

*Samuel French Acting Edition*

# Mother of the Maid

*by Jane Anderson*

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## CHARACTERS

**ISABELLE ARC** – Joan's Mum

**JOAN ARC** – The Maid

**JACQUES ARC** – Joan's Da

**PIERRE ARC** – Joan's big brother

**FATHER GILBERT** – The family priest

**LADY OF THE COURT** – A well-meaning woman of privilege

**THE COURT SCRIBE** – May be played by actor playing **FATHER GILBERT**

**JOAN'S PERSONAL CHAMBERLAIN** – May be played by actor playing **FATHER GILBERT**

**A PRISON GUARD** – May be played by actor playing **PIERRE**

**MONIQUE** – The **LADY OF THE COURT**'s Chambermaid

## SETTING

France. The Arc home. Some fancy rooms at court. A prison cell.

## TIME

Around 1429.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

This is not intended to be a history play. I beg you to not treat it that way. No classical acting please. Play it intimate and funny and messy and real. And no need to take the medieval setting too literally. Keep it simple but keep it tactile. This is a world that swings between dirt floors and tapestries, sheep dung and glass cups. Feel free to be impressionistic and fluid with the sets.

Note on the Arc's dialogue: in order to distinguish the Arcs from their upper class and educated counterparts, I've written the Arc's dialogue in my own version of Peasant Speak (in a British version, the actors can play with a range of English accents that express class difference). The Arcs talk in the shorthand of people who labor all day and don't care to waste their breath on unnecessary words: "A lotta burrs in the wool. Takin' me all day to clean it. Dunno what you lettin' those sheep get into." Their way of talking is direct and plain and if you follow the rhythm built into the dialogue it will fall into place.

## ACT I

### Scene One

*(Lights up on ISABELLE ARC sitting on a stool in the dim interior of the Arc home, cleaning a pile of sheep's wool, pulling out burrs and twigs and bits of detritus. The better to see, she's set herself up in a rectangle of late-afternoon light that's coming through the open door. Monotonous sounds from the outside drift in – cicadas, a few birds, someone chopping wood somewhere.)*

**ISABELLE.** Isabelle Arc is a God-fearing woman. She can neither read nor write and her skirts smell ripe as cheese. But she can do all sorts of handy things such as gutting a lamb, lancing a boil and hiding the family valuables during a raid. She has never blamed God for a blessed thing. When she lost a baby daughter to the bloody flux she barely shed a tear. Not that she didn't love the child, she knows that motherhood is a numbers game and you're bound to lose a few before you're done. Isabelle is grateful to have a daughter as healthy and hardy as her Joan. She's grateful for her sons who are healthy and hardy as well. She's grateful that the English haven't slaughtered 'em all like they did with the LeBecques. Nancy LeBecque was her best friend and they gossiped and laughed while they spun. Isabelle badly misses her friend and sometimes Isabelle wishes that her Joan would be a little more chatty. But still, Isabelle Arc counts her blessings. Grateful, grateful, grateful. That's what Isabelle tries to be.

*(A church bell tolls somewhere off in the distance. ISABELLE dutifully mumbles a quick prayer then resumes her endless picking.)*

*(JOAN comes in from the field looking flushed and distracted.)*

**ISABELLE.** There you are. Where you bin'?

**JOAN.** Bin' up on the hill with the sheep.

**ISABELLE.** Sheep came down a while ago.

**JOAN.** Well, that's where I bin'.

**ISABELLE.** A lotta burrs in the wool. Takin' me all day to clean it. Dunno what you're lettin' those sheep get into.

**JOAN.** Not gettin' into anything they haven't before.

**ISABELLE.** Well, they are. A lotta crappy little bits in here. Y'need to keep those sheep outta the scrub.

**JOAN.** Not goin' in the scrub.

**ISABELLE.** Seems they are, seein' all the pricklies I'm havin' to pick out.

**JOAN.** I'll pick 'em out if it bothers you so much.

*(JOAN sets a stool apart from her mother and starts picking through the wool.)*

**ISABELLE.** Why you workin' there in the dim, move over here where you can see.

**JOAN.** I can see fine.

**ISABELLE.** You'll strain your eyes, you'll wear them out. Y'only got one set of eyes, gotta treat them right. Go on, set yourself in this nice patch of light.

*(JOAN scoots her stool into the rectangle of light and continues to pick through the wool with her head bent down so ISABELLE can't look at her face.)*

If you straighten up you'll see all the better. You hunch over like that, you'll crook your back, start lookin' like some old crone.

**JOAN.** Alright, Ma.



**ISABELLE.** Not goin' after you, just noticin' you're not yourself. Been noticin' a change.

**JOAN.** Just doin' my job, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Is it the Bonheur boy? You feelin' somethin' for him?

**JOAN.** Gah no.

**ISABELLE.** He's sweet on you. I seen him lookin' at you.

**JOAN.** If he's gettin' ideas about me, not my fault.

**ISABELLE.** Not anyone's fault. It's natural for a boy to be lookin' atcha. You're a good lookin' girl. Nothin' wrong with it, if he's havin' a look.

**JOAN.** Let him look. Nothin' to me.

**ISABELLE.** He'll grow on you. He's decent. Works hard. And not so bad on the eyes. Y'think he's all serious business, then he smiles and gets that little dimple on his cheek. I like a man with a dimple, don't you?

**JOAN.** You marry him then.

**ISABELLE.** Why ya bein' so crabby?

**JOAN.** Don't give a crap about Dennis Bonheur's dimple. Sweet Jesus, Ma, there's a war on, there's bigger things to discuss.

**ISABELLE.** Fine, you wanna sit here and talk about findin' a severed head in the well? Is that what ya wanna chat about?

**JOAN.** Not sayin' I do.

**ISABELLE.** What do you want to talk about then?

**JOAN.** Don't need to talk right now.

**ISABELLE.** Don't know what you need more quiet for, when you haven't talked to a blessed soul all day. Only so much you can keep turnin' around in your head before you're bored to tears.

**JOAN.** Not bored, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Glad you have such a lively mind that keeps ya such nice company. Good for you. Goody good for you.

**JOAN.** Okay, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Just need to say one thing. Don't get worked up now. When I was bringin' up your lunch, I saw you lyin' on the ground in the upper field. Whatever you'd bin' doin' – ain't nothin' so terrible. It's a normal part of wantin' a man.

**JOAN.** You thought I was diddling myself?

**ISABELLE.** Whatever it is, might as well come clean with me. Better I find out before your father does so's I can smooth the way. I seen it all, my dear. I know things, I done things. Whatever it is, we'll keep it between us.

*(A beat.)*

Did someone get you pregnant?

**JOAN.** No, Ma, no.

**ISABELLE.** What is it, Love?

Somethin' scare you? You can tell me.

**JOAN.** I'm havin' holy visions, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Oh. Oh my sweet girl. Why didn't you just come out and tell me?

**JOAN.** Dunno. Still sortin' it out.

**ISABELLE.** But you could have told me. Not somethin' you need to hide from me.

**JOAN.** As I said, I'm sortin' it out.

**ISABELLE.** What kind of visions?

**JOAN.** Saint Catherine bin' appearin' to me.

**ISABELLE.** Oh. She's a lovely saint. That's lovely, Joanie. How long has this bin' goin' on?

**JOAN.** A while now.

**ISABELLE.** What does she look like, is she wearin' robes and all?

**JOAN.** Not lookin' at her clothes Ma.

**ISABELLE.** She have a halo?

**JOAN.** Yuh, there's a glow around her head.

**ISABELLE.** That sounds about right. How does she come to you? Give me the step-by-step.

**JOAN.** I start out by prayin'. Go on for a few hours or so.

**ISABELLE.** You can pray for that long?

**JOAN.** Yuh, sure.

**ISABELLE.** But do you doze a bit?

**JOAN.** No, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** It happens. I doze sometimes when I'm in church. Sometimes your eyes get heavy and you take a quick snooze and you dream a bit.

**JOAN.** No, Ma, I don't get dozy. I don't doze when I pray, I don't do that.

**ISABELLE.** All right. Go on, you pray and then what happens.

**JOAN.** When Saint Catherine's about to appear to me, everything gets real sharp, vibrant-like, you understand?

**ISABELLE.** Sure...

**JOAN.** The sounds around me, they get loud – birds, cicadas, the bees in the clover, the sheep grindin' their teeth. And the smells – dirt, water, wool. The taste of the turnip I had for lunch. It all gets very large, you see. And wondrous. Even the dung balls on the sheep's arses are gorgeous to me. I see it all as part of God's creation, you know?

**ISABELLE.** Sure, that's lovely, yes.

**JOAN.** And then there's a light that blocks it all out. And a hum.

**ISABELLE.** A hum.

**JOAN.** A tingle.

*(Cupping her heart and then her groin.)*

That I feel here...and here.

**ISABELLE.** I see.

**JOAN.** And she's there. And we come together.

**ISABELLE.** Together how?

**JOAN.** She fills me. She slays me. She takes me apart.

*(A concerned beat.)*

**ISABELLE.** Have you talked to Father Gilbert about this?

**JOAN.** Yuh.

**ISABELLE.** What'd he say?

**JOAN.** He said all the girls love Saint Catherine and I weren't the only one who claimed to see her. I told him it wasn't a claim, it was a fact. But all I got was a pat on the head.

**ISABELLE.** Well, seems he don't think it was real.

**JOAN.** Well, it is. I'm not some stupid girl who hears la-la-la around the fairy tree. I'm bein' called to serve, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** You wanna be a nun.

**JOAN.** Gah no. Don't wanna be no nun, spend all day starin' at a wall.

**ISABELLE.** That's not all it's about. If you get in a good convent, they'll teach you how to read and write. And if you play your cards right, you could become an abbess. Abbesses get to tell people what to do, you'd like that.

**JOAN.** Don't want to be no lousy abbess. I'm meant for a worldly life.

**ISABELLE.** Then you gotta get married.

**JOAN.** Don't want a husband.

**ISABELLE.** Well, you're gonna have to marry someone, girlie. Your brothers will have their own wives, they're not gonna take care of you.

**JOAN.** Don't need the brothers. God has a plan for me.

**ISABELLE.** And what's that?

**JOAN.** Never mind.

**ISABELLE.** Not never mind. What plan?

**JOAN.** Nothin'.

**ISABELLE.** Not nothin', what plan?

**JOAN.** He wants me to lead an army and drive the English out of France.

**ISABELLE.** Saint Catherine told you this?

**JOAN.** That's right.

**ISABELLE.** Joanie. The only girls who follow armies are whores. You know that?

**JOAN.** I won't be followin' an army, I'll be leadin' it.

**ISABELLE.** Really.

**JOAN.** Sorry that you doubt me, Ma, I'm sorry for that.

**ISABELLE.** Oh stop. Get off your high horse.

**JOAN.** Didn't expect you'd understand.

**ISABELLE.** Listen, my girl, if your father finds out about this soldiering thing, he's gonna beat you bloody.

**JOAN.** Let 'im. He can't stop me.

**ISABELLE.** Oh yes he can.

**JOAN.** Let 'im go against God.

**ISABELLE.** And what makes you the spiritual authority around here, missy? You need a good slap.

**JOAN.** Go ahead. See where that gets you.

**ISABELLE.** Joanie. Whatever strange thing is goin' on in your head - I get strange thoughts too. With all the horrible, hateful things been goin' on, who's to blame us? It's just a matter 'a chasin' those thoughts outta yer head, just sweep 'em outta yer head. Whoosh, like sweepin' out the floor.

**JOAN.** For sweet sake, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Joanie, no one's gonna let you lead an army.

**JOAN.** It's already happening.

**ISABELLE.** What're you talkin' about?

**JOAN.** When you sent me to stay with Cousin Durand and Michelle. There's a castle a day's walk from them. I got Durand to take me there to meet the captain.

