

TREATMENT

Movie adaptation based on
BAUDOLINO by Umberto Eco

Synopsis

In the twelve century, religion and mysticism prevail. Wars are being carried out in the name of religion, and mysticism is heightened by imagination; it is hard to tell reality from fiction in the stories of those times. Finding the realm of the Universal Religion is alluring to the adventurous minds of regular people and to monarchs eager to philander economically and dominate spiritually. Valvolino is a writer who mixes reality and imagination.

Note: The character's name Valvolino will be used in the graphic book and movie.

ACT I-STAGE I: The Setup (1155)-Baudolino writes about his visions and encounter with Frederick I, the Emperor of the Western Holy Roman Empire.

The church scriptorium is silent and dark except for the desk lit by a candle. A 15-year-old boy writes on a parchment. The letters he writes *slowly morph into leaves carried by a gust of wind into an earie forest. The leaves settle on the ground and, from the depths of the forest, a snorting, small, white unicorn paces into a clearing lit by the moon. The 12-year-old Baudolino looks in awe at the unicorn who trots and playfully invites him to follow and play. Following, Baudolino pulls away the branch of a tree which, upon being released, springs back and hits him in the small of the neck...actually the stick his father is hitting him with, while lamenting the bad luck of having a liar of a son capable of daydreaming and telling him funny stories instead of milking the cow, moving the hay in the shed or chopping the wood for the fire; and all this as the day is almost over and the night is getting colder. To escape further beating and the scorn from his father, Baudolino runs out of the poor house, almost a shack, and farther away into the woods. After a while he stops to catch his breath.*

The wind plays with the branches and leaves of the trees. Moon rays piercing the clouds light the drifting sheets of the heavy fog. The snorting of a horse startles Baudolino; looking over, he gradually distinguishes a huge one ridden by a big, armored, bearded man. The man seems to be lost, reigning in the horse's harness to stop. He looks down, in search of a trail, then up and sees a kid watching him from behind a tree. Baudolino, is rather curious than afraid. The horseman addresses him in German and the kid makes an effort to understand and respond: in an approximate German, he offers protection at his parent's shack against the thieves roaming around and the prospect of a bowl of hot broth and rest overnight. The man accepts the offer and pulls him up on the horse while praising his hospitality, and wondering how come he could speak some German.

At the shack, the old man is about to get a load of hay in the fork but, startled by the apparition of the threesome, lets it fall on his head; removing it to better see, he ignores the man and continues the scorn of his son where he left it earlier. This time though is about his son for not staying away from the war raging around the woods and, even worse, for bring it in his yard; he laments that people like this are often the nobleman's people taking away a haystack for tax. The horseman listens to the kid's bearably understandable translation and introduces himself as Frederick I, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. He is grateful for their hospitality and offers to pay for the overnight rest. Upon hearing the translation, the old man brightens up a bit and introduces himself as Galiardo the father of the good for nothing son, then engages in bargaining for the broth and hay. The kid mimics the translation and the Emperor gives them his dues then rides towards the shed. The father and son look at the two golden coins with rather curious and gleaming eyes, like they've never seen such a thing before.

ACT I-TURNING POINT #1: The Opportunity (10%) (1155) Baudolino is adopted by Frederick and learns from Bishop Otto of Freising at the Morimond Abbey.

In the sunny morning, a small wind blows the leaves in the front yard of the shack. Eating a meager breakfast while sitting on some logs, the kid tells to the Emperor about the unicorn vision. He embellishes the story by adding the vision of a Saint, Saint Baudolino, who predicted the Germans' victory in the siege of the Terdona. If the Emperor wants, he can accompany him to his camp and tell to both the attackers and the sieged people about this prediction; this would embolden the attackers and weaken the defenders.

