



## EXTRACT 1: THE MAHABHARATA

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

*The Mahabharata* is an epic Hindu poem from ancient India, originally written in Sanskrit. It was adapted for the stage by Jean-Claude Carrière and Peter Brook in the 1980s and later for television in a production lasting over five hours.

The poem is a historical account of the lengthy, deadly struggle for power between two groups of cousins. The first group was the Pandavas, sons of King Pandu. The second group was the Kauravas, sons of the blind king Dhritarashtra. These relationships are set out in the table below.

Interwoven into this conflict are tales of many characters, some dead, some alive, some human, some gods. The drama includes tensions, hatred, betrayals, magical births, deaths and a constant sense of destruction. These are presented in a highly stylised form of theatre.

This extract is from the opening scene, 'The Beginnings'.

### CHARACTERS

KAURAVAS – sons of the blind king DHRITARASHTRA	PANDAVAS – sons of King PANDU and Queen KUNTI
GANDHARI, wife of DHRITARASHTRA	YUDHISHTHIRA , ARJUNA, BHIMA,
DURYODHANA, eldest son	NAKULA, son of PANDU and MADRI
DUHSASANA, second son	SAHADEVA, son of PANDU and MADRI

VYASA, the poet/author of *The Mahabharata*

BOY

GANESHA, elephant-headed Hindu god

KING SANTANU (played by VYASA), grandfather of DHRITARASHTRA and PANDU

GANGA, goddess of the river

BHISHMA, son of GANGA and SANTANU

KING OF THE FISHERMEN, father of SATYAVATI

SATYAVATI, mother of VYASA

AMBA, AMBIKA, AMBALIKA, sisters and princesses

KING SALVA, fiancé to AMBA

KING PANDU, warrior king, son of AMBALIKA and VYASA, father of the PANDAVAS

QUEEN KUNTI, a wife of KING PANDU

QUEEN MADRI, another wife of KING PANDU

KING DHRITARASHTRA, blind son of AMBIKA and VYASA

GAZELLE

SERVANT

## THE BEGINNINGS

*A boy of about twelve enters. He goes toward a little pool. Then a man appears. He is thin, wearing a muddy loincloth, his feet bare and dirty. He sits thoughtfully on the ground and, noticing the BOY, he signals him to come closer. The BOY approaches, slightly fearful. The man asks him:*

		5
VYASA:	Do you know how to write?	
BOY:	No, why? [ <i>The man is silent for a moment before saying</i> ]:	
VYASA:	I've composed a great poem. I've composed it all, but nothing is written. I need someone to write down what I know.	
BOY:	What's your name?	10
VYASA:	Vyasa.	
BOY:	What's your poem about?	
VYASA:	It's about you.	
BOY:	Me?	
VYASA:	Yes, it's the story of your race, how your ancestors were born, how they grew up, how a vast war arose. It's the poetical history of mankind. If you listen carefully, at the end you'll be someone else. For it's as pure as glass, yet nothing is omitted. It washes away faults, it sharpens the brain and it gives long life. [ <i>Suddenly the BOY points, indicating a strange form approaching in the distance.</i> ]	15
BOY:	Who's that? [ <i>It is someone with an elephant's head and a man's body, who comes strutting toward them. He has writing materials in his hand. VYASA greets him warmly.</i> ]	20
VYASA:	Ganesha! Welcome.	25
BOY:	You're Ganesha?	
GANESHA:	Rumor has it that you're looking for a scribe for the Poetical History of Mankind. I'm at your service.	
BOY:	You're really Ganesha?	
GANESHA:	In person.	30
BOY:	Why do you have an elephant's head?	
GANESHA:	Don't you know?	
BOY:	No.	
GANESHA:	If I've got to tell my story too, we'll never finish.	
BOY:	Please.	35
GANESHA:	Right. I am the son of Parvati, the wife of Shiva.	
BOY:	The wife of the great god, Shiva?	
GANESHA:	Himself. But Shiva's not my father. My mother did it alone.	
BOY:	How did she manage?	
GANESHA:	It's not easy. To cut a long story short, when I arrived in this world, I was already a fine, sturdy boy, just about your age. One day, my mother told me to guard the door of the house. She wanted to take a bath. "Let no one in," she said. An instant later, Shiva was standing in front of me, wanting to come into the house, his house. I blocked the way. Shiva did not know me—I'd only just been born—so he said "Out of my way! It's an order. This is my home." I answered, "My mother told me to let no one in so I'm letting no one in." Shiva was furious. He called up his most ferocious cohorts. He commanded them to flush me out, but I sent them flying. My force was superhuman. I blazed, I glittered—horde after horde of demons withdrew in shame, for I was defending my mother. Shiva had only one way left: cunning. He slipped	40
		45
		50

