

---

# SLAVE UBU

---

A collage

---

By Shimon Tzabar

---

## Act 1, Scene 1

*(A parade ground. On the left is a barbed wire fence. On it is a sign: BEWARE! THE POLISH BORDER. Underneath, in smaller letters: NO ENTRY WITHOUTH A VALID VISA. On the right is a big house. A corporal is parading three soldiers. Each of them is wearing a different uniform. The corporal himself is wearing only his underpants. On his head is an elaborate military cap.)*

SOLDIERS: We are free men and this is our leader. Three cheers for freedom. Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! We are free! It's our duty to be free. Hey, stop. Not so fast. We might arrive on time. Freedom means never, never arrive on time. Let us be late separately. We are free men. We never disobey together. No, no, yes. Who said yes? *(they all look at each other)*

CORPORAL: Fall in! *(they all fall out)* You! Free man number three, you get two days detention for being in line with number two. Number two, you get three days detention for being in line with number three. This is a drill in disobedience. Blind indiscipline at all times is the strength of all free range men. Left turn! *(one turns right, one left and one walks backwards)*

FREE MEN:  
(singing) We are free men.  
We are free men.  
Not so fast,  
not so fast,  
we might arrive on time.  
Freedom means never  
never arrive on time.  
Let us be late,  
let us be late  
together.  
No, not together.  
Separately late. That's the spirit of freedom.  
Freedom, freedom.  
*(While the free men are drilling, MA and PA UBU arrive from the left. They stop at the barbed wire. PA UBU is dressed in a tuxedo and a top hat. On the head of MA UBU is a small crown.)*

PA UBU: Shit! How are we going to pass this?

MA UBU: As usual. On our hands and knees.

PA UBU: By my red candle. I'm not going to ruin my magnificent garment. It's surely worth a zloty or two as the crow flies...

MA UBU: You've stolen it off the banker...and besides, what happened to your green candle?

PA UBU: After what happened to us in Poland, my candle is no longer green. Woman! Lie on the wire. Your husband and master is going to walk over your body to prevent injury to himself.

MA UBU: Not on your life!

PA UBU: Don't get cheeky with me, woman! Your bloody disobedience gets on my...

CORPORAL: *(turns to the couple)* Disobedience?! Here we come! *(to the soldiers)* More free people from behind the iron Curtains. All hands to the rescue. *(All three soldiers throw away their rifles and lay down to sleep. The corporal walks to the border, lifts the barbed wire and helps PA and MA UBU cross. To PA UBU)* You are a free man now. Join the regiment.

MA UBU: Don't join anything. You are still the King of Poland.

PA UBU: King my foot! I'm fed up with kingdoms, Polish or otherwise. Try to collect taxes from the stingy, stinking peasants. They cling to their zloty as if they were made of gold. You can't get a penny out of them without twisting their arms, burning their skin and delivering electric shocks to their testicles. And they never thank you for the pleasure. It's all complaints: Amnesty International, the European Court of Justice, United Nations and so on. Royalty is out of time and out of fashion. Kings are disappearing as fast as the howler monkey. In a few years time there will be only five kings left: The four kings of the pack of cards and the Queen of England. Shit. I think the future lies in slavery.

MA UBU: That's not safe either.

PA UBU: What do you mean, you silly cow?

MA UBU: It has already been abolished once.

PA UBU: That's because it was founded on the wrong principles.

MA UBU: What are the right principles then?

PA UBU: I'll show you. *(UBU walks to the house and rings the bell A small window opens above the door. The head of ACHRAS peeps out.)*

ACHRAS: What do you want?

PA UBU: Bingo. You've hit the jackpot.

ACHRAS: What are you talking about?

PA UBU: You've won the biggest prize in human history and I'm delivering it personally.

ACHRAS: There must be some mistake...

PA UBU: Either you accept it or you don't. It can go to somebody else...

ACHRAS: I'll be down in a minute. *(ACHRAS's head disappears, the window closes. The door opens just a bit. ACHRAS's head appears again.)* Where is it?

PA UBU: It's me. *(puts his boot in the door and keeps it ajar)* You've got yourself a slave.

ACHRAS: I beg your pardon?

PA UBU: From now on, I am your slave and you are my master.

ACHRAS: What do I need a slave for? Are you mad or something?  
PA UBU: In these troubled days nobody can survive on his own. *(He pushes himself forward. ACHRAS disappears because UBU is filling the doorway, but his voice can still be heard.)*

ACHRAS: But I need no slave.  
PA UBU: Now that you have one, he will tell you what you need and what you don't need. *(pushes himself forward and disappears from view)* First we have to check the premises... *(the door is slammed closed)*

MA UBU: Hello young sailor, you look pretty today.  
CORPORAL: I'm not a sailor. I'm a corporal of free men.  
MA UBU: *(Touches him. Her hands slide all over his body)* Yes, you are a corporal of three men. Together you are four.  
CORPORAL: Not three men, free men.  
MA UBU: *(Gets closer and hugs him. Her lips are closing on his. With a very sweet voice)* The number doesn't matter, darling. Well, and then it might...  
*(The other three free men get interested, they leave whatever they are doing and approach the couple, staring. MA UBU rests the corporal gently on the ground and lies on top of him. The small window above the main door in the house opens and the head of PA UBU appears.)*

PA UBU: So, that's what you after, you silly cow! M' Lord Achras, go and fetch her! No. I'll do it myself.  
*(UBU disappears. A moment later the door opens and UBU storms out. Meanwhile the free soldiers return to their duties and the corporal manages to get himself free. MA UBU's eyes are still on the corporal when UBU drags her into the building and slams the door behind them.)*

FREE MEN:  
(singing) We are free men.  
We are free men.  
Not so fast,  
not so fast,  
we might arrive on time.  
Freedom means never  
never arrive on time.  
Let us be late,  
let us be late  
together.  
No, not together.  
Separately late. That's the spirit of freedom.  
Freedom, freedom.