The Emperor is astonished by the kid's proposal and is happy to take the offer on account of it saving so many lives. He then turns to Galiardo and tells him that his son deserves recognition for his intelligence and better yet an education at his court; he is ready to adopt the kid as his son. The Emperor wins over the reluctance of the suspicious Galiardo by giving him five golden coins to better his life as well, and that for a long time. Motivated by the coins, Galiardo mumbles more to himself that feeding a good for nothing son is no reason for keeping him around... The leaves blown by the wind morph back into the letters written by Baudolino on the parchment. As he writes, the door of the scriptorium opens; in a haste, he hides the parchment and pulls a book in front of him as if he was studying. Bishop Otto approaches his desk and jokingly pinches Baudolino's ear pretending to punish him for studying this late at night. Seriously then, he praises Baudolino's efforts and progress in learning Latin; this is the language in which the life and glory of the Emperor will be described in the book that he is writing and Baudolino will translate. "Go to sleep now", paternally advises Otto, "tomorrow we travel to Rattisbon. The Emperor wants you to listen to the debates in the council. And by the way, you will also study with Canon Rahewin in my court quarters".

ACT I-STAGE 2: The New Situation (1156-1176), Baudolino increases his standing at the Imperial court, falls in Love with Empress Beatrice and fights in the Siege of Crema.

(1956) Baudolino Participates in the Emperor's Council Discussions

The small common dormitory has a few empty beds and one in which Baudolino is still sleeping. The door opens and Canon Rahewin loudly teases him that the Holy Roman Emperor is waiting for his illustrious presence. Laying on a worn out mattress with some straws protruding from it, Baudolino opens one eye first, then both and jumps off the bed.

In the council room, a baron adviser expresses his anger at the way the Pope had treated the Emperor at the coronation: instead of the Holy Sunday, it was on Saturday, instead of the main altar it was on the side one, instead on the crown on the head it was on the shoulders, instead of anointing with olive oil sweetened with balsam it was the baptism one. Why the baptism one? Why does the Emperor need to be kept way from devil's temptation to sin? What's the message here? concludes the baron almost out of breath. Many other noblemen murmur and nod in agreement. Frederick chuckles and smiles, and Baudolino, who was seated next to him, wants to know why. Frederick liked the fact that the coronation was not too solemn because otherwise the blessing of the Pope would have been more important than his direct lineage from the Germanic princes. Baudolino smartly stands-up and tells the Emperor that he is sly as a weasel because this turns the Pope into a simple notary acknowledging the status quo. Frederick and the barons all lighten up and laugh. The Emperor stands up and placing his hand on Baudolino's head praises the way he's looking at things, jokingly advises the barons to take good example. Smiling from his pew, Otto waves at Baudolino to join him. The mood of the barons had changed for the better and Frederick is asking for an account of the preparations for his wedding with Beatrice, the Princess of Burgundy. Otto is about to talk with Baudolino but he is hit by a sickly, coughing fit. Baudolino comforts him while listening to the councilors' gossip about the beauty of Princess' dowry rather than that of her physic.

(1956) Beatrice arrives at Rattisbon

Princess Beatrice of Burgundy and her entourage arrive through the portal of the castle's inner court. They make their way through a happy crowd waving hands and flags. Beatrice, a very young and beautiful lady, rides a white horse. Frederick receives her and introduces Baudolino as his son. In a simple but gracious way, Beatrice touches Baudolino's cheek in acknowledgement. A flock of white pigeons fly by, some flapping their wings above the heads of the small group, while Baudolino is stricken by Beatrice's beauty. Otto senses what happens and jokingly pokes him to wake up and kneel down to greet the Empress, and he does the same. Amused, Frederick offers his arm to Beatrice and accompanies her up the stairs and into the castle.



(1956) Frederick and Beatrice get married in the Church of Würzburg.

In the sumptuous church, the Bishop of Würzburg officiates Frederick's marriage with Beatrice. Baudolino, kneeling on the stairs of the altar, follows the ceremony, his sights locked on the Empress. Under the magic of her beauty and the harmony of the music, his imagination takes off, triggered by the shadows of some birds projected on the tall stained glass windows and *...the birds fly into the church and around Baudolino. He is offering his glowing heart for the birds to take it to Beatrice. She does and looks at Baudolino smiling lovingly while the birds fly back towards the windows and ...* a sudden change in the rhythm of the ceremonial music awakens Baudolino from his reverie.

