

King Ubu
by
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CHARACTERS

MAMA UBU.
BOURDURE.
WENCESLAS.
ROSEMONDE.
BOLESAS, LADISLAS, BOUGRELAS: THEIR SONS.
THE GHOSTS OF THEIR ANCESTORS.
GENERAL LASCY.
STANISLAS LECZINSKI.
JEAN SOBIESKI.
NICOLAS RENSKY.
THE EMPEROR ALEXIS.
LAP, BATTERY, COTICE: PALADINS.
CONSPIRATORS AND SOLDIERS.
PEPPLE.
MICHEL FÉDÉROVITCH.
NOBLES.
MAGISTRATES.
COUNCILLORS.
FINANCIERS.
LACKEYS OF PHYNANCES.
PEASANTS.
THE WHOLE RUSSIAN ARMY.
THE WHOLE POLISH ARMY.
THE GUARDS OF MAMA UBU.
A CAPTAIN.
THE BEAR.
THE HORSE OF PHYNANCES.
THE CREW.
THE SEA-CAPTAIN.

ACT I

SCENE I

Poland - that is to say nowhere.

Papa Ubu, Mama Ubu.

PAPA UBU: Pshite!

MAMA UBU: Oh! that's a fine thing. What a pig you are, Papa Ubu!

PAPA UBU: Watch out I don't kill you, Mama Ubu!

MAMA UBU: It isn't me you ought to kill, Papa Ubu, it's someone else.

PAPA UBU: Now by my green candle, I don't understand.

MAMA UBU: What! Papa Ubu, you're content with your lot?

PAPA UBU: Now by my green candle, pshite. Madam, certainly yes, I'm content. I could be content with less. After all, I'm Captain of Dragoons, Privy Councillor to King Wenceslas, Knight of the Red Eagle of Poland, and formerly King of Aragon. What more do you want?

MAMA UBU: What! After being King of Aragon, you're content with reviewing fifty flunkies armed with cabbage-cutters, when you could put the crown of Poland on your head where the crown of Aragon used to be?

PAPA UBU: Ah, Mama Ubu, I don't understand a word you're saying.

MAMA UBU: You are so stupid.

PAPA UBU: Now by my green candle, King Wenceslas is very much alive. And suppose he snuffs it - hasn't he got legions of children?

MAMA UBU: What prevents you from slaughtering the whole family and putting yourself in their place?

PAPA UBU: Ah! Mama Ubu, you do me wrong. Watch out you don't end up in the soup.

MAMA UBU: Poor unfortunate, when I'm in the soup who'll patch the seat of your pants?

PAPA UBU: Who cares? Isn't my arse just like everybody else's?

MAMA UBU: If I were in your place, I'd want to plant that arse on a throne. You could make lots of money, and eat all the sausages you want, and roll through the streets in a carriage.

PAPA UBU: If I were King, I'd wear a big wide-brimmed hat, the kind I had in Aragon, the one those Spanish rogues stole from me.

MAMA UBU: You could also obtain an umbrella and a big cape that would fall to your heels.

PAPA UBU: Ah! I yield to temptation. Buggery pshite, pshitey buggery! If I ever run into him in a corner of the woods, he'll pass a bad quarter of an hour!

MAMA UBU: Ah! well, Papa Ubu, now you're acting like a real man.

PAPA UBU: No, no! Me - Captain of Dragoons - slaughter the King of Poland? I'd sooner die!

MAMA UBU (*aside*): Oh, pshite! - (*Aloud.*) Would you rather remain as beggarly as a rat, Papa Ubu?

PAPA UBU: Bluebelly! by my green candle, I'd rather be poor a beggar like a skinny and brave rat than rich like a mean and fat cat.

MAMA UBU: And the broad-brimmed hat? And the umbrella? And the big cape?

PAPA UBU: And then what, Mama Ubu?

He leaves, banging the door.

MAMA UBU (*alone*): Vrout, pshite! He's slow to understand, but vrout, pshite! I believe he's been shaken. Thanks to God and myself, in eight days I may be Queen of Poland.

SCENE II

The stage represents a room in the house of Papa Ubu where a splendid table has been set.

Papa Ubu, Mama Ubu.

MAMA UBU: Hey! Our guests are bloody late.

PAPA UBU: Yes, by my green candle. I'm bursting with hunger. Mama Ubu, you're very ugly today. Is that because we have guests?

MAMA UBU (*shrugging her shoulders*): Pshite!

PAPA UBU (*grabbing a roast chicken*): Hey, I'm hungry. I'm going to bite into this bird. I believe it is a chicken. It is not bad.

MAMA UBU: What, you wretch, are you doing? What will our guests eat?

PAPA UBU: They will still have plenty. I won't take any more. Mama Ubu, go look out the window and see if our guests are arriving.

MAMA UBU: (*going to the window*). I don't see anyone.

Meanwhile Papa Ubu steals some veal.

MAMA UBU: Ah! There's Captain Bordure arriving with his men. What are you eating now, Papa Ubu?

PAPA UBU: Nothing, a little veal.

MAMA UBU: Ah! veal! veal! veal! He ate the veal! Help!

PAPA UBU: Now by my green candle, I'm going to pull your eyes out.

The door opens.

SCENE III

Papa Ubu, Mama Ubu, Captain Bordure and his men.

MAMA UBU: Good day, gentlemen, we've been waiting for you impatiently. Sit yourselves down.

BOURDURE: Good day, Madam. But where is Papa Ubu?

PAPA UBU: Here I am! Here I am, damn it! By my green candle, I'm certainly fat enough.

BOURDURE: Hello, Papa Ubu. Be seated, men.

They all sit.

PAPA UBU: Ouf! A few more pounds and I'd go through the chair.

BOURDURE: Well, Mama Ubu, what are you giving us that's good today?

MAMA UBU: Here's the menu.

PAPA UBU: Oh, this interests me.

MAMA UBU: Polish soup, cutlets of rastron, veal, chicken, pate of dog, rump of turkey, charlotte russe...

PAPA UBU: Hey, there's enough, I suppose. Is there more?

MAMA UBU (*continuing*): Sherbet, salad, fruits, dessert, boiled beef, Jerusalem artichokes, cauliflower a la pshite.

PAPA UBU: Hey! Do you think I'm an oriental Emperor that you should spend so much?

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

PAPA UBU: Ah! I'm going to sharpen my teeth against your calves.

MAMA UBU: Eat your dinner instead, Papa Ubu. Here's some Polish soup.

PAPA UBU: Bugger! That's bad!

BOURDURE: It's certainly not good.

MAMA UBU: You heap of savages, what do you want?

PAPA UBU (*striking himself on the forehead*): Oh! I have an idea.
I'll be back in a little while.

He goes out.

MAMA UBU: Gentlemen, we are going to eat veal!

BOURDURE: It's very good. I'm finished.

MAMA UBU: To rumps now.

BOURDURE: Delicious! delicious! Hurray for Mama Ubu!

ALL: Hurray for Mama Ubu!

PAPA UBU (*returning*): And soon you'll be shouting "Hurray for
Papa Ubu!"

*In his hand he holds an unmentionable mop. He dashes it on the
banqueting table.*

MAMA UBU: Wretch! what are you doing?

PAPA UBU: Try a little of that.

Several taste it and fall down poisoned.

PAPA UBU: Mama Ubu, pass me the cutlets of rastron. I'll serve.

MAMA UBU: Here they are.

PAPA UBU: To the door, everybody! Captain Bordure, I have to
speak to you.

THE OTHERS: Hey! we haven't eaten.

PAPA UBU: How have you not eaten? To the door, everybody!
Remain, Bordure.

No one moves.

PAPU UBU: Not gone yet? Now by my green candle, I'm going to
murder you with these cutlets of rastron.

He begins throwing them.

ALL: Oh! Ouch! Help! Defend yourselves! Curses! I'm dead!

PAPA UBU: Pshite, pshite, pshite! To the door! I order it.

ALL: Save yourselves! Miserable Papa Ubu! Traitor and crude beggar!

PAPA UBU: Ah! they've left. I can breathe easy now, but I dined very badly. Come, Bordure.

They leave with Mama Ubu.

SCENE IV

Papa Ubu, Mama Ubu, Captain Bordure.

PAPA UBU: Well then. Captain, did you dine well?

BOURDURE: Very well, sir, except for the shit.

PAPA UBU: Eh! the pshite wasn't bad.

MAMA UBU: Each to their own taste.

PAPA UBU: Captain Bordure, I've decided to make you Duke of Lithuania.

BOURDURE: But how? I thought you were terribly poor, Papa Ubu.

PAPA UBU: In a few days, if you please, I shall reign over Poland.

BOURDURE: Are you going to kill Wenceslas?

PAPA UBU: He's not silly, this chap. He guessed it.

BOURDURE: If it's a question of killing Wenceslas, I'm in. I'm his mortal enemy and I'll answer for my men.

PAPA UBU (*throwing himself on Bordure to kiss him*): Oh! oh! I love you, Bordure.

BOURDURE: Hey! you stink, Papa Ubu. Don't you ever wash?

PAPA UBU: Rarely.

MAMA UBU: Never!

PAPA UBU: I'm going to stamp on your feet!

MAMA UBU: Thick pshite!

PAPA UBU: Go, Bordure, I've finished with you. But by my green candle, I swear by Mama Ubu to make you Duke of Lithuania.

MAMA UBU: But ...

PAPA UBU: Say nothing, my soft child.

They leave.

