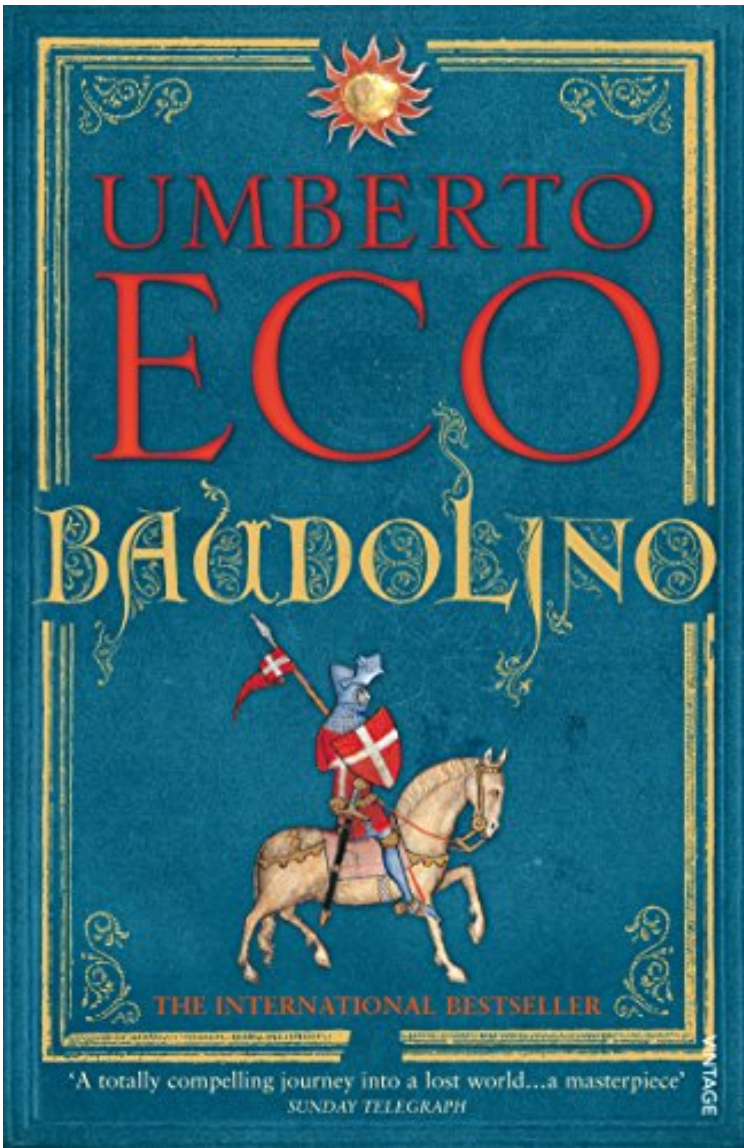


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Baudolino



Par Umberto Eco
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Description : Description du produitIt is April 1204, and Constantinople, the splendid capital of the Byzantine Empire, is being sacked and burned by the knights of the Fourth Crusade. Amid the carnage and confusion, one Baudolino saves a historian and high court official from certain death at the hands of the crusading warriors and proceeds to tell his own fantastical story. Born a simple peasant in northern Italy, Baudolino has two major gifts--a talent for learning languages and a skill in telling lies. When still a boy he meets a foreign commander in the woods, charming him with his quick wit and lively mind. The commander--who proves to be Emperor Frederick Barbarossa--adopts Baudolino and sends him to the university in Paris, where he makes a number of fearless, adventurous friends.Spurred on by myths and their own reveries, this merry band sets out in search of Prester John, a legendary priest-king said to rule over a vast kingdom in the East--a phantasmagorical land of strange creatures with eyes on their shoulders and

mouths on their stomachs, of eunuchs, unicorns, and lovely maidens. As always with Eco, this abundant novel includes dazzling digressions, outrageous tricks, extraordinary feeling, and vicarious reflections on our postmodern age. This is Eco the storyteller at his brilliant best. International Bestseller

Presentation de l'auteur An extraordinary epic, brilliantly-imagined, new novel from a world-class writer and author of *The Name of the Rose*. Discover the Middle Ages with Baudolino - a wondrous, dazzling, beguiling tale of history, myth and invention. It is 1204, and Constantinople is being sacked and burned by the knights of the fourth Crusade. Amid the carnage and confusion Baudolino saves a Byzantine historian and high court official from certain death at the hands of the crusading warriors, and proceeds to tell his own fantastical story. The most playful of historical novelists, Umberto Eco has absorbed the real lesson of history: that there is no such thing as the absolute truth. In *Baudolino*, he hands his narrative to an Italian peasant who has managed, through good luck and a clever tongue, to become the adopted son of the Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, and a minister of his court in the closing years of the 12th century. Baudolino's other gift is for spontaneous but convincing lies, and so his unfolding tale--as recounted in 1204 to a nobleman of Constantinople, while the fires of the Fourth Crusade rage around them--exemplifies the Cretan Liar's Paradox: He can't be believed. Why not, then, make his story as outrageous as possible? In the course of his picaresque tale, Baudolino manages to touch on nearly every major theme, conflict, and boondoggle of the Middle Ages: the Crusades; the troubadours; the legend of the Holy Grail; the rise of the cathedral cities; the position of Jews; the market in relics; the local rivalries that made Italy so vulnerable to outside attack; and the perennial power struggles between the pope and the emperor. With the help of alcohol and a mysterious Moorish concoction called "green honey," Baudolino and his ragtag friends engage in typical scholastic debates of the period, trying to determine the dimensions of Solomon's Temple and the location of the Earthly Paradise. And when the Emperor needs support in his claims for saintly lineage, who but Baudolino can craft the perfect letter of homage from the legendary Prester John, Holy (and wholly fictitious) Christian King of the East? A giddy and exasperating romp, *Baudolino* will draw you into its labyrinthine inventions and half-truths, even if you know better. --Regina Marler From Publishers Weekly In another grand mythical epic, Eco transports readers to the medieval Italy of *The Name of the Rose* (though almost two centuries earlier), where Frederick Barbarossa seeks to establish himself as the Holy Roman emperor. The story begins in 1204, as the Byzantium capital of Constantinople is sacked and Baudolino, the adoptive son of Frederick, recounts his life to Byzantine historian Niketas, whom he has just saved from the barbaric Latins. Unfolding amid religious conspiracy theories and mysticism, the narrative, which builds slowly, follows the life of Baudolino, an Italian peasant boy who fabricates stories he realizes people want to believe in. While studying in Paris, Baudolino meets several friends from all over the world, who together divulge their intimate dreams and share their desire to discover distant places. Two decades later, Baudolino calls together his friends to embark on what will be a lifelong journey to find Prester John, the Christian priest of the East, whose fabled reputation Baudolino has helped create. Eco seems to loosen the reins when the friends set out across unknown territories, where they grope through an eternally dark forest; traverse a river of stones and boulders; and encounter such mythical creatures as the sled-footed skiapods, dog-headed cynocephali and the Hypatia, beautiful sirens with the legs of goats. While the pilgrims are aware, to a certain extent, of Baudolino's truth-stretching, they all come to believe in their search, as does Baudolino himself. Eco builds his story upon light theological and historical debates, though fiction and history are more evenly balanced than in his previous book, *The Island of the Day Before*, making for a more engaging read. While this book lacks the suspense of *The Name of the Rose*, it is nevertheless a spirited story that might offer those previously daunted by his writing a more accessible entre. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.