(1958) Otto summons Baudolino to search for the Realm of the Universal Religion

Two years later, in an office with shelves loaded with books, Rahewin reads a book while Baudolino translates Otto's chronicle of Frederick's legacy. Someone is coughing and Baudolino and Rahewin look at each other. Baudolino stands up and walks to the adjacent room.

Otto is in bed, coughing; he has further aged and his health deteriorated considerably. Baudolino asks him if he wants to call on the doctor. Otto doesn't want to, the leeches they put on him too many times drew so much blood that he wonders if any was left. Instead, he calls for Rahewin as well and asks them both to listen to his last wishes. Rahewin is to continue writing the account of the Emperor's reign and complete teaching Baudolino the use of the Latin and other foreign languages. "In two years" the Bishop says, "there had been six expeditions into Italy to quell revolts or destroy cities like Milan, Terdona, Pavia, Bologna, Tuscany and Tivoli. But that's Europe. Then we have the Eastern Holy Empire, Byzantium to deal with. Frederick just ceased recognizing Manuel I, by declaring himself the sole Augustus of the Whole of the Holy Roman Empire. That doesn't bode well; he's going to siege Constantinople next. That's what is going to stir the Muslims in turn. "On the religious front", he carries on, "the Pope is old, and we'll have not only the ambitions of a new pope but even an antipope as well, if things continue the way they do

now. Moreover, the distant Orthodoxy in Russia remains a power capable of surprises. There is too much of everything, concludes the Bishop with a weaker voice. “Puer dilectissime”, addresses Otto to Baudolino, “go find the Realm of the Universal Religion where Prester Johannes holds the secret of the Universal Religion and governance harmony. Frederick must build an alliance with him. But first Baudolino, you need to go to Paris, learn how different people are and how to convince them that there is hope for a common ground, in spite those differences. You need to learn theology and dialectics, both a higher order of knowledge” says Otto, his voice almost a whisper now. He stops talking and lays immobile. Rahewin sadly looks at Baudolino then nods. Baudolino is about to close Otto’s eyelids, but Otto comes back to life in a surge of energy: “Remember the kingdom of the Presbyter Johannes. I know that you invented many stories that the emperor liked to hear. So then, if you don’t have all the specifics of that realm, invent some.” And with that, Otto exhales heavily and stops breathing.

(1159) Baudolino gets a sword on his Birthday

On Baudolino’s 18th birthday anniversary, the Emperor has a private discussion with him and Rahewin. Frederick praises Baudolino for what he learned from Otto, Rahewin and the books. He waves at a page holding a big, ornamented box to approach. He opens the box, takes a sword out of it and hands it over to Baudolino. He is to use it on the battle grounds and learn the hardship of war as well. Looking at Rahewin, he recounts how the lawyers of Bologna had settled his divine right of protecting the Italian cities and collect the taxes from their trades. They were to break down the walls of their fortresses, to begin with; nothing to fear since he is their protector. “But they didn’t” says he, standing up in anger, “and I am going to give them a lesson, starting with Crema.”



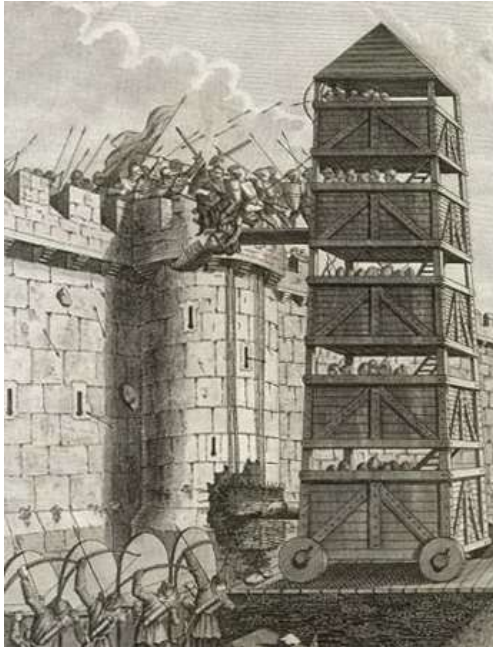
(1159) Frederick and Baudolino at the siege of Crema