SCENE V

Papa Ubu, Mama Ubu, a Messenger.

PAPA UBU: What do you want, mister? Get out of here. You tire me.

MESSENGER: You are summoned, sir, by the King.

He goes out.

PAPA UBU: Oh! pshite, jarnicotonbleu, by my green candle, I've been found out! I'm going to be decapitated! Oh! Oh!!

MAMA UBU: What a softy! And time is short.

PAPA UBU: Oh! I have an idea: I'll say it was Mama Ubu and Bordure.

MAMA UBU: Ah! thick P.U.. If you do that...

PAPA UBU: Hey! I'll go there at once!

He leaves.

MAMA UBU (*running after him*): Oh, Papa Ubu, Papa Ubu! I'll give you sausages!

PAPA UBU (*offstage*): Oh, pshite! You know what you can do with your sausages!

SCENE VI

The King's palace.

King Wenceslas, surrounded by his officers; Bordure; the king's sons, Boleslas, Ladislas, and Bougrelas; plus Ubu.

PAPA UBU (*entering*): It's not me, you know! It's Mama Ubu and Bordure.

THE KING: What is the matter, Papa Ubu?

BOURDURE: He's drunk.

THE KING: As was I this morning.

PAPA UBU: Yes, I'm drunk. I've had too much French wine.

THE KING: Papa Ubu, I am anxious to reward you for your numerous services as Captain of Dragoons, and I make you today Count of Sandomir.

PAPA UBU: O Wenceslas, sir, I don't know how to thank you.

THE KING: Don't thank me, Papa Ubu. Just be there tomorrow at the big parade.

PAPA UBU: I'll be there, but please do me the honour of accepting this small kazoo. (*He gives the king a kazoo.*)

THE KING: What would a man my age do with a kazoo? I'll give it to young Bougrelas.

YOUNG BOUGRELAS: He is a beast, this Papa Ubu.

PAPA UBU: And now I am going back home. (*He falls down turning away.*) Oh! Ouch! Help! By my green candle, I've busted a gut and cracked the bouzine!

THE KING (*picking him up*): Are you badly hurt, Papa Ubu?

PAPA UBU: Yes certainly, and I'm surely going to burst. What will become of Mama Ubu?

THE KING: We shall see to her maintenance.

PAPA UBU: You're very kind. (*He goes out.*) Yes, but King Wenceslas, you won't be any the less slaughtered.

SCENE VII

Ubu's house

Lap, Battery, Cotice, Papa Ubu, Mama Ubu, Conspirators and Soldiers, Captain Bordure.

PAPA UBU: Hey! my good friends, it's high time we formulated a plan of action. Everybody'll give their opinion. I'll give mine first, if you'll permit.

BOURDURE: Speak, Papa Ubu.

PAPA UBU: Hey well, my friends, my idea is simply to poison the king by putting arsenic in his lunch. Then when he goes to taste it, he'll drop dead, and so I will be king.

ALL: Fi, the sagouin!

PAPA UBU: Hey what, doesn't it please you? Then let Bordure share his idea.

BOURDURE: I think we should give him a big stroke of a sword that will split him from the head to the belt.

ALL: Yes! Voilà! That is noble and valiant.

PAPA UBU: And if he starts kicking you? I just remembered - on parade he wears iron boots that hurt badly. If I'd thought of it before, I'd have gone and denounced you for trying to involve me in this dirty business, and I reckon he would reward me too.

MAMA UBU: Oh! the traitor, the coward, the nasty wretch!

ALL: Boo, Papa Ubu!

PAPA UBU: Hey! Gentlemen calm yourselves if you don't want to visit my pockets. I agree to take the risk for you. By the way, Bordure, you're in charge of slicing the king in two.

BOURDURE: Wouldn't it be better for us all to jump on him at once while bawling and bawling? We'd have a better chance of winning over the troops.

PAPA UBU: Then, voilà I'll try to step on his feet. He'll jump back, and I'll say to him: PSHITE, and on that signal you will jump on him.

MAMA UBU: Yes, and as soon as he has died, you will take his sceptre and his crown.

BOURDURE: And I will lead my men in pursuit of the Royal Family.

PAPA UBU: Yes, and I especially recommend you get the young Bougrelas.

They leave.

PAPA UBU (*running after them and making them come back*): Gentlemen, we forgot an indispensable ceremony. It is necessary to swear to fight valiantly.

BOURDURE: And how do we manage that? We don't have a priest.

PAPA UBU: Mama Ubu can stand in place of one.

ALL: Hey well. Whatever.

PAPA UBU: Do you swear to really kill the king?

ALL: Yes, we swear it! Hurrah for Papa Ubu!

ACT II

SCENE I

The King's palace.

Wenceslas, Queen Rosemonde, Boleslas, Ladislas and Bougrelas.

THE KING: Mister Bougrelas, you were very impertinent this morning to Master Ubu, knight of my orders and Count of Sandomir. Therefore I forbid you to appear at my parade.

THE QUEEN: But Wenceslas, it wouldn't be too much for you to have your whole family to defend you.

THE KING: Madam, I never go back on my word. You tire me with these nonsenses.

BOUGRELAS: I submit, my father.

THE QUEEN: Really, my lord, are you determined to go to this parade?

THE KING: Why not, my lady?

THE QUEEN: Have I not dreamed of him striking you with his many weapons and throwing you into the Vistule, while an eagle like that on the arms of Poland places the crown upon his head?

THE KING: Whose head?

THE QUEEN: Papa Ubu's!

THE KING: What madness! Mister Ubu is a very fine gentleman who would let himself be torn apart by wild horses for my service.

THE QUEEN AND BOUGRELAS: What idiocy!

THE KING: Keep your opinions to yourself, young sagouin. And you, my lady, to prove how little I fear Mister Ubu, I'm going to the review as I am, without buckler and without sword.

THE QUEEN: Fatal imprudence! I won't see you living again.

THE KING: Come, Ladislas. Come, Boleslas.

They leave. The Queen and Bougrelas go to the window.

THE QUEEN AND BOUGRELAS: May God and great Saint Nicholas watch over you!

THE QUEEN: Bougrelas, come into the chapel with me pray for your father and your brothers.

SCENE II

The parade ground.

The Polish Army, The King, Boleslas, Ladislas, Papa Ubu, Captain Bordure and his men, Lap, Battery, Cotice.

THE KING: Noble Papa Ubu, come closer to me to inspect the troops.

PAPA UBU (*to his men*): Attention, you lot. (*To the King*). Coming, Sire, coming.

Ubu's men surround the King.

THE KING: Ah! there is the regiment of Danzig horse-guards. My word, they are very beautiful!

PAPA UBU: You think so? They appear to me to be miserable. Look at this one. (*To the Soldier*). How long has it been since you washed yourself, you worthless clown?

THE KING: But this soldier is very clean. What is the matter with you, Papa Ubu?

PAPA UBU: This!

He stamps on the King's foot.

THE KING: Wretch!

PAPA UBU: PSHITE! To me, my men!

BOURDURE: Hurrah! Forward!

All strike the King. A Paladin explodes.

THE KING: Oh! help! Holy Virgin, I've died!

BOLESAS (*to Ladislas*): That does it! Let's draw!

PAPA UBU: Ah! I have the crown! Now for the others.

BOURDURE: Death to the traitors!!

The king's sons run away. All pursue them.

SCENE III

The Queen and Bougrelas

THE QUEEN: At last I begin to feel reassured.

BOUGRELAS: You don't have any cause to fear.

An awful clamour is heard outside.

THE QUEEN: What is that dreadful noise?

BOUGRELAS: Ah! What do I see? My two brothers pursued by Papa Ubu and his men.

THE QUEEN: Oh my God! Holy Virgin. They're losing ground.

BOUGRELAS: The whole army is following Papa Ubu. The king is not there. Horror! Help!

THE QUEEN: Boleslas is dead! He received a bullet.

BOUGRELAS: Hey! (*Ladislas turns around.*) Defend yourself! Hurrah for Ladislas!

THE QUEEN: Oh! he's surrounded.

BOUGRELAS: This is the end of him. Bordure just cut him in two like a sausage.

THE QUEEN: Alas! These madmen penetrate the palace. They're coming up the stairs.

The clamour increases.

THE QUEEN AND BOUGRELAS (*on their knees*): My God, defend us.

BOUGRELAS: Oh! That Papa Ubu! The wretched rogue! If I had him here...

SCENE IV

The same. The door is demolished. Papa Ubu and his men burst in.

PAPA UBU: Hey! Bougrelas. What now?

BOUGRELAS: By the living God! I will defend my mother to the death! The first one to take a step dies!

PAPA UBU: Oh, Bordure, I'm scared! Let me out of here.

A SOLDIER (*advancing*): Surrender, Bougrelas!

BOUGRELAS: Hold, hooligan! Here's your comeuppance!

He splits open the Soldier's skull.

THE QUEEN: Hold good, Bougrelas! Hold good!

MANY (*advancing*): Bougrelas, we promise to spare your life.

BOUGRELAS: Scoundrels, scrotums, mercenary sagouins!

He makes a windmill with his sword, and massacres them.

PAPA UBU: Oh! I'll finish this thing just the same.

BOUGRELAS: Mother, save yourself by the secret staircase.

THE QUEEN: And you, my son, and you?

BOUGRELAS: I'll follow.

PAPA UBU: Try and catch the queen! Ah, she's gone! As for you, you wretch...

He advances toward Bougrelas.