	behind me and suddenly he chopped off my head. My mother's anger had no limits. She threatened to destroy the powers of heaven and smash the sky into tiny splinters. Shiva, to calm her down, ordered a head to be put on me as quickly as possible, the head of the first creature to come by. It was an elephant. So there we are. I'm Ganesha, the bringer of peace. [ <i>He positions himself with great care and says to VYASA</i> ]: I'm ready. You can begin. But I warn you: my hand can't stop once I start to write. You must dictate without a single pause.	55
VYASA:	And you, before putting anything down, you must understand the sense of what I say.	60
GANESHA:	Count on me. [ <i>A silence falls and lasts a few moments.</i> ] We're expecting someone?	65
VYASA:	No.	
GANESHA:	So ...?	
VYASA:	There's something secret about a beginning. I don't know how to start.	70
GANESHA:	May I offer a suggestion?	
VYASA:	You're most welcome to.	
GANESHA:	As you claim to be the author of the poem, how about beginning with yourself?	75
VYASA:	Right. A king, hunting in a forest, fell asleep. He dreamed of his wife.	
GANESHA:	Very good start.	
VYASA:	A few months later, a fisherman caught a fish, cut it open and found in its stomach a tiny little girl, whom he called Satyavati. She grew up. She became very beautiful, but unfortunately she smelled most dreadfully of fish. This made her very sad; no one would come near her. Then, one day, she met a wandering hermit who said to her: "I like you. Let's make love, here, right away, and I promise I'll turn your dreadful stench into a most delicious odor." She cried: "Now! Here! In broad daylight! I can't!" So the hermit drew a thick mist across the river and field, he took her to an island, and so she became fragrant, irresistible...	80
		85
BOY:	They had a son?	90
VYASA:	Yes. I am that son. Vyasa. And Satyavati went back to the fisherman, whom she called her father.	
GANESHA:	Keep going, son of the mist. We haven't yet started. What happened at the beginning?	
VYASA:	In those days, the king was called Santanu. One day, he was walking beside the river when suddenly there appeared before him a woman of a beauty that beggars description. [ <i>VYASA himself bows to a woman (GANGA) who has just appeared. Assumes role of king.</i> ]	95
VYASA-SANTANU:	"You take my breath away," he told her. Wonder blows my mind. Whoever you are, creature of darkness or spirit of the sky, be mine.	100
GANGA:	Do you accept my conditions?	
VYASA-SANTANU:	At once. What are they?	
GANGA:	You will never challenge my actions, or oppose them, whether you find them good or bad. You will be neither curious nor angry and you will never ask the slightest question, on pain of seeing me leave you instantly.	105
VYASA-SANTANU:	I accept.	