**ISABELLE.** You went to some castle?

**JOAN.** Yuh.

**ISABELLE.** You were supposed to be takin' care of your Cousin Michelle and the baby. What's the matter with you?

**JOAN.** Durand and Michelle was fine with it.

**ISABELLE.** They know about this vision thing?

**JOAN.** Yuh, told 'em.

**ISABELLE.** Before you told me?

**JOAN.** What do you care? You don't believe me anyway.

**ISABELLE.** And they do.

**JOAN.** Yuh. They had me bless their rosaries.

**ISABELLE.** Who are you to go blessin' people's rosaries? You're not a priest. Shame on you for makin' fools of your cousins.

**JOAN.** I'm not playin' anybody for anything! I'm followin' God's orders, Ma. Sweet Jesus, you think this has been easy for me? You think I asked for this?

**ISABELLE.** Would you like me to have a talk with Saint Catherine?

**JOAN.** A talk?

**ISABELLE.** I could tell her this ain't a sensible thing to ask of you.

**JOAN.** Oh Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Oh Ma, what?

**JOAN.** She's not going to appear to you.

**ISABELLE.** And why not?

**JOAN.** You can't just call up a holy saint. Doesn't work like that.

**ISABELLE.** Don't get high-handed with me, girlie. I bin' prayin' a lot longer than you have.

**JOAN.** Okay, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Okay what?

**JOAN.** Just so you know, I'm leavin' in two weeks.

**ISABELLE.** For where?

**JOAN.** Captain is gettin' together an escort for me to go meet the Dauphin.

**ISABELLE.** What captain?

**JOAN.** I told you. The one at the castle.

**ISABELLE.** You just waltzed up to him and told him that you're gonna save France.

**JOAN.** He knows I'm the real thing. He said I had the glow.

**ISABELLE.** Oh sure, wonder what else he thinks you have.

**JOAN.** Gah Ma, you and your dirty mind.

**ISABELLE.** And who's gonna be in this escort? Any nuns be travelin' with you?

**JOAN.** What do I need fuggin' nuns for?

**ISABELLE.** Ya can't be travelin' alone with a bunch of men.

**JOAN.** Saint Catherine said it's fine.

**ISABELLE.** Oh really, my darling. And will Saint Catherine be there to keep them from rippin' your skirts over your head?

**JOAN.** Won't be wearin' skirts. I'll be wearin' men's gear.

**ISABELLE.** Men's gear.

**JOAN.** Tunic and hose. And I'm cuttin' my hair.

**ISABELLE.** You'll do no such thing.

**JOAN.** It's my hair. I'll do what I want with it.

*(ISABELLE slaps her.)*

Don't know how you think a slap from you could change my mind.

*(ISABELLE slaps her again.)*

**ISABELLE.** I'm your mother. You'll do what I say.

**JOAN.** You don't have a say, Ma. It's up to God, not you.

**ISABELLE.** Don't you dare use God's name to disobey me.  
Don't you dare. Who do you think you are?

**JOAN.** I'm the Maid.

**ISABELLE.** What Maid?

**JOAN.** I know you're confused, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** I'm not confused. I'm furious. You're a stubborn, reckless girl and ya have no idea what you're doin'.

**JOAN.** I forgive you.

**ISABELLE.** Don't you go forgivin' me, that's not your place!

**JOAN.** Bless you, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Stop that.

**JOAN.** Bless you.

**ISABELLE.** Stop it, Joan.

**JOAN.** Bless you.

*(ISABELLE slaps her again.)*

Fine. Go to hell.

## Scene Two

*(JOAN is being held down by her brother PIERRE while her father JACQUES beats her with a stick. ISABELLE is standing by, looking grieved.)*

JACQUES. No daughter 'a mine is goin' whoring after an army!

JOAN. Hittin' me won't change my mind.

JACQUES. Get those voices outta yer head or I'll lock you up.

JOAN. Can't, Da.

JACQUES. Can't or you won't?

JOAN. Can't when I know I'm right.

*(JACQUES hits her again.)*

ISABELLE. Jacques, stop.

JOAN. Let him, Ma, I can take it.

JACQUES. You're a tough one, aren't you?

JOAN. Guess I am.

*(JOAN wipes at her eyes.)*

PIERRE. You cryin' now.

JOAN. Yuh. So?

PIERRE. Can't lead an army if you cry like a girl.

JOAN. Not cryin' like a girl.

PIERRE. Cryin' like what, then? A boy?

JOAN. I'm cryin' 'cause my arse hurts.

ISABELLE. Leave her alone now.

PIERRE. What's with you wantin' to wear men's clothes?

You wanna be a guy? You sweet on girls?

JOAN. Shut it.

ISABELLE. That's enough, leave her alone.

PIERRE. Want me to have a go at her, Da?

JACQUES. No. Get the cow collar.

JOAN. You gonna lock me up now, Da?



**JACQUES.** That's right. 'Til you get your head screwed on straight.

**JOAN.** That's a lovely thing to do, chainin' up yer daughter like a piece 'a livestock. When my escort gets here they're gonna think you're quite the man.

**ISABELLE.** Don't get smart with your Da.

**JOAN.** Not getting smart, just letting him know what's what.

**JACQUES.** I held back on you, y'know. If a soldier gets a hold 'a you, there's no mercy.

**JOAN.** Yuh, I seen what they can do. We could all get slaughtered anyway, sittin' here dumb as a sheep.

**ISABELLE.** Bite your tongue.

*(PIERRE comes back with the cow collar and a lock and chain and starts buckling it around JOAN's waist.)*

**JOAN.** It's true, Ma. We could be the next LeBeques. I've gotten the call to save our country. I have the backing of God Almighty Himself, and you wanna hold me back?!

**PIERRE.** It's 'cause you're outta your nut.

**JOAN.** That's your own ignorance. I have people out there who believe me.

**PIERRE.** Fuggin' Cousin Durand? He's a moron.

**JOAN.** I got a high-ranking captain with connections to the royal court, I got a bishop, I got the entire city of Vaucouleurs who know I'm the Maid. But own family treats me like dirt!

**ISABELLE.** We're just lookin' out for you, Joanie.

**JOAN.** This is lookin' out for me? What you're doin' to me is wrong, it's sinful! Your doubtin' could send you all to hell!

**JACQUES.** Don't you threaten us, girl.

**ISABELLE.** Shame on you!

**JOAN.** I'm just sayin' it 'cause I love you Da. I'm sorry you can't see that I'm right.

**JACQUES.** (*To PIERRE.*) Chain her to her bed.

**JOAN.** I will not let this family crush me!

(*PIERRE takes JOAN off.*)

**ISABELLE.** Oh Jacques. What have we done? She hates us.

**JACQUES.** She'll get over it.

## Scene Three

*(JACQUES and ISABELLE are with their local priest, FATHER GILBERT. He's showing them a parchment.)*

**FATHER GILBERT.** This was just sent to me from the bishop in Vaucouleurs. He was apparently very impressed with Joan.

**ISABELLE.** So she did meet him?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Oh yes. Let me read you a bit, "I declare that by the authority of the church and Jesus Christ, that she is a pious, pure, and godly young woman."

**ISABELLE.** Well, that's good t'know.

**FATHER GILBERT.** He also goes on to confirm that she's a virgin. Also nice to know.

**ISABELLE.** They inspected her...?

**FATHER GILBERT.** It's a routine procedure, all done very properly. But listen to this - "This young woman possesses extraordinary charismatic powers for one so young, naïve, and unrefined. This can only be attributed to her saintly visitations which I have found to be authentic."

*(JACQUES, who can't read, looks at the parchment.)*

**JACQUES.** That's what it says?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Yes. It's in this section right here.

**ISABELLE.** So this bishop believes her. About Saint Catherine an' all.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Oh yes he does. In fact, he goes on to say that he's quite certain that she's the Maid referred to in the prophecy.

**JACQUES.** So it's a prophecy now? Sounds to me like some folk tale gotten out of hand.

**FATHER GILBERT.** No, no. It's very well known in the upper ecclesiastical community.

**JACQUES.** This is all written down somewhere.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Yes. It's referred to in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

**JACQUES.** You seen it?

**FATHER GILBERT.** No, the text is kept in a vault in Rome.

**JACQUES.** So you never seen them words, you never read them for yourself.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Jacques, please. I'm not some backwater priest. I've studied in Paris, I know my holy texts.

**ISABELLE.** Jacques don't mean any disrespect, Father. We're both in a bit of a shock.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Of course, I understand.

**ISABELLE.** So you really do think our Joan is this Maid person?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Yes, Isabelle, I do.

**JACQUES.** Seems Joan told you about these visions and you didn't seem none too impressed.

**FATHER GILBERT.** I wouldn't say that I wasn't impressed. I just believe in proceeding with caution with young girls who can be rather fanciful. But you know, Joan has always struck me as having a special presence.

**ISABELLE.** So you really think she has it.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Oh yes. I remember this one time – I was walking back through the square and there were some boys throwing rocks at a lame cat. And your Joan, who was just a little bit of a thing, she picked up that cat and faced off those boys and said, "The next stone that's thrown, let it pass through me."

**ISABELLE.** You remember that cat, Da. She brought it home.

**JACQUES.** Yuh, drowned it.

**FATHER GILBERT.** I hope you both know that you have an extraordinary daughter.

**ISABELLE.** Well we done our best to raise her up right, haven't we Da?

**JACQUES.** (To **FATHER GILBERT.**) So what're you sayin' here? You sayin' our daughter's to join an army and liberate France?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Apparently, yes.

**JACQUES.** Oh come on off it, Father, you really believe that?

**FATHER GILBERT.** I don't think God means for Joan to actually go into battle, of course not. Her role will be symbolic. We're a depressed country, there's no real leadership and I believe that it's God's plan to use Joan to inspire the army to victory.

**ISABELLE.** She'll be someone to go along and keep the troops cheerful.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Exactly.

**ISABELLE.** That makes sense, don't it, Da?

**JACQUES.** Soldiers are swine, Izzy. She could end up on the side of the road raped with her belly slit, you thought 'a that?

**FATHER GILBERT.** I understand your concern, Jacques. Of course soldiers can be vulgar but Joan is the Virgin Maid and even the crudest knight will be kneeling in front of her asking for her blessing.

**ISABELLE.** So you think Saint Catherine will keep her safe.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Absolutely. She's on a righteous path and God and his saints will protect her.

**JACQUES.** You guarantee that? Can you get that in writing on your fancy parchment there?

**FATHER GILBERT.** It's a matter of faith, Jacques. But if you're having any conflicts about your trust in God, we should talk about that.

**JACQUES.** My faith is solid enough.

**ISABELLE.** It's just hard for us not to worry about what could happen to our girl, I think that's what Jacques is tryin' to say.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Here's a suggestion. Why don't you send one of her brothers to go along with her as a family chaperone.

**JACQUES.** Can't spare the labor.

**FATHER GILBERT.** If you need to hire some extra hands, I can have the church provide the funds.

**ISABELLE.** That's very generous, Father.

**JACQUES.** Don't think so.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Jacques, your family doesn't have a choice.  
It's God's will. I hope you both understand that.

**ISABELLE.** Yes. We do.

**FATHER GILBERT.** And just so you know, word about Joan is spreading. I've already had quite a few pilgrims stop by the church, asking where she lives – of course, for your family's sake, I didn't say. But you should be prepared for more people coming through here. They'll know who you are and they'll be watching you. If they feel just a pinch of disbelief coming from any of you, that could be disastrous for Joan, do you understand?

**ISABELLE.** Yes, Father.

**FATHER GILBERT.** And Jacques, there's no need to beat Joan anymore.

**JACQUES.** Wasn't plannin' to.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Good. As I said, she has a greater Father to obey now.

**ISABELLE.** Thank you for comin' by, Father. We don't want to take up any more 'a your time.

**FATHER GILBERT.** I'll give you as much of my time as you need. We have some extraordinary days ahead of us. Bless you both, my dears.