...On a knoll overlooking the fortress in the valley, mounted on a black horse, the Emperor overlooks the progression of the siege; close by are a couple of noblemen and clergy. Two commanders animatedly point down at and discuss the infantry positions lined up in the valley. They split and ride their horses down. From the valley, two riders gallop their horses up the knoll.

Arrows and spears fly between the attackers in the siege-tower and the defenders on the crenels. The heavy stones catapulted by the defenders break some trusses of the tower which starts to wobble.

One of the two horse riders, Baudolino, reaches the Emperor. He advises the tower to be pulled back or else it will be destroyed. The Emperor nods and angry orders the tower to be pulled back and the Crema prisoners tied up on it; the defenders will not dare throw the stones at their own.

A bit later, Baudolino enters the Emperor's tent in a hurry and distressed tells him that the tied up prisoners shout for their own people to ignore them and keep stoning the tower and that the enraged defenders do. In wrath, the Emperor orders for the remainder of the Crema prisoners to be burned alive in front of the walls. Baudolino vehemently argues against it, what is it for? A nobleman stands up and points out that the defenders have many Imperial prisoners and they will be killed in revenge. "So be it, we are at war" states the Emperor to the dismay of the people around him. "And get the carts to start digging under the walls" he adds, then dismisses all.



ACT I / ACT II. TURNING POINT #2: The Change of Plans (25%). (1162) Frederick Sends Baudolino to Study in Paris

Frederick, Beatrice and Baudolino are about to finish dinner. Frederick throws his napkin on the table, stands up and, pacing up and down, laments the three years in which he did not see any effects of Crema's destruction: Milan and other Italian cities still disobey him. Why some Italian cities recognize him while other do not, he wonders. "Barbarians" he says, "with no respect for their Emperor!" Baudolino comments that the Italian cities' interests are so different that they continuously change their allegiances, even to the point of fighting against each other. So, the ones that recognize or are against the Emperor today, will probably change tomorrow. Beatrice follows the discussion by looking in turn at Frederick and Baudolino, while holding her hand on her belly; she is about to give birth. Frederick pensively acknowledges Baudolino's point. Changing the topic, he recalls Otto's wish that Baudolino goes to study in Paris. He sadly recognizes that his duties and the permanent wars had prevented his access to the luxury of superior knowledge. Warriors, monks, and peasants is the world that he inherited. But he sees that the law, philosophy, the earthy mechanisms and even the movement of the stars are becoming equally important. And to end on a humorous note he adds: "and the movement of the money, because that's where we're getting the money for our wars."

Reluctant in the beginning, Baudolino concedes in the end to the value of his learning in Paris; he stands up bows and expresses his gratitude to the Emperor. Beatrice looks at Baudolino then stands up to excuse herself and ask Baudolino the favor of accompanying her. At the door of her chamber, Beatrice softly asks Baudolino to frequently write to her about his life and studies in Paris. Baudolino looks at her in a way that make her blush. Realizing that his deep emotions are obvious, he drops on one knee and, looking down, promises to write. The Empress touches his cheek to make him stand up and face her. After a brief moment, as she turns to enter the room, their lips touch as by accident and both are shocked by the happenstance. Confused, she gets into her room. Frozen, Baudolino is looking at the handle of the door closing slowly.

ACT II-STAGE III: Progress (1162-1176) Baudolino studies in Paris, writes the Prester Johannes imaginary letter and saves the Emperor life at the battle of Legnano.