VYASA:	They lived a year of boundless love. A child was born. His mother wrapped him in a piece of cloth, cried:	110
GANGA:	I love you!	
VYASA:	And laughing, threw him into the river. "Don't ask!" Santanu told himself "I must never ask a question." The next year they had another child. She cried:	115
GANGA:	I love you!	
VYASA:	And drowned it. "Don't ask!" Santanu repeated. And so it went, for seven years. The eighth year, an eighth child was born.	
GANGA:	I love you! [GANGA prepares to drown her eighth child. SANTANU cannot hold himself back any longer. He cries out.]	120
VYASA–SANTANU:	Stop! Stop! Why these murders? Why are you killing these children?	
GANGA:	Why? I am Ganga. I am goddess of this river. I didn't kill these children, I saved them. Like me, they were of divine origin, but condemned to be born and die again amongst men. I agreed to set them free and that is why I laughed. Now I must go. This eighth child will be called Bhishma. He will be infallible, invincible. Farewell.	125
VYASA–SANTANU:	And the goddess vanished.	130
BOY:	What happened to the child?	
VYASA:	She took him away. The world knew twenty years of happiness. Santanu reigned with perfect justice, there was no war, no misery—it was a golden age. One morning, twenty years later, he was taking his customary walk beside the river when suddenly, bubbling and churning, the water opened and out of it rose a resplendent young man, armed to the teeth.	135
BOY:	Bhishma?	
VYASA:	Yes. Santanu recognized his son and called the goddess: "Ganga! Ganga!" She appeared, robed in a fountain of foam. [The goddess is there again, she says to SANTANU]:	140
GANGA:	Here is Bhishma, our eighth child. I brought him up, taught him everything and now his knowledge matches his strength. Take him. He is yours.	145
VYASA:	Santanu returned to the palace with his son. Everyone admired him and saw in him the future king, a wonder king. But another day, when King Santanu was taking his melancholy promenade by the river—for he went back there every day—all at once the air was filled with an enchanting fragrance. The king followed the scent and saw before him a woman of wondrous beauty. [Once more, SANTANU finds a beautiful woman crossing his path.]	150
VYASA–SANTANU:	Who are you?	
SATYAVATI:	I'm Satyavati. My father is king of the fishermen.	155
BOY:	Satyavati? Your mother.	
VYASA:	Yes, my mother.	
GANESHA:	Your mother's going to play a part in your story?	
VYASA:	Any objection?	
GANESHA:	No objection at all. Go on.	160
VYASA:	So Santanu fell on his knees and said to the sweet-scented maiden: [VYASA goes down on one knee and addresses the woman]: "I've been a widower for many years. I've held down my heart and watched over my people. But now your scent sends me reeling, it blends with the blood in my veins. I'm	165

SATYAVATI:	caught in its silken net. Satyavati, be my bride.” My hand belongs to my father. [ <i>As she speaks, the KING OF THE FISHERMEN appears.</i> ]	
KING OF THE FISHERMEN:	Santanu, there’s no doubt my daughter needs a husband and you are a most worthy match. But in exchange I need a promise: the child you make together will succeed to your throne.	170
VYASA:	That’s not possible, said Santanu. I already have a son, a perfect son. He’s young, he’s strong—he’s the future king.	
KING OF THE FISHERMEN:	If that’s the case, farewell. Go back to your palace, forget my daughter. [ <i>THE KING OF THE FISHERMEN and SATYAVATI begin to go. BHISHMA calls after them.</i> ]	175
BHISHMA:	Wait! You have just killed my father. Accept this marriage. At my request.	
KING OF THE FISHERMEN:	Bhishma, you are the best of sons, the noblest of heroes. We see you everywhere, arms in hand and no one dares say you no. Your enemies tremble for their lives. Whether I give you my daughter or refuse her, the danger is the same.	180
BHISHMA:	What danger?	
KING OF THE FISHERMEN:	If I refuse, I foresee your fury. If I give her to your father, they will have children, children who will be your rivals, whom you will grow to hate.	185
BHISHMA:	I make a solemn oath; the son your daughter bears will be our king.	
KING OF THE FISHERMEN:	You give up all your rights?	190
BHISHMA:	Yes. Forever.	
KING OF THE FISHERMEN:	You surprise me.	
BHISHMA:	I give you my word.	
KING OF THE FISHERMEN:	Bhishma, I speak to you from my heart, as a father. Listen carefully. I do not doubt your word, not for a second, but if one day you have children, what will they make of your vow? They will be strong like you. If they want to conquer the kingdom by force, who could resist them?	195
BHISHMA:	I understand and I reassure you. To avoid all conflict, and for love of my father, I swear the oath of absolute renunciation. I will say it clearly. I abjure forever the love of woman.	200
KING OF THE FISHERMEN:	Say again what you have just said.	
BHISHMA:	I abjure forever the love of woman.	
BOY:	He said that?	
VYASA:	He said just that, in all solemnity. At once, voices rang through the sky, crying “Bhishma! Bhishma!” and flowers rained upon the earth.	205
	<i>BHISHMA takes SATYAVATI by the hand and leads her to his father.</i>	
BHISHMA:	Climb on my chariot, mother. I will take you to the palace.	210
GANESHA:	Did Bhishma like women?	
VYASA:	No one ever knew. But as a reward for his vow, he was given the power to choose the time of his death.	
BOY:	Is it possible?	
VYASA:	It was possible in those days.	215
GANESHA:	And then?	
VYASA:	Twenty years went by. Santanu and Satyavati had a son, but the heir to the throne was a poor weakling. Santanu died.	
GANESHA:	Like us all. And Bhishma remained without a wife?	

