ending is eerily close to reality in its understanding that such stories do not *have* endings. We wake from

NOTES

nightmares, but not because the nightmares have ended: we can merely endure no more.

That is why Ubu, archetypal Pa, traitor, King, then refugee, finally escapes banality. He is the centre of his play because he has the brute force necessary to hold his own against the combined opposition of Ma Ubu, Sexcrement, Buggerlas, and the others. He is prehistoric, atavistic, destructive, pure engorging will. Unencumbered by tradition, and with sufficient power to dispense with even the appearance of morality (what a relief it is to watch affairs of state conducted completely without bullshit!), Ubu survives. He is real. He can be King anywhere in the world. For now.

So, the point is not to compound the usual felony by creating yet another version of *Ubu*, a little more contemporary, for the library; I want to put Ubu and his violent, bloody Poland back on the stage, where we First Worlders can be faced directly with the image of our souls. This translation is as literally accurate as possible, with some changes dictated by our increased tolerance for blasphemy and poetic invective; where I have taken liberties, I have done so for theatrical effect. In fact, theatrical effect has been my touchstone throughout, because despite all the theorizing about the play, all the analyses of its dramatic progenitors and its involved symbolism, the text itself remains concrete. Pliable, yes, but also earthy, fertile, factual. *Ubu* lives.

A note for directors and actors: this play and this translation were created for you. Be full of care, and be real. Be imaginative rather than literal, sharp and tight rather than heavy, and please do not attempt to be *significant*. Or, what is worse, reverent. Remember your audiences, too; the play is meant to be funny, though the laughter is that of a festering civilization.

For encouragement, advice, and inspiration, respectively, I should like to thank Robert Brustein, Michael Feingold, and Aileen Robbins. I owe special gratitude to Bruce Huett, who confirmed my original intentions by giving an early version of this translation its first production.

David Copelin
Vancouver, Canada
September, 1973

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