

# NORTHLIGHT THEATRE

## STUDY GUIDE



By Jane Anderson

Directed by BJ Jones

# EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Northlight's Education Department approaches all aspects of our education programming with a spirit of collaboration to encourage students' artistic growth through self-expression and unbridled creativity.

## Northlight On Campus

**Theatre skills** are the focus of this residency program. Students explore the fundamentals of acting through a curriculum that emphasizes collaboration and play. Students adapt a familiar narrative into a new story that they will perform for peers, administrators, family, and friends. This before, during, or after-school program can be custom-designed to meet each school's needs.

## Masterclass

This residency is designed to integrate core curriculum with **advanced theatre arts** topics. A Northlight Teaching Artist comes to the school classroom to lead an in-depth experience with topics such as stage combat, playwriting, musical theatre, improv, theatre design, and more. Programs can be designed to run one to three class sessions.

## Speak Up!

This **theatre for social change** residency asks students to address issues impacting their community. It is an active personal, artistic, and academic investigation that brings current events into the classroom and fosters social responsibility. Through the process of creating an original performance addressing topical issues, students use their voices to engage their peers in building positive change in their community.

## Season Access

Students **attend mainstage productions** at little or no cost, supplemented with in-school workshops, study guides, and post-show discussions. To enhance the student matinee experience, an optional pre-show **Artist Engagement** workshop connects students directly to the professional artists involved in the production.

## COMPILED BY:

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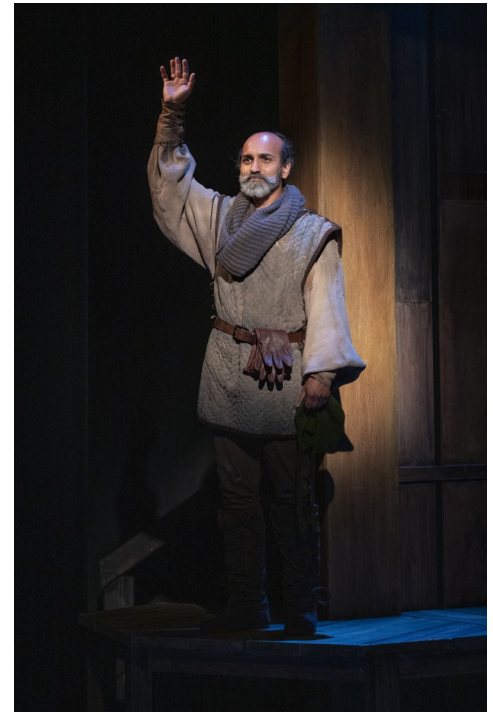
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# THE PLAYWRIGHT & THE SETTING

## Jane Anderson (*Playwright*)

Jane Anderson is an Emmy award-winning writer and director for theater, film and television. Plays include: *Mother of the Maid*, *The Baby Dance*, *BabyDance: Mixed*, *Defying Gravity*, *Looking for Normal*, *The Quality of Life*, *The Escort*, *Lynette at 3AM*, *Food & Shelter* and *The Last Time We Saw Her*. *Mother of the Maid* premiered at The Public Theater in 2018 and starred Glenn Close. Her plays have been produced Off-Broadway and in theaters around the country, including ACT, Arena Stage, Actors Theater of Louisville, Williamstown, Shakespeare & Company, The McCarter Theater, Long Wharf, the Geffen Playhouse, and the Pasadena Playhouse.



“Mother of the Maid is a deeply personal play for me...I had a Joan of Arc obsession when I was a young gay girl trying to come out to my mom. I think women of my ilk had that with Joan blasting apart traditional male/female roles. Then when I became a mother, I realized how it must’ve been to raise a child like me. Now that I am older, I have a deeper understanding of what it is to raise an unusual child, and how painful and exciting it is.”

–Jane Anderson

## French Politics in the 1400's

In 1392, the French King Charles VI killed five of his attendants during a paranoid schizophrenic episode. As a result, he was called the “mad king,” and was unable to lead France to victory against the English. The kingdom had thus been consumed by political division, followed by years of bloody turmoil in the fight to claim the power of the throne.





# SYNOPSIS

Isabelle Arc says that grateful for her sons and healthy daughter, Joan. Joan enters and Isabelle asks where she's been. Joan claims with the sheep up on the hill. Isabelle attempts to talk with her daughter about boys, but Joan says "there's a war on, there's bigger things to discuss." Joan admits to Isabelle that she's been having "holy visions," specifically that Saint Catherine has been appearing to her. Joan explains that God has called her to lead an army and drive the English out of France. Joan reveals that she already met with the captain and is leaving to meet with the dauphin, the eldest son of the King of France. Joan explains that she'll be dressed in men's gear and cutting her hair in order to avoid danger. Isabelle and Joan have an argument and Joan tells her Mother to "go to hell."

