

The Fall of the Red Apple

The Drowning of an Empire

Byzantines (Greeks)

Constantine (Emperor)

Notaras (Chief Advisor of Constantine)

Scout

Eastern Orthodox Priest

Guard (Greek)

Servant (Constantine's)

Captain Giovanni Giustiniani

Giovanni's Soldier

Ottoman Turks

Memhet (Sultan)

Pasha (Chief Advisor)

Turkish Soldier

Ribbon Dancers

Guards (Turkish)

Janissaries (Ottoman elite fighting force)

Uluma (Islamic Priest)

Miscellaneous

Narrator (Indian slave)

Urban (bell maker)

Stage Hands

Scene 1:

Arabian music playing

(Narrator sitting cross-legged, front center stage; meditating. Music stops. He looks up slowly, speaks ponderingly to audience.)

NARRATOR: There is an old Turkish proverb: *(pauses, holds up red apple)* “a red apple invites stones.” *(long pause)* The city of Constantinople was the juiciest, reddest apple on the tree in the year 1453. For 391 years, or what Rev. 9 refers to as “an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year,” the Islamic powers of the world had been throwing stones at this red apple, trying desperately to knock it from the tree. Constantinople was the jewel in the crown of Christianity. It was the last defense to protect Europe from the Islamic swarms. But because of its long-standing corruption of the Truth of God, and in response to the cry of the saints, the angels were carefully preparing a power from the east that would pour over the Euphrates and blast forth God’s trumpet judgments in slaying a 1/3 part of the Roman Empire. And so, from within the walls of Constantinople, the emperor – Constantine – and his men, looked out in terror as the Ottoman Turks approached the city.

Scene 2:

(Eastern Orthodox music playing)

(Constantine and Notaras on stage; CON and PRIEST praying. NOTARAS using eyepiece to look out to left of audience. NOTARAS closes eyepiece in frustration)

NOTARAS: The reports from our scouts have been verified. The Ottoman army is enormous – MUCH larger than any that the world has ever seen, your majesty.

PRIEST: The Ottoman’s army is like the sea – it never has peace but is always rolling angrily - having no bounds.

Scout enters looking grim

SCOUT: *(falling down on one knee to CON)* Your majesty – we have just returned from down river. The Ottoman’s have finished building their second fortress – they are calling it “The Throat Cutter”. They have complete control of access to the Black Sea. We saw with our own eyes a Venetian ship sunk by a cannon for not stopping to pay tribute to Mehmet. He is preparing to attack. And soon my Lord.

CON: *(indignant)* The walls of Constantinople have stood fast against every invader for over 1000 years. More than 20 times, armies have stood outside our gates, and been defeated.

NOTARAS: I agree entirely – our city is unrivalled. We have a triple set of walls, each 100 feet tall and 30 feet thick. We are surrounded by water on 3 sides.

SCOUT: HOWEVER, no Christian army has ever been victorious against the Ottoman Turks in battle.

CON: That is why we’re not going to *give* them a battle. If it’s our city they want, they will have to *take* it from us. Send word throughout the city – we are preparing for a siege. And send word throughout Europe, to come to our aid for the honor of God and Christendom!

(They leave stage left through door)

(NARRATOR enters stage right via stairs)

NARRATOR: The Turkish hoards were coming in great waves, pouring over the river Euphrates with their sights set on this (*Holds up apple*) Constantinople....ople...Constantinople. The young Sultan – Mehmet – had declared that he would conquer Constantinople, and triumph over the infidel in the name of Islam. His army of horses numbered 200 thousand thousand – a host that would stretch from here all the way to North Battleford!

Emperor Constantine's call for aid was heard throughout Europe. In a humble bellmaker's cottage far away in Hungary, an idea was conceived that would change the course of history.

