

St. George and the Turkish Knight

Concept and preliminary script by Susan Galbraith, liberally embellished and improved by members of the troupe, in particular Connie Walters, Mike Miller, and Julie Schult.

Annotated as performed at Thornden Park, Syracuse on May 1, 2003 during our May Day celebration.

Narrator: Maria Hosmer-Briggs
St. George: Nancy McCracken
Joe Everyman: Pete Schult
Lisa Strata: Mike Miller

Blitzkrieg: Julie Schult
Halliburton: Connie Walters
Lisa's helper: Laurel Sharp
Doctor I.M. Plausible: Susan Galbraith

(Narrator enters, wearing safari clothes and a headset, and carrying a microphone. She is accompanied by Blitzkrieg, who is filming Narrator with a videocam but occasionally gets sidetracked and starts filming the audience, so Narrator has to keep moving to stay in front of the camera.)

Narrator: The truest tales of joy and pain
Are told and told, and told again.
For history repeats, you know.
And we must reap what we do sow.

So this year's mumming play will tell
A story you may know too well
The tale of a most ancient fight.
Of Saint George and the Turkish Knight.

(George enters, wearing a silver hood, a long-sleeved grey shirt, and a long white tunic with a red "Cross of St. George" on the front. The back of the tunic has a silhouette of a dragon with the international "no" sign – circle crossed by a diagonal line – over the dragon.)

George: In comes I. I'm George the Saint.
I'm NO MARTYR, and I ain't
No pacifist! I killed a dragon.
Mess with me and I'll be baggin'
All your lands and all your chattel.
I need more land to run my cattle.
To the victor go the spoils.
Say, *(points at a random audience member)* did I hear they struck more oil?

(Joe enters. He is a tall man wearing a NASCAR windbreaker jacket and carrying a newspaper.)

Joe: *(entering)* In comes I, Joe Everyman.
I've always done the best I can.
I'm angry at the folks in charge
Who've made my tax bill grow so large.

(Lisa enters, a balding man with a full white beard, wearing a bright yellow yarn wig and a flowered muu-muu dress.)

Lisa: *(entering)* In comes I, of ancient fame.
Lisa is my given name.
You know me not? Perhaps I oughta
Give my full name - Lisa Strata.
I'm here today to right a wrong.
The weak are suffering from the strong.
George is a bully, not a saint,
And what he claims, the truth it ain't!
That "dragon" that he cut in two
Was my iguana, Mr. Blue.

George: These things happen, honey lamb.
Don't get your knickers in a jam.
When civilization meets the savage
There's bound to be collateral damage. *(swings sword, narrowly missing Joe)*
(continuing to address Lisa) I didn't mean to get you mad.
Here's a kiss to make you glad.

Lisa: Sir! I am a virtuous maid.
And I don't trust you with that... blade.

George: A spirited and handsome wench
And handy with a monkey wrench!
I'd shed my armor for your charms
And let you share my coat of arms.

Lisa: *(aside)* I'd like to ditch this pompous clown.
Or better, get him out of town.
To evade his crude attraction
I need a weapon of mass distraction.

I must send him on a quest
That will never let him rest.
To battle foes that don't exist
He'll gallop off into the mist,
Imaginary foes to fight.
Starting with ... the "Turkish Knight"!

(to George) I cannot marry till the day
The Turkish Knight is sent away.
The country suffers from his schemes.
His evil face haunts all my dreams.

Joe: So that's the cause of all our ills!
Falling income, rising bills,
Blizzards, droughts, and global warming,
Ozone holes and desert storming.
I knew someone was to blame.
Killing him will win you fame!

George: No villain can escape my wrath
For I am on a righteous path.
Knowing God is on my side
Swells my manly heart with pride.

Lisa: Hurry, hurry! Time to go! (*pushing George off stage*)
Seek him high and seek him low.
He can not fool you with disguise.
If you just look into his eyes.
The Turk has such an evil glare
His gaze makes birds fall from the air. (*someone tosses a rubber chicken onstage*)

(*aside*) This Turkish Knight's a helpful hoax!
I always did like practical jokes.

George: (*salutes*) I will hunt him everywhere.
In caves and deserts, in the air
(Offstage: Will you hunt him with a fox?) I will hunt him with a fox.
(Offstage: Will you hunt him in a box?) I will hunt him in a box.
I will hunt him here and there.
I will hunt him EVERYWHERE!
And when I see his ugly mug
I will STRANGLE that Turkish thug.
(*This last couplet is a solemn vow, make it slow and clear. Joe leads a cheer.*)
I always like to look my best.
And this is an important quest.
While I'm on this epic mission.
I need a scribe with wit and vision.

(*Blitzkrieg is a short-haired woman in safari vest. She carries a videocam with the lens cover still on it, and she has a tendency to turn the camera upside down when aiming it at herself.*)

Blitzkrieg: (*enters*) Blitzkrieg here, from AOL-Murdoch-KNN
(Heckler: KNN? Blitzkrieg: the Knightly Knews Knetwork.)
At your service with my camera and pen.
Only tell me where you're headed
I will be your bard, embedded.
When life's too quiet, I shake it up.
If there's no news, I make it up.
No matter if my facts are junk.
The focus groups will love your spunk.

George: Let's move 'em out. That Turk will soon
Confront his personal "High Noon."
He'll hear me coming and he'll cower
Before my overwhelming power.