Joan's father Jacques beats her, Joan says she can take it. Pierre her brother insults and Joan says she has a high-ranking captain with connections to the royal court, the bishop, and a whole city believing she's the Maid, but is shocked by her own families treatment. Isabelle says they're just looking out for her and begins to feel bad for what they've done.

Father Gilbert, the local priest, visits the Arc's home and shows them a parchment that was sent by a Bishop who was impressed with Joan. Isabelle asks if Father Gilbert really believes that Joan is the "Maid." Father Gilbert affirms Joan's plan. Jacques sees the possible bad outcomes but Father Gilbert says God will protect her, he suggests that one of her brothers go along with her. Father Gilbert says word is spreading about and any signs of disbelief could be disastrous for her. He blesses Isabelle before leaving but Jacques refuses the blessing. Isabelle, now alone, prays to Saint Catherine, and a shaft of light hits Isabelle's face.

Isabelle is spinning wool when Joan enters with a new haircut and mens clothing. Pierre enters, giving Joan a sword, and Isabelle is concerned. Joan says she has enough in her head without her mom putting her down. Isabelle comforts Joan and Joan admits she is scared. Isabelle reveals her vision of Saint Catherine, but Joan tells her it was just the sun.. Pierre announces that the escort has arrived. Isabelle sends them off noting, "I raised an extraordinary woman."

Isabelle, Jacques and Pierre are having dinner. She asks Pierre about Joan's meeting with the Dauphin and Pierre he is giving Joan an army. Pierre says that he is also joining Joan's army, and Isabelle and Jacques express concern. Pierre refuses to help Jacques with work, and they threaten each other. Isabelle scolds Pierre, telling him, "if you want to come back from this war you better have a little more humility." Pierre apologizes and Isabelle asks further about Joan and Pierre says she's a little homesick. Isabelle decides to make the long journey to see her.

Isabelle narrates her journey to Joan, walking three hundred miles to see her. Guards wouldn't let her through, but Lady of the Court greets Isabelle, recognizing her as the Maid's mother, and says Joan is leaving the next day. Isabelle is upset by this, but The Lady of the Court calms her, offering her a foot bath. Isabelle also asks about her children and the Lady assures she has nothing to worry about, saying. Isabelle is embarrassed by her dirty feet, but Lady insists on washing them. The women talk about their lives and the atrocities done by the English. The Lady promises Isabelle that Joan is going to save them. The Lady remarks that Joan growing up in humble circumstances must have made her closer to God than those born into wealth. Isabelle says they're not poor, offended, she starts to leave. She wants to see Joan. A Chamberlain enters, telling Isabelle Joan will be available after dinner. Isabelle refuses to wait for Joan anymore. The Chamberlain complies and brings Isabelle to Joan, who is in a post-prayer state.

In an antechamber at the castle, Isabelle, Jacques, and Pierre are wearing fancy clothes. Pierre reveals that Joan was hit by an arrow in combat and Jacques is upset with Pierre for not protecting her. Joan enters, dressed in armor. Isabelle asks about the arrow, but Joan insists she's fine, telling them Saint Catherine let it through to test her. A scribe enters so Joan can dictate a letter to the Duke of Burgundy, who won't make peace with

France. Joan is aggressive in her shocking her parents. Joan leaves to speak with the Dauphin. Jacques is concerned that the letter seems reckless and Pierre remarks that Joan is allowed to do anything. Isabelle tells them she's proud of both of her children.

Back in the Arc house, Pierre describes Joan's failed attempt in a battle which ends with English capturing her. Isabelle is worried about how they are treating her, but Pierre assures her that King Charles will pay her ransom soon.

Jacques and Isabelle meet with Father Gilbert who believes the English are keeping her to put her on trial for heresy. He says they want to teach her a lesson and if Joan recants her visions, they'll release her. Jacques is angry with Father Gilbert for ensuring Joan's safety during their first meeting. Father Gilbert leaves, telling them to not lose hope. Isabelle tells Jacques she needs to see Joan and after comforting each other they leave to see her.