Scene 3:

(*URBAN on stage. Lights firecracker underneath bucket (bell). It explodes. He is ecstatic.*)

URBAN: It's brilliant! (*Gathers scrolls, scribbling designs on them, fumbling as he goes about excitedly*). If my cannon can work in small form, imagine what it will do on a larger scale! Emperor Constantine has called for all the armies of Europe to come to his aid. He doesn't *need* all of Europe – he just needs *this!* I alone have the solution! I must leave *at once* for Constantinople.

(*Hungarian or German music playing*)

(*URBAN packs his bag and fumbles around again with scrolls, rushing out the door stage left.*)

GUARD marches across stage and stands at top of stairs.

URBAN travels out around audience and up the stairs muttering. *Knocks at gates of the palace.*)

GUARD: Foreigner – what business have you in Constantinople?

URBAN: (*with arrogance*) I demand to see the Emperor. (*shaking his plans/drawings*) I have the key to victory against the Ottomans. I *must* see him.

GUARD: (*pausing first, looking him over, not impressed*) Follow me.

URBAN: (*speaking to himself as they walk across the stage*) I will soon be indispensable to the Emperor when he sees the brilliance of my plans.

(*URBAN* walks through the door. *IMMEDIATELY* is thrown back out, and falls to the ground. *Scrolls* thrown out at him as well)

GUARD: (*very loud and angry*) Your design is ludicrous! The Emperor will not risk this expense on a bellmaker's whimsical idea. (*Throws URBAN'S hat at him. Changes tone now*) But because he is a gracious, God-fearing man, and not like that barbarian Turk, he will allow you to leave with your head attached. But don't come wasting the emperors time again! We have a serious threat at our door, and this is not a time for fool's jokes!

(*GUARD* slams the door)

(*URBAN* collects his scrolls and goes and sits on top step of stage, thinking, mumbling to himself)

(*NARRATOR* enters in front of the stage, takes a showy bite of his apple, jumps up on the stage to sit next to *URBAN* by the end of *URBAN'S* next line)

URBAN: (*sounding childish*) My design is not a joke! He didn't even let me test it for him. I know the Ottoman's are a serious threat! That's why I've come! My plan *WILL* work, I *KNOW* it will!...(pausing) Well, if the Emperor doesn't believe me, perhaps his barbarian enemy will! (*standing up*) Constantine will rue the day he....(*turns around to face narrator*)

NARRATOR: Good day, sir.

URBAN: Who are you?

NARRATOR: Who am I? *(turning to the audience)* Well I am the narrator of course! I couldn't help but overhear your plans to visit the Sultan. If the Emperor of Constantinople doesn't have time for you, how do you think you'll fare before the Sultan?

URBAN: *(fumbling...)* Um...uh...

NARRATOR: *(pondering)* Mehmet – Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Do you know what his men call him? *(slowly now)* Humquar (hum-car) – drinker of blood. *(puts arm around Urban)* Do you know what Mehmet does to people who waste his time, or anyone really, that he takes a dislike to? *(adjusting his own turban, eerily now)* He places their turban on their head, and *nails* it there with a spike. Then he cuts their head off and puts it on a pole outside the front of his door. *(pauses, changing tone to be very cheery now, with a smile)*
So, best of luck with that!

(NARRATOR hops down and walks away in front of stage left, taking another bite of his apple)
(URBAN hops down, visibly nervous, wiping his brow, fumbling with scrolls, exists in front of stage right)

Scene 4:

(Arabian music playing. Ribbon dancers enter while throne is set up. SOLDIERS enter from stage left, carry in heads on spikes and put them by the stairs. More SOLDIERS and PASHA march in from stage left and stand by throne while Mehmet enters from stage left and sits.)

MEHMET: *(wildly)* OUT! EVERYBODY OUT! *(music stops, everybody leaves hurriedly)*. Not you Pasha. I need my most trusted advisor. *(pauses)* My most earnest desire is to crush the infidels. *(rubbing his neck)* A Christian Constantinople is a bone in the throat of Allah. Our men are incredible – willing to rise early and live on little. But our catapults are not strong enough to break the walls of Constantinople. And if we can't break through those walls, it doesn't matter how strong our army is.