BOUGRELAS: Ah, by the living God! Here is my vengeance!

He rips open Papa Ubu's guts with a terrible blow of his sword.

BOUGRELAS: Mother, I follow you!

He disappears by the secret staircase.

SCENE V

A cavern in the mountains.

Young Bougrelas enters, followed by Rosemonde.

BOUGRELAS: Here we will be safe.

THE QUEEN: Yes, I hope so. Bougrelas, support me!

She falls in the snow.

BOUGRELAS: Ha, what, my mother, ails you?

THE QUEEN: I'm very sick, believe me, Bougrelas. I have only two hours to live.

BOUGRELAS: What! Has the cold weather gotten to you?

THE QUEEN: How can I stand so many blows? The king slaughtered, our family destroyed, and you - representing the noblest race that ever carried the sword - forced to hide in the mountains like a smuggler.

BOUGRELAS: And by who, great God, by who? Vulgar Papa Ubu, an adventurer from who knows where?, a vile scoundrel, a shameful vagabond! And when I think that my father decorated him and made him a count, and the following day that villain unashamedly assaulted him.

THE QUEEN: Oh, Bougrelas! When I remember how happy we were before the arrival of this Papa Ubu! But now, alas, all is changed.

BOUGRELAS: What do you want? Let's wait with hope and never renounce our claim.

THE QUEEN: I wish it for you, my child, but as for me, I won't see the happy day.

BOUGRELAS: Eh? what's wrong? She becomes pale, she falls. Help! But I'm in a desert! Oh, my God! Her heart doesn't beat any more. She's dead! Is this possible? Another victim for Papa Ubu!

He buries his face in his hands, and weeps.

BOUGRELAS: Oh, my God! how sad it is to find oneself alone at the age of fourteen, with a terrible vengeance to pursue!

He falls prey to the most violent despair. Meanwhile the Souls of Wenceslas, Boleslas, Ladislas and Rosemonde enter the cave. Their Ancestors come with them and fill the cave. The eldest approaches Bougrelas and gently wakes him.

BOUGRELAS: Hey? What do I see? All my family, my ancestors! By what miracle?

THE GHOST: Learn, Bougrelas, that I was during my life Matthias Lord of Koenigsberg, the first king and founder of our house. I place upon you the responsibility of exacting our vengeance. (*He gives him a big sword.*) Let this sword not rest until it has caused the death of the usurper.

The Ghosts disappear, and Bougrelas remains alone in an attitude of ecstasy.

SCENE VI

The King's palace.

Papa Ubu, Mama Ubu, Captain Bordure.

PAPA UBU: No! I won't do it! You want to ruin me with this nonsense?

BOURDURE: But in short, Papa Ubu, don't you see the people await the happy event.

MAMA UBU: If you don't have meats and gold distributed, you'll be overthrown within two hours.

PAPA UBU: Meats, yes! Gold, no! Slaughter three old horses. That's good enough for such sagouins.

MAMA UBU: Sagouin yourself! How did I end up with such an animal as you?

PAPA UBU: For the last time, I want to become richer. I won't release a single coin.

MAMA UBU: When he has in his hands all the treasures of Poland.

BOURDURE: Yes. I know that there is in the chapel an immense treasure. We will distribute it.

PAPA UBU: Wretch! Just you try!

BOURDURE: But Papa Ubu, if you don't make any distributions, the people won't want to pay their taxes.

PAPA UBU: Is this really true?

MAMA UBU: Yes, yes!

PAPA UBU: Oh, then I agree to all. Invite three million people and cook a hundred and fifty cows and sheep, especially as I will also have some.

They leave.

SCENE VII

The court of the palace full of people.

Papa Ubu wearing a crown, Mama Ubu, Captain Bordure, hirelings loaded with meat.

PEOPLE: There's the king! Long live the king! Hurrah!!

PAPA UBU (*throwing gold*): Catch. This is for you. It hardly amuses me to give you money, but you know, that's what Mama Ubu wanted. At least promise me you'll pay your taxes.

ALL: Yes, yes!

BOURDURE: Look, Mama Ubu, see how squabble. What a battle!

MAMA UBU: It's truly horrible. Ugh! there's someone with his skull cracked open.

PAPA UBU: What a beautiful spectacle! Bring other cases of gold.

BOURDURE: If we made a race...

PAPA UBU: Yes, that's an idea. (*To the people.*) My friends, you see this case of gold? It contains three hundred thousand golden rose-nobles in genuine Polish currency. Those who want to run get at that end of the courtyard. You will start when I wave my handkerchief, and the winner will have the case. As for those that don't win they will have this other case to share as a consolation prize.

ALL: Yes! Long live Papa Ubu! What a good king! One didn't see anything so good in the days of Wenceslas.

PAPA UBU (*to Mama Ubu with joy*): Listen to them!

All the people line up at the far end of the courtyard.

PAPA UBU: One, two, three! Are you ready?

ALL: Yes! Yes!

PAPA UBU: Go!

They start running and falling over themselves. Screaming and tumult.

BOURDURE: They approach! They approach!

PAPA UBU: Hey! The first one is losing ground!

MAMA UBU: No! He's regained it.

BOURDURE: Oh! He's losing, he's losing! Finish! It's the other

The one that was second finishes first.

ALL: Long live Michel Fédérovitch! Long live Michel Fédérovitch!

MICHEL FÉDÉROVITCH: My lord, I really don't know how to thank Your Majesty.

PAPA UBU: Oh, my dear friend, this is nothing. Take home your case, Michel; and the rest of you, divide this other case between you. Take a piece each until there aren't any left.

ALL: Long live Michel Fédérovitch! Long live Papa Ubu!

PAPA UBU: And you, my friends, come and dine. I open today the doors of the palace. Please honour me by sharing my table.

PEOPLE: Let's go! Let's go! Long live Papa Ubu! He is the noblest of rulers!

They enter the palace. One hears the noise of an orgy that continues until the following day. The curtain falls.

ACT III

SCENE I

The palace.

Papa Ubu, Mama Ubu.

PAPA UBU: Now, by my green candle, here am I, king in this country. I've already given myself indigestion and someone is fetching my big cape.

MAMA UBU: What's it made of, Papa Ubu? Being king is all very well, but we have to economize.

PAPA UBU: Madam my female, the cape is made of sheep-skin with a clasp and bridles made of dog-skin.

MAMA UBU: Why, that's beautiful. But it's even more beautiful to be royal.

PAPA UBU: Yes, you are right, Mama Ubu.

MAMA UBU: We owe a great deal to the Duke of Lithuania.

PAPA UBU: To who?

MAMA UBU: Hey! Captain Bordure.

PAPA UBU: Do me a favour, Mama Ubu: don't speak to me of that buffoon. Now that I don't need him any more, he can kiss my arse. He's not getting that duchy.

MAMA UBU: You're making a mistake, Papa Ubu. He'll turn against you.

PAPA UBU: Oh! I pity him a lot, this small man. I worry as much about him as I do about Bougrelas.

MAMA UBU: Hey? Do you think you're done with Bougrelas?

PAPA UBU: You bet your arse. What do you think he's going to do to me, that fourteen-year-old monkey?

MAMA UBU: Papa Ubu, pay attention to what I tell you. Try to win over Bougrellas by your kindness.

PAPA UBU: More money to hand out? Ah! No! You've already made me waste twenty-two million.

MAMA UBU: Watch your head. Papa Ubu. Or he'll cook it for you.

PAPA UBU: Hey well, you will be with me in the pot.

MAMA UBU: Listen once again. I am sure that young Bougrellas can beat you because he has justice on his side.

PAPA UBU: Ah, dirt! Isn't injustice just as worthy as justice? Ah, you abuse me, Mama Ubu. I'm going to cut you into little pieces!

Mama Ubu runs away, pursued by Ubu.

SCENE II

The great hall of the palace.

Papa Ubu, Mama Ubu, officers and soldiers, Lap, Battery, Cotice, nobles in chains; financiers, magistrates, clerks.

SUBTERRANEAN NOISES.

Kneading the glottises and larynges of the jaw without a palate,
How fast the printer prints!
The sequins tremble like the windmill's vanes,
The leaves fall, in the teasing of the wind.
The jaw of the skull without brains chews up the strangers brain,
Sundays, on the hill, to the sound of fifes and drums,
Or on red-letter days, in the endless cellars of the palace.
Unfolding and explaining, the Debraining Machine,
How fast, how fast, the printer prints!

PAPA UBU: Bring in the noble crate and the noble hook and the noble knife and the noble book! And then - bring in the nobles!

The Nobles are brutally shoved in.

MAMA UBU: Restrain yourself, Papa Ubu, for goodness' sakes.

PAPA UBU: I have the honour to inform you that to enrich the kingdom I'm going to kill all you nobles and take your possessions.

NOBLES: Horror! To us, people and soldiers!

PAPA UBU: Bring the first Noble, and pass me my Noble hook. Those that are condemned to death I'll put through the trapdoor and they'll fall into the basement of Pinchpork and then into the room below where their brains will be removed by the debraining machine. (*To the 1st Noble.*) Who are you, you buffoon?

FIRST NOBLE: Count of Vitepsk.

PAPA UBU: What's your income?

FIRST NOBLE: Three million rixdales.

PAPA UBU: Condemned!

He grabs the Noble with the hook and puts him down the hole.

MAMA UBU: What base ferocity!

PAPA UBU: Second Noble, who are you? (*The Noble says nothing.*) You going to answer, dirt bag?

