

The Three Stooges Make a Comeback

“The rewards for being sane are not many, but knowing what’s funny is one of them.”

[Thus spoke the late novelist Kingsley Amis](#) through a character in his work, *Stanley and the Women*.

Whether I am sane may be a point of contention, especially since the hammer blows from the political and cultural disasters of the last two years have dented my sense of humor. Yet the farce now being acted out on the world stage can still bring laughter, even if poisoned with bitterness.

I am speaking of the Ukraine War. Top billing in this farce belongs to Russia’s Vladimir Putin, America’s Joe Biden, and Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelensky.

The 70-year-old President Putin, whose invasion of Ukraine officially kicked off the war some months ago, is a former KGB officer and a semi-dictator past his prime.

At 79, President Biden is a lifelong politician who left his prime behind years ago. He’s also likely suffering from dementia. “Let me start off with two words,” Biden said in a recent [speech](#): “Made in America.”

President Zelensky is a former comedian and therefore the only actor on this stage with a professional resume.

All three of these performers have recently brought up the possibility of nuclear war as blithely as some of us talk about the weather. Putin reportedly threatened the use of tactical nuclear weapons, Biden referred to possible Armageddon, and depending on interpretation of his [statement](#), Zelensky called on NATO to deliver a first strike to Russian

forces.

Were it not for the fact that the nuclear saber-rattling of these nincompoops might result in the deaths of millions, the whole pathetic scenario might be funny, like some slapstick bit from the Three Stooges.

Just as bad are the supporting actors. Here in the United States, for example, the war hawks in Congress support Ukraine and couldn't care less about what happens to the rest of us, one suspects. They want to keep sending more weapons and money to a country well-known for the [corruption](#) among its politicians and bureaucrats.

Meanwhile, no one in Washington really explains to the rest of America why Russia is "evil" and Ukraine "virtuous" or why we are so committed to Ukraine. Ask most Americans why the United States should pick a dog in that fight, and most will answer, if they have any idea at all, "The Russians invaded Ukraine." Ask why the Russians invaded Ukraine, and you'll probably get a shrug and a blank look.

To add some mystery to this farce, some unknown party recently blew up part of the [Nord Stream gas pipelines](#) that run from Russia to Europe. No one will fess up to the crime, although there is plenty of blame flying around.

All three of these men wield enormous power. If these heads of state wanted an end to the war, they or their emissaries would have called for a cease-fire and been sitting around a table months ago, hammering out details for peace, or at least making the attempt. But they are weak, acting in their own interests or those of their backers rather than looking for the best possible road to peace.

Meanwhile, we are their audience, hundreds of millions of us, watching a burlesque, an unintended parody of capable statesmanship.

For someone possessed with the talents of irony and humor, a Tom Wolfe for instance, our times have delivered you a present waiting to be unwrapped. You might even steal one of Wolfe's essay titles, *My Three Stooges*, and make it *Our Three Stooges*. Untie the ribbons, open that gift box, work the contents into a novel, and with any luck, you'll have a bestseller for sure.

Provided, of course, enough of us are left alive to read it.

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