*(FATHER GILBERT touches ISABELLE's head in a blessing. He considers doing do the same for JACQUES but thinks better of it and leaves.)*

**ISABELLE.** Oh Jacques. It's real.

**JACQUES.** Don't be so gullible, Izzy. He wants to use our daughter to put his parish on the map. And he's sayin' my soul's on the line if I won't go along with his scheme? How bloody dare him.

**ISABELLE.** Fine, you'd rather believe that your daughter's a lunatic? She ain't a flighty girl, Jacques. She ain't like that fairy tree crowd who get hysterical every time they see a leaf move. She takes after you. She don't

put up with nonsense. And she works hard. Even the way she prays – she sticks to it like a job to be done. Makes sense that God would pick her. And look at all the fancy people who think she's really something. That bishop and that captain who's an educated noble type. They wouldn't send some peasant girl to court for a joke, now would they? They have their reputations to look after.

**JACQUES.** Still don't believe it.

**ISABELLE.** You don't believe it 'cause your pride's bin' hurt.

**JACQUES.** Oh come off it.

**ISABELLE.** Come off it yourself. And don't think it didn't hurt me to be the last to know. Well, get over it. She's special, Jacques. Everyone sees it and who are we to hold her back? It'd be a sin to keep her down just 'cause we acted like a couple of stupid peasants.

**JACQUES.** Stupid peasants believe everything that's told them.

**ISABELLE.** So you'd rather keep her chained to her bed in some cow collar? If our girl ain't ravin' now, that'll put her over.

**JACQUES.** It's my job to see things clear for this family.

**ISABELLE.** Well I see things too. Clearer than you, sometimes. It's a horrible, horrible world, Jacques. Why would you wanna crush this one bit of wonder that's come our way? Our girl's bin' chosen and we both should be fierce proud.

**JACQUES.** Go ahead then. You tell her she can go.

**ISABELLE.** It's up to both of us.

**JACQUES.** No, don't think so. Let it be on your head, not mine.

*(JACQUES leaves.)*

*(ISABELLE stands there for a beat, now starting to feel a little sick with doubt. She pulls out her rosary and starts to pray.)*

**ISABELLE.** Blessed Saint Catherine, illumine my ignorant heart with Thy heavenly light, Blessed Saint Catherine, illumine my ignorant heart with Thy heavenly light, Blessed Saint Catherine, illumine my ignorant heart with Thy heavenly light...

*(A shaft hits ISABELLE's face. She stares up at the light and lets out a small gasp of wonder.)*

Oh. There you are. Glory!



## Scene Four

*(Lights up on ISABELLE spinning wool.)*

*(JOAN enters and stands in front of her mother.)*

JOAN. Hey Ma. Whatta you think?

*(JOAN's hair is now cut and she's wearing a doublet, breeches, and hose that look like they've been borrowed from a low-ranking page.)*

ISABELLE. Well, no one's gonna be botherin' you, lookin' like that.

JOAN. I had extra ties put on my breeches, see? They're all attached to my doublet so no one can pull my knickers off.

ISABELLE. How you gonna take a wee? Can't just squat in your skirts anymore.

JOAN. Yuh, that's somethin' to figure out.

ISABELLE. What happened to your breasts?

JOAN. I bound them.

ISABELLE. Your nipples will flatten. Can't feed a baby with flat nipples.

JOAN. Yuh, sure.

ISABELLE. Just sayin', girl, you listen to your mum.

*(PIERRE enters, carrying a secondhand sword in a scabbard and some wild flowers in his fist.)*

PIERRE. Hey. Did'ja see my horse?

JOAN. Yuh, looks like a good ride.

PIERRE. He's fast. Tried yours out too and he'll do. Nice and steady. But what's with all these fuggin' flowers in his mane?

JOAN. Was the fairy tree girls. They asked to braid it.

*(PIERRE tosses the flowers on the floor.)*

**PIERRE.** Dopey girls. I'll go take the rest of 'em out.

**ISABELLE.** Oh leave the flowers in. The horse looks darling.

**PIERRE.** Ma, she can't ride like that. (To **JOAN**.) Here, I sharpened up your sword, take a look.

*(JOAN pulls the sword out of its scabbard and checks out the blade.)*

Had to bang out a lot of knicks. Whoever had it wasn't usin' it right. It was like they was hackin' at rocks.

**JOAN.** More like helmets, wouldn't you say?

**PIERRE.** Never hit at a helmet with a sword like this, y'understand? It'll wreck the blade. This is for runnin' someone through. You use the tip to go between the armor plates, you find a soft spot and you ram it through.

**ISABELLE.** She won't be usin' that thing, now stop.

**PIERRE.** Just tellin' her, Ma. (To **JOAN**.) I greased it up, so it's easy to draw. Try it.

*(JOAN yanks the sword out and thrusts it into an Englishman's gut.)*

**JOAN.** HAAAA!

**ISABELLE.** Stop that! Get that thing out of here!

**JOAN.** It's just a sword, Ma.

**PIERRE.** She was just tryin' out the sword, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** I don't want it in my house. Take it outside.  
Go on!

**PIERRE.** Okay Ma, calm down.

*(PIERRE leaves with the sword and scabbard.)*

**JOAN.** What's the problem, Ma?

**ISABELLE.** I raised you to be kind and now you're actin' like it's some big thrill for you to be killin' people.

**JOAN.** I'm not gonna kill anyone. The sword is just for show.

**ISABELLE.** Well it's an ugly show. And the way you're struttin' around in your man's clothes. I don't think this is how Saint Catherine wants you to be.

**JOAN.** Saint Catherine thinks I look fine.

**ISABELLE.** Well, I think you look strange. You don't look like my daughter.

**JOAN.** Still your daughter, got the same face.

**ISABELLE.** You're acting like a toughie. You're swaggerin'.

**JOAN.** Not swaggerin'.

**ISABELLE.** You are. You have this strange, mannish look in your eye. You need to watch yourself.

**JOAN.** I do watch myself! That's all I do is watch myself!

**ISABELLE.** Don't shout at me.

**JOAN.** Then don't call me strange! I'm not strange! Sweet Jesus, I have enough on my head without you puttin' me down!

**ISABELLE.** Oh Joanie. C'mere.

**JOAN.** No.

**ISABELLE.** Come to your mum. C'mon.

*(ISABELLE puts her arms around JOAN.)*

No need for us to fight. Come on, hug us back. You haven't had a good hug in a long time. Never too big for a hug. Come on...

*(JOAN lets herself be held.)*

There we go.

**JOAN.** Oh Mama, this is scarin' the shite out of me.

**ISABELLE.** I know, my sweet girl, oh I know. Do you want to know somethin'? I was prayin' to your Saint Catherine. And she came to me. She did. This lovely beam of light shone down on me, right here. It warmed my face, as if she was sayin' to me, "Don't worry, Isabelle, I'm going to look after your girl."

**JOAN.** Was it comin' from that window up there with the crack in the pane?

**ISABELLE.** Yes, right from there.

**JOAN.** That was the sun, Ma. It always hits that window at a certain time of day. It gets at a certain angle and it shoots through. It's nothing special.

ISABELLE. Oh.

JOAN. C'mon, you seen it.

ISABELLE. No, never have.

JOAN. A real visitation - it's not just some light on your face, y'understand? That's not how it works. It goes deeper than that.

ISABELLE. Aren't I a dope.

JOAN. Don't be hurt, Ma. Just explainin' how it is.

ISABELLE. Well, glad you did.

*(PIERRE comes back in.)*

PIERRE. You done with her, Ma? Our escort's here. They wanna get goin'.

ISABELLE. All right. Here, I packed you some food for the road. There's a loaf of bread in there, some boiled eggs. Your da picked some of his plums, he said to wait a day or two to let 'em ripen up. Make sure you say goodbye to him. He's in the upper field. He won't say much, but know that he loves you. Give'm a proper hug.

JOAN. I will, Ma.

ISABELLE. *(To PIERRE.)* You watch after your sister. And watch yourself.

PIERRE. Don't worry, Ma. I'll bring you back somethin' nice from the court. Maybe a fancy cup.

ISABELLE. Just bring yourselves back. Be smart.

PIERRE. Will do.

*(PIERRE goes back out.)*

JOAN. Goodbye, Mama.

ISABELLE. I love you, Joanie.

JOAN. I love you, Mama...

*(JOAN hugs her mother hard.)*

ISABELLE. All right. All right now. You be good.

JOAN. Will do, Ma.

*(JOAN bounds out. ISABELLE stands at the door of the house, squinting out at the day light that's pouring in from the outside.)*

*(We can hear JOAN give the men in the escort a hearty greeting.)*

**ISABELLE.** Isabelle Arc watched her daughter walk up to the rough lookin' men who were waitin' for her in the yard. One of the men gave her daughter a leg up on her horse and fixed her stirrup. Isabelle studied the face of the man for any sign of lascivious thoughts. But no, he was all business. And so was her Joan. But then –

*(We hear the horse whinny.)*

**JOAN.** Whoa, boy!

**ISABELLE.** There was a bee in a flower that was left in her horse's mane and the beast was swinging his head in a panic and starting to buck –  
Oh sweet God – Joanie!

**JOAN.** I got it, Ma!

**ISABELLE.** Cool as can be, Joan reined the beast back in and calmed him down. How did she know how to do that? How on earth did she know? Joan picked the flower out of her horse's mane and dropped it to the ground. Then she turned her horse 'round and followed her brother and the men out the gate – Joanie! Take care of yourself! But Joan didn't hear her. She was already chattin' it up with the men, so confident, so capable, so her own person. I raised an extraordinary young woman.

*(ISABELLE picks up the flowers that PIERRE had tossed to the ground.)*

Oh well. That's that.

## Scene Five

*(ISABELLE is serving up food to JACQUES and to PIERRE who's now wearing nicer clothes from the court.)*

**ISABELLE.** How was Joan when she met the Dauphin? Did they give her a gown?

**PIERRE.** No, she was wearin' what she was travelin' in.

**ISABELLE.** Her man's clothes.

**PIERRE.** Yuh.

**ISABELLE.** No one thought it was odd?

**PIERRE.** Yuh, sure. But the Dauphin's an odd one too.

**JACQUES.** I've heard that. Simpleton. Not all there.

**PIERRE.** Nah, Da, he's a really smart guy. Just a little wonky, don't look anyone in the eye.

**ISABELLE.** But Joan made a good impression on him. They got along.

**PIERRE.** He's givin' her an army Ma, I'd say that's gettin' along.

**JACQUES.** How many troops are they givin' her?

**PIERRE.** Couple of hundred or so. Hey – they measured me for armor. I'm gettin' a full suit, brand new.

**ISABELLE.** You're not fightin', are you?

**PIERRE.** Yuh, of course.

**JACQUES.** You ain't trained, son. Can't just walk into battle wearin' fifty pounds of plate.

**PIERRE.** I won't be walkin'. I'll be on a horse. Look at the sword they gave me. Check out the blade. It's twice fired. Try the grip.

**JACQUES.** Very nice. Put it away.

**ISABELLE.** *(To JACQUES.)* I don't like this.

**PIERRE.** Ma, they're makin' me a knight.

**JACQUES.** Who's in charge of this thing? Who's your commander?

**PIERRE.** Joan's the commander.

**JACQUES.** But who's in charge who knows what they're doin'?

**PIERRE.** There's a duke named Dunois. He's been workin' the front at Orleans.

**ISABELLE.** (*To JACQUES.*) You know who he is?

**JACQUES.** I've heard of him.

**ISABELLE.** Is he a good commander?

**JACQUES.** We're losin' the war. Hasn't done shite so far, has he?

**PIERRE.** That's why they're bringin' in Joan.

**JACQUES.** She's a banner-bearer, boy. She don't know anythin' about military strategy.

**PIERRE.** Yuh, but Saint Catherine will be advisin' her.

**JACQUES.** Christ.

**PIERRE.** Da, they're not gonna send her out with a pile of men just to get 'em slaughtered. They all think she has somethin'. If you were there at court, you'd get it.