SECOND NOBLE: Grand Duke of Posen.

PAPA UBU: Excellent! Excellent! That's all I want to know. Into the hole! Third Noble, who are you? You have a dirty head.

THIRD NOBLE: Duke of Courlande and of the cities of Riga, Ravel, and Mitau.

PAPA UBU: Very well! Very well! Don't you have something else?

THIRD NOBLE: Nothing.

PAPA UBU: Into the hole then! Fourth Noble, who are you?

FOURTH NOBLE: Prince of Podolie.

PAPA UBU: What's your income?

FOURTH NOBLE: I am skint.

PAPA UBU: For using foul language, you go in the hole. Fifth Noble, who are you?

FIFTH NOBLE: Margrave of Thorn, Palatine of Polack.

PAPA UBU: That's not much. Don't you have anything else?

FIFTH NOBLE: It is sufficient for me.

PAPA UBU: Hey well!. It is better to have little than nothing. Into the hole! What are you snivelling about. Mama Ubu?

MAMA UBU: You are too ferocious, Papa Ubu.

PAPA UBU: Hey! I'm becoming richer. I'm going to have them read me MY list of MY possessions. Herald, read me MY list of MY possessions.

HERALD: Earldom of Sandomir.

PAPA UBU: Begin with the principalities, you dickhead!

HERALD: Principality of Podolie, Grand-Duchy of Posen, Duchy of Courlande, Earldom of Sandomir, Earldom of Vitepsk, Palatinate of Polack, Margraviate of Thorn.

PAPA UBU: What else?

HERALD: That's all.

PAPA UBU: How can that be all? Oh well then, let's get on with the Nobles, and seeing it's taking so long to get richer, I'm going to execute them all. So I'll get all their possessions. All right, throw the Nobles down the hole.

(The Nobles are herded into the hole.)

PAPA UBU: Hurry, if you please. Now I want to make laws.

SEVERAL: This we've got to see.

PAPA UBU: I'm going to first reform justice. After that we will proceed to finances.

SEVERAL MAGISTRATES: We oppose all change.

PAPA UBU: Pshite! From now on, magistrates will no longer be paid.

MAGISTRATES: And what will we live on? We are poor.

PAPA UBU: You can have the fines you impose and the possessions of those you sentence to death.

FIRST MAGISTRATE: Horror!

SECOND: Infamy!

THIRD: Scandal!

FOURTH: Indignity!

ALL: We refuse to judge under those circumstances.

PAPA UBU: Into the hole with the magistrates!

They struggle in vain.

MAMA UBU: Hey, what are you doing, Papa Ubu? Who's to render justice now?

PAPA UBU: Me! You'll see how well things'll go.

MAMA UBU: Yes, that'll be perfect.

PAPA UBU: Shut up, you brainless tart. And now, gentlemen, we proceed to matters of finance.

FINANCIERS: There's nothing needs changing.

PAPA UBU: I want everything changed! First, I want to keep half the taxes.

FINANCIERS: How excessive!

PAPA UBU: Gentlemen, we'll put a ten percent tax on property, another on trade and industry, a third on marriages, a fourth on not marrying, and a fifth on deaths, of fifteen francs each.

FIRST FINANCIER: But that's that's silly, Papa Ubu.

SECOND FINANCIER: It's absurd.

THIRD FINANCIER: That has neither head nor tail.

PAPA UBU: You dare argue with me? Into the hole with the financiers!

They stuff the financiers in.

MAMA UBU: But really. Papa Ubu, what kind of a king are you? You slaughter everybody.

PAPA UBU: Hey pshite!

MAMA UBU: No more justice, no more finance .

PAPA UBU: Fear not, my sweet child. I'll go from village to village to collect the taxes in person.

SCENE III

A house of peasants in the vicinity of Warsaw.

Several peasants are assembled.

A PEASANT (*coming in*): Did you hear the big news? The king is dead, the dukes also and the young Bougrelas ran away with his mother to the mountains. And on top of all that, Papa Ubu has seized the throne.

ANOTHER: I know some other news. I come from Cracow where I saw them carry away the bodies of more than three hundred nobles and five hundred magistrates he killed, and it appears they are going to double the taxes and Papa Ubu will come to collect them himself.

ALL: Great God! What will become of us? Papa Ubu is an awful sagouin and his family, it is said, is abominable.

A knocking at the door.

A PEASANT: Listen! Is that not someone knocking at the door?

A VOICE (*outside*): Horn-belly! Open by my pshite, by Saint John, Saint Peter, and Saint Nicholas, open up! Blood and money! Hornducats! I've come for the taxes!

The door is demolished. Ubu enters followed by his legion of money-grabbers.

SCENE IV

PAPA UBU: Which one of you is the oldest? (*A peasant advances.*)
What's your name?

PEASANT: Stanislas Leczinski.

PAPA UBU: Well then, horn-belly, listen to me well, otherwise these gentlemen will cut off your ears. Do I have your attention?

STANISLAS: Your Excellency has yet to say anything.

PAPA UBU: What? I've been speaking for an hour. Do you think I came here to preach to the wilderness?

STANISLAS: Such a thought is far from my mind.

PAPA UBU: I've come to tell you and direct you and inform you that you have to produce and show your money immediately, otherwise you will be slaughtered. Let's go, noble snot-noses of finance, bring in the money wagon.

Someone brings in the wagon.

STANISLAS: My lord, we are down on the register for only one hundred and fifty-two rixdales, which we've already paid six weeks ago come Michaelmas.

PAPA UBU: It is very possible, but I've changed the government and I announced in the newspaper that you will have to pay all existing taxes twice, and three times those that will be designated subsequently. With this system I'll make my fortune quickly; then I will kill everybody and leave.

PEASANTS: Mister Ubu! Have mercy on us. We are poor citizens.

PAPA UBU: I don't give a pshite. Pay.

PEASANTS: We are not able to. We have paid.

PAPA UBU: Pay! Or I'll break you with torture and separation of the neck from the head! Horn-belly, I am the king, am I not?

ALL: Ah, it is thus! To arms! Long live Bougrelas, by God's grace King of Poland and Lithuania!

PAPA UBU: Forward, gentlemen of Finance! Do your duty.

A fight ensues. The house is destroyed, and old Stanislas runs alone across the plain. Ubu remains to collect the money.

SCENE V

A dungeon in the fortress of Thorn.

Bordure in chains, Papa Ubu.

PAPA UBU: Ah, citizen, that's how it is. You wanted that I pay you what I owed you, then you rebelled because I didn't. You conspired against me and now you're in chains. Hornstrompet! The trick is turned so well on you it must surely be to your taste!

BOURDURE: Take care, Papa Ubu. In the five days you've been king, you've committed more murders than it would take to damn all the saints of Paradise. The blood of the king and his nobles cries for vengeance, and their cries will be heard.

PAPA UBU: Hey! my beautiful friend, you're talking heavy! I don't doubt that if you escaped it could result in complications, but I don't believe the dungeons of Thorn have ever set free any of the fine young men entrusted to them. And so, good night, and I invite you to sleep well although the rats dance a beautiful sarabande.

He leaves. The gaoler comes to lock all doors.

SCENE VI

The palace at Moscow.

The Emperor Alexis and his court, Bordure.

ALEXIS: Was it not you, infamous adventurer, who cooperated in the death of our cousin Wenceslas?

BOURDURE: My lord, forgive me. I was forced into it in spite of myself by Papa Ubu.

ALEXIS: Oh! The awful liar! Anyway, what do you want?

BOURDURE: Papa Ubu had me gaoled on a trumped-up charge of conspiracy. I succeeded in escaping, and I rode on horseback five days and nights across the steppes to come and implore your gracious mercy.

ALEXIS: What did you bring me as a token of your submission?

BOURDURE: My free sword and a detailed plan of the city of Thorn.

ALEXIS: I'll take the sword, but burn this plan by Saint George! I don't want to owe my victory to treason.

BOURDURE: One of the sons of Wenceslas, young Bougrelas, is still alive. I will do anything to restore him to the throne.

ALEXIS: What rank did you hold in the Polish army?

BOURDURE: I commanded the 5th regiment of dragoons at Wilna and a company of mercenaries in the pay of Papa Ubu.

ALEXIS: Good. I name you sub-lieutenant in the 10th Cossack regiment, and beware if you turn traitor! If you fight well, you will be rewarded.

BOURDURE: I do not lack courage, my lord.

ALEXIS: That is well. Disappear from my presence.

He goes.

SCENE VII

Ubu's council chamber.

Papa Ubu, Mama Ubu, Councillors of Phynance.

PAPA UBU: Gentlemen, the meeting is now open. Try to listen carefully and keep calm. First we're going to examine our finances,

then we'll talk about a little system I've invented for making good weather and bringing rain.

COUNCILLOR: Very good indeed, Mister Ubu.

MAMA UBU: What a silly man!

PAPA UBU: Lady of my pshite, watch yourself. I won't endure your silliness. Well then, gentlemen, I have informed you that the finances are going fairly well. A considerable number of dogs in woollen stockings pour into the streets, and the dognappers are doing fine. On all sides one sees only burning houses, and people bending under the weight of our finances.

COUNCILLOR: And the new taxes, Master Ubu, are they working?

MAMA UBU: Not at all. The tax on marriage has produced only 11 coins, and so Papa Ubu pursues people everywhere to force them to get married.

