Ubu Rex

A play by Alfred Jarry

A new translation by David Cope

Illustrations by Chick Carlson...

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

— A. Jarry

# ACT ONE

Scene 1

(PA UBU and MA UBU)

**PA UBU**

Sheeeyit!

**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 shoe, I don’t understand.

**MA UBU**

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

**PA UBU**

In the name of my green shoe, sheeeyit, milady, certainly I’m happy. I have more than enough: captains 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 clot, 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 parador and a big cloak which would hang in your beets.

PA UBU
Ah! I give into the temptation! Buggers of sheezy, sheezy 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! 1, captain of dragoons, to assassinate the King of Poland! I’d rather die!

MA UBU
(aside)
Oh sheezy! (Aside) So you’ll keep on begging like a rat, Pa Ubu?

PA UBU
Godlessly, 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 parador? And the big cloak?

PA UBU
Well, what the hell, Ma Ubu? (Exit, slamming the door)

MA UBU
Fart, sheezy, he was hard to get going, but fart, sheezy, I think I shocked him up a little. By the grace of God and myself, maybe in a week I’ll be Queen of Poland.

Scene II
(A room in Pa Ubu’s house. Pa Ubu is away. 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?
SEXCREMINT

Good day, Pa Ubu. Sit down, fellas. (They all sit down.)

PA UBU

Oof, a little more and I’d burst my chair.

SEXCREMINT

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, wobmart curless, veal, chicken, poulé 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)

Blockbestr, salad, fruit, dessert, boiled beef, Jerusalem artichokes, cauliflower i’s sheeyin.

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 potato soup.
Bugger, is it bad.

SEXCREMEN

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.

SEXCREMEN

It's very good. I'm finished.

MA UBU

Now try the Pope's nose.

SEXCREMEN

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

Talk a little. (Several tattle and fall poisoned) Pass me the wombat cutlets, and I'll serve.

MA UBU

Here they are.

PA UBU

Everybody out! Captain Sexcremen, 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, Sexcremen. (Nobody moves.) You haven't gone yet? In the name of my green soul, 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

Sheezy! Sheezy! Sheezy! Get out! I am making my point.

ALL

Every man for himself! Wretched Pa Ubu! Traitorous and beggarly swine! (Executing HENCHMEN)

PA UBU

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

SEXCREMEN

Very much, sir, except for the sheezy.

PA UBU

Hey, the sheezy 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 bugeer'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 how to kiss him)
Oh! Oh! Sexcrement, I love you very much!

SEXCREMENT
Hey! You sink. Pa Ubu. Don't you ever budge?

PA UBU
Hardly ever.

MA UBU
Never.

PA UBU
I'll step on your toes.

MA UBU

PA UBU
Take off, Sexcrement. I'm finished with you. But by my green mot, 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! Shove it, great balls of fire, in the name of my green mot, I am found out, my head will be cut off, eek, alaa!

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! Great P U... if you do that...

PA UBU
Hey! That's just the ticket!

(EXIT UBU)

MA UBU
(jumping after him)
Oh! Pa Ubu. Pa Ubu. I'll give you some haggis.
PA UBU
(fff)
Oh, shevvis! You’re an old haggis yourself.

scene 3
(The King’s palace. KIng WENCESLAS surrounded by his OFFICERS. SExCREMENT, The King’s sons, BOLETAS, LADIESLAS, 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 tu 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! Yee! Help! In the name of my green snout, I’ve burst 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 Ubu, CROTCH, PILE, COOTIE, SEXCREMENT, CONSPIRATORS, and SOLDIERS)
PA UBU
Huh! My deor 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

PA UBU
Fie, the filthy pig!

ALL

PA UBU
What, you don't like it? Well then, let Ssecrement 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, senile cheapskate!

ALL

Down with Pa Ubu!

PA UBU
Hey! Gentlemen, keep a civil tongue in your head or you'll wind up in my stetho-list. Okay, I agree to expose myself for your sake. That way, Ssecrement, 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: SHEETY!, and at that signal you'll jump him.

MA UBU
Yes, and as soon as he's dead you'll take his scepter 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 Buggerlus.

(The SOLDIERS leave. PA UBU chiefs 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.

MA 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!
ACT TWO

Scene 1
(The King's palace. KING WENCESLAS, QUEEN ROSAMUND, BOLESLAS, LADISLAS, 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, sir, 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 plucked 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, Ladielas; 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,
SEXCREMMENT 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
Aha! Here comes the Danzig regiment of horse guards. Faith, aren't
they beautiful.

