UBU REX
by Alfred Jarry
a new translation by david caplin

Pulp Press
This translation is dedicated to
Jan Kott and Rik Mylewski
who are Poles apart

This is a Pulp Book

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Characters

Pa Ubu
Ma Ubu
Captain Sexcrement
King Wenceslas
Queen Rosamund
their sons: Boleslas
Ladislus
Buggerlas
General Laski
Stanislas Leczinski
Jan Sobieski
Nicholas Rensky
Czar Alexis
Frigadiers: Pile
Cootie
Crotch
Conspirators & Soldiers

People
Nobles
Magistrates
Countstors
Financiers
Tax Collectors
Peasants
The Whole Russian Army
The Whole Polish Army
Ma Ubu’s Guards
A Captain
The Bear
The Phynancial Horse
The Disembraining Machine
The Ship’s Master
The Ship’s Crew

"The scene... is set in Poland, which is to say, Nowhere."
— A. Jarry

Act One
Scene 1

PA UBU AND MA UBU

PA UBU: Sherry!
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 snout, I don’t understand.
MA UBU: So, Pa Ubu, you are happy with your destiny?
PA UBU: In the name of my green snout, sheeit, 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 only 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 was 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 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 your guests are coming.

MA UBU: (going) I don’t see a thing. (Meanwhile, PA UBU steals a filet of veal) Ah! There come 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.
SEXCREMEN: 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!
SEXCREMEN: Good day, Pa Ubu. Sit down, fellas.
They all sit down.
PA UBU: Oof, a little more and I'd bust my chair.
SEXCREMEN: 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.
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.

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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: 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 Ya Ubu! Traitorous and beggarly swine!
EXECUT VINCIT.
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 soot, 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 soot, 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 baggies.

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! Yl! Help! In the name of my green shot, 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 UBU, CROUCH, PILE, COOTIE, SEXCREMEN, 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.

SEXCREMEN: 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.

SEXCREMEN: I think we should whack him with a sword and unseam him from the nape 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 sheevit list. Okay. I agree to expose myself for your sake. That way, Sexcrement, you'll be able to slice the King in two.

SEXCREMEN: 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.

SEXCREMEN: 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 take an oath to cut and thrust valiantly.

SEXCREMEN: 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!
Act Two
Scene 1

The King's Palace. King Wenceslas, Queen Bolamund, 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, 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: Big wrong.
They all stab the king. A brigadier explodes

KING: Oh! Help! Holy Virgin, they got me.

BORELAS: (to LADILAS) 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, Burellas

QUEEN: Well, I feel reassured now.

Burellas: 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!

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

QUEEN: Borellas is hit by a bullet! He's dead.

Burellas: Hey! (ladies turn around) Defend yourself, Hurray for Ladlas!

QUEEN: Oh! He's surrounded.

Burellas: 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 & Burellas: (on their knees) Dear God, defend us.

Burellas: 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 firm man to take a step gets it.
PA UBU: Oh! Sextentment, 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!
Hetwirls 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 toward 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, son 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, 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 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 Wencelas, Ladislav, Boleslav and Rosamund enter the grotto. Their ancestors accompany them and fill the case. The oldest approaches BUGGERLAS and raises him gently) Ha! What do I see? My whole family, my ancestors... what miracle is this?
GHOST: Learn, Buggiers, that during my time on earth I was the noble Mathias of Koenigberg, the first King and founder of our dynasty. Into thy hands I commit the responsibility for our revenge. (He gives BUGGERIAS a big sword) And may this sword I give thee never know repose until it has struck the usurper dead.

They disappear, leaving BUGGERIAS in ecstasy.

Scene 5

The King’s palace. PA UBU, MA UBU, SEXTREMENT.

PA UBU: No, I don’t want to! Do you want to bankrupt me for the sake of those gluttons?

SEXTREMENT: 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 de-throned within two hours.

PA UBU: Meat, a7? 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.

SEXTREMENT: 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!