(1162-1167) In Paris, Baudolino makes friends with other students, lives a liberal life, writes to the Princess and starts a fake letter as if from Prester Johannes. In the letter Frederick is proposed an alliance with ample, mutual religious and trade benefits. His friends contribute to the letter with the products of their own imagination and motivations. In search for the validation of Prester Johannes existence they start searching the abbey's libraries for old religious texts and talking with ecclesiasts of different faiths. One of them is Zosimos, a Greek Orthodox priest who claims to be in the possession of a map towards the Realm which is somewhere east of India. In favor of the Realm's existence, he presents historical accounts of Alexander the Great and books describing strange humans and animals of those faraway lands. He even offers to go to Constantinople ahead of time to prepare the trip, using his influence at the court of the Byzantium Emperor. While Baudolino and his friends fall asleep, Zosimos makes a copy of the letter and leaves in a haste. Over the years, the letter grows in embellished details about the Realm and descriptions of oddities along the pilgrim; moreover, it even alludes to a possible Holy Grail handover to Prester Johannes, as a proof of the good deeds towards a lasting alliance. Some of the priests they talked with, either motivated by faith are ready to join Baudolino's group pilgrim.

From his barren room, Baudolino melancholically watches the moon lightening the roofs of the houses on the outskirts of Paris. The profiles of a flock of bats flying by is projected over the moon. They...*fly into the room and their shapes morph into the* letters of the letter that Baudolino is writing to Beatrice. He tells her about the subjects of his studies and the hardship of the long hours of study...*drinking together with his friends at the smoky tavern Baudolino waves at a waitress as if to whisper her a secret. Jokingly he takes a good look at her breasts instead, she whacks him in the head and turns around offering her butt for a pinch...* and the exercises in rhetoric that they have in the class... *There is laughter, more drinking and ample body language about women's endowments.* ... but the class room is so cold ... *Baudolino proudly points out at a fresh scar on his face and... in bed with a mature woman, they are surprised by the unexpected return of the lady's husband...* that they sometimes have to continue at home...*a butcher judging by his apron and the hook that he has in his hand...* which actually is not much warmer. *Baudolino grabs his clothing in a heartbeat and barely makes it to the window to jump out; not quickly enough though to completely avoid the butcher's hook slashing his cheek...* And he feels lonely sometimes...*and the letters morph back into the bats who fly out of the window...* and away into the night.

Details in progress...

The small heating stove is glowing but the room is rather cold. Baudolino and his roommates are wrapped in blankets. Abdul sings a love song accompanied by his Cittern, the Poet lays down on a bed, a tear drop running down his cheek, and Baudolino reads and writes down passages from a book.



Baudolino gets distracted by the sweetness of Abdul's song, looks at The Poet then asks Abdul where his inspiration is coming from. Abdul stops singing, thinks for a while, then looking at the stove and its glowing flames...the glaring sun sends waves of heat on the desert's dunes. From the distance, a group of travelers is slowly approaching. On a camel... Details in progress...

The Poet suddenly gets up in a display of distress and getting a coat on him leaves the room slamming the door shut.

Details in progress...

(1167) By the end of the five years of studies, the letter from Prester Johannes is ready and Baudolino plans to show it to his adoptive father, upon the return to Germany. In Ratisbon, he finds Frederick angry at the Lombard League alliance which denies his sovereignty over all the Northern Italy cities. Furthermore, the city of Ancona acknowledged the authority of the Byzantium Emperor Manuel I and he has to raze that city first. Baudolino realizes that this is not a good time to show the letter to Frederick.

(1176) The brewing conflict with the Lombard League reaches the point of a decisive military confrontation in 1176. Frederick loses the Legnano battle. Baudolino saves his life and the Emperor finally pays attention to the potential of the Prester Johannes letter. Under the shock of the lost battle Frederick agrees that Baudolino's pilgrim to the Realm of the Universal Religion should start as soon as the conditions are favorable. But that will not be soon.

Details in progress...

(1176) Baudolino smartly advises the Emperor on what the Italians want

Details in progress...