A guard let's Isabelle into Joan's cell where she comforts Joan saying she'll be free soon. Isabelle is concerned for Joan's health and Joan admits that Saint Catherine has stopped talking to her, which has hurt Joan. Joan is determined not to give in to the English saying that she can't abandon her faith at her darkest moment. Isabelle explains that Joan could get burned at the stake if she doesn't deny her visions, but Joan is upset and gets the guard to take Isabelle away. Isabelle promises Joan that she'll never turn her back on her like Saint Catherine has.

Back at the castle, Isabelle is with the Lady of the Court. Isabelle wants to see the King but was told to put her name on a list and to come back in a month. She paid a scribe in the marketplace to write a letter to the King and The Lady tells Isabelle it's not what she dictated, but an inappropriate poem about Joan. She calls the scribe to rewrite the Isabelle remembers him, saying he was the one that took down Joan's letter before the coronation. Isabelle states she's having a hard time gathering her thoughts, The Scribe offers to come back later. Isabelle asks, why nothing is being done for Joan. She brings up the king not paying for Joan's ransom and the Scribe says her ransom was the highest on record and the treasury is depleted. Isabelle questions if the King knows how much Joan is suffering. The Lady tells Isabelle about a dream her daughters had about Joan, but Isabelle insists that Joan needs action, not dreams.

At Joan's prison cell, a guard instructs Isabelle change Joan into her burning dress. Isabelle sends the guard away. As she undresses Joan, she tells her of the lovely spring they've had and Joan remembers when Isabelle would take her to the fair. Joan recounts being mean to one of her old dolls and apologizes. Isabelle reassures Joan that she was just a little girl. As Isabelle holds her daughter, Joan says she's scared, knowing it'll hurt. Isabelle says she saw Saint Catherine the previous night in her prayers, and she's going to be with Joan when the burning happens. Isabelle tells Joan she loves her and the guard takes Joan away.

Jacques narrates that he would not let Isabelle be at the burning. He describes raising his hand so Joan would see him and know that he was proud of her. He watched her until it was over. A monk scooped a fistful of Joan's ashes into a rag and gave it to Jacques, Then led Jacques out of the square because he had gone blind. Pierre tells the audience that he, too, was at the burning, but he spent most of the time in a tavern getting drunk. He paid his tab with a chunk of Joan's hair and went back to the army, praying to God that he'd get hit. Isabelle says Jacques died in the ox cart on the way home from a heart attack driven by grief. She buried her husband next to Joan's ashes on the grassy hill where Joan first had her visions. She says she learned to read and travelled to Rome to meet with the pope to clear Joan's name. She describes the sounds and sights of nature all around her and how that is a sign of pure goodness, stating, "I had a daughter once."

# MEET THE CHARACTERS



***Kate Fry***

**Isabelle Arc**

Patient, poised, and filled with endless care, Isabelle is the Mother of the Maid. Though at first worried and doubtful of Joan's visions, she continuously shows Joan unconditional love. She is strong and willful in the defense of her child, and will do anything to support her.



***Kareem Bandealy***

**Jacques Arc**

Father of Joan, Jacques Arc is a strict, stoic, and hardworking laborer with a traditional mindset finding himself frustrated by his family's "blind faith." Despite his hard exterior he has a great love for his family.



***Grace Smith***

**Joan Arc**

Courageous and resilient, Joan of Arc receives visions from Saint Catherine, believing it to be her duty to drive the English out of France.

Though she faces opposition from many people, including doubts from her family, Joan clings to her faith.

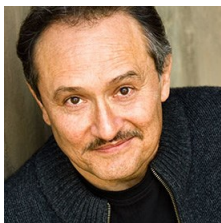


***Casey Morris***

**Pierre Arc**

Outspoken and rugged, son of Isabelle and Jacques and brother to Joan, Pierre ridicules Joan's initial claims about her visions.

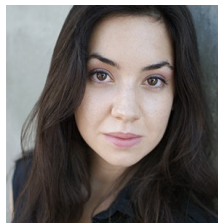
However, on request, he joins her in the army, fighting alongside her. He feels the need to protect his sister strongly.



***Ricardo Gutierrez***

**Father Gilbert**

Religious leader of the Arc's village, Father Gilbert encourages Joan's parents to support her decision, believing it's "God's Plan," but wavers after Joan's capture.



***Haley Burgess***

**Monique**

Answers to the Lady of the Court and helps what's needed.



***Penelope Walker***

**Lady of the Court**

Proper and privileged, Nicole, a wealthy Lady of the Court. She is fascinated by Joan's work and praises Isabelle's role as a mother.

