

JACQUES. Jacques Arc would not allow his wife to be there at the burning. He sent her off to a chapel clear to the other end of the city where she'd be spared the smell of the smoke. He was told that the crowds would be thick and if he wanted to be anywhere near his daughter that he had to get there early. He took his place near the stake before dawn and watched as the pitch-covered kindling and logs were brought in. He stood his ground as the square filled up and he shut his ears to all the ugly talk. When his daughter's cart rolled up, he raised his hand so she could see him. He wanted her to know that her da was proud of her. He wanted her to know that her da had her back. He watched. He watched. He never took his eyes off his child and saw her through her agony. Once it was over, Jacques felt it his duty to stay until every last trace of his girl was gone. Relic traders rushed the mound to collect his daughters' blackened bones to sell as souvenirs. Then soldiers came and beat them back and shoveled the smoking mess into buckets to throw in the river. A monk who was there to cleanse the spot with holy water scooped a fistful of ash into a rag and gave the bundle to Jacques. Then the monk led Jacques out of the square because the Maid's father had lost his sight.