CURTAINS

## Act 1, Scene 2

*(Inside the house. The dining room. MA and PA UBU sit at the table, dressed as before. The table is laid out. ACHRAS is serving, wearing an apron.)*

PA UBU: *(Tasting from the dish ACHRAS has just served. He makes a face.)*  
Disgusting. What is it, m' Lord?

ACHRAS: Gigot a la Clinique. Just what you ordered, Mister Ubu.

PA UBU: Mister Ubu my foot! Can't you address me properly, by my correct title, m' Lord?

ACHRAS: Of course, of course. But what is it? Please, tell me.

PA UBU: If I'm your slave, you ought to address me as such.

ACHRAS: Yes, my Slave.

PA UBU: That's much better, m' Lord. Now, let me tell you, m' Lord, that although it's not my nature to complain, it seems to me that you haven't carried out your cooking instructions properly, m' Lord.

ACHRAS: I did, I swear I did. Just as you instructed me, my Slave.

PA UBU: I told you that the timing is most important. When did you put the gigot in the marinade, m' Lord?

ACHRAS: Eight days ago, my Slave.

PA UBU: And what kind of marinade was it? Do you remember m' Lord?

ACHRAS: Of course I remember. Dry red wine and olive oil. In equal parts, my Slave.

PA UBU: But you put no spices in, did you, m' Lord?

ACHRAS: Of course I did, and plenty, Salt, pepper, bay leaves, thyme, root of zingiber, juniper berries and one teaspoon of sugar. Exactly as you instructed me, m' Slave.

PA UBU: And what did you do then, m' Lord?

ACHRAS: I injected it, twice, with half a cup of brandy mixed with half a cup of fresh orange juice. And I did it three times a day, m' Slave.

PA UBU: But you didn't turn it over twice a day as I told you to do, m' Lord.

ACHRAS: Of course I did, m' Slave. I also mixed two spoons of rabbit blood into the sauce. Just as you instructed, m' Slave.

PA UBU: With all due respect, you are lying to me, m' Lord. If you had carried out my instructions to the letter, it would have been delicious. You spoiled the greatest dish in the world just to displease or, perhaps, even to poison my person, m' Lord. I'll consider a suitable punishment during my afternoon nap. Meanwhile take the disgusting mess out of my sight and give it to the dog. I could do with some bread and garlic, m' Lord.

ACHRAS: I haven't got a dog, m' Lord.

PA UBU: Then eat it yourself, m' Lord, and hurry-up with the bread and garlic. I'm hungry.

*(ACHRAS rushes out and is immediately back with bread and garlic. He pours wine into UBU's glass. He is very eager to please. UBU puts his feet on the table and eats with great relish and appetite. Saliva is running down his jaw and he is spitting crumbs of bread and garlic around.)*

MA UBU: And what about me?

*(PA UBU throws her a bunch of garlic and bread)*

MA UBU: I don't eat garlic. It spoils my complexion.

PA UBU: Complexion my foot. *(yawns with a mouth full of food)* I must have my afternoon nap. *(Grabs some garlic and bread, the bottle of wine and exits. The moment UBU disappears, MA UBU launches into the plate of gigot that is in front of her and stuffs herself as if she hadn't eaten for days.)*

MA UBU: Luckily, I'm not so fussy. He wasn't either, until he sat on the Polish throne. *(Washer down the meal with a glass of wine, wipes her mouth with her sleeve and looks around. ACHRAS is busy cleaning the sliver.)* Come here, m' Lord. *(ACHRAS stops his cleaning and approaches)*

ACHRAS: Yes, m' Slave.

MA UBU: Nearer. *(ACHRAS comes nearer)* Show me your hands. *(ACHRAS shows his hands)* Turn them over. *(looks at his hands)* Clean enough. Put your left hand on my right boob and your right hand on my thigh under my skirt.

ACHRAS: But...

MA UBU: You're my Lord, aren't you? You must, therefore, have some rights. Droit de Seigneur at least, or some British equivalent.

ACHRAS: But... *(the door opens and UBU bursts in)*

PA UBU: *(bangs with his fist on the table)* Shit! Shit! And shit again! What kind of establishment are you running?

ACHRAS: It was just repaired last week, m' Slave.

PA UBU: You mean it's not your fault, m' Lord?

ACHRAS: I swear I just repaired it last week, m' Slave.

PA UBU: I suppose you blame the working class, do you?

ACHRAS: Well, I paid for the repair, m' Slave.

PA UBU: So, it's their fault, is it? Out of hundreds or maybe thousands of fine establishments, I've chosen yours, in order to bestow on it some reputation, some honour. And what you repay me with? Discomfort. That is what you are repaying me with, m' Lord. You want me to suffer discomfort. To deprive me of the pleasures to which I'm accustomed.

ACHRAS: It never entered my mind...

PA UBU: Assuming you have one, m' Lord.

ACHRAS: I'll call the repair man immediately, m' Slave.

PA UBU: You'll do nothing of the sort, m' Lord. Since he let you down once, he will let you down again. Your box, if I may express myself that way, has passed its sell-by date. Why don't you nip out and get a new, high definition colour television, a video recorder and a few good tapes

ACHRAS:                    (*winks*), if you know what I mean...  
I will, I will, m' Slave. (*takes off his apron and rushes to the door*)

Curtains

### Act 1, Scene 3

*(UBU is in the room by himself. Next to him is a large suitcase.)*

PA UBU: By my red candle, what am I going to do with that turd? He makes my life utterly impossible. He can't cook, he doesn't amuse me, and he can't even provide, because, so he says, he has no money. I know that he is lying. If he hadn't any money he would not live in such luxury. The proper thing would be to kill him, but I'm not sure that it is feasible in the present circumstances. The second best thing would be to consult my Conscience. There he is, in this suitcase, all covered with cobwebs. As you can see, I don't employ him too often. *(UBU opens the suitcase. His conscience jumps out, dressed only in a shirt.)*

CONSCIENCE: Sir, and so on and so forth, I am at your disposal.

PA UBU: Sir, I acknowledge your servitude, but I would like to know how and why you have the effrontery to appear before me undressed and only in your shirt?