PASHA: *(thinking)* There is a man, a foreigner from Hungary, who just arrived to our camp this morning. He claims he has the key to victory. I didn't mention it sooner because he is a Christian. I do not know if he can be trusted. Do you wish to see him?

MEHMET: I have methods to secure his loyalty. Yes, bring him in at once.

(URBAN sitting at bottom of stairs. PASHA goes over and motions for him to come up. URBAN walks up stairs and when he sees the heads on spikes, gulps visibly while rubbing his neck.)

PASHA: *(to URBAN on the side)* I urge you my Hungarian friend, choose your words carefully.

MEHMET: Let's not waste my time. What is this key to victory that you speak of?

URBAN: your Magnificence, I am going to presume that your cannons, like those of all the kings of Europe, are much too weak to break through the walls of Constantinople. I have invented a cannon that can be cast in solid bronze, and is so powerful that it can launch a 600 pound cannon ball a mile through the sky.

MEHMET: (*doubting*) That hardly seems believable! But let's assume that what you're saying is true. What can you do to those walls over there? (*pointing to city walls*)

URBAN: (*hesitant*) I'm not entirely sure. I have yet to fully carry out the design.

MEHMET: Take a look at those heads over there...and I will ask you again. What can you do to the walls of Constantinople?

URBAN: (*looking at the heads, and suddenly looking much more sure*) Well when you put it *that* (*pointing to heads*) way, I am *certain* that these cannons could blow down the walls of Babylon herself!

MEHMET: Excellent. Get to work right away. The siege begins as soon as your cannon is ready.
(*They all exit stage right down stairs and walk in front of stage to get Cannon. Mehmet and Urban supervise while SOLDIERS bring cannon out.*)
(*CON sits on throne reading multiple letters from kings of Europe, looking distressed*).

NARRATOR: The Angels of God had been busy at work preparing the fire, smoke and brimstone that the Apostle John saw by revelation in ch. 9:17. Urban's cannon was unlike anything the world had ever seen – 27 feet long, cast in a single, solid piece of bronze. It took 400 men and 70 yoke of oxen just to move it! And although it had first been offered to Constantine and his army, it was by God's design that (*beckoning to Constantine*) "not you, but you (*to Mehmet*) shall have this power."

(*Mehmet & co. exit to left*)

Scene 5:

(*Eastern Orthodox music playing*)
(*CON on stage reading letters, NOTARAS and SERVANT enter*)

CON: (*waves the letters*) Not a single king of Europe is willing to come to our aid!

SERVANT: Your majesty – division, poverty and the Black Death have taken their toll on the armies of Europe. I'm afraid no help is coming. The Ottoman forces will surround the city any day now.

CON: There is one last thing we could do. The Pope has agreed that if we submit to his papal authority, he will support us and send soldiers and weapons.

NOTARAS: (*bitterly*) It is better for the city to be governed by the Islamic turban than the Latin tiara.

SERVANT: I agree entirely. It is better for us to put our trust in God than the Italians.

CON: Then we must trust that we are under divine protection, and that even now at the last moment divine intervention will chase off the invader.

(*ship / naval sounds*)
(*they run to edge of stage as if peering over wall into the harbor*)

SERVANT: (*excitedly*) Italian ships! But they don't carry the flag of the Pope! Somebody has answered your call for help!

(GIOVANNI and his men enter stage right up stairs 2 at a time, with energy and flare. Removes his hat and does a deep bow to CON)

GIOVANNI: My emperor, Captain Giovanni Giustiniani at your service. I received your call for help and set sail at once. I have personally financed and organized this expedition with 700 of my best men.

CON: We are greatly encouraged by your timely arrival, and are fortunate to have such an expert of siege warfare with us. I appoint you commander-in-chief immediately. What do you suggest, captain?

GIOVANNI: Your walls are weakest along the harbor. I would order a chain be placed the mouth of the harbor. No ships would be able to leave the city any longer, but it would be strong enough to prevent any Ottoman ships from entering the harbor. It will also keep our wall out of range of their cannons.