PA UBU
Do you think so? They look crapy 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
SHHEEYHT!!! Rally 'round me, men!

SEXCREMMENT
Hurray! Forward!

(They all stand 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! (soon stops) 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.

(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
Rascal, 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 stairway.

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 stair)

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 whom knows where, vile scum, shameless 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 is all turning 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 drier! 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 furnace of
violent despair. During this time, the GHOSTS of Wenceslas,
Ladislas, Boleslas and Radoslava enter the grotto. Their ANCESTORS
accompany them and fill the cave. The oldest approaches
BUGGERLAS and raises 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 Machiav 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 this sword I give thee never know repose until it has struck the unmerit deed. (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 deposed within two hours.

PA UBU

Meat, oh! Gold, no! Slaughter three old horses, that's good enough for those filthy slobs.

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 get it out.

PA UBU

Wretch, don't you dare!

SEXCREMENT

But, Pa Ubu, if you don't give bounteous 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 steer and sheep. As long as I get my share!

(Exeunt)

Scene 6
(The palace courtyard fill of PEOPLE. PA UBU crowned, MA UBU, SEXCREMENT, FLUNKIES 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. Plus! 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, whispering)
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. Screeches 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 Fedorovitch, hurray for Michael Fedorovitch.

MICHAEL
Sir, 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 Fedorovitch! 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)

* * * * *
ACT THREE

Scene I
(The palace: PA UBU, MA UBU)

PA UBU

In the name of my green spot, 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 Sexrecrement.

PA UBU

Ma Ubu, please don't mention that buffoon to me. Now that I don't need him any more, let his stomach grow 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 aisle with me.

MA UBU
Listen, as I say, I feel sure that young Buggerlas will win in the end, because he has fight 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, CROTH, PILE, COOTIE, NOBLES in chain, FINANCERS, JUDGES, CLERKS, etc. (unobtrusive))

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

(The NOBLES are bruntly 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 expatriate 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 pigpickers and there in the torture chamber they will be disembowelled. (To the NOBLE) Who are you, buffoon?

FIRST NOBLE
Count of Vitbesch.

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, buffoon?

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 Miusu.

PA UBU

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

THIRD NOBLE

Nothing.

PA UBU

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

FOURTH NOBLE

Prince of Poznje.

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 Thoro, 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 Thoro.

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, deep all the Nobles down the hatch. (The NOBLES are all pushed into the ambulance) 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
Sheerit. 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, Birchkins. Gentlemen, we shall now proceed to matters financial.

FINANCIERS
There is nothing to be changed.

PA UBU
What? I want to change everything. Fire 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!

(They are shooed down the hole)
MA UBU
Well, really, Pa Ubu, you’re some King. You’re killing everybody.

PA UBU
Ah, shevyeit.

NA 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 horrid 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 shevyeit, by St. John, St. Peter, and St. Nicholas! Open up; theer 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 gens will cut off your ears. 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 zlots, 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 beer 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! Hurry 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. SEXCREMEN 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. Hurry finance, it serves you right, and the joke is so good that you’ll die laughing.

SEXCREMEN
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 this might be complications, but I don’t believe the dungeons of Thon 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 once sardana.

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

Scene 5
(The palace in Moscow. CZAR ALEXIS and his COURT, SEXCREMEN)

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

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

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

SEXCREMEN
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?

SEXCREMEN
My adventurer’s sword and a detailed map of the city of Thon.

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 Wencelas, young Buggerfas, is still alive. I'll do my best to repair him to the throne.

CZAR

What was your rank in the Polish army?

SEXCREMENT

I commanded the Fifth Regiment of the Vilna dragoons under Wencelas 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 son.

PA UBU

Lady of my dreams, watch it, because I will not suffer your impieties. And I was hoping to you gentlemen, the finances are going passably well. A considerable number of piggy-bank dikes proved the streets every morning and the Frigates 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, born of my confide, mildly financier, I have eaten to talk with you a month 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, Birdykins, it must be from Sexcrement.

MA UBU

Exactly. He says the Czar was very hospitable, that he's going to invade your Estates to crown Buggerfas, 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 your phynances and I'll burn candles for you. Lord, what will become of me?

(UBU cries and sob)
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 knucks 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 coat, 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 Ubu, Soldiers, Frigadiers)

SOLDIERS & FRIGADERS
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 or they’ll chase me.