CONSCIENCE: Sir, and so on and so forth, Conscience, like truth, is usually naked. I have put a shirt on as a mark of respect to your honour.

PA UBU: That's fine with me. However, I haven't called you to be flattered, but to consult you on a very important matter: Shall I, or shall I not, kill my Lord and master Achras.

CONSCIENCE: And why do you want to kill him?

PA UBU: He annoys me. He can't cook and he doesn't attend to my comfort and pleasures with due enthusiasm.

CONSCIENCE: Sir, and so on and so forth, it's not civilised to repay good with evil. Mister Achras gave you and your family shelter in his house. He is trying very hard to please you and it is not his fault that he doesn't always succeed. Mister Achras, so on and so forth, is a fine fellow and harmless. It would be a most cowardly act to kill a poor old man who cannot defend himself.

PA UBU: Are you sure, mister Conscience, that he cannot defend himself?

CONSCIENCE: Absolutely sure. Look at him. Does he look like someone who can defend himself?

PA UBU: Thank you very much sir. You have given me good advice. Since there is no risk in killing him, I shall assassinate him as soon as he provides us with the colour television. And as for you, I ought to consult you more often, since you provide such an excellent service. Meanwhile, back to your suitcase.

CONSCIENCE: Thank you too, so on and so forth, for letting me stretch my cramped bones from time to time. You cannot imagine how uncomfortable your suitcase is. *(CONSCIENCE jumps back into the suitcase)*



Curtains

## Act 1, Scene 5

(Same room, but a sofa replaces the dining table. MA and PA UBU are present.)

MA UBU: It's too bad you have killed Achras. There is nobody now to attend to my needs.

PA UBU: Big deal! And what are your needs, if I may ask?

MA UBU: You may. My needs are many and varied. If you insist, I'll give you a complete list at the weekend.

PA UBU: That's most gracious of you. Meanwhile, you can satisfy your needs by watching our new high resolution colour television.

MA UBU: A colour television won't satisfy all my needs. I need something more versatile.

PA UBU: I know what you are driving at, you silly cow, but you won't get it.

MA UBU: Why not?

PA UBU: Why not? Because I'm here and I'm versatile enough for you.

MA UBU: That's very generous of you, but you are too busy a person to provide me with any real comforts, especially in the afternoons.

PA UBU: While I'm having my nap.

MA UBU: Exactly, having your nap. That's the time I need you most. And, since you mention it, these afternoon naps are a new habit of yours. You didn't have such afternoon nap habits when you were King of Poland.

PA UBU: I couldn't afford to then. But since I became a slave, I've much more leisure time.

MA UBU: Well, if you have more leisure time, why don't you attend to my needs?

PA UBU: And give up my afternoon naps? Not on your life.

MA UBU: In that case, I'll have to call in the corporal of the three men.

PA UBU: By my red candle. if you do that, I'll kill you both.

MA UBU: What for?

PA UBU: For no apparent reason of course, you silly cow. I don't trust this fellow.

MA UBU: And whom do you trust?

PA UBU: Only my conscience.

MA UBU: Oh yes, of course. If only you had one.

PA UBU: You may be surprised, but I do have one. You haven't seen him, because for reasons of security, I keep him in a locked suitcase.

MA UBU: Well, if you trust your conscience, why shouldn't he attend to my needs?

PA UBU: If that will shut your trap, why not? (*opens the suitcase*) Conscience, get out. We need you again.  
(*CONSCIENCE jumps out of the suitcase, still dressed only in his shirt*)

CONSCIENCE: (*bows*) At your service and so on and so forth.

PA UBU: You see this woman, my wife? She needs someone to attend to her needs. Do you have any objections?

CONSCIENCE: What are her needs?

PA UBU: I don't know. I'll get the list at the weekend. Meanwhile, do as you are told.

MA UBU: In his shirt only? *(to CONSCIENCE)* Can't you dress properly?

CONSCIENCE: It has been suggested before, m' am. But I'm comfortable in this attire, if you don't mind.

MA UBU: On second thoughts...well...stay as you are.

PA UBU: Now that you are in safe hands, I will, with your permission of course, attend to my own business. *(UBU exits)*  
*(MA UBU looks at CONSCIENCE. She scans him from top to bottom.)*

MA UBU: You are a little bit skinny for my taste, but it's better than nothing. Are you being properly fed?

CONSCIENCE: Moral principles, ethics and good deeds, so on and so forth, contain little nourishment, as you may well know.

MA UBU: Poor boy. Pa Ubu is neglecting you as much as he is neglecting me. That really draws us closer together. *(she steps one step closer; but CONSCIENCE steps back)* Don't be afraid, skinny. My motherly instincts are pure and noble. *(Advances again. CONSCIENCE retreats.)*

CONSCIENCE: With all due respect madam, in my official capacity and so on and so forth, I can't afford to be off my guard, even for a swift moment.

MA UBU: You are afraid then?

CONSCIENCE: Afraid? of what?

MA UBU: *(victorious)* Gotcha! There is still some fire burning in your bones.

CONSCIENCE: I don't know what you are talking about. As an official conscience, so on and so forth, no desire, of any sort, has been implanted in my creation. And that's official...  
*(As CONSCIENCE is speaking, MA UBU reaches out her hand and catches his balls. A huge penis suddenly protrudes from under his shirt.)*

MA UBU: Not programmed, ha? You little skinny cheat!

CONSCIENCE: It has nothing to do with sexual desire, madam. It's purely a pavlovian—conditioned or unconditioned, I've forgotten which— reflex.

MA UBU: Reflex my foot, as my husband might say. I never saw such a healthy specimen in my whole life.  
*(pushes CONSCIENCE on the sofa and lies on top of him)*

CONSCIENCE: *(cries)* Help! Help!  
*(PA UBU storms in through the door)*

PA UBU: What's going on here? *(Sees what's going. Tears MA UBU away and hits CONSCIENCE a big blow with his fist.)*

MA UBU: You've killed him!