A mother herself. She wishes her daughters were more like Joan

# THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

The name the Hundred Years' War has been used by historians since the beginning of the nineteenth century to describe the long conflict that pitted the kings and kingdoms of France and England against each other from 1337 to 1453. Two factors lay at the origin of the conflict: first, the status of the duchy of Guyenne (or Aquitaine)—though it belonged to the kings of



England, it remained a fief of the French crown, and the kings of England wanted independent possession; second, as the closest relatives of the last direct Capetian King (Charles IV, who had died in 1328), the kings of England from 1337 claimed the crown of France. Theoretically, the French kings, possessing the financial and military resources of the most populous and powerful state in Western Europe, held the advantage over the smaller, more sparsely

populated English kingdom. However, the expeditionary English army, well disciplined and successfully using their longbows to stop cavalry charges, proved repeatedly victorious over much larger French forces: significant victories occurred by sea at Sluys (1340), and by land at Crecy (1346) and Poitiers (1356). In 1360, King John of France, in order to save his title, was forced to accept the Treaty of Calais, which granted complete independence to the duchy of Guyenne, now considerably enlarged to include almost a third of France. However, his son Charles V, with the help of his commander in chief Bertrand du Guesclin, by 1380 had succeeded in reconquering almost all the ceded territory, notably by a series of sieges.

After a hiatus, Henry V of England renewed the war and proved victorious at Agincourt (1415), conquered Normandy (1417-1418), and then attempted to have himself crowned as the future king of France by the Treaty of Troyes (1420). But his military successes were not matched by political successes: although allied with the dukes of Burgundy, the majority of the French refused English domination. Thanks to Joan of Arc, the Siege of Orleans was lifted (1429). Then Paris and the Ile-de-France were liberated (1436- 1441), and after the French army had been reorganized and reformed (1445-1448), Charles VII recaptured the duchy of Normandy (the Battle of Formigny, 1450), and then seized Guyenne (the Battle of Castillon, 1453). The end of the conflict was never marked by a peace treaty but died out because the English recognized that the French troops were too strong to be directly confronted.

English territory in France, which had been extensive since 1066 (after the Battle of Hastings,) now remained confined to the Channel port of Calais (lost in 1558). France, at last free of the English invaders, resumed its place as the dominant state of Western Europe.

*“Da, they're not gonna send her out with a pile of men just to get 'em slaughtered, they all think she has something' if you were at court, you'd get it.” – Pierre Arc*



# JOAN OF ARC: A HISTORY

## Early Life



Joan was born to Jacques d'Arc and Isabelle Romée in Domrémy on the borders of the duchies of Bar and Lorraine in the early 15th century. Her year of birth is believed to be 1412. Her parents were peasants and owned about 50 acres of land. Joan was strongly inclined towards religion from a young age. Within the church she could sometimes be seen prostrated before the crucifix, or with her hands joined and her face and eyes lifted towards the image of Christ and that of the Virgin Mary. She started experiencing divine visions when she was around 12-13 years old. According to her own later accounts, she felt the voice of God commanding her to serve the French nation by driving out the English and bringing the dauphin to Reims for his coronation. She also claimed to have seen saints like St. Michael and St. Catherine in her visions.

## Joan d'Arc Soldier and Prophetess

In 1428, Joan went to Vaucouleurs, a walled town held by an Armagnac garrison in the far east of the kingdom, and asked Captain Robert de Baudricourt to take her to the king, for whom, she said, God had given her a message. As word of Joan's insistent claims began to spread, the Duke of Lorraine prepared to send her to Chinon. The news about her arrival had caught Yolande of Aragon's attention, Charles VII's mother-in-law. She knew that Charles VII could use this to raise the morale of the broken France against the English and she helped bring Joan to the king. When he meets Joan, King Charles VII gives her an army.



On April 26, she rode in to Orleans. After six months of siege, and with the kingdom of Bourges in disarray, Joan the Maid had freed Orleans in just four days of fighting.

On July 17, 1429, Charles VII of France entered the cathedral of Reims for his own consecration. Joan the Maid stood at Charles' side, Joan's renown was growing. On July 21, 1429, Joan and Charles VII began to march the French army towards Paris. In a few days, Joan's army had liberated the Chateau-Thierry and Soissons.

Charles, again, had sought reconciliation with Duke Philip, but the latter had no intention of making a lasting peace. Burgundy still stood with England. The result would be war. On March 29, Joan left the court of Charles to join the French army at Lagny. In less than a month, she liberated the town of Melun.