MA UBU
Fie, the coward.

PA UBU
Ha! That sheeys-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 sheeys-hook and the nosepicker.

MA UBU
He’s too 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 rug 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 this case, bring me another animal, but I just won’t go on foot, horsey 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 Regular. But I’ve got the book of finances and so much the worse for you if you steal from me. I’m leaving Frigadier 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 ears.

(The ARMY moves off to the sound of fanfares)

MA UBU
(adown)

Now that that fat puppet is gone, let’s try and get down to business, kill Buggerlot, 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

Where is that treasure? Not one of these paving stones sounds hollow, even though I counted just thirteen stones behind the tomb of Ludolfo 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 hack, 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 this? 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 Sigiward)

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
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 POLISH. 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 soldiers, be so kind as to carry our financial helmet, and you, sire lancers, take care of the sheezy shears and the enema trick 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. Crocht 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 Wartaw, noble Lord.

PA UBU
Boy of my sheezy, 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 dreamt 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 sheezy 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 stock 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 us, we will take a stand inside the windmill and shoot...
with the phrensy-pinted out the window. The enema stick will bar the
door, and if anyone tries to get in he’d better be leerly of the
sherry-hook.

OFFICERS
Sue 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,waffle the
Financial Song.

(LASKI goes)

SOLDIERS & FRIGADIERS
Long live Pa Ubu, our great Financier!
Ting, ting, ting;
Ting, ting, ting;
Ting, ting, ting!

PA UBU
O, my great ladls, I adore them. (A Russian cannonball hits and
breaks an arm of the window!) Ah! I’m scared! Sue God, I’m dead!
But no, I haven’t got a scratch.

(Enter a CAPTAIN)

CAPTAIN
Sue 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
got 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, Miser, 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 EXCREMENT 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.

SEXCREMENENT

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

(He massacres the POLES)

PA UBU

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

ALL

Forward! Hurrah! God’s cramp! Crush the big pick.

SEXCREMENENT

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 brutalized 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.

SEXCREMENENT

It’s a cap pistol.

PA UBU

Ah! Putting me on again! Up my hole

(UBU jumps on SEXCREMENENT 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! Sheet-it-saber, do your duty, and you, financial hook, no lagging behind. Let the enemy 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 intrepid financial horse!

(UBU bounds himself at the CZAR)

A RUSSIAN OFFICER

On guard, your Majesty!

PA UBU

There’s for you! Oh! Oww! 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 bearen!

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 sick 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
your salvation only to our equestrian skill, as well as to the solidity of the backs 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 Finances. 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 mud. 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 pistol.) Ah! Hey, you! Watch it, or you’ll run afoul of the boiling valor of the Master of Finances. 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! Misra 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 ear:

COOTIE
Misra, it’s as good as it can be, seeing as how it’s bad. By consequence of which the head 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 mows 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! Misra!
AN ECHO

Herron!

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 show 'em up my hole.

(Enter a BEAR)

COOTIE

Hoo, 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 suing out Pace More. Everyone gets out 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

Sanificetur nomen tuum.

COOTIE

Yellow bugger!

PILE

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

PA UBU

Faci volentias tuas!

COOTIE

Ha! Now I've wounded him.

PILE

Hurrah! He's losing blood.

(The FRIGADIERs shoot, the BEAR bellow with pain, and UBU rushes on)

COOTIE

Hold him tight while I get my explosive knuckleduster.

PA UBU

Panem nostrum quotidiam de nobis hodie.

PILE

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

PA UBU

Sic ut nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.

COOTIE

Ah! I've got it.

(An explosion. The BEAR falls dead)

PILE & COOTIE

Victory!
PA UBU

Seid 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 magnanious virtue of the Master of Finances, who exalted himself, exhausted himself, and strained his voice reciting patronymics 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 Frigider 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

Revolving as!

PA UBU

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

PILE

I’m scared. 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?
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 Renzky was saying is true, if Ma Ubu really is dehioned. 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.
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, rushing 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 min get stooped by that Buggers and his mates. I lose my cavalier, Tragedy Crouch, 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 Buggers. Bom bom, thank you Ma’am! Ah! I could die. Then finally I take off, chased by that famous 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, smashed 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. Buggers 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 ass. I mean my very respectable spouse. Man, did I take his finances. Man, did I steal his stores. 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

(begging to awaken)

Catch Ma Ubu! Cut off her ears!