PAPA UBU: Blood and money! Horn-belly! Madam financier, haven't I ears to speak with and you a mouth to hear me? (*Burst of laughter.*) Or rather, no! You confuse me and you are the reason I am silly! Now horn of Ubu! . . . (*A messenger enters.*) Now what does he want? Go then, sagouin, or I'll poach you with beheading and with twisting of the legs.

Messenger leaves.

MAMA UBU: Ah! He's gone but he left this letter.

PAPA UBU: Read it. I believe I'm losing my mind, or else I don't know how to read. Hurry up, buffoonette, this must be from Bordure.

MAMA UBU: Precisely. He says the Czar welcomed him very well, that he's going to invade your dominions to re-establish Bougrelas, and then you will be killed.

PAPA UBU: Ho! Ho! I am afraid! Ha, I think I'm dying. Oh poor man that I am. What's to become of me, great God? This mean man is going to kill me. Saint Anthony and all the saints, protect me! I will give you money and I will burn candles for you. Lord, what's to be done?

He weeps and sobs.

MAMA UBU: There's only one way out, Papa Ubu.

PAPA UBU: Which is what, my love?

MAMA UBU: War!!

ALL: Praise God! There! That is noble!

PAPA UBU: Yes, and I'll suffer even more blows.

FIRST COUNCILLOR: Let's run! Let's run to organise the army.

SECOND: And assemble the provisions.

THIRD: And to prepare the artillery and fortifications.

FOURTH: And to raise money for the troops.

PAPA UBU: Ah, no! I'm going to kill you. I don't want to spend money. And another thing - I was once paid to make war and now I have to do it at my own expense. No, let's make war by my green candle since you are so set on it, but don't pay a single coin.

ALL: Long live war!

SCENE VIII

The encampment before Warsaw.

Soldiers and Paladins.

SOLDIERS and PALADINS: Long live Poland! Long live Papa Ubu!

PAPA UBU (*entering with casque and cuirass*): Hey, Mama Ubu, give me my breastplate and my swagger-stick. I'm soon going to be so loaded down I won't be able to walk if I'm pursued.

MAMA UBU: Fi, the coward!

PAPA UBU: Ah! There's the pshite-sword that runs away and the money-crook that doesn't hold! I'll never be ready, and the Russians advance and they're out to kill me.

A SOLDIER: Lord Ubu, you're losing your yard-scissors.

PAPA UBU: I'm going to kill you with my pshite-hook and mug-knife.

MAMA UBU: Ah he is beautiful with his helmet and his breast-plate. One is put in mind of an armed pumpkin.

PAPA UBU: And now I'm going to get up on my horse. Bring, gentlemen, the Horse of Phynances.

MAMA UBU: Papa Ubu, your horse won't be able to carry you. It hasn't eaten anything for five days and is nearly dead.

PAPA UBU: How do you like that! They make me pay 12 coins a day for this nag, and she cannot carry me. Ubu horn! Do you kid me, horn of Ubu, or are you robbing me? (*Mama Ubu blushes, and lowers her eyes.*) All right, bring me another beast, but I won't go on foot. Horn-belly!

Paladin Lap [in blackface] leads in an enormous horse.

PAPA UBU: I'm getting on. Oh! I'd better sit because I am going to fall. (*The horse starts.*) Ah! Stop my beast. Great God, I'm going to fall and die!!!

MAMA UBU: He is indeed an imbecile. Ah, he's up. But now he's down.

PAPA UBU: Fizzihorn, I'm half dead. But it doesn't matter. I'm off to war and I will kill everybody. Anybody who steps out of line I'll fix with twisting of the nose and teeth and extraction of the tongue.

MAMA UBU: Good luck, Mister Ubu!

PAPA UBU: I forgot to tell you that I'm handing you the regency. But I'm taking the accounts with me. To bad on you if you cheat me. I'm leaving Paladin Lap to help you. Farewell, Mama Ubu.

MAMA UBU: Farewell, Papa Ubu. Kill the Czar good.

PAPA UBU: For sure. Twisting of the nose and teeth, extraction of the tongue and forcing of the swagger stick in the ears.

The army moves off to the sound of fanfares.

MAMA UBU (*alone*): Now that this thick stooge is gone, let's make it our business to kill Bougrelas and seize us the treasures.

ACT IV

SCENE I

The crypt of the ancient kings of Poland in the cathedral of Warsaw.

Mama Ubu, alone.

MAMA UBU: Now, where is this treasure? No tile sounds hollow. Yet I carefully counted thirteen flagstones from the tomb of Ladislas the Great going along the wall, and there is not anything. Someone must have deceived me. No! Here the tile sounds hollow. To work. Mama Ubu! Let's loosen this stone. It holds fast. Let's use the end of the money-crook. It will serve its purpose again. There! There is gold in the middle of the bones of kings. Into our bag, then, with it all! Hey! What is this noise? In these old vaults, can anything still be alive? No, it's nothing. Let's hurry. Let's take all. This money will be better off in daylight than in the middle of tombs of old princes. Let's put back the stone. Now what? Still that noise! This place scares me. I will take the remainder of this some other time. I will come back tomorrow.

A VOICE (*rising from the tomb of Jean Sigismond*): Never, Mama Ubu!

Mama Ubu runs away terrified, carrying off the stolen money through a secret door.

SCENE II

The town square in Warsaw.

Bougrelas and his men, People and soldiers.

BOUGRELAS: Forward, my friends! Long live Wenceslas and Poland! That old rogue, Papa Ubu, is gone. All that remains is the old witch, Mama Ubu, and her champion. I offer to march at your head and to re-establish the race of my forefathers.

ALL: Long live Bougrelas!

BOUGRELAS: And I'll revoke all the taxes established by the awful Papa Ubu.

ALL: Hurrah! Forward! Let's run to the palace and slaughter the whole brood.

BOUGRELAS: Hey! There is Mama Ubu coming down the stairway with her guards.

MAMA UBU: What is it you want, gentlemen? Ah! It is Bougrelas!

The crowd launches stones.

FIRST GUARD: All the windows are broken.

SECOND GUARD: Saint George, I am stunned!

THIRD GUARD: Cornelius, I die.

BOUGRELAS: Launch stones, my friends.

PALADIN LAP: Hey! It is thus!

He unsheathes his sword and rushes in, wreaking terrible carnage.

BOUGRELAS: Have at you! En-garde, you loose cannon!

They fight.

PALADIN LAP: I'm dying!

BOUGRELAS: Victory, my friends! And now for Mama Ubu!

Trumpets sound.

BOUGRELAS: Ah! There are the Nobles arriving. Let's run. Let's catch the evil harpy!

THE OTHERS: Until we strangle the old bandit!

Mama Ubu runs away pursued by all the Poles. Shots and hail of stones.

SCENE III

The Polish army on the march in the Ukraine.

PAPA UBU (*enters dragging a long bridle*): Blue corn! Ham of God! Head of cow! We are going to perish because we die of thirst and tiredness. Lord Soldier, have the kindness to carry our phynance box, and you, Lord Lancer, take charge of the pshite-chisel and physics-stick to relieve our person, because, I repeat, we are tired.

The soldiers obey.

BATTERY: Hey! Mister! It is astonishing that the Russians don't appear.

PAPA UBU: It is regrettable that the state of our finances doesn't permit us to have a car big enough for our needs; because, for fear of demolishing our nag, we came the whole way on foot, trailing our horse by the bridle. But when we are back in Poland, we will invent, by means of our science in physics and helped by the enlightenment of our councillors, a car to transport the whole army.

COTICE: There's Nicholas Rensky on a hurry.

PAPA UBU: What's bothering him, this boy?

RENSKY: All is lost. Lord! The Poles are revolting. Lap is killed and Mama Ubu has fled to the mountains.

PAPA UBU: Bird of night, beast of misfortune, owl in gaiters! Where do you finish with these nonsenses? It's just one thing after another. And who did it? Bougrelas, I bet. From whence do you come?

RENSKY: From Warsaw, noble Sire.

PAPA UBU: Boy of my pshite, if I believed you I'd make the whole army go back the same way it came. But, esteemed youth, there are on your shoulders more feathers than brains and you've dreamt this silliness. Back to the outposts, my boy. The Russians are not far off, and we will have soon to draw our weapons and attack with everything we've got - pshite, phynances and physics.

GENERAL LASCY: Papa Ubu, don't you see the Russians on the plain?

PAPA UBU: It is true! The Russians! And now I am bolloxed! If there was means for me to get away - but not at all. We are on a height and exposed on all sides.

THE ARMY: The Russians! The enemy!

PAPA UBU: Let's go, gentlemen. let's take up our positions for the battle. We're going to stay on this hill and won't commit the blunder of descending to the bottom. I will hold the middle like a living citadel and the rest of you will circle around me. I recommend that you put in your rifles as many bullets as they'll hold, because eight bullets can kill eight Russians and that's a few less I won't have on my back. We'll put the infantry at the bottom of the hill to receive the Russians and kill them a little, riders behind to throw themselves into the confusion, and the artillery around the windmill here to fire into the heap. As for us, we will stay inside the windmill and will fire with our phynance-gun through the window. Across the door we'll place the physics-stick and if someone tries to enter we'll use the pshite-hook!

OFFICERS: Your orders, Lord Ubu, will be executed.

PAPA UBU: Hey! It goes well. We will be winners. What hour is it?

GENERAL LASCY: Eleven O'clock in the morning.

PAPA UBU: Then we shall dine because the Russians won't attack before noon. Tell the soldiers, Esteemed General, to get themselves ready and to begin the Song of Finances.

Lascy leaves.