PA UBU: Deserves it. The rascal. Cheating on me. Imagine that: my own conscience cheating on me! Who would have believed it?

MA UBU: *(laughing)* You have no conscience any more.

PA UBU:

True. No conscience any more, and I feel fine.

Curtains

## Act 2, Scene 1

*(PA and MA UBU. MA is knitting while PA is standing and peering into the empty suitcase where his CONSCIENCE used to live.)*

PA UBU: *(to himself)* Shit! I know very well that I ought to be deeply grieved for killing such a lice fellow as my own conscience, and yet, I'm not grieved at all. I'm not sad even. To be precise, I feel fine. I feel very fine indeed. This is odd and I'm beginning to think that this beautiful conscience of mine, with his shirt and so on and so forth, was actually redundant and quite superfluous to my needs... I really ought to ask myself: If I feel so good without him, why did I carry him with me all those years...?

MA UBU: Don't be ridiculous. You need a conscience like everybody else.

PA UBU: What for?

MA UBU: What for, you ask? For everything. We can do nothing without our conscience.

PA UBU: Everything? Really? Can't I lift a finger without my conscience: *(lifts a finger)* You see? You are wrong. I can lift a finger without my conscience.

MA UBU: That's trivial.

PA UBU: Trivial my foot! What about smoking a cigar? Is that trivial too? Can I or can't I smoke a cigar without my conscience? *(Takes out a cigar from his pocket, a lighter from another, but the lighter doesn't work. No flame.)*

MA UBU: You see, you can't smoke a cigar without a conscience.

PA UBU: Don't be daft. It's probably run out of fuel. Let me try something else: Can I pee without my conscience? *(Turns around towards the wall and pees. Turns his face towards MA UBU.)* You see: I can pee without my conscience.

*(A blind beggar with a white stick and dark glasses approaches slowly, feeling his way with the stick. In his other hand he shakes a tin box with a few coins in. When he passes by. UBU drops a coin in the box.)*

MA UBU: Why are you always drifting into trivial? When I say that you can't do anything without a conscience, I mean something important, something that is tangible, something that is of real value: stealing, robbing or killing for a profit. With that extensive house and everything, our finances are at a very low ebb. We are already down to our last zloty.

PA UBU: *(to the BEGGAR)* Hey you. Stop!

BEGGAR: *(stops)* What for?

PA UBU: I'm going to kill you.

BEGGAR: *(looks into his tin box)* For one pound and thirty five pence, twenty of

which are of the Irish worthless variety? You must be out of your mind! I'll give you the money if you are so desperate.

PA UBU: It's not for the money.

BEGGAR: *(with great surprise)* Not for the money?

PA UBU: No, it's for a much higher principle. I've got to show to Madam my wife that I can kill somebody without having a conscience.

BEGGAR: Principle? You are a raving lunatic. To kill for a principle? I'd better get out of here!... *(run away quite agile, throwing aside his white stick on the way)*

MA UBU: I told you. You can't kill without your conscience.

PA UBU: Rubbish. Absolute rubbish. I can kill whoever I like, provided they don't run away as fast as that bloody blind beggar.

MA UBU: Fine, kill one... and don't forget the money!

PA UBU: All right. Keep the soup warm. I'll be back in a jiffy. *(Goes to the corner, picks up a revolver, tucks in into his belt and leaves the stage. The moment PA UBU disappears, MA stops knitting. Takes the broom that lies nearby and signals. The corporal of the free men appears from the shadows and they both fall into each other arms.)*

Curtains

## **Act 2, Scene 2**

*(Street scene. Evening, dimly lit. A figure crouches next to a cardboard box playing a mouth organ. PA UBU arrives, approaches the figure. Takes out the revolver from his pocket and shoots the figure in the head point blank. The figure collapses. PA UBU lifts the figure's hand and drags him out off the stage.)*

Curtains

## Act 2, Scene 2

*(Stage back to scene 1. MA UBU fornicating with the corporal of the free men. UBU approaches slowly dragging the dead figure. While he is still at the dark end of the stage, he shouts.)*

PA UBU: Hey wife, help me with the corpse! By my red candle, he is real heavy.  
*(The fornicating pair separates in panic. The corporal slips underneath the back curtain and disappears. MA UBU arranges her dress. By the time she's finished, PA UBU arrives with the corpse. He lets go of the hand.)*  
Here is your dead body and don't dare tell me again that I can't kill without my conscience.  
*(At the very moment the corpse rises to life. Jumps up and starts to dance violently to accompanying music that is getting louder and louder. Now, in the full light, it can be seen that the figure is that of a drunker, hairy old beggar. With his music, dancing and swirling he looks like a whirling dervish.)*

MA UBU: And you call that a dead corpse?  
PA UBU: By my red candle! It was a dead cold corpse just a minute ago. I shot him in the back of the skull like a rat.

MA UBU: Don't brag. I knew it and I told you so. You can't kill without a conscience.  
*(by this time, the noise of the music accompanying the whirling dervish is very loud)*

PA UBU: What are you saying?  
MA UBU: I can't hear you. What are you saying?  
PA UBU: Speak loudly. I can't hear you! What are you saying?  
*(MA UBU gets impatient. She picks up the broom and hits the dervish hard with the handle. The dervish stops and falls dead.)*

MA UBU: What did you say?  
PA UBU: He is dead. Now you can see that he is dead.  
MA UBU: If he is, I killed him. Not you.  
PA UBU: Do you want me to kill somebody else?  
MA UBU: I think we've had enough corpses for one day. I'm much more concerned about our finances. Have you got any money?  
PA UBU: I'd forgotten all about that.  
MA UBU: That's what happens when you go round without a conscience. Let me tell you one thing. If you can't go on killing, and you don't want to get yourself another conscience, you can still beat people up and rob them of their money. You don't need much conscience for that.

PA UBU: A dangerous occupation, believe me. People have a very nasty habit: when you try to rob them, they hit back. I've a few scars to prove it. From a purely medical point of view, it's much safer to work for



humanity that against it.

MA UBU: You already tried it when we became slaves. Then you still had your conscience, but now...

