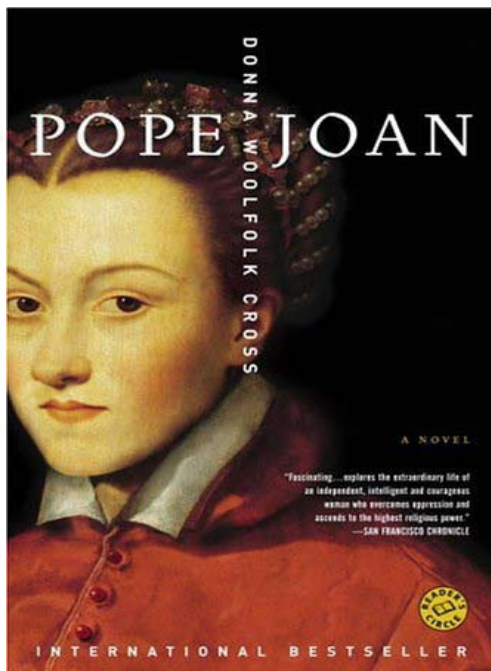




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BATTLE AXE'S BOOK OF THE MONTH



Pope Joan

by *Donna Woolfolk Cross*

One of the most controversial women of history is brought to brilliant life in Cross's tale of Pope Joan, a girl whose origins should have kept her in squalid domesticity. Instead, through her intelligence, indomitability and courage, she ascended to the throne of Rome as Pope John Anglicus. Pope Joan is a sweeping historical drama set against the turbulent events of the 9th century -- the Saracen sack of St. Peter's, the famous fire in the Borgo that destroyed over three-quarters of the Vatican, the Battle of Fontenoy, arguably the bloodiest and most terrible of medieval conflicts. The novel is a fascinating vivid record of what life was really like during the so-called Dark Ages, as masterwork of suspense and passion that has as its center an unforgettable woman, reminiscent of Jean Auel's Ayla, Jane Austen's Emma, and other heroines who struggle against restrictions their souls will not accept.

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