(1176) Frederick loses the battle of Legnano with the Lombard League and Baudolino saves his life

The battle is lost and the battlefield is now almost empty. Few soldiers lay dead on a grassy patch. Other soldiers either tiredly fight in small groups or walk around stunned, wounded.

Baudolino is attacked by a lone, furious peasant with an ax. Baudolino easily disarms him, makes him get his breeches down and charges him to run back to his folks or else he'll have his balls chopped. The peasant runs away ashamed but grateful for having his life spared. An enemy horseman is approaching and Baudolino gets at the ready to defend himself against the real soldier; but he is ridiculed as a loser instead of being attacked. "Go home" shouts the horseman at him. "Frederick's

army was defeated, what are you fighting for?” asks the horseman galloping away. An Imperial soldier running by recognizes Baudolino and shouts: “we lost the Emperor, we lost the Emperor!” Baudolino runs after him in disbelief to ask for details. “ Frederick was last seen defending himself” says the man, pointing at a clearing into the forest. Baudolino runs into the forest and searches through the dead bodies. Under a pile of them, he finds Frederick wounded, barely alive, blinking.

On their perilous return to Rattisbon through the foggy forest, Baudolino finally gets the Emperor’s attention on Otto’s vision about Prester Johannes and the letter that he has from him. The Emperor is somewhat hopeful about the Prester’s existence and the benefits of an alliance with him. The Realm seems so far away though and his many enemies are so close.

ACT II-TURNING POINT #3: The Point of No Return (50%) (1977) An Imperial spy captures a Prester Johannes letter intended to the Emperor of Byzantium Manuel I. Baudolino realizes that Zosimos had stolen his and intended to use it to the benefit of the Manuel I. Apparently, that fake letter was not distributed due to unfavorable historical conditions. Baudolino has now a solid argument in favor of Prester Johannes existence. The time has come for the real letter to be distributed to the European chancelleries. Frederick agrees with both the distribution of the letter and Baudolino’s pilgrim to the Realm.

(1177) Frederick is in Venice to sign the peace with the Lombard Leagues and reconcile with the Pope.

In the Venetian palace, Frederick is surrounded by Italian noblemen and traders. Gathered in small groups, people discuss the positive prospects of the peace treaty to be signed-off with the Lombard League and the reconciliation with the Pope.

Details in progress...

ACT II-STAGE IV: Complications and Higher Stakes-(1177-1189) The prospects for peace in Europe are dimmed by the crusades towards Jerusalem and Constantinople. Baudolino’s departure is delayed until 1189 and he travels to Constantinople first to find Zosimos. He will then meet with Frederick in Armenia, as the Emperor advances on the Third Crusade against Jerusalem. After spending the night at the castle of an Armenian nobleman, Frederick is found dead in the morning, drowned in the Saleph river. The pilgrims start their 11-year trek to the Realm.

(1189) Baudolino captures Zosimos in Constantinople. The map that Zosimos promised to provide cannot be found but Zosimos claims to knowing it by heart.

Details in progress...

(1190) Baudolino and Frederick meet at the Dadjig Castle of the Armenian nobleman Ardzrouni. The Armenian is supposedly in position to secure alliances for the Emperor’s safe passage through the Islamic territories. He could help the pilgrims as well and wants to join them towards the Realm. At his castle, the Armenian presents numerous technical marvels that he had installed. Overnight, the Emperor mysteriously disappears from his room. He is found though in the morning, down the river, drowned. Whether he was killed in the castle and thrown in the river or had drowned himself while swimming in the cold waters, remains a source of suspicion against Ardzrouni throughout the whole pilgrim.

Details in progress...



(1190-1196) The Pilgrim to the Realm of the Universal Religion. During their 6-year long trek, the pilgrims encounter some odd humans, animals and similar challenges they described in their letter. It must be true then that if you believe in something that you imagine, it actually could be real, as Bishop Otto taught him, concludes Baudolino.