PA UBU: We are still slaves.

MA UBU: But where does it get us?

PA UBU: This is only the beginning. You start by being a slave, then you move up the social ladder by becoming a convict where all your needs are provided for you by the state. In the old days, if you were lucky, you could end up on the gallows with all your funeral expenses paid for. And, mind you, that was a huge saving. With running inflation and all that, our children would have thanked us. But now, that the death penalty has been abolished...

MA UBU: You aren't a master of finances. You are a master of bullshit. Why all this blathering? All I want to know is: where our next meal is coming from.

PA UBU: From honest work, madam my wife.

MA UBU: You must be off your rocket, as the beggar said, or just plain senile. Turning into a honest man! Do I detect the first symptoms of Alzheimer's disease? The moment you killed your conscience I knew that something terrible was in the making.

PA UBU: Shut your trap, you silly old cow and go and fetch your slave apron, our slave brush, our slave hook and our slave polishing kit. If I say that we are going into honest work I mean it. Wash and clean up all our slave pots and dishes. We are going into business.

Curtains

## Act 2, Scene 4

*(Same place. MA and PA UBU dressed as cooks.)*

MA UBU: You look very pretty in your cap and apron. Now go and find us a customer.

PA UBU: *(takes out a pair of binoculars and looks around)* Aha! I can see the army of free men approaching. Marching towards us.

MA UBU: Catch one.

PA UBU: I shall be most delighted. Polishing their boots, cutting their hair, trimming their bears and pruning their mustachios.

MA UBU: Are you out of your mind again? We are supposed to be cooks, not barbers or shoe polishers. You're carried away by your imagination again. Are you, by any chance, imagining that you are still the King of Poland?

PA UBU: My dear wife. I know what I'm doing. When I was King I did it for the glory of the fatherland. Now I'm doing it with a menu and a price list for the glory of our stomachs.  
*(The army of free men reach the stage. They march up and down the stage. PA UBU with his enormous brush falls in step with them. They sing while marching.)*

FREE MEN:  
(singing) We are free men.  
We are free men.  
Not so fast,  
not so fast,  
we might arrive on time.  
Freedom means never  
never arrive on time.  
Let us be late,  
let us be late  
together.  
No, not together.  
Separately late. That's the spirit of freedom.  
Freedom, freedom.

CORPORAL: Slope arms!

PA UBU: *(obeys with his brush)* Long live my red candle!

CORPORAL: Halt! No. Disobey by not halting. Carrrrry...on!  
*(The free men halt. UBU steps forward.)*

CORPORAL: It's you? At last you've joined us! How fortunate we are to have a real free man among us. What about your free wife? If she will join us too, we will become the army of free persons. *(turns to his men)* Did you see his arms drill? It was absolutely perfect. In the seven years I was drilling the army of free men, I never saw such a perfect performance.

PA UBU: We've obeyed your command, Sir, in order to carry out our duties as free slaves.

CORPORAL: I've explained and demonstrated this exercise many times, but this is the first time it has been done properly. Your understanding of freedom is much greater than mine or anyone else, since you even do so far as to obey commands. You must be a duke, a count, a viscount or something. Your name, Sir?

PA UBU: Discount Ubu, Sir. Former King of Poland and Butcher of Aragon. Pataphysician and inventor of the Braille microscope. At present, slave; of our own choosing of course. At your service, Mister...?

CORPORAL: Asshole... Corporal of free men... but, I beg you, don't address me by my name when ladies are present. Just corporal, or, better still, call me Duke of Marzipan.

PA UBU: Corporal Asshole. Have you ever considered polishing your boots?

CORPORAL: As you can see, I don't wear boots.

PA UBU: Corporal Asshole... *(MA UBU leaves her position at the corner and approaches)* Sorry, corporal Duke of Marzipan, have you considered polishing your feet?

CORPORAL: My feet? What for?

PA UBU: As a corporal of free men, you have to have one of your feet polished. Luckily for you, as a member of the non armed free forces, you are entitled to a rebate of ten percent off the recommended price.  
*(MA UBU approaches. To the CORPORAL.)*

MA UBU: Hello young sailor, or may I say Corporal of three men. You look very, very attractive today. Can I be of any service to you?

PA UBU: Of course you can. Kneel down and let me polish his foot in comfort.  
*(MA UBU kneels, doggy fashion, on her hands and knees. UBU lifts the CORPORAL's foot and places it on MA UBU's back. He opens his polishing box and starts to polish the foot. While he is polishing, a policeman enters. He paces slowly, looking around and observing everything. He bumps into the beggars body, which is still lying on the floor.)*

POLICEMAN: Stop! *(the free men start to move)* What's that? It's a body. It's dead. It's a corpse. Don't move. *(the free men move more vigorously)* How did he die?!

PA UBU: I killed him!

MA UBU: No. I killed him!

POLICEMAN: Everybody is under arrest. Nobody is to leave this place without permission. *(takes out a whistle and whistles)* Which one of you said: "I killed him"?

MA UBU & PA UBU: *(together)* Me!

POLICEMAN: Don't make fun of me. You two, come here. *(PA and MA UBU approach him. The POLICEMAN takes out a pen and a notebook from a pocket.)* You have the right to remain silent, but whatever you say will be taken down and may be used in evidence, etc...

PA UBU: *(to MA UBU)* You hear, we have the right to remain silent. How lucky

we are to live in a democracy. We have rights. We have the right to be silent. How come we haven't appreciated it before? When I was King of Poland I never granted my subjects the right of silence. It was not my fault. Since it was not a democracy, I couldn't have granted them rights. All I could grant them were duties. But here, in a democracy, we have rights. Tonight, when I go to bed, I'll exercise my right of silence. Constable, are you taking it down? Very well. Carry on with your duties and I'll carry on with mine. You asked me if I killed this man. Yes, I did. Have you taken it down?

MA UBU: But it's not true, constable. It's me. I killed him. With the broom handle.

POLICEMAN: (*writing everything down*) Not so fast. Can you repeat what you just said?