MA UBU

Oh, God! Where am I? I’m losing my mind. Oh! Lord, no! Thanks be to heaven, I think I see Miscei Pa Ubu sleeping next to me.

Let’s play it cool. Well, my fat fellow, did you sleep well?
PA UBU

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

MA UBU

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

PA UBU

Coozie, Pile, answer me, bag of sheysters! Where are you? Oh! I'm
afraid. But somebody spoke. Who was talking? I don't suppose it was
the bear. Sheysters! 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图文!
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 hussy!

MA UBU
She doesn't drink!

PA UBU
Not since I hid the key to the winemaking. 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 Ladislav and Boleslas killed.

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

MA UBU
You broke your promise to Sextremont 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 misdicks.

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 busy 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. Omens a Deo scientia, which means, Omnis, all; 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!

(Shamelessly)

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

PA UBU
Hah! You slut!

MA UBU
Such impertinence.

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

MA UBU
Cootch 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

Oh, hell, no. It’s too long. All I know is, despite my incontrovertible gaffinity everybody beat me.

MA UBU

What, even the Poles?

PA UBU

They screamed “Long live Wencelas 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 Croach.

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 that! On your knees before your master! (He grabs her and makes her kneel!) You will suffer the ultimate torture!

MA UBU

Ha, ha, 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 eares, 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 Baptism’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 terroric dir at the opening of the curtain. 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

(hissing UBU)

There, coward, beggar, desperado, miscreant, Mustem!

PA UBU

(reproving)

There! Polack, drunkard, bastard, buzzard, Tarrar, ghead, cockroach, stoo-pigron, greaseball, communinist!

MA UBU

(joining in)

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

(The SOLDIERS attack the UBU, 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 snore, will it never end, at the end of the end? Another one? Ah! If only my phynancial horse was here!

BUGGERLAS

His ’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 Ubians! Hurrah! Carry on, get in here, we need you, Financial gentlemen!

(Enter the TRIGADIERS to join the battle)

COOTIE

Head for the hills, you Poles!

PILE

Ham! So we meet again. Mists of the Finances. Forward, fight fiercely. Try to reach the entrance, once 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 cronchole! 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 1

(The snow-covered prairie of Ursinia. The Ubins 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 whistling "Dixie," Pa Ubu.

(They disappear into the distance)

Scene 2

(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 2 million knots an hour, and there
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 heeds over and the sea whitens)

PA UBU
Oh! Ah! God! Now we're capstaining. 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 brushup 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 astirwhi 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 aper ships, 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 Saran and all his pomp.

PA UBU
Sit on water, pump us a drink.

(They all sit down)

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

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 dar at Spain again.

COOTIE
Yes, and we'll around 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 pole and Polish!

CURTAIN
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 premiere 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 1897, his example and influence has been powerful in contemporary French (and internationally) theatre. 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.

THE FIRST POLISH JOKE

Yet another version of Alfred Jarry's Ubu Rex? Who? 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 versions, fizzles 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 greater 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 passion and faction-ridden Paris theater is available elsewhere, and Ubu's honored place as a recognized ancestor of the Theatre of the Absurd (according to Martin Esslin, Robert Bras Hat, 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 be by now little more than a curiosity, a Gallic Gorgon. But Ubu lives, somehow, and will continue to live as long as our theater and our politics are dominated by the vassal, brutish biogenetic of which King Ubu and his gross Queen are mirror images, not merely cartoon-figure burlesques. Pa Ubu is not only King Tvard, as G. Legman would have it; he is King Appetite, King Capital, King Totalitarian, King Consumm. 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 childishly corrupt society. Ubu Rex is a comic nightmare, a surreal vision of a gray, tacky, incompetent world, a plastic souvenir of the ruthless hidden just beneath the surface of every island 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 anti-climax of the play's ending is eerie close to reality in its understanding that such stories do not have endings. We wake from
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, Sacrement, Buggerfas, and the others. He is prehistoric, avaricious, destructive, pure engaging 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 50 Years 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. Pithy, yet, 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. Oh, what is worth, reverent. Remember your audiences, too: the play is meant to be funny, though the laughter is that of a fettering 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 Huer, who confirmed my original intentions by giving an early version of this translation its first production.

David Copelin
Victoria, Canada
September, 1973
Other Playscripts from PULP

DUET FOR A SCHIZOPHRENIC
a short play in three parts
by
Chris Johnson

&

KAFKA and Other Plays
drama
by
Brian Shein

at discriminating bookstores