On May 15, Joan marched to the Siege of Compiègne. On the night of May 22, she called for her banner and gathered her men for an assault on the enemy. May 23, she rode cross the bridge, out through the fortified boulevard on the north bank of the Oise, and on, charging into the heart of the Burgundy position. More and more of the Armagnac soldiers were forced into retreat across the river, until the enemy pushed so close to the boulevard that the captain from Joan's side had no choice but to shut the town's gate. Amid the confusion, Joan was taken by the nearest Burgundian captain.

In November, the Burgundians sold Joan to the English, who charged her with 70 offenses including witchcraft, heresy, and dressing as a man. After ten months of imprisonment, on May 2, Joan was told to face the court once again, and on May 24, 1431, Joan was taken from the castle to the Abbey of Saint-Ouen in the center of the city, where a scaffold had been built. She was to be burned alive in purifying fire. On May 30, Joan was put to death.



# MOTHER OF THE MAID: FAMILY

## Isabelle d'Arc



Isabelle d'Arc, born in 1384, was the mother of Joan of Arc. A devout Catholic, Isabelle nurtured Joan in the ways of the Church. Isabelle was originally from Vouthon, a small town a short distance to the west of Domrémy. She married Jacques d'Arc and together they raised a family that included three sons and two daughters. After Joan's death, Isabelle moved to Orleans where she received a pension from the people of the city in gratitude for her daughter's deliverance of Orleans in 1429. In 1455, two months after the election of Pope Calixtus III, Isabelle Romée and her two sons appealed for justice concerning Joan's case. The trial to overturn Joan's 1431 Trial of Condemnation began on November 7, 1455. The trial is now called Joan's Trial of Nullification or Rehabilitation. Joan's original trial was overturned in 1456 and she was declared a martyr by the Church. Isabelle lived out her final days in Orleans where she was highly regarded and honored as the mother of the "Maid of Orleans" the hero of France. At Joan's Trial of Nullification her mother said: *"Because the people suffered so much, she had a great compassion for them in her heart and despite her youth she would fast and pray for them with great devotion and fervor. She never thought, spoke or did anything against the faith. Certain enemies had her arraigned in a religious trial. Despite her disclaimers and appeals, both tacit and expressed, and without any help given to her defense, she was put through a perfidious, violent, iniquitous and sinful trial. The judges condemned her falsely, damnably and criminally, and put her to death in a cruel manner by fire. For the damnation of their souls and in notorious, infamous and irreparable loss to me, Isabelle, and mine..."*

## Jacques d'Arc



Joan's father was born in 1380 in the district of Troyes. He established himself at Domrémy. In 1419 he was the purchaser of the Chateau de l'Ile. In a document from 1423 he is described as doyen or sergeant of the village; he therefore took rank between the mayor and the provost, and was in charge of collecting the taxes. In 1427, in an important trial held before Robert de Baudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs, Jacques was again acting as a delegate of his fellow-citizens. We know that he opposed with all his power the mission of his daughter, whom he wished to marry off. However, he went to Reims for the coronation of the King, and the King and the municipality defrayed his expenses and gave him a horse for his return to Domrémy. He was ennobled in December, 1429. Jacques d'Arc died 1431, it is said, of sorrow over his daughter's death.

## Pierre d'Arc

Pierre d'Arc fought alongside his sister Joan at Orléans, lived in the same house with her there, then accompanied her to Reims, and was ennobled with the rest of the family. He was captured with Joan at Compiègne, but was eventually released. Pierre retired to the city of Orléans where he received many gifts from the King, the city of Orléans, and a pension from Duke Charles, among them the Ile aux Boeufs in 1443. The descendants of Pierre possessed three of Joan's letters and a sword that she had worn. The letters were saved but the sword was lost during the chaos of the revolutionary period.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## WHAT YOU STAND FOR

*In Mother of the Maid, Joan takes a stand for France during the Hundred Years War. Over the past decade, we hear more and more from young people standing up for what they believe in, often in the face of criticism and adversity. This activity will ask students to consider their own power to stand up for topics they believe in and who may be an ally or a critic.*

### WATCH

Watch the following clips (or parts of these clips) of young people labeled as “modern day *Joan of Arcs*”:

1. Malala Yousafzai: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3lyymTRVKw>
2. Emma Gonzalez: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQPr3iMTL98>
3. Greta Thunberg: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AY\\_S7n3jkkU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AY_S7n3jkkU)

### DISCUSS

After watching those clips, consider the following questions for discussion:

1. Who else could we add to this list? Who are other youth standing up for rights around the world? In your community?
2. What makes their speeches effective or ineffective? What tactics are they using in order to convey information and emotion?
3. Who are their supporters? Their critics?