SOLDIERS and PALADINS: Long live Papa Ubu! Ting, ting, ting; ting, ting, ting; ting, ting, tating!

PAPA UBU: Oh, the brave people. I adore them!

A Russian cannonball arrives and breaks off a vane of the mill.

PAPA UBU: Ah! I'm scared. Lord God, I'm dead! And yet, no - I've no injuries.

SCENE IV

The same.

A captain, then the Russian army.

A CAPTAIN (*coming in*): Lord Ubu, the Russians attack.

PAPA UBU: Hey, well, what do you expect me to do about it? It wasn't me who told them to. However, Gentlemen of Finances, let us prepare to fight.

A second cannonball. Papa Ubu is bowled over, the cannonball bouncing up and down on his belly several times before coming to a stop.

GENERAL LASCY: A second cannonball! I'm getting out of here.

He flees.

PAPA UBU: Ah, I've had enough. It rains lead and iron here and we could damage our precious person. Let's descend.

All descend quickly. The battle has just begun. They disappear into torrents of smoke at the foot of the hill.

A RUSSIAN (*striking*): For God and the Czar!

RENSKY: Ah! I'm dead!

PAPA UBU: Forward!! Ah you, mister - you that I'm hitting because you tried to hit me first-do you hear? You bag of wine, with your musket that doesn't go off.

THE RUSSIAN: Is that so?

He shoots him with a revolver.

PAPA UBU: Ah! Oh! I am wounded! I am pierced! I am punched! I'm done for! I'm buried! Except that he missed! Ah! I got him! (*He rips him open.*) Now start something!

GENERAL LASCY: Forward! Let's press home our advantage! Cross the moat! Victory is ours!!

PAPA UBU: You think so? So far I feel on my forehead more bumps than laurels.

RUSSIAN CAVALRY: Hurrah! Make way for the Czar!

The Czar enters, accompanied by Bordure, disguised.

A POLE: Ah! Lord! Save what you can! There's the Czar!

ANOTHER: Ah! My God! He's crossing the moat.

A THIRD: Biff! Boff! There's four of them stunned by that big bastard of a lieutenant.

BOURDURE: Ah! had enough, the rest of you? Hold, Jean Sobiesky, this is what's due to you! (*He stuns him.*) Now for the others!

He massacres the Poles.

PAPA UBU: Forward, my friends! Catch this blighter! We'll make minced meat of these Muscovites! Victory is ours! Long live the red Eagle!

ALL: Forward! Hurrah! Ham of God! Get the big feller!

BOURDURE: By Saint George, I have fallen.

PAPA UBU (*recognising him*): Ah, it is you, Bordure! Ah, my friend, we are well happy, along with everyone else present, to see you. I'm going to cook you slowly! Gentlemen of Finances, light a fire. Ah! Oh! Ah! I'm dead. It is at least a cannonball I received. Ah! my God, forgive me my sins. Yes, it is definitely a cannonball.

BOURDURE: You've been shot with a cap-pistol.

PAPA UBU: Ah! You ridicule me! Again? I'll show you!

He rushes at Bordure and tears him apart.

GENERAL LASCY: Papa Ubu, we advance on all fronts.

PAPA UBU: So I see, but I'm not able to do any more. I am bereft of energy. I would like to sit down on the floor. (*Sits on the ground.*) Oh! my bollocks!

GENERAL LASCY: Go take the Czar's instead. Papa Ubu.

PAPA UBU: Hey! I'll do that at once. Let's go! Pshite-sword, do your duty, and you, money-crook, don't remain behind. Physics-stick, emulate them unstintingly, and share with this swagger stick the honour of slaughtering, burying and abusing the Muscovite emperor. Forward, Mr. Horse of Phynances!

He charges at the Czar.

A RUSSIAN OFFICER: Watch out, Your Majesty!

PAPA UBU: Take that, you! Oh! Ouch! Ah! But all the same. Ah!, gentlemen, mercy! Leave me alone. Oh! But I didn't mean it.

He runs away. The Czar pursues him.

PAPA UBU: Holy Virgin, this fanatic pursues me! I've got to escape, great God! Ah! Good, there is the moat. But I feel him breathing down my neck. Courage! Let's close our eyes!

He jumps the moat. The Czar falls in.

THE CZAR: Bollocks! I've fallen in.

POLES: Hurrah! the Czar is down!

PAPA UBU: I hardly dare turn around! Ah! That's good. He's a sitting target. That's it, Poles, give him a good kicking! He's got a broad back, the poor sod! No, I don't dare watch. All the same, our prediction was spot on. The physics-stick worked marvels. There's no doubt that I would have completely killed him if an inexplicable terror had not come upon me and annulled in us the effects of our courage. But we had to suddenly turn tail, and owe our preservation only to our riding skills and to the solidity of the hocks of our Horse of Phynances, whose speed is equalled only by its strength, and whose agility is famous, and also to the depth of the moat which was fortunately in the path of the enemy of those here present, Mister Finance. All of which is very beautiful, but no one's listening to me. Let's go! Here we go again!

The Russian dragoons charge, and rescue the Czar.

GENERAL LASCY (*running across*): This time it's a rout!

PAPA UBU: Ah! That's our cue to get out of here. Therefore, gentlemen of Poland, forward! Or rather, backward!

POLES: Every man for himself!

PAPA UBU: Let's go! What a shower, what a rout, what a multitude! How am I going to get out of this mess? (*He is knocked over.*) Ah! But you! Pay attention, or you're going to taste the wrath of Mister Finance. Ah! he's gone. Let's save ourselves - and quick! - while Lascy isn't looking.

He runs off, then we see the Czar and the Russian army pursuing the Poles.

SCENE V

A cave in Lithuania.

It snows.

Papa Ubu, Battery, Cotice

PAPA UBU: Ah! What a wretched time. It's freezing enough to split a rock and the person of Mister Finance is badly damaged.

BATTERY: Hey! Mister Ubu, are you over your terror and your flight?

PAPA UBU: Yes. I'm not afraid any more, but I must flee again.

COTICE (*aside*): What a swine!

PAPA UBU: Hey, Lord Cotice, your yard. How goes it?

COTICE: As well, sir, as it can and it could be worse. By consequence of the fact that the lead bends it to the ground, and I can't extract the bullet.

PAPA UBU: That's good. You were always wanting to strike others. Me, I displayed the greatest courage and without exposing myself to danger I slaughtered four enemies by my own hands, not counting those that had already died.

COTICE: Do you know, Battery, what became of little Rensky?

BATTERY: He received a bullet in the head.

PAPA UBU: Just as the poppy and the dandelion are mowed down by the pitiless efforts of the pitiless mower who mows them down pitilessly, so did little Rensky play the poppy. He is a hard man to beat, but there were too many Russians.

BATTERY AND COTICE: Hey! Mister!

AN ECHO (*in the wings*): Hhrron!

BATTERY: What's that? Let's arm ourselves with our torches.

PAPA UBU: Ah, no! More Russians, I bet! I've had enough! Bottom line: if they piss me off, I'll marmalise them.

SCENE VI

The same.

Enter a bear.

COTICE: Hey! Mister Finance!

PAPA UBU: Oh, hold! Look at the little doggy. He's so cute.

BATTERY: Look out! Ah! what an enormous bear! My cartridges!

PAPA UBU: A bear? Ah! the atrocious beast! Poor poor me, I'm being eaten! God save me! He's coming for me! No, it's Cotice he's after. Ah! I breathe.

The bear throws himself on Cotice. Battery attacks the bear with a knife. Ubu takes refuge on a rock.

COTICE: To me, Battery! To me! Help me, Mister Ubu!

PAPA UBU: Bernique! Sort it out yourself, my friend. We're saying our Pater Noster. Everyone will have his turn to get eaten.

BATTERY: I have him! I'm holding him!

COTICE: Hold tight, my friend. He's beginning to let go of me.

PAPA UBU: Sanctificetur nomem tuum.

COTICE: Filthy coward!

BATTERY: Ah! He's biting me! Oh Lord, save us. I am dying.

PAPA UBU: Fiat voluntas tua.

COTICE: Ah! I have succeeded in wounding him.

BATTERY: Hurrah! he's losing blood!

Amidst the cries of the Paladins, the bear bellows in pain and Ubu continues to mutter.

COTICE: Hold him tight so I can get him with my explosive punch.

PAPA UBU: Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie.

BATTERY: Get on with it. I can't hold on much longer.

PAPA UBU: Sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.

COTICE: Ah! I have him!

An explosion sounds and the bear drops dead.

BATTERY AND COTICE: Victory!!

PAPA UBU: Sed libera nos a malo. Amen. Is it very dead yet? Can I come down from my rock?

BATTERY (*with contempt*): If you wish.

PAPA UBU (*descending*) : You may flatter yourselves that if you are still living, and if you tread the snows of Lithuania again, you owe it to the magnanimous virtue of the Master of Finance, who strained himself, broke his back, and near lost his voice saying paternosters for your safety, and who handled the spiritual sword of prayer with as much courage as you who handled the temporal explosive punch of the here-present Paladin Cotice. We pushed our devotion even further, because we did not hesitate to go up on a very high rock so that our prayers had less distance to cross to reach the sky.

BATTERY: Revolting she-ass!

PAPA UBU: Here is a stupid beast. Thanks to me, you have something to eat. What a belly, gentlemen! The Greeks would have been more at ease in there than in their hobby-horse, and we were, dear friends, close to being able to testify with our own eyes his internal capacity.