VYASA:	Yes. Passionately faithful to his vow. But you know, in the olden days if a king wanted to get married, he had to win a wife in a tournament. The little king was far too feeble to take part, so Bhishma fought in his place. He swept everyone off the field and came back with three wives instead of one.	220
	<i>BHISHMA reappears leading three princesses.</i>	225
GANESHA:	What are you doing with three wives? Didn't you swear to abjure all women?	
BHISHMA:	They are not for my narrow bed. No, I haven't broken my vow. They are for the young king, my father's son.	
BOY:	What are their names?	230
BHISHMA:	Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika.	
BOY:	Amba's crying. [ <i>The BOY points to one of the princesses who is indeed crying.</i> ]	
BHISHMA:	You're right. Amba, why these tears?	
AMBA:	Listen to me, Bhishma. Before you won me at the tournament, I had already chosen a husband in secret. He knows it and he loves me. It's King Salva. How can you—who so revere fidelity—how can you marry me to your half-brother when I'm already bound by love to another man? Salva is waiting for me. Let me join him.	235
		240
	<i>BHISHMA has a moment's reflection before replying:</i>	
BHISHMA:	What you say is true, Amba. You can go. [ <i>A young king is there; AMBA runs toward him. As he sees her, he starts laughing. AMBA is disconcerted.</i> ]	
AMBA:	Salva ...	245
SALVA:	What?	
AMBA:	It's me, Amba. Why are you laughing?	
SALVA:	So Bhishma let you go?	
AMBA:	Yes.	
SALVA:	Go back to him, Amba. I don't want you anymore.	250
AMBA:	What are you saying?	
SALVA:	You're his prize. You're soiled.	
AMBA:	But I'm not his. He has never touched me. Not grazed me with the back of his hand. He has not even wanted me. Salva, my eyes know only you.	255
SALVA:	Please leave.	
AMBA:	I can't. Where could I go?	
SALVA:	I repeat, I don't want you anymore. Bhishma scares me and you are his prize. You no longer exist. Go away.	
	<i>AMBA calls wildly:</i>	260
AMBA:	Bhishma! [ <i>BHISHMA is there.</i> ]	
BHISHMA:	What now?	
AMBA:	Save me. I've been rejected by the man I love and you are the cause of my misery. You can't abandon me now. You won me. I'm your wife. Marry me.	265
BHISHMA:	You know I can't marry you, Amba. No women can come into my life. As Salva has rejected you, you are free. Go back to your father.	
AMBA:	No, I'm not free and I refuse to go back to my father, who	