After debating, on a couple of maps, on whether to take the silk trade or Alexander the Great conquests route, they decide to follow the first. The silk trade map has more details and there should be more people to meet during the pilgrim. Spiritually, Boron is interested to find one of the ten lost tribes of Israel, supposedly beyond the Sambatyon river. Due to the nature of the river, once the tribe crossed it could have not been crossed back because it's dangerous stony flow stops only on Saturdays.

Along the way on a route scarcely described on the maps, they encounter people in communities sharing distinct set of beliefs. The first is with people who believe in the power of the nature and of their own senses; they cherish the unpredictability of the nature and particularly the wind, live naked to feel its full power and are free of constraints. The second group has adepts of the rational thought who believe that there is always a cause and effect in the behavior of the nature thus it is governed by laws, laws which must extend to human behavior. The third group has adepts of the inner spiritual enlightenment which they believe that creates a human bond conducive to universal happiness. Each member of the pilgrim's group is attracted by one or the other of these beliefs and wishes to remain in that collectivity rather than continue the pilgrim. Each time though, their attraction to the realm of the Universal Religion wins over, albeit after arguments and delayed departures. In each of these collectivities also live some odd creatures, who seem to be accepted, tolerated or welcomed differently in each of these groups; they are the Gog and Magog creatures who ran away from their own and were trying to integrate with the humans by working hard.

After about four years of trekking through extreme weather conditions, odd nature instances like sun and moon eclipses and volcanic eruptions, Baudolino's group arrives at a very high and long, long wall. Walking for a long time along the wall, they see a small wooden plate on which they knock in desperation, but to no avail. Only after giving up, the plate is opened; a Chinese man, just the head visible, looks at them impassibly. Three pilgrims rush to look through the opening, obstructing it. Baudolino pulled them away and with more body than comprehensible, Baudolino tries to find out where the Sambatyon, the river of stone is. After a long pause, the Chinese stick his hand through the opening and points towards the direction that the pilgrim came from; this causes a major distress among them and incriminations burst into an argument in which they all shout at each other at the same time.

The Chinese impassibly look at them then extends his hand again through the opening to indicate now the opposite direction; this arrests the argument and Baudolino makes yet another attempt to explain that they are looking for the Sambatyon river. The head of the Chinese man disappears from the opening, then reappears and his hand extends through the opening with a small bronze bowl filled with water; the bowl is tied up to heavy metal chain. The offering is welcomed and the pilgrim drink thirstily. The vase is yanked by the chain back through the opening and the wooden plate shut closed and locked. The pilgrims look resigned at each other. Baudolino abruptly turns to the last direction pointed at by the Chinese and briskly walks away from the group. The others follow, arguing and gesticulating. Turning while walking, Baudolino shouts that this is the right way to go; they'll have to arrive at the same point where Alexander

the Great had to stop at the Sambatyon. The pilgrims furiously claim that this is yet another lie driving them to yet another extension of their exhausting trip. Baudolino stubbornly points forward and shouts back that they have to find a way around the wall, head south, then west towards India.

Another two years pass until one evening they hear rumbling noises in the distance; this must be the Sambatyon decide the brightening up pilgrims.

The source of the noise now almost deafening is a major boulder, mud and tree trunks flow.

They walk along the river to find a way of crossing it when, unexpectedly, the flow stops. There is a problem though; it happens that as they kept track of the days of the week, this one is a Saturday and, as a Jew, Boron would not cross it. It takes a whack in Boron's head to put him to sleep and, on Ardzouny's shoulders, across the River. As they cross it, a thunder like noise is followed by the flow re-starting; there is a huge wave of water now inundating the banks and washing the debris down the river path.

A couple of days later, they start encountering the odd creatures of Pnadpezin, who acknowledge that they are at the border with the Prester Johannes Realm.



Details in progress...

ACT II / ACT III-TURNING POINT #4: The Major Setback (75%) (1196-1200). Political complexities and the threat of an imminent invasion of Gog and Magog prevent them from crossing the border. Waiting for the favorable conditions, they blend in with the awkward humans and society of Pndapetzim. Baudolino falls in love with Hypatia.