**JACQUES.** Court is filled with bootlickers. Whatever the idiot king wants everyone goes along with it.

**PIERRE.** He's not an idiot. I think you need to show a little more respect for the Dauphin.

**JACQUES.** Aren't you proper?

**PIERRE.** I ain't a fool, Da. I know what's what.

**JACQUES.** Do you?

**PIERRE.** Not like you bin' anywhere.

**JACQUES.** Don't you talk to me that way.

**ISABELLE.** Let's just have our meal, nice and peaceful, can we? Pass your father the ale. By the way, the Dupray girl has been askin' after you. You might want to pay her a visit before you go back.

**PIERRE.** I got plenty of ladies to visit at court.

**JACQUES.** Big stud, are you? Better keep your cock in your pants.

**ISABELLE.** Oh Jacques.

**PIERRE.** I'm done.

**ISABELLE.** Sit back down and eat.

**PIERRE.** Not hungry. I'm gonna go see John.

**ISABELLE.** You just got here.

**PIERRE.** Haven't seen him. He wants to hear what's goin' on.

**ISABELLE.** Then tell your brother to come back here for the night so we can all be together.

**PIERRE.** Yuh, dunno, we might go out.

**JACQUES.** Don't get drunk, I need you two in decent shape tomorrow. We're puttin' up a wall.

**PIERRE.** Yuh, I'll see.

**JACQUES.** What do you mean, you'll see?

**PIERRE.** Means what it sounds like. I have things to do.

**ISABELLE.** You're to help your Da tomorrow, don't argue that.

**PIERRE.** I'm the Maid's knight, I ain't haulin' rocks for some fuggin' wall.

*(JACQUES lunges at PIERRE and grabs him by the scruff of the neck.)*

**JACQUES.** Who the hell do you think you are?

**PIERRE.** Leggo of me!

**JACQUES.** You pompous little prick -

**ISABELLE.** Stop it, that's enough.

**JACQUES.** You're gonna goddamn listen to me -

*(PIERRE pulls out his sword.)*

**PIERRE.** I'm gonna stick you Da!

**ISABELLE.** Stop that!

**JACQUES.** Get out of my house before I break your bloody neck!

**ISABELLE.** Pierre, put that thing away! Jacques, go outside and cool yourself. Please go, sweetheart.

*(JACQUES leaves. ISABELLE turns on PIERRE.)*

What's the matter with you, threatenin' your da with a sword - who the hell do you think you are?

**PIERRE.** He messed with me, Ma.



**ISABELLE.** I don't want to hear it. Where do you get off, acting like some prince. Your sister would be appalled. She might be the Maid, my dear, but she wouldn't think of refusing to help this family. She helped me spin ten pounds of wool before the two of you took off.

**PIERRE.** And I helped Da geld a bunch of lambs.

**ISABELLE.** And you'll clean the pig's arse if he asks you to. I don't care who you are at that court you're never to talk back to your father again.

**PIERRE.** Okay, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** I'll tell you one thing, my boy, if you want to come back from this war you better have a little more humility. And you better pray. Pray hard, my darling, pray to be a better man. Otherwise, I see no reason why God would want to save your sorry hide. Your sister may be spared but you'll just be one more rotting corpse on the battlefield.

**PIERRE.** I'm sorry, Ma...

**ISABELLE.** I don't wanna lose you.

**PIERRE.** You won't lose me, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Can't do it.

**PIERRE.** C'mon, there's nothing to worry about. I say my prayers. Every day. I got it covered.

**ISABELLE.** (*Touching his face.*) Look at you. So handsome.

**PIERRE.** Doin' well, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** You look well fed.

**PIERRE.** Yuh, been eatin' pretty well at court.

**ISABELLE.** Is Joanie gettin' nice and plump?

**PIERRE.** Not really. She don't eat the way I do.

**ISABELLE.** I'm sure the food is too rich for her. Is her stomach nervous?

**PIERRE.** She's restless, yuh.

**ISABELLE.** Has she made any friends?

**PIERRE.** Not really her kind of people.

**ISABELLE.** Snooty types.

**PIERRE.** They're all right. But you know her, she likes to keep to herself.

**ISABELLE.** But she gets along.

**PIERRE.** Sure.

**ISABELLE.** She has a comfortable place to sleep?

**PIERRE.** She's got her own room, Ma, with her own valet.

**ISABELLE.** That hasn't made her head swell.

**PIERRE.** Nah, she's ain't impressed by that stuff.

**ISABELLE.** Is she homesick?

**PIERRE.** Yuh, a bit.

**ISABELLE.** My girl. I need to see her.

**PIERRE.** It's a long trek, Ma. And not too safe. I'd take you, but I gotta get back. I'll be on my horse at a gallop most of the way.

**ISABELLE.** I can go on my own. I'll be fine. Saint Catherine will watch after me.

**PIERRE.** Sure. Wouldn't look too good for her, the Maid's Mum gettin' whacked on the road.

**ISABELLE.** Your da won't like it, but that's too bad. I'll find someone to cook for him. And I'll need to make myself somethin' to wear. I don't expect to be with all the fancy people, but I still want to look decent.

**PIERRE.** They'll want to meet you, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Oh no, they won't.

**PIERRE.** Sure they will. They'll be all over you.

**ISABELLE.** Well, I don't wanna intrude. Tell Joanie that I won't be in the way. I'll just tuck in somewhere. I'll cook for her if they'll let me use the kitchen.

**PIERRE.** Sure.

**ISABELLE.** Is it lovely, the castle?

**PIERRE.** Yuh, it's pretty impressive. Posh.

**ISABELLE.** Rugs on the floor?

**PIERRE.** Yuh, on the walls too.

**ISABELLE.** Is there gold everywhere?

**PIERRE.** No, Ma. No one's got gold but the church.

**ISABELLE.** Oh, sure.

**PIERRE.** But they got a lot of nice things around. I drunk outta a glass cup at dinner.

**ISABELLE.** Did you?

**PIERRE.** They kept it filled too. Always someone there to pour you some more.

**ISABELLE.** I'd like to try that, drinkin' out of a glass.

**PIERRE.** I can arrange for that. And the court musicians are friends 'a mine. I'll get 'em to play some tunes for ya.

**ISABELLE.** Oh what fun!

**PIERRE.** I'll show you a good time, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** You sweet boy, give us hug. Oh this will be grand, won't it?

**PIERRE.** Grander than you think.

**ISABELLE.** I can do this.

**PIERRE.** Sure you can.

**ISABELLE.** Aren't I something?

**PIERRE.** You are, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Look at me. I'm the mother of the Maid.

## Scene Six

*(Sound of pouring rain.)*

*(Lights up on ISABELLE hunkered down in the rain.)*

**ISABELLE.** Isabelle Arc walked three hundred miles to see her girl, praying the whole way she wouldn't get lost or killed. She walked over rocks, she walked through mud, she walked in storms that left her soaked to the skin. She beat back dogs who bit at her heels. She walked on knees that screamed in their sockets. She walked on blisters that ate at her toes. 'Twas nothin' to her when she thought of her girl who'd be there at the gates to welcome her in. They'd walk together, arm-in-arm through the court. They'd show all those so-and-sos what the Arc women are made of. But when Isabelle finally got to the castle, the guards wouldn't let her through. While they looked for someone to speak for her, they made her stand in the gutter for half the day 'til they opened the gates and let the soggy old woman in.

*(The set transitions to a chamber in the Dauphin's castle - grand and bright with gilt and rich colors, in stark contrast to the dim interior of the Arc home.)*

*(ISABELLE's shoes are caked with mud and her traveling cloak and skirts that are soiled from her hard trip.)*

*(The LADY OF THE COURT sweeps in.)*

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Hello there. Are you the Maid's mother?

**ISABELLE.** Yes, M'lady, yes I am.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I'm so sorry you've had to wait. Your daughter's leaving for the siege tomorrow and she has a lot of people to see before she goes.

**ISABELLE.** She's leavin' tomorrow?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Yes.

**ISABELLE.** I didn't know that.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I'm so sorry.

**ISABELLE.** It took longer than I thought for me to get here. There was a lot of rain and mud and such, and the road got flooded and a bridge gave out, then I was robbed and lost my way...

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Oh no, how awful.

**ISABELLE.** And now my daughter's leaving?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** You don't have to worry. We'll make sure you have plenty of time with her. But you poor thing, your feet must be killing you.

**ISABELLE.** They could use a rest, yes.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Let's get you a foot bath.

**ISABELLE.** Oh, you don't have to bother with that.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** It's no bother. Let me call one of my chamber staff. Oh Monique.

*(MONIQUE, her lady-in-waiting, comes in.)*

**MONIQUE.** Yes, Madame.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Set us up with a foot bath, please.

*(To ISABELLE.)* Would you like anything to drink? Some mead?

**ISABELLE.** Yes, all right. Thank you.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Bring us a pitcher, will you?

**MONIQUE.** Yes, Madame.

*(MONIQUE exits.)*

**ISABELLE.** Have you seen my son, Pierre? He was supposed to meet me here. I don't know where he's gone to.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** He may be out on a hunt.

**ISABELLE.** Has he been lookin' after his sister?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I'm sure he has. But you don't need to worry about your daughter. She's very serious about her mission. She's not distracted by the young men around here.

**ISABELLE.** Is everyone fine with the way she's dressed?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Oh, we think it's charming. In fact she's started a trend. Some of the young ladies here have ordered doublets.

**ISABELLE.** Oh. Well, that's somethin'.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** You must be very proud of your daughter.

**ISABELLE.** She's a good girl.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Joan is a very special soul.

**ISABELLE.** I hope she's bin' behavin' herself.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Oh she's perfect. She's very outspoken but we all love her for that. The Dauphin adores her.

**ISABELLE.** He does. Oh good.

*(MONIQUE comes back with a tray with two glass cups and a pitcher of mead.)*

**LADY OF THE COURT.** May I pour for you?

**ISABELLE.** Yes, please.

*(The LADY OF THE COURT pours ISABELLE a cup and hands it to her and then pours a generous cup for herself.)*

*(ISABELLE holds the glass cup with reverence.)*

It's a lovely cup.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** There are nicer cups but I've gotten tired of asking for them. Votre santé.

*(They drink. ISABELLE can't help but gulp it down.)*

**ISABELLE.** Oh. It's delicious. Sweet.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** They use honey from the castle hives.

**ISABELLE.** Oh. Are they special bees?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** They're just bees. But they do get their nectar from our royal garden so I suppose their honey is quite special. I'll get you a jar.

**ISABELLE.** Oh, thank you. Lovely.

*(MONIQUE comes back with the foot bath.)*

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Here we are.

*(The LADY OF THE COURT gestures to ISABELLE's shoes.)*

May I...?

**ISABELLE.** Oh, I can take them off.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** No, please allow me.

**ISABELLE.** A lady like you don't want to be touchin' my dirty old shoes.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Oh no, it would be my honor. I wanted to wash your daughter's feet but there's another lady in court who got to her before I did. People can be very pushy around here.

*(The LADY OF THE COURT unlaces ISABELLE's shoes and takes them off, exposing ISABELLE's dirty, ragged stockings.)*

**ISABELLE.** Pardon my stockings, they're full of holes.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** We'll get you some new ones.

**ISABELLE.** Oh, thanks much, but I can repair them.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** No need. We have plenty to spare.

*(The LADY OF THE COURT gingerly removes ISABELLE's crusty stockings.)*

**ISABELLE.** Don't look at my feet, they're ugly as rocks.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** No they aren't. They're beautiful. They've been through so much. You have the feet of a Biblical woman, like Ruth or Abraham's Sarah. These are feet that have walked through the desert.