CON: *(motions to SERVANT)* Have the chain set up immediately.
(SERVANT leaves)

GIOVANNI: And what is our weapon count? As I recall, there are 14 miles of wall to defend around the city?

CON: *(motions to NOTARAS, who checks his paper and whispers into CON's ear. CON is serious here).* We have several bows and 1 light cannon.

GIOVANNI: *(sarcastically in disbelief)* Seriously?! You have 1 light cannon for 14 miles of wall? *(pausing, mustering courage; charisma returns).* Well, let's get to work! We need to strengthen the walls, clear the motes, and polish up that cannon!

(GIOVANNI and SERVANT exit stage left out the door, chain set up in front of stage. CON sits on his throne.)

Scene 6:

(Ottoman table set up in front of stage with chess board. MEHMET, PASHA and TURKISH SOLDIER, JANISSARIES around table.)

MEHMET: The Ottoman empire will never be secure until it holds Constantinople. If I cannot rule an empire that include Constantinople, I would prefer not to have an empire at all.

PASHA, JAN and TURKISH SOLDIER: TO WAR!!

JAN: *(very seriously)* It is believed we have at least one soldier for each man, woman and child within the city walls – if not more Sultan of Sultans. These enemies of the Faith do not stand a chance.

MEHMET: We will give these wretched unbelievers one final offer of peace.
(MEHMET walks over and calls up to CON on stage)

MEHMET: In return for voluntarily surrendering the city, I offer all the inhabitants freedom of life under Ottoman protection, and I will even recognize you, Emperor Constantine, as one of my governors.

CON: *(standing up)* Giving you the city depends neither on me or anyone else here, as we have all decided to die with our own free will. Closing the gates of my capital, I will defend my people to the last drop of

blood. I turn now and look to God alone. If it is his will that the city should be yours, who is there that can oppose him?

(MEHMET returns to his table and plays with his chessboard muttering curses with his men – despicable infidels, wretched unbelievers, enemies of the faith)

JAN: He is a fool my Lord, our men are loyal and have never failed to show courage. 10 000 of our men make less noise in battle than 100 Christian soldiers. You have only to give the signal.

GIOVANNI enters from stage left)

GIOVANNI: Emperor – the city is holding tight. Even though we are outnumbered 10 to 1, we still can come out of this alive. The chain we set up across the harbor is working brilliantly. Mehmet is not able to get his cannons close enough to break through our walls. The morale of our soldiers is high.

CON: Excellent! Keep me informed of any developments.

(BOTH exit together)

MEHMET: Constantinople has never fallen before, because it's only ever been attacked by land. We HAVE to attack by sea.

TURKISH SOLDIER: the chain sir – no ship can get past it – what do you have in mind?

MEHMET: I have an idea, and it's just crazy enough that it might work. Tonight we are going to reverse the history of the world. No longer will the West advance towards the East, as in former times. Now we gallop west. There will be 1 empire, 1 faith, and 1 sovereignty of the world. Order the sailors to ready their ships. We set sail at dawn.

(drums beating, sailing sounds, trumpets, yelling)

(GIOVANNI, CON, NOTARAS, SCOUT, PRIEST and GUARD all run to front of stage and look down)

NOTARAS: Um...Constantine...we have a problem.

GIOVANNI: *(in disbelief)* Their ships... .. are flying through the air! Their men... .. are rowing through the air!

Ottoman Ships carried over the chain, followed by the cannon. Ottoman soldiers humming "Humquar, Humquar, Humquar etc." as they carry the cannon over the chain, followed by Urban, Mehmet, Pasha and Soldiers. Stand on ground near stage right entrance.

SCOUT: *(in shock)* They're not flying... .. Mehmet has his soldiers *carrying* the ships out of the water!! They are lifting them over the chain!

PRIEST: How is this even possible – he must be killing hundreds, if not thousands of his own men to do this.

NOTARAS: Hours.....we only have hours before his ships will be within striking distance.

CON: Gather the people for one final plea to God.