(1196-1199) Pndapetzim is a city with extremely diverse population in terms of physiognomy and set of beliefs. The politocracy keeps the ailing son of Pester Johannes as a dummy governing figure and the population under control under the pretense of an imminent invasion of the Gog and Magog threat. The border cannot be crossed right away due to obscure conditions that must be fulfilled. While continuously hoping for the favorable conditions to settle, the pilgrims blend in with the odd characters of Pndapetzim. They learn that relative harmony could exist in spite of puzzling differences in physiognomy and mind set; while the latter frequently manifest in verbal spate, there is no hate nor physical violence associated with it, apparently.

Details in progress...

(1199) Baudolino explores the outskirts of the city and has again the vision of a unicorn accompanied by a beautiful, young girl. Only that this time it's real. The girl, Hypatia, is also intelligent and they have long discussions about the human nature and its harmony with the surrounding world. It looks like some sort of a Universal Consciousness is more important than that of a Universal Religion. Baudolino and Hypatia fall in love with each other. Although he is a 58 years old, bold man, she is not phased out by his age and looks. He is beautiful by contrasts

with the hairy, ugly satyrs that she and her sisters' community know. In turn, Baudolino is not phased out by the fact that she is not entirely...human.

Details in progress...

ACT III-STAGE V: The Final Push (1200) The Gog and Magog Attack and the Pilgrims Must Flee.

(1203) The threat of the apocalyptic Gog and Magog materializes as they are spotted approaching the city. The pilgrims help organizing and training the Pndapetzim people to defend the city. The Gog and Magog attack and Pndapetzim loses the battle to the fault of its own people; at the critical moment when they were to counterattack, the mindset differences blow-up into an argument and a fight starts between them. The Gog and Magog conquer the city but the pilgrims manage to flee, joined by their faithful unipod Gavagai. Unfortunately, Baudolino is separated from his beloved, pregnant Hypatia.

Details in progress...

ACT III-TURNING POINT #5: The Climax (90-99%) (1200-1204) The Pilgrims embark on a maritime silk road route. captured by terrorists.

(1200-1204) The pilgrims embark on a Chinese ship loaded with silk to trade for the precious stone and gold from India and Persian Gulf. On the ship there are traders, a Buddhist, a Nestorian monk, and two Muslim scholars, the latter embarking later, in Muscat. The monks engage in discussions on what is common on their beliefs and how a Universal Religion could be achieved. It turns out that the differences cannot be reconciled except by being tolerant vs. each other. On the route, they experience a huge tsunami and have to fight pirates. Other ships sailing in the opposite direction are sighted. Baudolino keeps having his daydreaming experiences about huge octopuses and fish coming out of the Ocean waters. Once arrived in the Persian Gulf, the ships' Captain would turn back to China but the monks convince him to continue to Constantinople; the monks hope to deliver a message of unity to the parties fighting in Constantinople. When they arrive, Constantinople is aflame, conquered by the Crusaders. Baudolino's group and the monks disembark and face the destruction of the city.

Details in progress...

ACT III-STAGE VI: The Aftermath. (1205) Baudolino Writes his Story.

The open window overlooks burned down houses, the broken tower of a minaret and the dome of the Saint Sofia church in the distance. The dome is gray under the heavy clouds covering the sky. A flock of crows fly by and...[enters the room then morph into the...](#) letters of the story that Baudolino is writing on a parchment. His last lines are ironical about the truth in Otto's prophecy about dreams turning into reality and the meaning of "Esse est percipi!". Could this be true? It could, but only if heightened by Faith, Baudolino concludes in writing, then lets the pen down. As he pensively looks at the destroyed city, a sunray breaks through the clouds and lights the dome of Santa Sophia, as if turning on its golden splendor. The burned down houses restore themselves to their white beauty adorned with flowers and the broken minaret tower rises back into the sky. On the road, a group of women draped in floating veils approaches the house. Hypatia, holding a baby in her arms, walks in front of them smiling.

END