**ISABELLE.** Well, they've walked through plenty of mud.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Just hike up your skirts a bit, so we don't get them wet.

**ISABELLE.** Forgive my skirts, they looked fine before I left. They're a mess now.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** But you're a traveler. Please don't apologize.

*(ISABELLE hikes up her skirts, exposing her bruised and mud-stained legs. The LADY OF*

**THE COURT** *puts ISABELLE's feet in the foot bath.*)

**LADY OF THE COURT.** How does this feel? Is the water warm enough for you?

**ISABELLE.** Yes, thank you. It's lovely.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** We'll leave your feet in there for a bit and let them soak.

**ISABELLE.** I'm not keepin' you from anything, am I?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Oh please, I'd rather be with you than with anyone in this horrible court. Let's freshen our cups.

*(Pouring.)*

What may I call you?

**ISABELLE.** Isabelle would be fine.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Please call me Nicole.

**ISABELLE.** All right.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Do you have other daughters, Isabelle?

**ISABELLE.** No, just the sons. I had another girl before I had Joan, but the baby died.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I'm so sorry.

**ISABELLE.** It happens. Every family loses a few. I know a woman who lost four of her children all in one year.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** How awful.

**ISABELLE.** She has one boy left but he was born with a hunchback and not much good for anything. Wouldn't you know he'd be the one to survive.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** You have to wonder about God's plan, don't you?

**ISABELLE.** You do. There's the LeBeques – wonderful people. They'd do anythin' for you. Good fun too. Nancy, the mother, could make ya laugh. Wicked good humor, but she was never mean. You could confide in her.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** How nice to have a friend like that.

**ISABELLE.** She's gone. The whole family got slaughtered one night by the English. They was killed in the most horrible way, from baby to grandmum – no mercy. No



family left to bury them. My husband had to see to that. He got together a shovelin' crew. I made the crosses. Eight in all.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** What a terrible, tragic thing.

**ISABELLE.** Yes. 'Twas.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Isabelle, your daughter is going to save us.

**ISABELLE.** Oh. Well, we'll see.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** She is. She's going to turn this war around.

**ISABELLE.** That's what I'm told.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** This must be overwhelming for you.

**ISABELLE.** It is. Yes.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I understand. I do. I'm a mother as well.

**ISABELLE.** Oh, how many children?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Three girls.

**ISABELLE.** How nice to have so many daughters.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Well...they're not like your Joan, they're all a bit spoiled, I'm afraid.

**ISABELLE.** You have to be firm with them. You can't give a child everything it wants, otherwise they think the world is theirs.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** You're so right. I try. But we're titled and the world is theirs in a sense. It's hard to tell them otherwise.

**ISABELLE.** Do you teach them their prayers?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Oh yes. I take the girls to services every Sunday but they're still a little immature spiritually. They tend to drift during mass. But they're good girls. And very clever. My oldest two are musically gifted. Jeannette sings and her sister Mimi plays the lute.

**ISABELLE.** How lovely.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** And my youngest, Colette, is interested in textiles. She's only nine but she knows how to work a loom. She wove a shawl for me.

**ISABELLE.** How nice to have a daughter that makes things for you. Lucky you.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Yes. But tell me more about Joan. What was she like as a little girl?

**ISABELLE.** Well, she had a mind of her own like all kiddies do. But she was more stubborn than most. She never backed down, y'know?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Of course, that makes sense. And I'm sure she was quite charismatic as a child.

**ISABELLE.** Charismatic?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** You must have seen that there was something special about her.

**ISABELLE.** She's always been a bit different, yes.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Tell me a story about her.

**ISABELLE.** A story. Can't think 'a one right now.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Did she ever perform any miracles?

**ISABELLE.** Well, she once got some goats back in their pen. That's a miracle if ya know goats.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** So animals would come to her. They trusted her.

**ISABELLE.** I suppose. She's always been kind to them.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Well you see, that's one of the signs. When Saint Margaret was a child, wild doves would land on her hands. And Saint Daria was friends with a lion.

**ISABELLE.** My daughter is no saint. She's not perfect, believe me. We've had our ups and downs.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Well, who doesn't. I love my girls to death, but there are times when I'd like to smack them.

**ISABELLE.** Oh I've done that.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Have you.

**ISABELLE.** Oh sure. You have to when they get too smart with you. A good smack and lots 'a chores keeps 'em in line.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I'm sure that's what makes Joan so determined.

**ISABELLE.** No, she's never been one to back down.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** And that Joan has grown up in humble circumstances – the poor are so much closer to God than those born into wealth.

**ISABELLE.** We're not poor. My husband runs a flock of eighty sheep.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I didn't mean street poor, I meant – like Jesus' family, humble but hardworking. Do you know what I'm saying?

**ISABELLE.** We do all right. Our kids never went hungry.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to offend you.

**ISABELLE.** No, just had to set things straight.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** What I was trying to say in my very stupid, clumsy way, is that I'm so in awe of you. To have gone through so much and to raise a daughter who is such gift to the world. It makes me ashamed that with all my privilege that I'm not doing better with my own daughters, to make them care about deeper things. Do you know what I'm saying?

**ISABELLE.** Well, there's women in my village who don't think I done such a good job. They think I raised a strange daughter.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** They're just small-minded.

**ISABELLE.** But my friend Nancy understood Joan. Nancy had a lively mind. She learned herself how to read a bit. She was goin' to teach me. And I wanted Joanie to learn.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Oh, I can have my daughters' tutor teach Joan.

**ISABELLE.** Oh, you would? That'd be a wonderful thing. I'd love for her to be able to read.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Listen, when she gets back from the war we'll have her stay with us at our country home. It's beautiful out there. She can live with us for a couple of months.

**ISABELLE.** Well, I don't wanna put you out.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** No, no, we'd love to have her. She'll have wonderful meals and our tutor will teach her how to write and have her reading all the great texts. He'll instruct her in music and drawing as well.

**ISABELLE.** I don't think she'd like that arty stuff.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Well, you don't know. She's never been exposed to it.

*(ISABELLE takes her feet out of the foot bath.)*

Here, let me dry you.

**ISABELLE.** I can do it, thank you.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Would you like some more mead?

**ISABELLE.** No, had enough. I want to see my daughter now.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I'm sorry – did I say something to offend you?

**ISABELLE.** It's not like my Joanie don't eat well in her own home. I know how to feed my girl.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I'm so sorry, that's not what I meant.

**ISABELLE.** But I'm sure she'd rather stay with you and have her mind made smart than come back home and watch a bunch of dirty sheep.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I don't want you to think in any way that I don't respect where she's come from. I know you've raised her in a lovely home.

**ISABELLE.** It's a shite hole. I'll tell you what, Nicole. You take Joanie and send yer daughters to me. I'll put 'em to work pickin' dung balls out of sheeps' arses.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Oh how fabulous! I adore you!

*(A CHAMBERLAIN enters.)*

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Madame. The Maid would like her mother to know that she'll be available to see her after dinner.

**ISABELLE.** After dinner? Who's he?

**CHAMBERLAIN.** I'm the Maid's chamberlain, Madame.

**ISABELLE.** I've been waitin' for her since dawn.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** She can't be disturbed, Madame. She's having her time with Saint Catherine.

**ISABELLE.** Oh bloody Saint Catherine.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Excuse me?

**ISABELLE.** You tell my daughter that I've had it. I'm not waitin' around for her anymore.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** This woman just walked three hundred miles to be with her daughter. You damn well better take her to see her right now.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** All right, Madame.

**ISABELLE.** I'm goin' to have a good talk with that girl, straighten her out.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** You're a great lady, Isabelle. Don't let anyone push you around.

**ISABELLE.** I'm gonna give her a good talking-to, her and that so-and-so saint of hers. Ridiculous.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** This way, Madame.

*(ISABELLE follows the CHAMBERLAIN.)*

**ISABELLE.** I'm not gonna be treated like some sorry sack, hopin' my daughter will pay me some mind...

*(As ISABELLE and the CHAMBERLAIN exit, the set starts to transition to the chapel.)*

*(We hear ISABELLE still carping as she re-enters.)*

... Who does she think she is, leavin' me in a corner like some dirty old bucket. Shame on her -

*(ISABELLE is stopped short as the chapel is revealed to her. Lit by dozens of candles, a beautiful, intimate, holy place.)*

*(We see JOAN standing there glowing in a soft, white robe, her face open and serene in a post-prayer state. She truly looks like she's been communing with the divine, transitioned from a scruffy farm girl to a young saint. The effect should be breathtaking.)*

**JOAN.** *(Gently.)* Hello, Mama. There you are.

**ISABELLE.** Oh Joanie...oh my girl...

(**ISABELLE** *lets out a small sob.*)

**JOAN.** What is it, Mama?

**ISABELLE.** Oh Joanie.

(**ISABELLE**, *overwhelmed, drops to her knees and kisses her daughter's hand while* **JOAN** *gently pets her mother's head.*)

**JOAN.** Bless your heart, Mama, bless your heart.

(*Lights fade to black.*)

## ACT II

### Scene One

*(We're in a fancy antechamber where a table of food has been laid out for the Arcs. ISABELLE, JACQUES, and PIERRE enter, wearing their finest clothes. PIERRE starts making himself a plate.)*

**ISABELLE.** *(To PIERRE.)* You should see the room they put us in – oh it's grand.

**PIERRE.** Glad you like it, Ma.

**JACQUES.** It's ridiculous big. Can't heat a room proper with ceilings that high.

**PIERRE.** That's what tapestries are for, Da.

**ISABELLE.** That's right. They keep the walls all nice 'n cozy.

**JACQUES.** How long does it take to make one of 'em?

**PIERRE.** Two years 'bout.

**JACQUES.** That's a lot of labor to warm up a room.

**ISABELLE.** He's just sayin' that. He loves the room. Couldn't get him off the bed. Sweetheart, do they have any unicorns here?

**PIERRE.** Unicorns?

**ISABELLE.** Like the one in the tapestry.

**PIERRE.** No, Ma. Unicorns ain't real.

**JACQUES.** That's what I said.

**ISABELLE.** Well, I thought 'cause all the other things was real, the birds, and the flowers and all – Jacques, you was namin' all the flowers.

**JACQUES.** But horses don't grow horns, y'understand? Cows, rams – the ones with cloven hoofs grow horns. You'll never find a horn on a horse.

**ISABELLE.** All right. Fine.

**JACQUES.** Don't know why you wouldn't take my word for it, why you'd believe some bloody picture on a rug.

**ISABELLE.** Oh shut up.

(To **PIERRE.**) Where's Joanie?

**PIERRE.** She'll be here in a bit. They're puttin' her armor on.

**ISABELLE.** She's wearin' armor, not a dress?

**PIERRE.** Yuh, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Why?

**PIERRE.** They want her that way.

**JACQUES.** Why ain't you wearin' your armor?

**PIERRE.** Dunno. They didn't ask for it.

**JACQUES.** Did you see much combat?

**PIERRE.** Yuh, of course I did.

**JACQUES.** Kill any English?

**PIERRE.** Ain't about how many you kill, Da, it's about leadership.

**JACQUES.** So you were up on your horse in your fancy armor, just wavin' your sword around.

**ISABELLE.** Stop. All we care about is that our boy is here with us and didn't get hurt.

**JACQUES.** Didn't seem to be the case with his sister.

**PIERRE.** She's fine, Da, she came out of it all right.

**ISABELLE.** What're you talkin' about?

**JACQUES.** Fellow in the escort told me she took a hit.

**ISABELLE.** My God. Why didn't you tell me?

**JACQUES.** Wanted it confirmed.

(To **PIERRE.**) Were you with her when it happened?