### ACTIVATE

Have students choose a topic they feel strongly about and write a speech in order to persuade an audience. Ask them to identify (1) their audience (2) their main point or thesis (3) facts or information to accompany anecdotes.

*Option:* Choose a location, audience, or environment that all topics should live within, such as the United Nations. Are all students going to be speaking to a summit of world leaders? Or should they cultivate a speech to their local city council? Then, set the stage! Restructure your room, give students roles, or take on a role yourself. Create an immersive space for students to experience what it might be like to stand on a larger stage.

Students could write their speeches and, after watching *Mother of the Maid*, compare them to the tactics Joan uses when attempting to persuade world leaders. Students could also present their speeches to the rest of the class or in small groups.

### REFLECT

Ask students to reflect on this process:

- If you were to give this speech in your chosen arena, who would your allies be? Who would your critics be?
- Is the idea of standing up for your ideas in front of adults exciting, scary, or both? Do you think these speeches are seriously considered by adults in power?

# DAY TO DAY LIFE

**Peasants** The word peasant comes from the French word paysan which simply means someone from the country. Most people in the Middle Ages lived in small villages of 20 or 30 families. The land was divided into three huge fields. Each peasant had some strips of land in each field. Most peasants owned only one ox so they had to join with other families to obtain the team of oxen needed to pull a plow. The life of a medieval peasant was not static and unchanging, but rather a time of change and development. Life was generally worse for peasants earlier in the middle ages, but by the 1300s, farming techniques, the growth of towns, changes in the environment, and a generally more cosmopolitan world view by king and commoner alike all contributed to the overall improvement in peasants' lives. However, famine, marauding armies, ruthless lords, and more could disrupt the life of the commoner.



**Peasant Women** had many domestic responsibilities, including caring for children, preparing food, and tending livestock. During the busiest times of the year, such as the harvest, women often joined their husbands in the field to bring in the crops. Women often participated in vital cottage industries, such as brewing, baking and manufacturing textiles. Women living in towns had similar responsibilities to those in the countryside. Just as rural women helped with their husbands' work, urban women assisted their fathers and husbands in a wide variety of trades and crafts, including the production of textiles, leather goods, and metal work, as well as running shops and inns.

**Nobles** In countries where noble rank entailed clearly defined legal privileges—such as the right to be tried only in special courts—proven descent from noble ancestors might be sufficient to qualify a family as noble in the eyes of the law. Fundamentally, however, nobility was expressed and epitomized by an individual's lifestyle. Hereditary land ownership, political influence, deference from social inferiors, courtly manners, and the ostentatious display of wealth combined to constitute a family's honor and hence to mark it as noble. Aristocrats— or those who wanted to be classed as such—vied with one another in hosting lavish banquets, they dressed in rich and extravagant clothing, and they maintained enormous households. The main pastime of the upper class during this time was hunting. When they were not hunting, the noble or knight was fighting.



**Noble Women** did own land and rise to powerful political positions, but this was usually accomplished through marriage. Often marriages were arranged by powerful families to form alliances, and women were treated as property that was traded. Most women, even those in privileged circumstances, had little control over the direction their lives took.

**Women in Society** Throughout the Middle Ages, the place of women in society was often dictated by biblical texts. The writings of the apostle Paul, in particular, emphasized men's authority over women. Within the households of the medieval period, especially among the lower classes, women were expected to be submissive to men. Men were seen as the heads of household, the authorities and the decision-makers. Women were expected to bear and raise children and take care of the domestic affairs of the house, but in general this role of mother was considered subordinate to the father's role. Most women were married as teenagers. Many women 'took the veil' and became nuns. Though the appeal of this way of life might be difficult to grasp today, for a medieval woman, one of its attractions might have been freedom from the dangers of childbearing.