PRIEST: *(comes out with incense walking back/forth across stage while rocking back and forth in prayer while chanting/music playing)*

(ALL except GUARD exit stage left while MEHMET'S ARMY gathers at bottom of stairs stage right)

(GUARD marching back and forth at front of stage)

(NARRATOR enters from in front of stage left, hops up onto the stage)

NARRATOR: *(looking down below, rubbing his chin slowly)* Do you see what I see? *(takes bite of apple)*

GUARD: *(fumbling with eyeglass, looking down)* Wait a minute, I recognize him. Isn't he the odd little fellow who was here trying to sell that crazy cannon idea a few months ago? *(pause, thinking)* Should I tell the emperor? *(pause, continuing hesitantly)*. Maybe tomorrow.

(Bells ringing, with occasional cannons)

NARRATOR: sounds like a good idea. *(hops off stage and exits)*

CON's MEN *come out and wheel small cannon to front of stage. They all have bow and arrows.*

MEHMET's MEN *prepare their cannon)*

GIOVANNI: *(giving signal)* Men – stand your guard – for God – and Christendom!

(Beating drums. Add trumpets, pipes, tambourines. Occasional cannon fire. Add bells, wooden columns, screaming, crying.)

(GIOVANNI at the front directing cannon fire. Gets hit in chest.)

GIOVANNI: *(unable to stand)* Men! Bring me to the emperor! *(His men help him hobble over to CON)* Sir, I am too injured to carry on. If I don't see a doctor immediately I will be of no use to you. Please let me return to my doctor for help and I will be back to lead your army as soon as possible.

CON: Captain, go and be quick. They have yet to breach the walls, but we will need your expertise if we are to keep it that way.

(CON takes over directing the cannon. GIOVANNI leaves stage left. His men at the top of the stairs standing guard, shooting arrows, see him leaving).

SOLDIER: Our captain is hit! He's retreating! Follow him!

(They follow after GIOVANNI)

CON: *(shouting to leaving soldiers, who ignore him)* Stop! Stop! I forbid you to leave your post! Defend the gate; it's too weak to be left unguarded.

JAN: Sir – we have the city! With one more effort the city can be taken!

CON: *(Yelling to his soldiers)* Go on, my falcons! March, my lions!

OTTOMAN SOLDIERS: *(shouting as they run up the stairs onto the stage)* Allah Akbar – Allah is great!

(SOLDIER waves flag at front of stage)

GREEK SOLDIER: *(pointing to the flag)* The city is lost! The city is lost! *(runs off stage left)*
(People off stage left shout "The city is lost!")

CON: *(throwing aside his cloak)* Let us go forward men, against these barbarians! *(leads the final charge with scout and him and all his soldiers die in battle)*

(Arabian music plays)

(Ottoman soldiers drag dead bodies off stage left)

(MEHMET and ULUMA and all other OTTOMANS walk on stage. ULUMA comes to front center).

ULUMA: *(In Arabic first, then English)* There is no God but Allah! Muhammad is his messenger!
(ALL step back, MEHMET steps forward)

MEHMET: We have reached the gates of the west, and now we can reach for our ultimate destiny – conquering Europe. This city shall no longer be called Constantinople, but Istanbul – “where Islam abounds.”

ALL: *(not in unison)* Allah Akbar! Allah Akbar! Allah Akbar!

NARRATOR: In conquering Constantinople, Mehmet had fulfilled God’s purpose with him. He was never destined to conquer Europe, but to judge the 1/3 part of the Roman empire for its long-standing corruption of the Truth of God, and the persecution of the saints. God had prepared these trumpet judgments in response to the cry of his people, and the angels were diligently at work, because God had not forsaken those whom he loved. If he has worked so diligently for his saints in the past, then certainly he is at work today, and will safely gather his chosen ones, as recorded in Isaiah 26 - “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity...” (Isa. 26:20-21). “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” (Isa. 25:9) “In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in Yah, Yahweh is everlasting strength.” (Isa. 26:1-4)