**PIERRE.** Not at the exact moment, no.

**JACQUES.** Why not?

**PIERRE.** It's a battle, Da, can't be by her side every fuggin' minute. But I was watchin' her back.

**JACQUES.** You don't watch someone's back in a charge, boy, you watch their bloody front.



**PIERRE.** I was right by her side, Da, and she charged ahead of me. That's what she does, she gets all hopped up and she won't listen to no one.

**ISABELLE.** But is she all right?

**PIERRE.** Yuh, Ma, she's fine. It was no big thing. She got hit by an arrow that got under her shoulder plate. She was so pumped up she didn't even notice it 'til we got back to camp and I saw the shaft stickin' outta her. I got someone to hold her down and I pulled it out, no big deal.

**JACQUES.** I heard she pulled it out herself.

**PIERRE.** Yuh, well you're gonna hear a lot of things, aren't you.

**ISABELLE.** Does she have a terrible wound?

**PIERRE.** Nah, I got it out clean. She's fine, Ma. Wouldn't even have mentioned it but people gotta go 'n talk. Don't know why Da had to bring it up.

**JACQUES.** Brought it up 'cause it needs to be discussed. Your job is to look after her.

**PIERRE.** Have you ever fought in a war? No. Were you there? No. And whoever told you she pulled her own arrow is a liar.

**ISABELLE.** All right, sweetheart...

**PIERRE.** I'm the one got her back to camp, I'm the one calmed her down and got the arrow out. And she cried like a baby while I did it.

**JACQUES.** We'll see what you do if you ever get hit.

**PIERRE.** Yuh, Da. Takes skill not to get hit.

**ISABELLE.** For God's sake, both of you stop. It's a wonderful day. Let's all count our blessings and be happy. Are you countin' your blessings?

**PIERRE.** Every fuggin' one of them, Ma.

*(JOAN comes in dressed for the ceremony in her armor and surcoat.)*

**JOAN.** Hey Ma! Hello Da!

**ISABELLE.** Joanie, there you are. Look at you.

**JACQUES.** How are you, Girl?

**JOAN.** Great Da, feelin' great. It's a big day. Glad you're here.

**JACQUES.** Glad to be here. Glad to see you.

**ISABELLE.** C'mere, give us a hug.

*(ISABELLE tries to give JOAN a hug through the breast plate.)*

Ooh, wish I could give you a proper squeeze, hard to get 'round all this metal they have you in. Can't be too comfortable for you.

**JOAN.** I'm used to it, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** Are you alright? We heard you had an arrow go through your chest.

**JOAN.** Not the chest, just the shoulder. It was nothin'. The wound closed up in a week. Didn't even pus.

**ISABELLE.** Had you prayed that morning?

**JOAN.** Yuh, of course, I always pray before a battle.

**ISABELLE.** I'm just wonderin' why Saint Catherine would let you get hit. She's supposed to be lookin' after you.

**JOAN.** She is Ma, she is. She let one through to test me. And it was good for my reputation. Your men respect you more when you take a hit.

**ISABELLE.** Well, let's hope that Saint Catherine don't put you through any more of these tests.

**JOAN.** Yuh, well. You like your room?

**ISABELLE.** Oh yes, it's very grand. I can't believe they're puttin' us up like this.

**JOAN.** Well, you're my mum and dad.

**ISABELLE.** And did you know, they picked us up at our house in a carriage with an escort and all. I spent the whole two weeks without once touchin' the ground. Your father walked some of the way. He got restless.

**JACQUES.** My arse got sore just sittin' there, couldn't take it.

**ISABELLE.** Me, I couldn't 'a been happier just leanin' back, watchin' the world go by. It was lovely.

**JOAN.** I'm glad, Ma. I told Charles I didn't want you havin' to foot it so he offered it up.

**JACQUES.** You call the king by his first name?

**PIERRE.** It's cheeky, but she gets away with it.

**JOAN.** Not cheeky. We're friends.

Did you tell them about the coat of arms?

**PIERRE.** Not yet.

**JOAN.** Charles is havin' a coat of arms made for us.

**ISABELLE.** Well, that's fancy. Don't know if we need one.

**JOAN.** Why not, Ma? It's a nice thing to have. You can hang it in the house. I also asked Charles to waive your taxes.

**JACQUES.** I can pay my own taxes, don't need you askin' favors for me.

**JOAN.** It's not a favor. I'm makin' him a king. He owes me.

**JACQUES.** Don't owe me.

**JOAN.** I'm just tryin' to make things easier for you, Da.

**JACQUES.** Don't need your help. Don't need my daughter managin' my business.

**JOAN.** Why is he bein' this way?

**ISABELLE.** We'll talk about this later.

**JOAN.** What the hell, Da?

*(A SCRIBE enters with his writing kit.)*

**SCRIBE.** Excuse me, Mademoiselle, are you ready for your letter?

**JOAN.** Yuh.

*(To ISABELLE and JACQUES.)* I have some business I have to do. The Duke of Burgundy won't make peace with us and we just can't fuggin' have that.

**ISABELLE.** Oh. Do you want us to leave?

**JOAN.** No, you can stay. I just need to put my words together.

*(JOAN turns away and bows her head to focus, while the SCRIBE sets up his portable desk.)*

**ISABELLE.** I'm the Maid's mother. And this is her father. We just come from Domrémy.

**SCRIBE.** (*Politely.*) A pleasure to meet you both.

**ISABELLE.** (*The SCRIBE's desk.*) That's a clever little thing.

**SCRIBE.** Yes, 'tis.

*(Nothing more to be said. The SCRIBE finishes setting up and waits for JOAN to come out of her meditation.)*

**JOAN.** All right, I'm ready.

**SCRIBE.** Go ahead, Mademoiselle.

*(JOAN dictates in a spill of words.)*

**JOAN.** Oh soon-to-be-defeated son of Burgundy, your arrogance offends the Maid who summons you to make no more war on France. You will win no more battles against the Maid who has the support of God Almighty Himself. Hand over to my king all the towns you have taken and plundered. If you will not do so, beware! The Maid will come after you, to your great misfortune. God and the Maid will strike you down and your soldiers' blood will soak the ground and water the lilies of France that will spring up in the path of your defeat! Heed my warning or accept God's wrath.

**SCRIBE.** Is that all, Mademoiselle?

**JOAN.** Yes, that should do it.

**SCRIBE.** Would you like to sign?

*(The SCRIBE dips the pen and hands it to JOAN. She bends over the parchment and makes her mark.)*

**JOAN.** I want this sent right away.

**SCRIBE.** Yes, Mademoiselle. And the Dauphin would like a quick word with you, if you wouldn't mind.

**JOAN.** All right.

*(To ISABELLE and JACQUES.)* Gotta do this.

**ISABELLE.** Are you comin' back?

**JOAN.** I'll meet you at the cathedral.

**ISABELLE.** We'll be together won't we, your brother said we'd all be standin' together.

**JOAN.** Don't know, Ma. We'll see.

*(JOAN leaves with the SCRIBE.)*

**JACQUES.** They're gonna send that out, what she said?

**PIERRE.** Yuh.

**JACQUES.** Seems reckless to me, spoutin' off threats like that to the English. The Dauphin allows this?

**PIERRE.** She's the Maid, Da. He lets her do anything.

**JACQUES.** What about his ministers, they approve of this?

**PIERRE.** They don't like it much, but they're a bunch of pompous farts. Can't stand that a girl gets a better seat at the table than them.

**JACQUES.** They could get the Dauphin to turn on her y'know.

**PIERRE.** Nah they won't.

**JACQUES.** They will if she gets outta hand. You need to pull her back.

**PIERRE.** She's winnin' us the war, why would I pull 'er back?

**JACQUES.** All it takes is if she trips up once.

**PIERRE.** She's not gonna trip up, Da. I'm watchin' out for her.

**JACQUES.** You weren't watchin' out for her when she got shot with that bloody arrow.

**ISABELLE.** Jacques, don't start up again. Have some mead. It's lovely stuff. They make their mead with special, royal honey. We should keep some bees. When we get home let's see about settin' us up some hives. You doin' all right there, Da?

**JACQUES.** Doin' fine.

**ISABELLE.** We're just all full 'a nerves, is all, bein' at a fancy coronation. But it's a lovely thing that we're all here together.

*(To PIERRE.)* And look at you, how handsome. I'm so proud of you. Takes my breath away how proud I am of both of you. Ready to burst.

(JACQUES *doesn't say anything, stares at his cup.*)

ISABELLE. Oh cheer up, Da. It's a wonderful day.

(*Blackout.*)

## Scene Two

*(We're back in the Arc house.)*

*(PIERRE is with JACQUES and ISABELLE. They're no longer in their fine clothes. JACQUES is listening to PIERRE, stone-faced, while ISABELLE listens with her hand to her mouth.)*

**PIERRE.** ... Joan said she could take the town with just a hundred men. But when we got there, there must 'a been six thousand Englishers waitin' for us. So we all headed for this castle to make our retreat. But when we got there, we was all backed up at the bridge. The fuggin' guards in the tower – they saw her banner, they knew she was out there – but the bastard cowards started lowerin' the gates. I tried to get us through 'fore they shut us out, I was yellin' at Joan to keep movin', but she just sat on her horse with that look in her eyes, that bloody self-righteous look of hers. I should 'a stuck her horse in the arse to make it bolt through the line. But we was all pressed together and my arm was pinned. And you can't see a fuggin' thing with your visor down –

**JACQUES.** Don't want your excuses, just tell us what happened.

**PIERRE.** So then the Englishers caught up to us and they pulled us off our horses. She weren't scared or nothin', just kind of pissed off, like what the hell, this weren't part of plan. You know?

**ISABELLE.** Are they treatin' her all right?

**PIERRE.** Oh yeah. She's a celebrity. They're not gonna mess with her. And once Charles pays her ransom they'll let her go.

**ISABELLE.** You think he'll get her out?

**PIERRE.** Sure, Ma. They make these kind of deals all the time. Nothin' to worry about, she'll be fine.

**ISABELLE.** That sounds hopeful, don't it, Jacques?

(JACQUES *doesn't answer.*)

PIERRE. She's fine, Ma, she's gonna be fine.

ISABELLE. Jacques?

(*He still won't answer.*)

Jacques?

(JACQUES *gets up and walks out.*)



## Scene Three

(**JACQUES** and **ISABELLE** are now with **FATHER GILBERT**.)

**ISABELLE.** So Father, it seems that the king ain't gonna pay for Joanie's release. So Jacques and me been talkin' about sellin' off the land and the animals to pay for her ransom. But we're not sure that'd be enough. We was thinkin' if we got some help from the church, and with all these pilgrims comin' through, we could take up a collection.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Isabelle, we're going to do everything we can. But it may turn out that the English won't release her for any price.

**ISABELLE.** But why not?

**FATHER GILBERT.** It seems, from what I've heard, that they're keeping her to put on trial.

**JACQUES.** What for? You don't put commanders on trial. That ain't part 'a the rules of war.

**FATHER GILBERT.** It's a church trial.

**JACQUES.** What's the church got to do with this?

**FATHER GILBERT.** They want to try her for heresy.

**ISABELLE.** Oh sweet God.

**JACQUES.** Where'd you hear this?

**FATHER GILBERT.** From a cleric who works for the bishop of Vaucouleurs.

**ISABELLE.** The bishop will vouch for her, won't he? He wrote that good report on Joanie when he examined her.

**FATHER GILBERT.** It won't count for much, I'm afraid. The English will want to set up their own tests.

**JACQUES.** Will there be anyone there to defend her?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Oh yes. Some of the monks on the panel are quite decent. In fact I know a priest who was on a retreat with one of the brothers. I'll send him a letter and tell him to put in a good word for Joan.

**JACQUES.** What's that gonna do?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Any contact will help, Jacques. Believe me, I'm pulling every string that I can.

**ISABELLE.** What if you went to Rome and talked to the pope? I'm sure the pope would stand up for Joanie.

**FATHER GILBERT.** I don't know, Isabelle. The Italians tend to look after their own. And the English know she's not a heretic. It's all political. They're just trying to save face.

