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Joan of Arc and her Marching Orders

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Just occasionally a book in a series transcends the limitations of its format. **Joan of Arc** won't disappoint any fan of the 'Dead Famous' style of historical biography. There is the usual slapstick, melodrama, cartoons, jokes, anomalous newspaper reports and secret diaries. But Robins succeeds at the same time in conveying a great deal about the life and mind of medieval France. He and Phil Reeve lack nothing in humour and verve, even the jokes are a cut above the average. They also create a coherent narrative, full of powerful characters, none more extraordinary than Joan herself - driven, foolhardy, vulnerable, supremely self-confident, shrewd - whose sense of divine destiny transformed her, for a brief space, from a powerless peasant girl, barely more than a child, into the most powerful warrior in France. There have been more expensive and serious books on Joan for children, but none better than this. Robins does an excellent job of boiling down a considerable body of historical scholarship and, in his capable hands, the burlesque and carnival of the presentation serve to illuminate the weakness and duplicity of Joan's friends and foes alike and to heighten the achievements and tragedy of the maid herself.

Running Order:

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