PA UBU: Don't listen to her. It was me who killed him, with a revolver.

POLICEMAN: It's not for me to decide. You two are under arrest. Corporal, take them away.

CORPORAL: (*to the army of free men, pointing at PA and MA UBU*) Take them away!

(*the three free men grab the POLICEMAN and without paying any attention to his protests, carry him away*)

Curtains

### Act 3, Scene 1

*(A police station. Two officers: one at the desk, the other at the back. The door opens. PA and MA UBU enter. MA carries the broom.)*

PA UBU: Good morning. Are we in the right place? We are looking for the shopkeepers of law and order.

POLICEMAN 1: Good morning. Can I help you?

PA UBU: We've been most impressed by your efforts to stamp out crime. Your call to the people of this country to help touches us deeply and we, Madam my wife, and I, have decided to give ourselves up and confess to a terrible murder that we have committed.

POLICEMAN 1: Excuse me for a moment. *(leaves his place, goes to the other officer and whispers to him)* They are confessing to a murder.

POLICEMAN 2: Without a solicitor being present?

POLICEMAN 1: That's right.

POLICEMAN 2: Have you videotaped their confession?

POLICEMAN 1: How could I? The equipment broke down two weeks ago.

POLICEMAN 2: Be careful. It could be a trap. First they confess, then they get convicted and after twelve years in the nick they'll turn around and claim they were framed. To be on the safe side, we ought to ask a solicitor to be present. I suggest that you keep them entertained until I can get hold of a lawyer and borrow some equipment from another station. *(Exits. POLICEMAN 1 returns to the desk.)*

POLICEMAN 1: *(to PA and MA UBU)* Would you prefer tea or coffee? I'm sorry, but we've only instant.

PA UBU: It's very kind of you. I'll have coffee, milk and five sugars. *(to MA UBU)* What about you?

MA UBU: Tea with one sugar will do, thank you very much. *(POLICEMAN 1 goes to make the drinks)*

PA UBU: I told you that we would be treated with respect. We'll have a jolly good life from now on.

MA UBU: I hope so. That policeman is really nice. I like him. *(POLICEMAN returns with the drinks)*

POLICEMAN 1: Do you smoke? Can I offer you a cigar?

PA UBU: With great pleasure.

POLICEMAN 1: *(Opens the drawer. Browses about, but his hands come out only with a packet of cigarettes.)* Sorry, but our budget has been cut. Will a cigarette do?

PA UBU: Have one of mine. *(hands a big cigar to the POLICEMAN and lights it for him)*

POLICEMAN 1: A very nice cigar. I see that crime does pay after all.

PA UBU: Only if you get caught. Otherwise, it's like any other self-employed job. No social benefits, no chance of promotion and, worst of all, no prospects of a pension when you grow old.

MA UBU: You don't seem to be interested in what we've done. We killed somebody.

POLICEMAN 1: Of course we are interested. But to comply with the law, we have to have a solicitor present... Here he comes.  
*(Officer 2 returns with the SOLICITOR. They carry with them the video. The SOLICITOR opens a folded director's chair in a commanding place on the stage and sits down. The camera with its tripod is put in place by POLICEMAN 2.)*

SOLICITOR: *(in a commanding voice)* Let there be light!  
*(The stage is suddenly flooded with light. The place starts to look like a film studio.)*  
Camera! *(POLICEMAN 2 takes a position behind the camera they had just brought in)*  
Ready! *(POLICEMAN 1 hits the clapper-board)*

POLICEMAN 1: Take one! Action! *(Runs immediately back to his seat at the desk. To the UBUS.)* Whom did you kill?

SOLICITOR: Have you cautioned them?

POLICEMAN 1: I forgot all about that.

SOLICITOR: Cut! Start again. Ready!  
*(POLICEMAN 1 leaves his place, claps the clapper-board again)*

POLICEMAN 1: Take two!

SOLICITOR: Action! *(POLICEMAN 1 runs back to the desk)*

POLICEMAN 1: You have the right to remain silent, but if you say anything it will be taken down and used as evidence.

PA UBU: I love that democratic bit.

POLICEMAN 1: *(to PA UBU)* Whom did you kill?

MA UBU: It's not him. It's me.

PA UBU: Shut up! He isn't talking to you.

MA UBU: Why should I shut up? It's democracy here. You said so yourself.

SOLICITOR: Cut! *(to the UBUS)* You have to decide who the killer was, and do it quick. Otherwise you will be charged with wasting police time.

PA UBU: Which is more serious?

SOLICITOR: What do you mean?

PA UBU: Which of the two charges carries a greater penalty: The killing or the wasting of police time?

SOLICITOR: The killing, of course.

PA UBU: In that case, charge us with the killing.

POLICEMAN 1: *(runs to the clapper board again)* Take three! Action!

PA UBU: We don't know his name. He was a dancing, hairy and bearded beggar who lived in a cardboard box.

POLICEMAN 1: Any witnesses?

PA UBU: I don't think so. It was pitch dark and the streets were deserted.

SOLICITOR: It's a complete charade. They can't make up their mind about who was

the killer and they don't know who the one they are supposed to have killed was. There are no witnesses, nor murder weapons...

PA & MA UBU: *(together)* Yes, there is! *(PA puts the gun on the desk and MA puts the broom)*

POLICEMAN 1: And now about the motive: why did you do it?

PA UBU: I had to show to Madam my wife that I'm capable of killing somebody even if I don't have a conscience.

MA UBU: Rubbish. He cannot and he didn't. I finished him off with the broom. You can't kill without a conscience. Everyone knows that!

POLICEMAN 1: And what happened to his conscience, if I may ask?

MA UBU: He killed him.

POLICEMAN 1: Killed his conscience?

MA UBU: Yes. He killed him. It was a very nice conscience, with a shirt and so on and so forth, who lived in a suitcase. He killed him just after he killed Achras.

POLICEMAN 1: He also killed Achras? That one was reported to us. Did you really kill Achras?

PA UBU: I'm very wicked person and so is Madam my wife.