**ISABELLE.** (To **JACQUES.**) You think that's true?

**JACQUES.** Of course it's political, what do you think?

**FATHER GILBERT.** I believe they just want to teach her a good lesson. The good news is, if she recants, they'll release her.

**ISABELLE.** Recant what?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Her visions.

**ISABELLE.** You mean Saint Catherine?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Yes.

**ISABELLE.** She should say Saint Catherine ain't real?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Yes, that would help.

**ISABELLE.** But that would be lying, wouldn't it? Couldn't she go to hell for that?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Whether Saint Catherine actually appeared to Joan or not, that could be argued.

**JACQUES.** You told us her visions were real.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Yes. To a point.

**JACQUES.** Not to a point. You sat here in our house and told us to send our girl to war because of that bloody saint.

**FATHER GILBERT.** No, I said God commanded it, not Saint Catherine.

**JACQUES.** You bloody did not!

**ISABELLE.** Jacques, let him talk.

**JACQUES.** He's not gonna give us a straight answer. He knows he gave us bad advice and now he's givin' us the run-around.

**FATHER GILBERT.** I beg to differ Jacques. The question of whether a saint has the ultimate authority over the

word of God is a very complex issue. It's not easy to explain to a lay person.

**JACQUES.** Because we're so bloody dense.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Jacques, I love this family, I love your daughter. I baptized her, I watched her grow up. I'm doing everything I can to save her.

**ISABELLE.** Father, are you saying that if Joan denies Saint Catherine, they'll let her go?

**FATHER GILBERT.** It's a strong possibility, yes.

**ISABELLE.** You're sayin' she needs to stop believing in Saint Catherine.

**FATHER GILBERT.** I'm saying she should pray directly to God for now.

**ISABELLE.** And God will keep our Joanie safe.

**FATHER GILBERT.** God will be there with her, whatever she has to endure.

**ISABELLE.** What d'ya mean?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Isabelle, God has plans for us that only He understands.

**JACQUES.** That gets you off the hook, don't it, God and his bloody plans.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Jacques, please.

**ISABELLE.** Could they burn her?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Best not to get ahead of ourselves.

**ISABELLE.** No, oh no. I won't let that happen.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Of course not. We're going to do everything we can.

**ISABELLE.** Father, I think God wants to bring our Joanie home, I do believe that. After all the wondrous things she's done. That's his plan for her, don't you think?

**FATHER GILBERT.** Yes, of course, of course. We'll keep praying for that.

**ISABELLE.** Are there any special prayers I should start in on?

**FATHER GILBERT.** The holy rosary will still do. I'd continue with that. And your novenas. And as many votives as

you wish to light at the church, of course I'll waive the fee.

**ISABELLE.** Should I leave off praying to Saint Catherine?

**FATHER GILBERT.** For now I'd say so, yes.

**ISABELLE.** All right. Will do. We'll get our Joanie back.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Yes we will. I have no doubt about that. We will bring her home. Forgive me, I need to go officiate a wedding...

**ISABELLE.** Thank you, Father.

**FATHER GILBERT.** Bless your heart, Isabelle, don't lose hope. Jacques, stay strong.

*(FATHER GILBERT takes his leave.)*

**ISABELLE.** I need to go see Joanie and explain to her about this Saint Catherine business.

**JACQUES.** The Englishers won't let you near her.

**ISABELLE.** I'm her mother, they damn well will. And don't you get in my way, do you hear?

**JACQUES.** Not gettin' in your way.

**ISABELLE.** You are! You with your horrible doubting. I can't breathe around you. You're like a big ugly rock sitting there, blocking everyone's way. No wonder our daughter took off.

**JACQUES.** It was you and your goddamn piety, lettin' that priest make you think you'd birthed the second coming. You're ignorant, Izzie.

**ISABELLE.** You hateful bastard!

**JACQUES.** You and your novenas – won't do ya a bit of good. It's words is all, arse-kissin' words to a God who doesn't give two shites about us.

**ISABELLE.** You wicked bastard! Go to hell!

*(ISABELLE starts punching at JACQUES. He throws his arms around her and holds her.)*

**JACQUES.** Quit it now...that's enough...

*(ISABELLE starts to sob.)*

**JACQUES.** Don't fall apart on me, Izzie. Buck up now. You're gonna calm yourself down and get your wits together. We're gonna talk our girl into savin' herself. Come on now, bear up. Not gonna let those bastards beat us down, are we?

**ISABELLE.** No, Da, no we won't.

**JACQUES.** We're gonna go out there together and bring our girl home.

**ISABELLE.** We will.

**JACQUES.** All right then. Good to go. Good to go.

*(Fade out.)*

## Scene Four

*(Lights up on JOAN in her cell. She's chained to a wooden pallet with shackles on her wrists and ankles. There's a latrine bucket set next to her.)*

*(We hear the door to her cell being unlocked, bolts sliding back.)*

*(A GUARD lets ISABELLE in.)*

ISABELLE. Joanie.

JOAN. Mum? How'd you get in here?

ISABELLE. I talked to a monk on your trial. Brother Francis. He got me permission to see you. Your da is here. He'd like to see you but they'll only let one of us in. Oh Joanie, let me look at you.

JOAN. Still here, Ma.

ISABELLE. It's almost over, sweetheart. You'll be out of here soon enough. Oh sweet girl, you're so thin. Are they givin' you enough to eat?

JOAN. It's enough, but it's foul.

ISABELLE. Da brought you apples from the orchard, he's talkin' to the guards about getting them in to you.

JOAN. Not hungry anymore.

ISABELLE. You have to eat, got to keep your strength up. I'll talk to Brother Francis about gettin' you some proper food.

*(She looks at the manacles on JOAN's wrists.)*

Look at these things, they're rubbing you raw. I'll bring in some of my salve and fix you right up. How are the guards treatin' you? Are they being respectful?

JOAN. No. They're swine.

ISABELLE. They haven't touched you...

*(JOAN just shakes her head.)*

Seems like they don't empty your slop bucket much.

**JOAN.** They like me to sit with my own stink.

**ISABELLE.** I'll move it for now. Looks like you bin' having the runs. I'll get you some cooked oats. That should get you solid again.

**JOAN.** Saint Catherine has stopped talkin' to me, Ma. I don't know what I did wrong.

**ISABELLE.** Nothing, sweetheart, you didn't do anything wrong.

**JOAN.** She's left me, Mama. It hurts.

**ISABELLE.** Don't you worry about Saint Catherine. Your Mum is right here. I won't leave 'til the trial's over and then we'll all go home.

**JOAN.** Where's Pierre?

**ISABELLE.** He's comin' out to meet us. He'll be here in a day or two.

**JOAN.** He should be gettin' the troops together to rescue me.

**ISABELLE.** He tried, darling. The army people have all gone off in different directions.

**JOAN.** Has he heard anything from Charles?

**ISABELLE.** No. But you'll be out of here soon. This Brother Francis is quite impressed with you. He said that you've been holdin' your own beautifully. But he says you can be a little cheeky sometimes.

**JOAN.** I got to defend myself, Ma.

**ISABELLE.** I know, Love. But it's just a matter of you giving in a little, just to make them feel they made their point.

**JOAN.** These people are out to get me. I can't give in to them.

**ISABELLE.** They're dreadful people I know. But you have to let 'em think you've learned your lesson. Do you understand? And then you'll be done with this whole awful thing and you can come back home.

**JOAN.** They want me to deny Saint Catherine.

**ISABELLE.** You'll do what you have to do.

**JOAN.** Ma, you don't abandon your faith when you're at your darkest, that's not what you do.

**ISABELLE.** Joanie, you don't have to stop believing in God. I'm only talkin' about Saint Catherine.

**JOAN.** I'm not gonna deny Saint Catherine. I can't believe you're sayin' this.

**ISABELLE.** Sweetheart, she's the one who got you into all this trouble.

**JOAN.** Why are you blaming her?

**ISABELLE.** Joanie, you just told me she left you.

**JOAN.** That's not what I said.

**ISABELLE.** She's left you, sweetheart.

**JOAN.** She does that. She comes and she goes. I had some ugly thoughts and she didn't wanna come to me. It's my fault if I haven't received her with grace.

**ISABELLE.** Joanie, no one in the world could be in a state of grace in this terrible place. She's hurt you, Love. She's left you alone in this horrible cell and you don't owe her a thing.

**JOAN.** I'm not gonna deny her, not doing that.

**ISABELLE.** Joan, look at me. They could burn you, do you understand? You need to save yourself.

**JOAN.** I can't do that to her.

**ISABELLE.** Joanie, she's not real. She was all in your head. You made her up in that brilliant, beautiful mind of yours.

**JOAN.** Oh Ma...no.

**ISABELLE.** She was a wonderful creation, honey, she was. She made you brave and strong and she helped you do remarkable things.

**JOAN.** No, no, no, no...

**ISABELLE.** Sweetheart, it's time to let her go.

**JOAN.** You're siding with my enemies.

**ISABELLE.** I'm not, Love. I just want to bring you home.

**JOAN.** I don't know you.



**ISABELLE.** Oh Joanie...

**JOAN.** Don't touch me. Sweet Jesus, go away!

Guard! Open the door!

**ISABELLE.** Joanie.

**JOAN.** Go away.

*(The **GUARD** comes in.)*

**GUARD.** Let's go.

**ISABELLE.** You need to empty her bucket.

**GUARD.** What?

**ISABELLE.** I said you need to empty her bucket. My daughter is not an animal.

**GUARD.** Go on, get out.

**ISABELLE.** Joanie, I'm not like your Saint Catherine. I'll never turn my back on you.

*(The **GUARD** takes **ISABELLE** out. The door slams shut.)*

### Scene Five

*(The court of King Charles. The setting doesn't appear as grand as before, the light shifted, to create a more muted scene.)*

*(ISABELLE is with the LADY OF THE COURT.)*

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I want you to know that my girls and I pray for Joan every day. We've put a statue of Saint Catherine in our chapel and the girls go in there every evening and light candles and they pray for a full half hour.

*(The LADY OF THE COURT brings out some folded notes.)*

They wrote these notes to give to Joan. Just some words of encouragement.

**ISABELLE.** She doesn't read.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Oh my gosh. Of course. I'm so sorry. They're short – I can read them to you and you can let Joan know what they say.

**ISABELLE.** My daughter needs to be rescued. She doesn't need notes.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Yes, I know.

**ISABELLE.** I've asked to see the king. I need to talk to him. He needs to find a way to save her. But I can't get in to see him. I was told to put my name on a list and come back in a month.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** No, that isn't right.

**ISABELLE.** So I thought a letter from me might help – I paid a scribe in the marketplace. If you could get it to him, as soon as you can, I'd much appreciate it.

*(ISABELLE hands the letter to the LADY OF THE COURT.)*

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Absolutely. I'll see what I can do. I don't have direct access to the king, but my husband knows the secretary of one of his ministers.

**ISABELLE.** But we need to get it to the king direct. He's the one who loves our Joan.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Yes, of course. May I read this?

**ISABELLE.** Yes, go ahead.

*(The LADY OF THE COURT takes a moment to read the letter.)*

**LADY OF THE COURT.** This is...are you sure this is what you want to say?

**ISABELLE.** What do y'mean?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** It's a bawdy poem.

**ISABELLE.** That bastard. This fellow swore to me he was followin' me word for word.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** You have to be very careful with who you pick to write your letters.

**ISABELLE.** I was. This man had his own booth. He was nicely dressed and his hands were clean. He even gave me a choice of paper. I got the best kind. I paid extra for it, and look what he did.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** There're are so many unscrupulous people out there. We'll do this over.

*(Calling.)*

Monique, call the scribe, please.

He'll be here in a moment.

**ISABELLE.** What does it say?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Oh, we don't need to read it.

**ISABELLE.** I'd like to know.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** It's about your daughter. It's extremely crude.

