

The Maid of Holloway
By Nina Crane

- MR THANET: Good afternoon everyone, as you know we are here today to assess Ms Joan D'Arc's suitability for parole. I'm Mr Thanet and joining me today is Mrs Ullswater and Ms D'Arc's lawyer, Mr Dalston. So, I shall proceed; Joan D'Arc – 19 years old at time of sentencing, imprisoned on charges of heresy, insubordination and shoplifting. Ms D'Arc it says here that you have been an exemplary prisoner, helping out with the prison garden and studying GCSE French and doing very well with that by all accounts.
- JOAN: Oui.
- MRS ULLSWATER: Though there is the question of your mental health.
- JOAN: There is nothing wrong with my mental health you cheeky cow.
- MRS ULLSWATER: It says here you claim divine guidance, that you received visions from God instructing you to recover France from English domination.
- JOAN: That is correct.
- MR THANET: I think you can see why we're dubious Ms D'Arc. (*BEAT*) Dr. Jensen, the prison psychologist, couldn't be with us today but he sent over his assessment of you over the past eighteen months that he's been working with you at Holloway. It says (*Beat*) 'She's bonkers'. (*BEAT*) Do you have anything to say in response to that?
- JOAN: Non.
- MRS ULLSWATER: Many people in prison believe claiming to have found God will stand them in good stead at their parole hearing, what makes you any different?
- JOAN: I did not find God in prison, he found me, when I was twelve; he sent three Saints to me in a field.
- MRS ULLSWATER: Of course he did. It says here that following said visions you led the French army in an astounding series of victories that reversed the tide of the war against the English.
- MR THANET: Did she now.
- MR DALSTON: She did it all dressed as a geezer.
- MRS ULLSWATER: Male disguise? Do you have transgender leanings Ms D'Arc? If so we can support you with this...

JOAN: Non, it was necessary to preserve my chastity; men would be less likely to think of me as an object of desire.

MRS ULLSWATER: Did your hairdo not suffice?

MR THANET: Moving on then; Ms D'Arc are you remorseful for your crimes?

JOAN: Remorseful? Non. I liberated my country through remarkable military leadership and I effectively turned the longstanding Anglo-French conflict into a religious war.

MR THANET: And why did you do that?

JOAN: Because I could.

MR THANET: I see.

MR DALSTON: She's had a tough childhood, mate. She witnessed quite a few raids and on one occasion her village was burned to the bleedin' ground!

MRS ULLSWATER: Where is this? Croydon?

JOAN: France. Idiot.

MR THANET: It also says here – J. D'Arc has made several attempts at escape from Belmarsh; on one occasion jumping from her 70 foot tower, after which they discovered you were a woman and relocated you to Holloway.

JOAN: Oui, I was only moved to a woman's prison eighteen months ago; they thought I was a man.

MR THANET: Due to your haircut and male attire?

JOAN: Oui.

MS ULLSWATER: Ms D'Arc, what are your plans should you be released?

JOAN: I want to open a tanning shop, offer vajazzles, nail extensions that sort of thing.

MRS ULLSWATER: Very good Ms D'Arc, a commendable career path indeed.

MR THANET: Yes, highly laudable Ms D'Arc. Lastly, we need to assess whether you are likely to reoffend and whether you are a danger to the public (*Beat*) Are you?

JOAN: Non.

MR THANET: Very good. Well Ms D'Arc, this is now your opportunity to put your case forward.

JOAN: I have nothing to say to you, God is my only judge.

MR THANET: Well, God can't be with us today, but I think we've heard enough now so shall we round up? Summation is - parole is hereby refused.

MR DALSTON: Refused?! But she led the French bleedin' army against the English!

MR THANET: I know Mr Dalston; but three Saints in a field? I mean, really?

JOAN: Did I say Saints? I meant cows.

MS ULLSWATER: Sorry, are you saying three cows in a field encouraged you to lead the French army against the English?

JOAN: Oui.

MR THANET: Well thank goodness for that, we thought you were a bit, you know, mad.

F/X: MR THANET and MS ULLSWATER laugh heartily.

MR THANET: Ms D'Arc you are hereby free to go.

END.