



Reluctant Saint

Donald Spoto

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"Don't make a saint of me," Francis of Assisi told a friend-even as his charisma and holiness were dazzling his contemporaries and generating a legend that has lasted almost a millennium. In *Reluctant Saint*, Donald Spoto, author of the acclaimed *The Hidden Jesus*, shows us a Saint Francis who transcends the image of Francis familiar to even the least religious among us: wealthy profligate, soldier, businessman, preacher, defender of the poor, mystic-and, later, a lodestar to ecologists and animal rights activists. Spoto's unprecedented access to unexplored archives and the saint's own unpublished letters help reveal how Francis pioneered an entirely new historical movement, one that eventually slipped from his grasp.

Spoto highlights Francis's position within the ecclesiastical, political, and social forces of medieval Italy in all its violence, color, and mystery. It was, like our own, a time of crisis with a craving for reform and for a deeper, simpler, more personal faith-yet concern for the common good, and for the poor and sick, was virtually unknown. A key part of the revolution Francis brought about was his insistence that such concern lay at the heart of the Gospel. *Reluctant Saint* portrays a life that has captured the hearts and minds of millions over the centuries.



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