**ISABELLE.** Why would he write such a thing?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I don't know. Let's just tear it up, shall we?

**ISABELLE.** He knew I was her mother, he knew I was in distress. Why would he want to do that to me?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** People can be so vile.

**ISABELLE.** I don't understand. I thought that my daughter was loved.

*(The SCRIBE comes in with his writing box.)*

**SCRIBE.** You called for me, Madame?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Yes. Madame Arc would like to dictate a letter. Let's use your nicest paper.

**SCRIBE.** Yes, Madame.

**ISABELLE.** I remember you. You took down a letter for my Joan. It was right before the coronation.

**SCRIBE.** Yes, Madame, I did.

**ISABELLE.** Did you write many letters for her?

**SCRIBE.** Quite a few, yes.

**ISABELLE.** When was the last time you saw her?

**SCRIBE.** About two weeks before she was captured.

**ISABELLE.** Did you enjoy the time you spent with her?

**SCRIBE.** Did I enjoy...?

**ISABELLE.** Did you talk about things with her, did you have conversations? Was she jolly?

**SCRIBE.** Jolly?

**ISABELLE.** Silly word, I'm sorry – never mind. I just wanted to know how she was.

**SCRIBE.** Madame, whenever you're ready.

*(A beat.)*

**ISABELLE.** Havin' a hard time, gatherin' my thoughts...

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Take your time.

**ISABELLE.** I don't know what to say.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** What did you say to the other scribe?

**ISABELLE.** I can't remember. Sorry. I'm still a little upset.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Take your time, dear.

**ISABELLE.** I'm sorry.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** It's all right. You've been through a lot.

**SCRIBE.** Shall I come back later, Madame?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I think so, yes.

*(The SCRIBE starts packing his kit.)*

**ISABELLE.** Was that letter too harsh?

**SCRIBE.** Excuse me?

**ISABELLE.** The one she wrote to that duke before the coronation. Did she step on too many toes, do you think?

**SCRIBE.** I don't know. I just write down the words.

**ISABELLE.** Why don't you care more?

**SCRIBE.** Madame?

**ISABELLE.** You spent time with my daughter, you took down her words. Why aren't you more grieved that she's bin' taken?

**SCRIBE.** I'm just trying to be professional, Madame.

**ISABELLE.** No one cares around here.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** We care, of course, we all care.

**SCRIBE.** We do, Madame, we care very much.

**ISABELLE.** Then why isn't anything bein' done for her? Why didn't the king pay her ransom?

**SCRIBE.** To be honest, Madame, our treasury is quite depleted. And her ransom was set extremely high. It's the highest on record, it seems.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Which is a good thing, really. It shows how much she's valued. The English will want to take good care of her.

**ISABELLE.** She's chained to a wall in the dark. She can barely move. Her guards are always tryin' to touch her. Does the king know how much she's suffering?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** I'll make sure that he knows. I'll write the king a letter myself.

**ISABELLE.** They're going to burn my girl, do you understand?

*(The LADY OF THE COURT nods to the SCRIBE that he should go. The SCRIBE exits and the LADY OF THE COURT takes ISABELLE's hands.)*

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Your daughter will be all right. I know it in my heart.

**ISABELLE.** How do you know?

**LADY OF THE COURT.** My daughters and I were talking about Joan this morning and my youngest said to me, "You know, Mama, I had a dream last night that I was sitting next to the Maid. We were at a big banquet and she was wearing the most beautiful dress and we were giggling together because we were the best of friends."

**ISABELLE.** My daughter doesn't wear dresses.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Yes, of course. The dress is only a symbol. Of better times, don't you see?

**ISABELLE.** The dress was dreamed up by a girl who eats peacock twice a week and goes to sleep in a nice soft bed. And Joan doesn't giggle. Never has. I don't know what your daughter was thinkin'.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** She's just a little girl.

**ISABELLE.** Is that all you people have to offer? A silly dream and some prayers in front of your fancy altars? That king of yours – he should be ashamed of himself, the way he used my daughter.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Isabelle, we're doing the best that we can. I feel sick about this. I love your daughter.

**ISABELLE.** No, you don't. You don't know her. You never cleaned her nose or wiped her bum or picked the knots out of her hair. You never felt her weight against you when she fell asleep. You don't know the smell of her. She never hid her face behind your skirts or cried for you to pick her up. You never watched her grow up into somethin' that's taller and smarter than you. You never knew her restlessness. And you don't know her fear. My child is so afraid.

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Isabelle, listen to me – whatever happens, I know you'll be a comfort to her. That's all we can do when our children are hurting, to be there for them, to hold their hands, and sing to them, and tuck them in.

**ISABELLE.** For God's sake, there's nothing to tuck her into! She's on a pallet with irons around her wrists, still calling out to her bloody saint!

**LADY OF THE COURT.** Oh Madame Arc, I don't know what else to do for you. I'm so sorry. I'm so very, very sorry. Please forgive me... I'm just a mother.

**ISABELLE.** Oh lady, bless your heart. And bless your daughters for their pretty dresses and their clever minds. Bless them for having the good manners to write notes to a girl who's about to be tied to a stake. You've raised them up well.

*(ISABELLE leaves.)*

*(Fade out.)*

## Scene Six

*(ISABELLE is now with JOAN while the GUARD unshackles JOAN's wrists and feet. The GUARD tosses ISABELLE a rough, white linen gown - the burning dress.)*

**GUARD.** She has to strip those clothes off and put this on.

*(He stands there, waiting to see JOAN naked.)*

**ISABELLE.** We'd like some privacy, please.

*(The GUARD doesn't move.)*

For the love of God, have some decency.

**GUARD.** No witchy business, now.

*(The GUARD leaves.)*

**ISABELLE.** Stand up, sweetheart, there you go.

*(JOAN stands and ISABELLE starts to help her unlace her jerkin.)*

**JOAN.** Tell me some stories, Mama.

**ISABELLE.** Well, let's see. We had our lambing season and it all went fairly well. Twelve of the ewes had babies and only one was a stillborn. But one of the ewes got killed by some dogs so we had an orphan lamb. So it all worked out. Your da was able to tuck the orphan in with the ewe that lost her lamb and she was happy to have it.

**JOAN.** Glad the little lamb found a mama.

**ISABELLE.** Oh yes, they're both very content. And let's see, what else can I tell you... The Bonheur boy got married.

**JOAN.** Good for him. He needed a girl.

**ISABELLE.** Yuh, seems he found the right one.

**JOAN.** Don't be sad that I never had a fellow, Ma. I would have made a lousy wife.

**ISABELLE.** I know, honey, you would've been a wretch.

*(ISABELLE helps JOAN off with the rest of her clothes - down to her undershorts and the*



*cloth that's binding her breasts. ISABELLE dips a rag in a bucket of water and starts to gently wash her daughter.)*

And what else. We've been havin' a lovely spring this year. The fields are greenin' up and there're wild flowers everywhere. The fairy tree girls have been out there, pickin' them to make their silly flower crowns.

**JOAN.** Silly girls.

**ISABELLE.** They are. But they have their fun.

**JOAN.** Does the air smell sweet?

**ISABELLE.** Oh very sweet. And you should see all the bees diggin' into those blossoms. Did I tell you – your da set us up with a couple 'a hives. We'll have our own honey in a month or two.

**JOAN.** I remember when you'd take me to the fair. You'd buy me a chunk 'a honeycomb from the bee man. I liked to chew the wax after I sucked all the sweet out of it.

**ISABELLE.** Oh, you loved your honeycomb.

**JOAN.** And I loved the puppet shows.

**ISABELLE.** You did.

**JOAN.** I laughed when the puppets hit each other. Don't know why. It was cruel.

**ISABELLE.** They were just puppets, sweetheart, that's why you laughed.

**JOAN.** But I believed it.

**ISABELLE.** Yes, you did.

**JOAN.** Mama, do you remember that little rag doll you made for me?

**ISABELLE.** Yes.

**JOAN.** I was so mean about it. I threw it on the floor. I was mad that I couldn't go out with Da and the brothers and the doll made me feel like a baby. I didn't mean to throw it on the floor. It was soft and you stitched a smile on her face. And I just threw it on the floor. I loved that dolly, Mama. I'm so sorry...

*(JOAN is crying.)*

**ISABELLE.** Oh honey, you were just a little girl, I know you didn't mean it.

*(ISABELLE gently wipes at her tears. JOAN is trembling.)*

Here, let's get you covered up now.

*(ISABELLE helps JOAN on with the burning dress. JOAN's knees start to buckle with terror.)*

**JOAN.** Oh God... Mama...

*(ISABELLE holds on to her.)*

**ISABELLE.** Come, let's sit for a bit.

*(ISABELLE cradles JOAN.)*

**JOAN.** I'm scared.

**ISABELLE.** I know, Love.

**JOAN.** Oh God, it'll hurt.

**ISABELLE.** Listen, I saw Saint Catherine last night. I was sayin' my prayers and she appeared to me. Oh, she was beautiful. She just lit up the room. She said she's had to be away from you because she was sent to look after a child who had fallen down a well. But she's thought of you every day and you're not to despair. She's told me she's going to be with you. She said you should just keep lookin' up at the sky and she'll take you up with her before the flames even reach you. She said you won't feel any pain.

**JOAN.** Oh Ma...

**ISABELLE.** It's true. Saint Catherine loves you and she'll be there. Just keep looking up at the sky.

**GUARD.** Time to go.

*(ISABELLE helps JOAN up and keeps hold of her until she releases her to the GUARD. As JOAN is taken up the stairs ISABELLE keeps talking to her.)*

**ISABELLE.** My girl, I love you... I love you so...

*(As soon as JOAN is gone, the horror overtakes ISABELLE, and she's wrenched with grieving wails.)*

*(We hear the sound of the crowd outside. ISABELLE goes to the prison window and calls out to JOAN one last time.)*

**JOANIE...!**

**Scene Seven**

*(Lights up on JACQUES.)*

**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.

*(Lights up on PIERRE.)*

**PIERRE.** Pierre had shown up for the burning as well, but he spent most of the time in a tavern drinking himself sick. He paid his bar bill with a hank of his sister's hair that he kept in a pouch along with the tip of the arrow he once pulled from her flesh. He went back to the army, drank some more, and prayed to God that he'd get hit.

*(Lights up on ISABELLE.)*

**ISABELLE.** Jacques died in the ox cart on the way home. Isabelle buried her husband next to their daughter's

ashes up on the grassy hill where Joan first had her visions.

Isabelle Arc was never going to get over it. Never. But she wasn't goin' to fade away in the dark of an empty house. She got herself a proper horse and wagon and she traveled. She learned herself how to read. She went to Rome and she met with the pope and told that man in the hat that her daughter was no bloody heretic. She faced a tribunal of clergy, three rows of them in robes black as crows, all of them just waitin' for the poor dim peasant woman to fall to pieces. But she didn't. Isabelle Arc stared those bastards down and she cleared her Joanie's name. Isabelle Arc still went to church but she didn't talk to priests. She talked directly to God Almighty Himself and raged at Him at will. She had no fear of Him. Nor of death. She planned on shaking her fists for all eternity.

*(Lights transition to reveal that ISABELLE is standing on grassy mound that's scattered with meadow flowers, framed by a fine blue sky. She listens to the sound of bird song and the soft hum of bees.)*

You hear those birds? How do they keep up it all day. It must be for pure enjoyment. And look at all these wild flowers – how do such delicate things manage to push their way up outta the dirt. And all those silly bees digging in to those blossoms, sucking up the nectar, not givin' up – oh the greedy, greedy things. And smell that air. So full of the sweetness of grass and bud and life. And the sky. Such a clear, clean blue. This is what made my daughter's heart so large. She didn't need to conjure up some saint. This, all this, this...is pure goodness. I had a daughter once.

*(Lights fade.)*

**End of Play**