	bartered me like an animal. Listen. Hear what I'll do. I will walk straight ahead, in ripped clothes, begging my way, and I will live with one thought, only one, night and day, only one, a thought like a blade: how to find someone to fight you to your death.	270
BHISHMA:	No one can kill me. It's impossible.	275
AMBA:	I will do so, all the same. Yes, I too pronounce a vow: in one of the worlds, I will find your executioner. There's now on this earth a woman who will always think of you. Never forget me, Bhishma. I am your death. [AMBA <i>leaves</i> . BHISHMA <i>watches her go in silence</i> . Now, SATYAVATI <i>reappears, she is sobbing</i> .]	280
SATYAVATI:	Bhishma! Bhishma!	
BHISHMA:	What is it?	
SATYAVATI:	The king my son is dead. [A <i>moment's silence</i> .]	
GANESHA:	Did he die without children?	285
VYASA:	Of course. He died on his wedding day.	
GANESHA:	So there are no more descendants.	
VYASA:	No. Not one.	
GANESHA:	But without children this story cannot go on.	
VYASA:	Exactly.	290
GANESHA:	It's absolutely necessary to give children to the princesses.	
VYASA:	Yes. Legitimate children.	
BHISHMA:	Who could father these children?	
GANESHA:	Why, you, of course, Bhishma. You're the only one.	
BHISHMA:	No. I cannot break my vow.	295
GANESHA:	The destiny of a race is at stake. You can surely forget your vow, just for once.	
BHISHMA:	Ganesha, this vow is the pillar of my life. Night after night I've fought against the temptation to break it and I have triumphed. Today I'm over fifty. Breaking my vow would be worse than death, it would kill my soul. I don't want another word on the subject.	300
GANESHA:	So the poetical history of mankind is already over. I'll collect my bits and pieces and be off. [GANESHA <i>is starting to pack his writing materials when SATYAVATI suddenly says</i> ]:	305
SATYAVATI:	No, wait a moment. Don't go. [She <i>goes to VYASA</i> .] Vyasa, you are forgetting someone who can make the princesses fertile.	
VYASA:	Who?	
SATYAVATI:	You. You, Vyasa.	310
GANESHA:	And why Vyasa? Where does this idea come from?	
BHISHMA:	Satyavati is right. Vyasa is her first son. Born in the mist. In a way, he's part of the family.	
GANESHA:	But he's the author of the poem.	
BHISHMA:	Precisely. It's up to him to do the necessary.	315
GANESHA:	Speaking as the scribe, I find this totally unacceptable.	
SATYAVATI:	Didn't you say when you got here: I am the bringer of peace?	
GANESHA:	Yes, but he is dirty. Nauseating.	
SATYAVATI:	So much the better. If the princesses can accept his sickly smell, his muddy skin, then their children will be all the more admirable. [She <i>comes close to VYASA</i> ]: My son, are you in good health?	320
VYASA:	Yes, mother, in very good health.	
SATYAVATI:	I am glad to hear it. [She <i>claps her hands</i> .] Quick! Tell the princesses a new husband has been found for them. Bathe	325

	them, perfume them, dress them in transparent silk! [ <i>While the princesses—delighted at the idea of a new husband—are being made ready, SATYAVATI returns to VYASA, saying</i> ]: The destiny of a whole race is in your hands. No weakness is permitted. [ <i>SATYAVATI goes up to the first princess, who is putting the final touches to her appearance.</i> ] Today, your brother-in-law will take you tenderly to his breast. Bring your family back to life and rejoice. [ <i>SATYAVATI and BHISHMA withdraw discreetly. VYASA goes toward the first princess, but the sight of him makes her cry with disgust. She drops to the ground, closing her eyes.</i> ]	330
VYASA:	Why did you close your eyes? So as not to see me? Because my body is caked in mud, my beard yellow with age? [ <i>The princess does not reply.</i> ] You will have a son. He will be called Dhritarashtra and he will be king. But as you closed your eyes on seeing me, he will be born blind.	340
SATYAVATI:	No. A king can't be blind. [ <i>The first princess leaves; the second enters.</i> ] Give us another son, I beg you. [ <i>The second princess now watches VYASA's approach apprehensively. She neither cries nor closes her eyes, but shudders at his smell.</i> ]	345
VYASA:	Why is your color draining away? Why the chalk in your cheeks? Am I so loathsome? Is my odor so strong? [ <i>The princess, terrified, does not answer.</i> ] You too will have a son, but he will be white as milk and he will be known as Pandu the Pale. [ <i>VYASA returns to his place. GANESHA greets him</i> ]:	350
GANESHA:	My compliments. But didn't you say when you arrived, my poem is the story of a vast war?	
VYASA:	I did.	
GANESHA:	These children just created, you're going to lead them to the slaughter?	355
VYASA:	You made me promise, Ganesha, never to pause in mid-stream.	
GANESHA:	True. As we were saying, two sons—Dhritarashtra the Blind and Pandu the Pale.	360
BOY:	Go on with the story.	
GANESHA:	Quick!	
VYASA:	We skip twenty years.	
	<i>GANESHA draws a long line across the page, saying:</i>	
GANESHA:	Simple.	365
VYASA:	Pandu and Dhritarashtra are now grown up.	
GANESHA:	Who is king?	
BOY:	Pandu, because his brother is blind.	
	<i>A woman enters, her eyes turned toward the sun.</i>	
VYASA:	You see this woman?	370
BOY:	Yes.	
VYASA:	Her name is Kunti. She doesn't know it, but she's carrying the fate of the earth in her belly. Her children will be glorious, and without them you wouldn't be here.	
GANESHA:	Why's she looking so persistently at the sun?	375
VYASA:	It's a secret.	
GANESHA:	What secret? Tell.	