BATTERY: I'm dying of hunger. What is there to eat?

COTICE: The bear!

PAPA UBU: Hey! poor lads, are you going to eat it all raw? We don't have anything to make fire.

BATTERY: Don't we have our rifle flints?

PAPA UBU: Hold, it is true. And it seems to me we are not too far from a small wood where there must be some dry branches. Be off to look for it, Master Cotice.

Cotice goes off across the snow.

BATTERY: And now, Master Ubu, go ahead and cut up the bear.

PAPA UBU: Oh no! He might not be dead. While you, who are already half eaten and bitten all over, you're just made for the part. I'm going to light a fire until he brings wood.

Battery begins to cut up the bear.

PAPA UBU: Oh! Watch out! It moved.

BATTERY: But Lord Ubu, it's already cold.

PAPA UBU: That's a pity. It would have been better to eat it hot. This is going to give the Master of Finance indigestion.

BATTERY (*aside*): He's disgusting. (*Aloud.*) Give us a hand, Mr. Ubu, to complete the task.

PAPA UBU: No, I don't feel like doing anything. I am tired, as a matter of fact.

COTICE (*returning*): What snow, my friends! One would think oneself in Castille or at the North Pole. Night begins to fall. In one hour it will be black. Let's hurry while we still can see.

PAPA UBU: Yes, do you hear, Battery? Hurry yourself! Both of you, hurry yourselves. Put the beast on a spit, cook the beast. I'm hungry, me!

BATTERY: Ah, it's too much! You have to work or you won't get anything, you hear, guzzler?

PAPA UBU: Oh! it's all the same to me. I'd just as soon eat it raw. It is you who will suffer. Besides which, I'm sleepy.

COTICE: What, Battery, do you want? Let's eat the dinner all ourselves. He won't get any, that's all. Or else we could give him the bones.

BATTERY: Fine. Ah, the fire is catching.

PAPA UBU: Oh! that's good. It's warm now. But I see Russians everywhere. What a rout, great God! Ah!

He falls asleep.

COTICE: I wish I knew if what Rensky said is true, whether Mama Ubu is indeed dethroned. It 's not impossible.

BATTERY: Let's finish supper.

COTICE: No, we have to speak of more important things. I think it would be a good idea for us to inquire as to the veracity of this news.

BATTERY: You're right. Should we abandon Papa Ubu, or stay with him?

COTICE: The night brings wisdom. Let's go to sleep. We'll decide tomorrow what needs to be done.

BATTERY: No, better to use the night to slip away.

COTICE: Let's go then.

They leave.

SCENE VII

Ubu speaks while sleeping.

Ah! Lord Russian Dragoon, pay attention. Don't shoot that way; everybody's there! Ah! there's Bordure. He is bad, one would say a bear. And Bougreles who comes at me! The bear, the bear! Ah, there he is down! It is tough, Great God! I don't want to do any work, me!. Bog off, Bougreles! Do you hear, you fool? There's Rensky now, and the Czar! Oh! they're going to fight me. And Madame Ubu! Where'd you get all this anyway? You stole my gold, you wretch! You've plundered my tomb in Warsaw Cathedral, close to the Moon. I've been dead a long time, me. It is Bougreles that killed me, and I am buried at Warsaw close to Vladislas the Great, and also in Cracow close to Jean Sigismund, and also at Thorn in the dungeon with Bordure. There he is again! But go, accursed

bear. You look just like Bordure! Do you hear, beast of Satan? No, he doesn't hear. The Snot-noses cut off his ears. That's it! Slaughter them! Cut off their ears! Take all their money! And drink yourself to death! That's the life of the Snot-noses - that's the luck of the Master of Finance.

He falls silent and sleeps.

ACT V

SCENE I

It is night. Papa Ubu sleeps.

Mama Ubu enters without seeing him.

The darkness is complete.

MAMA UBU: At last I find shelter. I am alone here. This is not a pity, but what a wild race - to cross the whole of Poland in four days! Every possible misfortune assailed me at once. No sooner does that fat arse leave, but I go to the crypt to become richer. Soon afterwards I almost get stoned to death by Bougreles and his fanatics. I lose my cavalier, the Paladin Lap, who was so enamoured of my charms that he would swoon with joy at seeing me, and even, I'm assured, when he didn't look at me - which is the height of passion. He would have cut himself in half for me, the poor boy. The proof is that he has been cut into quarters by Bougreles. Biff, boff, boom! Ah! I think I'm about to die. Then, therefore, I take flight, pursued by the furious mob. I leave the palace. I arrive at the Vistule. All the bridges are guarded. I swim across the stream, hoping to evade my pursuers. On all sides the nobility assembles and pursues. A thousand times I cheat death, persecuted by a mob of Polacks lusting for my blood. In short I escaped their fury, and after four days of tramping through the snow of what was my kingdom, I arrive to take refuge here. I've had nothing to eat or drink these four days. Bougreles was closing in on me. But at last, I'm safe. Ah! I'm dying of weariness and cold. But I would like to know what became of my thick buffoon, I mean to say my very esteemed spouse. After all, did I steal his money? Did I run off with his rixdales?. Have I taken one lousy bean?! And his Horse of Phynances, that was dying of hunger - it didn't see oats often, the poor devil. Ah! What a great story. But alas! I lost my treasure! It's at Warsaw, go look for it who will.

PAPA UBU (*beginning to wake up*) : Get Mama Ubu! Cut off her ears!

MAMA UBU: Ah God! Where am I? I'm losing my mind! Ah! no, Lord!

Thank heavens, I see

Little Papa Ubu asleep near me!

Let's be nice. Well, my fat fellow, did you sleep well?

PAPA UBU: Very poorly! He was well hard, that bear! Fight of the ravenous against the tough, but the ravenous completely ate and devoured the tough, as you'll see when daylight comes. Do you hear, noble Paladins?

MAMA UBU: What's he babbling about? He's even stupider than when he left. Who's he talking to?

PAPA UBU: Cotice, Battery, answer me, pshite-bag. Where are you? Ah! I am afraid. But someone spoke. Who spoke? It's not the bear, I suppose. Pshite! Where are my matches? Ah! I lost them in battle.

MAMA UBU (*aside*) : Let's take advantage of the situation and the night. Let's pretend to be a ghost, and make him promise to forgive us our larcenies.

PAPA UBU: But, by Saint Anthony, someone speaks! Ham of God! Hang me if they're not.

MAMA UBU (*magnifying her voice*): Yes, Mister Ubu, someone speaks indeed, and the trumpet of the archangel which shall draw the dead from the ash and the final dust would not speak otherwise! Listen to this stern voice. It is the voice of the Archangel Gabriel, who can only give good advice.

PAPA UBU: Oh! That, indeed!

MAMA UBU: Do not interrupt me or I shall say no more, and it'll be your funeral.

PAPA UBU: Ah, my belly! I'll be quiet, I won't say another word.

MAMA UBU: We were saying, Mister Ubu, that you're a fat bastard.

PAPA UBU: Very fat, indeed, it's true.

MAMA UBU: By God, shut up about yourself!

PAPA UBU: Oh! angels don't swear.

MAMA UBU (*aside*): Pshite! (*Continuing.*) You are married, Mister Ubu.

PAPA UBU: Absolutely, to the last of the minxes.

MAMA UBU: You mean to the most charming of women.

PAPA UBU: A horror. She has claws everywhere. One doesn't know how to take her.

MAMA UBU: It is necessary to take her with kindness, Lord Ubu, and if you do you'll see that she's at least the equal of Venus in Paradise.

PAPA UBU: Who did you say had lice?

MAMA UBU: You aren't listening, Mister Ubu. Lend us a more attentive ear. (*Aside.*) But we must hurry, the day is about to break. Mr. Ubu, your woman is adorable and delicious. She doesn't have a single fault.

PAPA UBU: You're mistaken. There isn't a single fault she doesn't possess.

MAMA UBU: Silence! Your woman has never been unfaithful to you.

PAPA UBU: I'd like to see the man that would want her. What a harpy!

MAMA UBU: She doesn't drink.

PAPA UBU: Not since I took the key to the cellar. Before, at seven o'clock in the morning, she was drunk and reeking of brandy. Now that she perfumes herself with heliotrope she smells no worse. It's all the same to me. But now I'm the only one that can get drunk.

MAMA UBU: Stupid fool! Your wife doesn't steal your gold.

PAPA UBU: No? That's funny.

MAMA UBU: She doesn't syphon off a single coin.

PAPA UBU: Witness, sir, our noble and unfortunate Horse of Phynances, who, not being fed for three months, had to do the entire campaign dragged by the bridle across the Ukraine. He died on the job, the poor idiot!

MAMA UBU: All lies. Your wife is perfect, and you, what a monster you are!

PAPA UBU: All I say is true. My wife is a rogue, and what a fathead you are!

MAMA UBU: Take care, Papa Ubu!

PAPA UBU: Ah, that's right. I forgot who I was talking to. No, I didn't say what I just said.

MAMA UBU: You killed Wenceslas.

PAPA UBU: That was not of course my fault. It's what Mama Ubu wanted.

MAMA UBU: You killed Boleslas and Ladislas.

PAPA UBU: Too bad for them! They wanted to hit me!

MAMA UBU: You broke your promise to Bordure, and then you killed him.

PAPA UBU: I'd rather it was me that reigns in Lithuania than him. At present you can see it isn't either of us. At least, you can see it isn't me.

MAMA UBU: There's only one way for all your misdemeanours to be forgiven.