# THE RISK OF CROSS-DRESSING

## Excerpt: How Cross-Dressing Helped Send Joan of Arc to the Stake

*by Joan Vos Macdonald, May 30, 2017*

When her captors asked why she wore men's clothing, Joan replied,

*"Dress is but a small matter."*

But upon repeated questioning, she hinted that wearing female garb imperiled her chastity. (The soldier's clothing she wore included a complicated series of straps connecting the hose and tunic—much harder to take off than a dress.) When told she could not attend mass unless she wore a dress, she said,

*"the dress of those who receive the Sacrament can have no importance."*

Her inquisitors disagreed. After threats of torture and rounds of cross examination, Joan signed a document denying her visions and agreeing not to wear men's clothes. She was sentenced to life imprisonment, but avoided execution. However, within a few days, possibly after some unwanted male advances from prison guards, but more likely because she didn't understand what she'd signed and hadn't been allowed to attend Mass even if she wore female clothes, she returned to the tunic and hose. Frustrated by her relapse—both because she continued to wear men's clothes and continued to claim hearing voices of saints—the pro-English Bishop of Beauvais, Pierre Cauchon, decided to excommunicate and then execute her, partly for the heresy of wearing men's clothes. The charge was defying the Biblical verse Deuteronomy 22:5, which said that women should not wear "that which pertaineth unto a man."

Despite the theological wiggle room, Joan's captors continued to harp on the sinfulness of her chosen wardrobe. During questioning before her second trial, they asked why she resumed wearing men's dress, and she responded that it was

*"more lawful and suitable for me to resume it and to wear man's dress, being with men, than to have a woman's dress."*

The bishop determined that the devil persuaded her to dress like a man, and declared her a relapsed heretic. Joan was sentenced to death, and at the age of 19, on May 30, 1431, she was burned at the stake—reportedly wearing a dress.





# CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

*In Mother of the Maid, Joan takes a huge risk. A risk that will change the course of history. In the play we see how deeply this effects her family, for better or worse.*

## RISK IT ALL

### BRAINSTORM

What is a risk you have taken in your life that has had an effect on other people? Did the risk end in reward? Why or why not? How did those effected feel before you made the risk? In the process? After?

### WRITE

Individually, write a letter to someone who will be effected by your decision. Tell them in detail what risk you are taking and why you are taking it. Do you know how it will effect them? Are they directly involved? Do you wish they were? How do you think they will react to your risk?

### SWAP

Now swap your letter with a partner. Read through it as if you were a loved one receiving this news. As you read notice the following:

- How does it feel to know someone you care for took this risk?
- What advice would you give them?
- What potential effect does it have on you?

Now write a monologue based on your reaction to the letter from the point of view of someone who cares about this person. Make sure you outline how this effects you. See the example from *Mother of the Maid* below:

*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 smoke. He was told the crowds would be thick and if he wanted to be anywhere near his daughter that he had to get there early... He stood his ground as the square filled up and he shut his ears to all the ugly talk. When his daughters cart tolled 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..."*

### SHARE & REFLECT

Perform your monologue, you audience can think about the following as they watch:

- What toll did this persons actions take on the performer?
- Were these effects intended or unintended?
- How did it feel to watch someone put themselves in the shoes of a person they have had an effect on?
- How did it feel to do that yourself?
- How do you see this play out in *Mother of the Maid*? How did Joan's actions have an effect on her family? On the world?

# Glossary

**HOLY VISIONS:** Visions occur frequently in the Bible as instruments of supernatural revelation. They are audiovisual means of communication between a heavenly being and an earthly recipient

**SAINT CATHERINE:** (of Alexandria) a Christian saint and virgin, who was martyred in the early 4th century at the hands of the pagan emperor Maxentius

**ABBESS:** A woman who is the head of an abbey of nuns

**DAUPHIN:** The eldest son of the King of France; **Dauphin of France** originally **Dauphin of Viennois** (*Dauphin de Viennois*), was the title given to the heir apparent to the throne of France from 1350 to 1791 and 1824 to 1830

**BLESS SOMEONE'S ROSARIES:** Refer to the beads that one uses for praying the Rosary, which is a Catholic prayer based upon the Bible that focuses on the events in the life of Jesus and that of Mary the Mother of Jesus

**TUNIC:** A tunic is a garment for the body, usually simple in style, reaching from the shoulders to a length somewhere between the hips and the knees

**HOSE:** a close-fitting garment covering the legs and waist that is usually attached to a doublet by points

**BISHOP:** A bishop is an ordained, consecrated, or appointed member of the Christian clergy who is generally entrusted with a position of authority and oversight

**VAUCOULEURS:** Vaucouleurs is a commune in the Meuse department of France, located approximately 300 km from Paris. Joan of Arc stayed in Vaucouleurs for several months during 1428 and 1429 while she sought permission to visit the royal court of Charles VII of France

**PARCHMENT:** a stiff, flat, thin material made from the prepared skin of an animal and used as a durable writing surface in ancient and medieval times

**HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA:** *Historia ecclesiastica* ("Ecclesiastical History"), is an indispensable documentary source for Christian history from 305 to 439. Through excerpts from the 6th-century Latin translation ascribed to Cassiodorus and Epiphanius, it provided the medieval Latin church with a major portion of its knowledge of early Christianity