POLICEMAN 1: *(to the SOLICITOR)* Can I charge them?

SOLICITOR: You can charge them only with the murder of Achras, and make inquiries about the beggar. I don't know what to do about the conscience. Is he a real person or just a metaphor?

POLICEMAN 1: What's a metaphor?

PA UBU: The figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object to which it is not properly applicable.

SOLICITOR: Cut!

Curtains

## Act 3, Scene 2

*(PA and MA UBU in a prison cell. They are dressed in grey prison uniform. They are heavily in chains and their feet in iron balls. MA is knitting. In the middle of the cell is a bucket. Water from the ceiling is dripping into the bucket.)*

- PA UBU: At last we have been properly housed and properly dressed. I'm especially impressed with the design. You remember how I used to complain about the socially imposed male costume, composed of too tight a jacket and the forever choking tie. This grey uniform suits me much better. I like grey. It is a most sophisticated colour.
- MA UBU: This apartment is comfortable but not too large so that I haven't much cleaning to do. It reminds me of the Palace of Wenceslas, our abode in Poland.
- PA UBU: I must say that prisons and palaces have a lot in common. Both are large buildings with a lot of windows with iron bars to prevent the enemy having an easy access. The only difference that I can detect is, that at the gate of the Palaces there are guards that don't let anyone in, while at the prisons the guards don't let anyone out. The difference is specially designed for our own comfort, to keep us from wandering out into the town that is a very unattractive place. The air is polluted and the streets boring, because they are made up, almost exclusively, of houses.
- MA UBU: Do you mean that we can't leave if we so desire?
- PA UBU: Leave here? Are you crazy? I've had quite enough of marching at the tail of my army across Poland, Belorussia and the Ukraine. Leave here? Leave for what? To visit friends, family, social functions? From now on, anyone who wants to see us should come here in person. I'm ready to give audience three times a week between three and five p.m.
- JAILER: *(knocks on the door)* Meal time!
- PA UBU: And twice a day we get our meals, free of charge. Isn't that wonderful? *(The door opens and somebody pushes in two plates on which there are dried pieces of stale bread. The door closes again. PA and MA UBU take the bread. They drag their feet with difficulty because their legs are in chains attached to iron balls. PA walks with his bread to the bucket and soaks the bread under the dripping water.)*
- PA UBU: I'm satisfied that they obey our orders to supply our meals on time. I've also made use of my pataphysical knowledge of mechanics to invent that special device that makes the rain drip in at meal times, to moisten our bread.
- MA UBU: Be careful not to wet the irons! They are sensitive to dampness and inclined to rust.
- PA UBU: Because they are made of a very delicate alloy, cast especially for our



delicate feet. You've must reminded me that I must invent something to stop the irons from rusting.

MA UBU: You don't have to worry about that, because I've taken care of this problem. I'm knitting woollen jumpers to keep the iron in good shape: Dry, warm and safe from rust.  
*(Shots and explosions are heard from a distance. The explosions are coming nearer.)*

PA UBU: *(looks out from the cell window)* Somebody is trying to improve the image of the town by turning some houses into rubble. It's encouraging seeing that the authorities here are taking criticism seriously and doing something about it.

JAILER: *(in panic)* Hide me! Hide me!

PA UBU: Hide you from what?

JAILER: They have taken over the jail!

PA UBU: Who was taken over the jail?

JAILER: They are going to kill me. Please hide me, please!  
*(Sounds of rapid footsteps. MA UBU hides the JAILER under her skirt. The CORPORAL of the free men enters.)*

CORPORAL: Where is he, the swine? *(stops, astonished)* Ah, it's you! You are free to go.

PA UBU: Free to go where?

CORPORAL: Wherever you wish. We've taken over the jail and we are freeing all prisoners.

PA UBU: Piss off! You want me to be free by throwing me out on the streets, to pay my own expenses in a country where the cost of living is seven per cent above the rate of inflation?  
*(there are more shots in the jail)*

A VOICE: The freedom revolution is smashed. Run for your lives! *(The CORPORAL of the free men rushes out. The JAILER gets out from under MA UBU's skirt.)*

JAILER: Thank you for saving my life. I'm most grateful. I hope to repay you at the first opportunity.

MA UBU: You had it and you missed. Have a better try at the second.

PA UBU: If you want to do us a favour, bring me some glue and welding equipment.

JAILER: What kind of glue and welding equipment?

PA UBU: I must glue and weld my chains to the foundation of this jail, so that no revolution and no amnesty or Royal pardon can ever set us free.

JAILER: But you are only on remand. Your trial hasn't started yet.

Curtains

### Act 3, Scene 3

*(The Great Hall of Justice or, for convenience, the Old Bailey. PA UBU, MA UBU, JUDGE, PROSECUTOR and COUNSEL for the Defence. The guards and the public are represented by cut out boards. Everyone is wearing wigs.)*

PA UBU: Let me declare, with great pleasure, the opening of the ceremony by which the wheels of justice will be seen, heard and set in motion, all in our honour of course, in order to bestow the bench with the great prestige of judging us.

JUDGE: Silence in court! *(signalling to the PROSECUTOR with his finger)*  
Who is he?

PROSECUTOR: The accused.

JUDGE: *(to UBU)* Shut up or you will be thrown out!

PA UBU: Certainly not. I'm here to attend my trial and there are vicious looking guards with pointed mustachios with the sole purpose of keeping me from leaving. By the way, who are you? May be you should be thrown out.

JUDGE: *(to the PROSECUTOR)* Tell him who I am.

PROSECUTOR: He is the Judge.

PA UBU: In that case, your Honour, I demand Justice.

JUDGE: And justice you will get. What's your name?

PA UBU: Francis Ubu, former King of Poland, Count of Mondragon, Discount of Sandomir, Butcher of Aragon and Plumber of Santa Catherina.

PROSECUTOR: Alias: Pa Ubu.

JUDGE: Any accomplices?  
*(the PROSECUTOR pushes MA UBU forward)*

MA UBU: Victorine Ubu, former Queen of Poland, Countess of Mondragon, Discountess of Sandomir, Butcheress of Aragon and Plumberess of santa Catherine.