PAPA UBU: What is it? I'm willing to become a holy man. I want to be a bishop, and see my name on the calendar.

MAMA UBU: You must forgive Mama Ubu for having diverted a little money.

PAPA UBU: Hey well, voilà! I will forgive her when she has returned it all and when I've thoroughly thrashed her, and when she has brought my Horse of Phynances back to life.

MAMA UBU: He's obsessed with that horse. Ah, I'm lost! The day breaks.

PAPA UBU: Well, anyway, I'm happy to know for sure that my dear wife has been fleecing me. I have it now from a reliable source. Omnis a Deo scientia, which means : Omnis, all; a Deo, knowledge

; scientia, comes from God. There is the explanation of the phenomenon. But Madame Apparition doesn't say anything any more. What can I do to comfort her? What she said was very funny. Hold, but it is daylight. Ah! Lord! Now by my Horse of Phynances, it's Mama Ubu!

MAMA UBU (*brazenly*): That's not true. I'm going to excommunicate you!

PAPA UBU: Ah! Carrion!

MAMA UBU: What profanity!

PAPA UBU: Ah, this is too much. I see perfectly well that it's you, soft minx! Why the devil are you here?

MAMA UBU: Lap is dead and the Poles hunted me.

PAPA UBU: And me, it is the Russians who hunted me. Beautiful minds meet.

MAMA UBU: In this case a beautiful mind has met an ass.

PAPA UBU: Ah! Hey well. She is now going to meet a palmipede.

He throws the bear at her.

MAMA UBU (*falling in a heap under the weight of the bear*): Ah, great God! What horror! Ah, I die! I choke! It's killing me! It's swallowing me! It's digesting me!

PAPA UBU: It's dead, stupid. Oh! But, as a matter of fact, maybe it isn't! Ah Lord!, no, it isn't dead! Let's save ourselves! (*Getting back up on his rock.*) Pater noster qui es...

MAMA UBU (*disentangling herself*): Hold! where is he?

PAPA UBU: Ah, Lord! There she is again. Soft creature, is there no way of getting rid of her? Is it dead, this bear?

MAMA UBU: Hey, yes, you stupid arse! He's already cold. How did he get here?

PAPA UBU (*confused*): I don't know. Ah, so, I know. He wanted to eat Battery and Cotice me, and I killed him with one blow of the Paternoster Noster.

MAMA UBU: Battery, Cotice, Paternoster Noster! What's is that? He is mad, my finance!

PAPA UBU: It's exactly as I say. And it's you who's mad, my little gibbon!

MAMA UBU: Tell me about your campaign. Papa Ubu.

PAPA UBU: Oh, lady, no! It is too long. All I know is that in spite of my incontestable valour, everybody beat me.

MAMA UBU: What, even the Poles?

PAPA UBU: They were shouting: Long live Wenceslas and Bougrelas! I believe they wanted to quarter me. Oh! the fanatics! And then they killed Rensky.

MAMA UBU: That's a matter of indifference to me! You know that Bougrelas killed Paladin Lap?

PAPA UBU: I'm indifferent! And then they killed poor Lascy.

MAMA UBU: Who cares?

PAPA UBU: Oh, but all the same, hold on, you carrion! Get down on your knees before your lord and master. (*He grabs her and forces her to kneel.*) You're going to undergo capital punishment.

MAMA UBU: Oh, mercy, Mister Ubu!

PAPA UBU: Are you finished? Then I'll begin: twisting of the nose, extraction of hair, penetration of the ears with a small stick, extraction of the brains through the heels, laceration of the bottom, partial or even total suppression of the bone marrow - if that will remove the spininess of your character - not forgetting the cutting open of the bladder, and finally the grand beheading a la Saint John the Baptist, the whole drawn from the holy writings of both the Old Testament and the New, set in order, corrected and perfected by the here-present Master of Finance! How does that suit you, fathead?

He goes to lacerate her.

MAMA UBU: Mercy, Mister Ubu!

Loud noise at the entrance to the cave.

SCENE II

The same.

Enter Bougrelas rushing into the cave with his soldiers.

BOUGRELAS: Forward, my friends! Long live Poland!

PAPA UBU: Oh! oh! Wait a moment, Mr. Polack. Wait till I've finished with Madame my better half.

BOUGRELAS (*striking him*): Take that, beggar, heretic, bully, infidel, Moslem!

PAPA UBU (*riposting*): Take that! Polack, drunkard, bastard, hussar, tartar, scabbard, cockroach, Savoyard, Communard!

MAMA UBU (*hitting him too*): Take that! capon, pig, felon, histrion, rascal, trollop, Polack!

The soldiers rush at on the Ubus, who defend themselves as best they can.

PAPA UBU: God! What a kicking!

MAMA UBU: They sure have feet, these Poles!

PAPA UBU: By my green candle, isn't this ever going to end? Another one! Ah, if I had here my Horse of Phynances!

BOUGRELAS: Hit! Always hit!

VOICES (*offstage*): Long live, Papa Ubu, our great financier!

PAPA UBU: Ah! There they are. Hurrah. Here come the Ubusmen. Forward. Come in. One has need of you, gentlemen of Finances!

Enter the champions who throw themselves into the fray.

COTICE: To the door, Poles!

BATTERY: Hey! We meet again, Mister Finance. Forward! Push vigorously! Secure the door! Once outside, all we have to do is run away.

PAPA UBU: Oh! I'm good at that. Oh! he hit me!

BOUGRELAS: God! I'm wounded!

STANISLAS LECZINSKI: It ain't nothing, my lord.

BOUGRELAS: No, I'm only stunned.

JEAN SOBIESKI: Hit! Keep hitting! They're making for the door, the beggars!

COTICE: I'm almost there! Follow me, everyone. By consequence of the fact that I see the sky.

BATTERY: Courage, Lord Ubu!

PAPA UBU: Ah! I've done something in my panties. Forward, horn-belly! Murder them, draw blood, skin them, slaughter them, horn of Ubu! Ah, they're retreating.

COTICE: There are only two of them guarding the door.

PAPA UBU (*stunning them with the bear*): And a one! And a two! Ouf! There - I am outside! Let's save ourselves. Everyone follow me - and quick!

SCENE III

The stage represents the province of Livonia covered with snow.

The Ubus and their entourage in flight.

PAPA UBU: Ah! I believe they've given up trying to catch us.

MAMA UBU: Yes. Bougrelas has gone to crown himself.

PAPA UBU: I don't envy him that crown.

MAMA UBU: You have every reason not to, Papa Ubu.

They disappear into the distance.

SCENE IV

The bridge of a ship running close to shore on the Baltic,

On the bridge, Papa Ubu and all his crew.

THE CAPTAIN: Ah, what a beautiful breeze!

PAPA UBU: We're certainly sailing at a speed bordering on the miraculous. We must be making at least a million knots an hour, and the good thing about these knots is the fact they can't be undone. Of course, we have a tail wind too.

BATTERY: What a pathetic imbecile!

A squall comes up. The ship dips and churns up the sea.

PAPA UBU: Oh! Ah! God! We've capsized! Everything is falling apart. Your boat is going to sink!

THE CAPTAIN: Everybody downwind. Edge the foresail!

PAPA UBU: Ah! But no! Don't all get to the same side. That's imprudent, that is. And suppose the wind changes direction? Everybody will go to the bottom of the water and the fishes will eat us.

THE CAPTAIN: Don't pull in! Tighten close and full.

PAPA UBU: Come on! I'm in a hurry, me. It's your fault, you ruffian of a captain, if we don't make it. We should be there already. Oh oh, but now I'm taking over. Try to turn, for God's sake! Drop the anchor. Face into the wind. Hoist the sails, secure the sails, helm up up, helm down, helm in the middle! You see, that goes very well. Cut across into the trough and that'll be perfect.

They all roar. The breeze freshens.

THE CAPTAIN: Haul in the standing-jib, take a reef to the topsails!

PAPA UBU: That's not bad! In fact, it is good! You hear, gentlemen of the crew? Bring in the big rooster and we will make a tour of the plum trees.

They die laughing. A wave washes on board.

PAPA UBU: Oh, what a deluge! It's all down to the orders we gave.

MAMA UBU (*to Battery*): Delicious thing, this navigation.

A second wave hits the deck.

BATTERY (*drowning*): I renounce Satan and all his pumps!

PAPA UBU: Esteemed boy. Bring us a drink.

All sit and drink.

MAMA UBU: Ah, what a delight it will be to see gentle France once more - our old friends, our castle of Mondragon.

PAPA UBU: Hey! We will be there soon. And right this instant we have arrived at the castle of Elsinore.

BATTERY: I feel rejuvenated by the thought of once more seeing my dear Spain.

COTICE: Yes, and we will dazzle our countrymen with tales of our marvellous adventures.

PAPA UBU: Oh! absolutely. And me, I'm going to rename myself Master of Finance in Paris.

MAMA UBU: There it is! Ah! what a jolt!

COTICE: It's nothing. We've just rounded the tip of Elsinore.

BATTERY: And now our noble ship sails at full speed over the dark waves of the North Sea.

PAPA UBU: Shy and inhospitable sea that bathes the country called Germania - named thus because inhabitants of this country are all Germanic cousins.

MAMA UBU: Now that's what I call learning. They say it's a very beautiful country.

PAPA UBU: Ah! gentlemen, so beautiful but it doesn't compare with Poland. If there weren't any Poland, there would be no Poles!

~ END ~