Blitzkrieg: They'll praise your deeds. They'll sing your song.
You'll be a hero your whole life long.
And if we need a bigger draw,
I'll throw in words like "shock" and "awe".
(*As George & Blitzkrieg exit*) C'mon, let's talk "interview".

(*Hal Burton is a tall, slim woman in a Stetson, checked sports jacket, and cowboy boots.*)

Hal Burton: (*enters*) Howdy!
Hal Burton here, I'm George's friend.
I hope his battles never end
'Cause every crisis, I can see
Provides an opportunity.
(*walks over to Joe*)
Hey pal, you see that orange sky?
It means fer sure, the end is nigh!
And lookey there, the Turkish Knight
Lurks in shadows, out of sight.
How can we foil the wily tricks
Of freedom-hating lunatics?
Well, gather round, and don't be fearful.
Listen to my news most cheerful.
Protect yourselves from grief and loss
With a piece of the True Cross! (*Takes out a box of toothpicks*)
It's pocket sized and solid pine
And only \$19.99!
A bonus if you order now -
A remnant of the Holy Shroud!
Your patriotic duty's clear -
Buy 'em up - the line forms here!

Lisa: The sky turns orange on every day
As the sunlight comes our way.
Why must you manufacture danger.
Causing us to fear each stranger?

Joe: Why do you hate America so much?

Hal Burton: Joe here's got the common touch.
You pacifists - yer foolin' yerself.
Folks, have the True Cross on your shelf
And keep your powder dry, I say,
For God and guns will win the day!
(*Hal Burton and Joe exit*)

Narrator: *(enters)* Soon news of George's quest was heard
His faithful scribe put out the word
That George's sword was hard at work
Destroying all to find the Turk.
Each house might be a hiding place
And must be searched to find - **that face**.

Lisa: My little prank has gone awry.
I have to stop that crazy guy.
Imagined foes cannot be killed.
So how can George's sword be stilled?
(light bulb moment)
The fear we have of others' clout
Comes from within and not without
To bring back balance to his life
George must confront his inner strife
To help him with this introspection
We'll show to him his own reflection.

(Lisa grabs Laurel, who is primping with her mirror and standing with the audience." Laurel is wearing a long, hooded brown coat. Her mirror has a reflective surface on both sides. Lisa sets Laurel up with the coat draped over her head, the mirror covering her face. Lisa stands behind Laurel and calls out.)

Marian: Come quick, St. George, I think he's here!
Help me now, I shake with fear. *(shakes Laurel.)*

(George and Blitzkrieg enter. George rushes over.)

George: Good has triumphed over evil!
I am here to face this devil.
That hideous monster will not stand
I'll strangle him with my own hand.

(Laurel turns, and George looks straight into the mirror at his own face.)

George: There's the face I've learned to hate!
Now you'll meet your righteous fate!
(George puts his hands around his own neck, strangles himself, and falls to the ground.)

Lisa: *(shocked)*: Oh, worse and worse! What can I do?
He was a fool, but I was too.
I only hope it's not too late
(turns to Blitzkrieg) Can you save him from his fate!

Blitzkrieg: (*Turns the camera – upside down – toward herself, and declaims in an “on-the-scene journalist” voice*) We saw the tyrant breathe his last.

And now the hero too has passed.

This day was full of guts and glory.

.....I'm off to find another story. (*exits*)

(*The Doctor sweeps onto the stage, wearing a Syracuse University dean's robe. It is a gaudy orange with black-striped sleeves and sports a blue velvet hood and a broad, flat blue-velvet hat shaped like a fallen soufflé.*)

Doctor: In comes I, the doctor glorious.

Witness to this scene victorious.

Saint George set out to vanquish Terror

But it seems there's been an error.

I was told the Turk had lost.

If this is victory, what was the cost?

Lisa: If you're a doctor, save him please!

Must I get down on my knees?

If we can pry his hands away

He might live another day!

Doctor: It's I.M. Plausible, PhD.

At your service. But, you see,

I enjoy **historic** strife.

Not the rigors of real life.

From a distance, war has nobility,

But it's much nastier in reality.

All this violence and blood....er

Sorry, but it makes me shudder.

Let's adjourn and have some tea

You can tell your tale to me.

(*Strokes Lisa. Lisa pulls away, saying “this is sexual harassment, you know.”*)

I'll take some notes on your perspective

Though you're clearly not objective.

I'd like to analyze the trends.

That brought Saint George to this sad end.

His fear of Turks, his great conceit

The reason for your **bald** deceit. (*peeling back Lisa's yarn wig*)

I'll write a monograph, or maybe two.

But right now, I'm no good to you. (*exits*)

Lisa: If you live by the sword in a violent way,

Sooner or later you'll be made to pay.

But beat to a plowshare and pulled through the field,

It opens the earth and increases the yield.

If likewise we transform the forces of strife,

Perhaps we can bring our Saint George back to life.

A sword dance would do it, 'though I'm not sure how.
Let's call in the Ribbonsteel rapper team now!

(Ribbonsteel Rapper team dawdles on sidelines, reluctant to enter. After some discussion, however, they dance, and Saint George miraculously revives.)

George: We all prefer to pass the blame
And give our fears a scary name
And so I hunted for the Knight
Who filled my heart with rage and fright.

But now I see my motivation
Was really sexual frustration.
I went off wandering in the mist
To please a girl I couldn't kiss.

(to Lisa)

So now I'm back, a better man Lisa: Better than ME?
I hope you'll join me in my plan
To celebrate life every day
And take your hand to greet the May.

FINIS