PROSECUTRO: Alias: Ma Ubu.

JUDGE: *(writing down and speaking loudly)* Pa Ubu and Ma Ubu. *(lifting his head from the paper)* How old are you?

PA UBU: Not quite sure. I gave my age to Madame my wife for safe keeping, but she lost it together with her own. I think it would be better to start afresh from the beginning.

JUDGE: *(to the PROSECUTOR)* What are the charges?

PROSECUTOR: The unlawful killing of Mister Achras and other as yet unknown.

JUDGE: How do you plead: guilty or not guilty?

COUNSEL: Not guilty, your Honour.

PA UBU: Guilty, your Honour.

COUNSEL: Not guilty!

PA UBU: Guilty!

PROSECUTOR: Can't you settle the matter quietly amongst yourselves?  
COUNSEL: *(takes out a coin from his pocket)* Heads or tails?  
PA UBU: Heads or tails.  
JUDGE: *(flips the coin in the air; lands it on his palm)* You win!  
PA UBU: *(to the JUDGE)* Guilty, your Honour and I hope that this is trifling incident won't prevent you rendering justice as is our due.  
JUDGE: *(to PROSECUTOR)* Proceed.  
PROSECUTOR: Ladies and gentlemen members of the jury, let me introduce to you one of the most vile criminals of the century...  
COUNSEL: If you are referring to my client, he isn't a criminal. He is an angel.  
PROSECUTOR: Objection! Your Honour.  
JUDGE: Objection upheld.  
PROSECUTOR: This vile and monstrous criminal who inflicted horrendous acts of violence on innocent victims...  
COUNSEL: Innocent victims? Don't make me laugh!  
JUDGE: Objection overruled.  
PROSECUTOR: He even used boot polish and a brush on the foot of one of our noble non-commissioned officers.  
COUNSEL: Only in order to make him more presentable on the parade ground...  
PA UBU: *(to his defence counsel)* You there, Sir, shut up! You are bullshitting the court and thereby preventing this highly respectable assembly of fine ladies and gentlemen from hearing our fabulous and magnificent achievements: Yes, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, we have been King of Poland and in this capacity we massacred more people than can be counted on a cheap electronic calculator; we also collected taxes by using brute force and always dreamt of bloodletting, extortion, blackmail and assassinations. Being very tidy in our habits we deposited all these old criminal cases in history books and then proceeded to fresh vile acts: We have slain Mister Achras, a fact to which he will bear witness himself and so my own conscience will do, the one with the shirt and so on and so forth. I hope that the whirling dervish will also be proud to present himself. My confession, together with the evidence of the aforementioned witnesses, will surely convince you, ladies and gentlemen to find us guilty, and you, Judge, to sentence us to the harshest punishment, so that we get what we deserve. It won't be denied that the only place fit for us is on the gallows but, as we've already found out, this option doesn't exist because it has been abolished. As for my accomplice, Ma Ubu...  
MA UBU: But...  
PA UBU: *(to MA UBU)* Hush sweet girl... *(to the JUDGE)* she deserves exactly the same as we do...  
PROSECUTOR: Since the accused pleads guilty to the charges, we can dispense with the witnesses.  
COUNSEL: Oh, no. If you aren't going to call the witnesses, I'll call them. Your Honour, may I call my first witness?  
JUDGE: Yes, you may.

COUNSEL: I call my first witness, Mister Achras.  
A VOICE: Mister Achras! Mister Achras to the witness box. (*continues to call from behind the stage*) Mister Achras refuses to give evidence on account of being dead.

JUDGE: Arrest him and bring him to the court, use force if necessary.  
COUNSEL: May I call my next witness, your Honour? My next witness is Pa Ubu's conscience.  
A VOICE: Pa Ubu's conscience to the witness box!  
(*a suitcase on wheels from which a pair of hands protrudes, wheels itself on to the centre of the stage*)

COUNSEL: Can you tell us about the conversation you had with the accused on the twelfth of January of last year?  
CONSCIENCE: No, I can't.  
COUNSEL: Why not?  
CONSCIENCE: Communication between a person and his conscience is privileged. I must therefore be excused from giving evidence.

COUNSEL: In this case I call my last witness, your Honour. Ludwig Formentera.  
USHER: Ludwig Formentera to the witness box.  
(*the dancing dervish and his music blasts through the stage swinging around like mad and vanishing at the other end without stopping*)

COUNSEL: I rest my case, your Honour.  
PROSECUTOR: I have proved the guilt of the accused beyond any reasonable doubt. In order that the punishment will fit the crime, I demand a two months suspended sentence and a six months disqualification from driving a motor vehicle.

COUNSEL: And I demand life imprisonment without parole at Her Majesty's pleasure.  
JUDGE: What is the verdict of the jury: Guilty or not guilty?  
A VOICE: The jury had found the accused guilty as charged.  
JUDGE: Will the accused stand up and hear the sentence. (*coughs and clears his throat*) Since the jury has found the accused guilty as charged, I sentence them to life imprisonment with hard labour. Case dismissed.

Curtains

## Act 4, Epilogue

*(An empty stage. PA UBU, dressed properly in a suit, a tie and a bowler hat. In one hand he carries an executive suitcase and an umbrella. In his other hand he holds a cellular telephone and an unfinished sandwich. He is in a great hurry. Walking and, at the same time, trying to finish eating his sandwich. Half way through the stage he is stopped by an acquaintance.)*

ACQUAINTANCE: Hello, Mister Ubu. How are you?  
PA UBU: *(impatient)* Fine, fine.  
ACQUAINTANCE: And how is Mrs Ubu?  
PA UBU: Fine, fine.  
ACQUAINTANCE: And how are your kids? I've forgotten. Is it two boys or two girls?  
PA UBU: A boy and a girl. Fine, fine. But really, you must excuse me. I'm in a great jury. I'm already late for work. Sorry, see you some other time.

Curtains

**End**