SEXTREMENT: 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. Scrabble together three million, 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, SEXTREMENT, 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!

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

MA UBU: It’s truly horrible. Pfft! There’s one with his skull move in.

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

SEXTREMENT: 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 crown 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.

SEXCREM: Here they come, here they come!

PA UBU: Hey, the first one’s losing ground.

MA UBU: No, he’s gaining again.

SEXCREM: 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: 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 1

The palace. PA UBU, MA UBU.

PA UBU: In the name of my green shot, 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: Hab? Captain Sexcrement.

PA UBU: Ma Ubu, please don't mention that buffoon 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 up the axel 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, CROUCH, PILE, COOTIE, NOBLES IN CHERUBS, FINANCIERS, JUDGES, CLERKS, AN OUBLETTE.

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: Hartford 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 pig-stickers and there in the torture chamber they will be disemboweled. (To the noble) Who are you, buffoon?
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, 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 Corland 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, patrimonial of Polock, margravias 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: Sheezyt. 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: Hoorters.

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 UBÚ: Hey, what are you doing. Pa Ubú? Who will dispense with justice now?
PA UBÚ: Me, of course! You'll see how it works out.
MA UBÚ: Yeah, that'll be a great mess.
PA UBÚ: Come on now, quiet, Bitchykins. Gentlemen, we shall now proceed to matters financial.
FINANCERS: There is nothing to be changed.
PA UBÚ: What? I want to change everything. First of all, I intend to keep half of all taxes myself.
FINANCERS: And with a straight face!
PA UBÚ: 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 FINANCER: But that's ridiculous, Pa Ubú.
SECOND FINANCER: It's absurd.
THIRD FINANCER: There's no rhyme or reason to it.
PA UBÚ: Contempt of court! Financiers down the hatch!
  The financiers are shoved down the hole.
MA UBÚ: Well, really, Pa Ubú, you're some King. You're killing everybody.
PA UBÚ: Ah, sheeyit.
MA UBÚ: No more justice, no more finances.
PA UBÚ: 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 Boggerlas and his mother are in hiding in the mountains. And that's not all: Pa Ubú has seized the throne.

SECOND PEASANT: I know plenty more. I just come from Grocow, 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 Ubú will come collect them himself!

ALL: Great God! What will become of us? Pa Ubú 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?

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

PEASANT: Stanislas Leszinski.

PA UBÚ: Well, horny cornhole, listen good. If you don't, these guns will cut off your ears. Well, are you going to listen?

STANISLAS: But Your Excellency hasn't said anything yet.

PA UBÚ: 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 UBÚ: 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: Sir, we are registered for one hundred fifty-two flotes, 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: Hal! So that's the way it is! To arms! Long live Buggerlas, by the grace of God, King of Poland and Lithuanian!

PA UBU: Forward, Gentlemen of Finance, do your duty.

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

Scene 4

A dungeon in the fortress of Thorn. Secremanent in chains, PA UBU.

PA UBU: Hal! 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: Hal! 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. PLUNKEN'S 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: Sir, 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.
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 sheeny, watch it, because I will not suffer your insanities. 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, born of my cornhole, milady financier, I have ears 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 enthroned Buggerlas, 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 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 knocks for me.

FIRST COUNSELLOR: Quick, let's run und 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 stock, 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 Urs, 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 sheepit-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 eareens-shears falling off.

PA UBU: I'll kill you with the sheepit-hook and the nosepicker.

MA UBU: He's so handsome with his helmet and his breastplate. You'd think it was an armoured 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 bell, 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 Frigadier Crotch to help you. Adieu, Ma Ubu.


PA UBU: You bet, twisting of nose and teeth, tongue extraction, and mashing the little wooden stick in his earsens.

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 Buggerfas, 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 Sigmund) Never, Ma Ubu!

Frightened, MA UBU runs out carrying the stolen gold through the secret door.

Scene 2

The marketplace of Warsaw. RUGGERLAS and his PARTISANS, PEOPLE AND SOLDIERS.
BUGGERLASS: 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 Friar. I am offering myself as your leader to re-establish the line of my fathers.