**DOUBLET:** A man's short close-fitting padded jacket, commonly worn from the 14th to the 17th century

**BREECHES:** an article of clothing covering the body from the waist down, with separate coverings for each leg, usually stopping just below the knee, though in some cases reaching to the ankles

**KNICKERS:** loose-fitting trousers gathered at the knee or calf

**SCABBARD:** A sheath for the blade of a sword or dagger, typically made of leather or metal

**STIRRUP:** Each of a pair of devices attached to each side of a horse's saddle, in the form of a loop with a flat base to support the rider's foot

**ORLEANS:** a city on the banks of the Loire River in northcentral France, and it's the capital of the Centre-Val de Loire region. Joan of Arc famously saved the city from English siege in 1429, an event celebrated with an annual festival

**VOTRE SANTÉ:** "to your health" in French —used as a toast

**ABRAHAM'S SARAH:** In the Bible, Sarah was the wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac

**(GOAT) PEN:** A small yard or animal enclosure

**SAINT MARGARET:** (of Scotland) an English princess and a Scottish queen

**SAINT DARIA:** a saint of the Early Christian period

**MEAD:** an alcoholic beverage created by fermenting honey with water, sometimes with various fruits, spices, grains, or hops. The alcoholic content ranges from about 3.5% ABV to more than 20%. The defining characteristic of mead is that the majority of the beverage's fermentable sugar is derived from honey

**CHAMBERLAIN:** An officer who manages the household of a monarch or noble

**(KING) CHARLES:** King Charles VII, ruled from 1422 to his death in 1461, the fifth from the House of Valois

**COAT OF ARMS:** a heraldic visual design on an escutcheon, surcoat, or tabard. The coat of arms on an escutcheon forms the central element of the full heraldic achievement which in its whole consists of shield, supporters, crest, and motto.

**SCRIBE:** A person who copies documents or takes dictation, especially one employed to do this before printing was invented.

**BURGUNDY:** Burgundy is a historical region in east-central France

**DOMRÉMY:** Domrémy-la-Pucelle, literally "Domrémy [of] the maiden" in reference to Joan of Arc, is a commune in the Vosges department in Grand Est in northeastern France. The village, originally named Domrémy, is the birthplace of Joan of Arc

**HERESY:** any belief or theory that is strongly at variance with established beliefs or customs, in particular the accepted beliefs of a church or religious organization. A heretic is a proponent of such claims or beliefs

**RECENT:** To say that one no longer holds an opinion or belief, especially one considered heretical

**OFFICIATE:** To perform a religious service or ceremony

**SHACKLE:** A pair of fetters connected together by a chain, used to fasten a prisoner's wrists or ankles together

**LATRINE:** A toilet or outhouse, especially a communal one in a camp or barracks

**BAWDY:** Dealing with sexual matters in a comical way; humorously indecent

**EWE:** A female sheep

**STILLBORN:** (of an infant) born dead

**TRIBUNAL:** A seat or bench for a judge or judges

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## Pre-Show Discussion

*Mother of the Maid* examines the story of Joan of Arc, but from the perspective of her mother. In the midst of Joan's political and social impact on French society, we see not only how one small determined soul can alter history, but also the importance of a parent's love and how much courage that can take at times.

What is the greatest act of love you've ever shown for someone in your life? Was it hard to do? Why or why not?

What is something you stand up for against all odds? How might that effect your life and the life of others around you?

## Post-Show Discussion Questions

- 1 Why do Joan's actions before she gets an army scare Isabelle? What did the time period dictate that would sway Isabelle's support? Why does Isabelle ultimately decide to support Joan?
- 3 Jacques holds tightly to his point of view of Joan and her but ultimately says "her da was proud of her." At what point in the play did Jacques' opinions shift and why? Did Joan know he was proud of her? Does his approval matter to Joan?
- 4 We see Joan's confidence in her conviction throughout the play, which grows as she get more power. Does that confidence work in her favor or against it? Why or why not?
- 5 Why does Isabelle fight so hard for Joan against her own family, and then for Joan's freedom? Is it a parents duty to stand by their child? Why or why not?
- 6 Throughout this play, we follow Isabelle and what it is to be the "Mother of the Maid," as reflected by the play's title. What changes about Isabelle and Joan's relationship at the end of the play in their final moments before Joan's burning compared to the beginning when Joan first tells Isabelle about her visions? What remains the same?