ALL: Long live Buggerla!

BUGGERLASS: And we will repeal all the taxes imposed by that frightful Pa Ubu.

ALL: Hurrah! Forward! Let's run to the palace and massacre that gang.

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

MA UBU: What do you wish, gentlemen? Ah! It's Buggerla!

The crown throws stones.

FIRST GUARD: All the windows are broken.

SECOND GUARD: St. George, they knocked me out.

THIRD GUARD: Bluebelly, I'm dying.

BUGGERLASS: Throw those rocks, my friends.

FRIGADER CROUCH: Hi! So that's how it is!

He draws his sword and attacks, creating a terrible carnage.

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

They fight.

CROUCH: I am dead!

BUGGERLASS: 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 volk's. Gunshots and a hail of rocks.
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 revolves 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 myself, 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 sheyit 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. Lord General, tell the soldiers to do their business and to warble the Financial Song.

LASKI goes.

SOLDIERS & FREGADERS: 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: (shrieking) For God and the Czar!

RENKY: 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. Hal! 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.

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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 Sobieski, 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 Shevyt-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 mas-

sacring, digging into, and exploiting the Muscovite emperor. Forward, our mister financial horse!

UBU hurl's himself at the Czar.

A RUSSIAN OFFICER: On guard, your Majesty!

PA UBU: There's for you! Ooh! Ooh! 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.

CEZAR: 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 wreath 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 Pynance. 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 butts 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 Pynances. 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: Hm! 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 tums.

COOTIE: (Aside) What a swine!

PA UBU: Eh! Sir Coottie, how is your ear now?

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 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: How Mista!

AN ECHO: Hmmm!

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: Hey, 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 Coottie he's going for. Ah, I can breathe again.

The bear jumps on Coottie. 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 tuat

Cootie: Hal! Now I’ve wounded him.

Pile: Hurrah! He’s losing blood.

The Friskaders shout, the bear bellows with pain, and Ubu matters on.

Cootie: Hold him tight while I get my explosive knuckleduster.

PA UBU: Panem nostrum quotidiamnam 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: (skeptically) 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 the temporal sword of the present and accounted-for Frigadel 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 as!

PA UBU: That 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 forest 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: Ohi! 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! Sextremet. 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 Upeul! 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 Ladislav the Great, in Cracow near Jan Sigismund, and also in Thorn, in the dungeon with Sextremet! There he is again. Go away, accursed bear. You look like Sextremet. Do you hear that, beast of Satan? No, he doesn't hear, the Frigadiers cut off his ears. Disembowel 'em, kill 'em, cut off the ears, 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.
Act Five
Scene 1


FA 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 Buggerlas and his zanies. I lose my cavalier, Frigadiers 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 Buggerlas. 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. Buggerlas 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 as 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 any one who wants it can have it.

PA UBÚ: (beginning to awaken) Catch Ma Ubú! Cut off her ears!

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

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

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

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

MA UBÚ: (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 UBÚ: Now, by Saint Anthony! I hear a voice! God's crakl! I'll be hanged.

MA UBÚ: (deepening her voice) Yes, Mr. Ubú, 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 UBÚ: Ch, come off it!

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

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

MA UBÚ: We were saying, Mr. Ubú, that you are a fat fellow.

PA UBÚ: Yes, really, quite right, very fat.

MA UBÚ: Be silent, God damn it!

PA UBÚ: Oh! Angels don't swear!

MA UBÚ: (aside) Sheezy! (Continuing) Are you married, Mr. Ubú?

PA UBÚ: Perfectly, to the last of the battle-axes.

MA UBÚ: You mean that she is a charming lady.

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

MA UBÚ: You must get at her by gentleness, Sire Ubú, and if you get at her that way you will see that she is not the equal of the Venus of Samothrace.

PA UBÚ: Yes, she does have a salmon face.

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

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

MA UBÚ: Silence there! Your wife is not unfaithful to you.

PA UBÚ: I'd like to see anyone who could fail for her. She's a harpy!

MA UBÚ: She doesn't drink.

PA UBÚ: 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 Phynacial 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 haggit 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 Ladiolas 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 doesn’t make any difference.
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 hatty 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. Omen a Deo scientia, which means, Omen, 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 chippy. What the hell are you doing here?
MA UBU: Croc 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 asl
PA UBU: Hol! Well, it’s going to meet a flying squirrel now.

UBU thows the bear at her.
MA UBU: (falling under the bear’s weight) Holy 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?

MA UBU: Mercy, Mr. Ubu!

PA UBU: A terrific din at the opening of the ewern. 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: (hitting Ubu) There! coward, beggar, despot, miscreant, Moslem!
PA UBU: (riponing) There! Polack, drunkard, bastard, buzzard, Tartar, fathead, cockroach, stool-pigeon, greaseball, communist!

MA UBU: (joining in) There, eunuch, pig, felon, ham, rascal, sloven, bedspread!
The soldiers attach the vsn, who defend themselves as best they can.

PA UBU: God! 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, 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.

Stanislav Leszynski: 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! Off! I’m outside! Let’s get out of here! Follow me, you others, and move it!

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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.


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 heeds over and the sea whitens.

Pa Ubu: Oh! Ah! God! Now we’re capizizing. 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, du 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 UBUs:_ That’s not bad, it’s even good! Do you hear, Mr.  
Crew? All down for ape chips, reelers, and tonsils!  
_(Several die of laughter. A wave is shipped)_ Oh! What a  
deluge! That’s the effect of the maneuvers we  
commanded.

_MA UBUs & PILEs:_ Navigation is a delicious thing.  

_Another wave is shipped._

_PILEs:_ (drenched) Renounce Satan and all his pomp.

_PA UBUs:_ Sire waiter, pomp us a drink.  

_They all sit down._

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

_PA UBUs:_ Wheel! We’ll be there soon. We’re just passing the  
castle of Elainore.

_PILEs:_ 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 UBUs:_ That’s for sure! And I shall get myself named Mas-  
ter of Finances in Paris.

_MA UBUs:_ Just the ticket. Oh, what a bumpy ride!

_COOTIE:_ It’s nothing, we just rounded the Elainore  
peninsula.

_PILEs:_ And now our noble vessel flies swiftly over the som-  
ber waves of the North Sea.

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_PA UBUs:_ Fierce and inhospitable sea which washes the  
country called Germany, so named because the inhabi-  
tants thereof are always germinating.

_MA UBUs:_ That’s what I call erudition. They say it’s a lovely  
land.

_PA UBUs:_ Gentlemen: it may be beautiful but it can’t equal  
Poland. Without Poland, there would be no spit 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 1907, his example and influence have 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.
Postscript

The more generally accessible adaptations of Alfred Jarry's _Ubu Rot_ 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_ 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 position 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 _Garbovace_. 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 Consumer. _Ubu Rex_ is nothing if not an alimentary tract. And we who still gobble, digest, and defecate have much _Ubu_ in us, as individuals, and as members of society. _Ubu Rex_ is a comic nightmare, a plastic souvenir of the ruthlessness hidden just beneath the surface of every bland and mean-spirited polity. 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 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 center of his play because he has the brute force necessary to hold his own against the combined opposition of Ma _Ubu_, Sescrement, Buggerlas, and the others. He is prehistoric, atavistic, destructive, pure engorging will. Unencumbered by tradition, and with sufficient power to dispense with even the spirited polity, 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 bloody, violent Poland back on the stage, where they belong. This translation is as literally accurate as possible, with some changes dictated by our increased tolerance for blasphemy and poetic inventive; 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, fertile, factual. _Ubu_ lives.

I owe special gratitude to Stephen Osborne and Jon Furberg of Pulp Press, who often bought the beer and who laughed when they read _Ubu_.

David Copelin
Los Angeles
December 1977
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LEO BURDAR:
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