VYASA:	No. It's the fundamental secret.	
GANESHA:	Ah ... fundamental! Proceed.	
BOY:	King Pandu married Kunti? [PANDU and KUNTI stand together.]	380
VYASA:	And he took another wife as well, called Madri. No sooner married, Pandu went hunting. Who could have imagined that a simple hunt could seal the fate of the world? He saw two splendid gazelles copulating in a thicket. He shot them down, the male and the female. The two animals, locked together, fell to the ground and the female with her dying breath gasped out these learned words:	385
GAZELLE:	Even devoured by lust and anger, men refrain from spilling blood. But science does not destroy fate, fate destroys science.	390
PANDU:	What are you trying to say?	
GAZELLE:	How could you, Pandu, a man of superior learning, how could you kill my lover and myself?	
PANDU:	Men have the right to kill gazelles. Men, and especially kings. Why do you blame me?	395
GAZELLE:	I blame you for not respecting the joys of love. You struck me down at a moment that all creatures find sweet. What had I done to you? Pitiless man, I show you no pity. I curse you. You will feel the fury of a love which you cannot appease. For, if one day you take one of your wives in your arms, at that moment you will die, as I do now. [The gazelle dies. The two women run to PANDU, who lays down his arms and princely clothes, crying out]:	400
PANDU:	I'm cursed. I must vanish without a trace in the forests. Tell Satyavati, tell Bhishma that Pandu now decrees his own everlasting exile. [He goes over to his blind brother and puts a silk scarf ceremoniously around his neck.] Dhritarashtra, my brother, you are king. [PANDU walks away. His two wives follow him.]	405
KUNTI:	And Madri, and me? If you leave us, our lives are over.	
PANDU:	Let me go. I've nothing to offer you. Only poverty and the lonely road.	
MADRI:	We'll follow you. [PANDU leaves with his two wives.]	
BOY:	[To VYASA] But you said Kunti will have glorious children. How will she manage?	415
VYASA:	Now for the moment of truth! [A sudden thunderclap. Angry winds rise.]	
GANESHA:	Why this icy wind? Who invoked the thunder? [PANDU and his two wives press forward, struggling against the wind and the cold.]	420
VYASA:	Pandu has reached the roof of the world with his two wives; the highest peak of the Himalayas, where the cold is brutal, where there's no relief from the howling storm. [PANDU stops. He is exhausted. He looks for shelter.] Constantly he mourns a life without children. He even offers Kunti to make love with another man.	425
PANDU:	[To KUNTI] Yes, with another man ...	
KUNTI:	No. We want you.	
MADRI:	Yes, you alone.	430
PANDU:	If I give you my love, I will die. [Suddenly KUNTI says to him]:	
KUNTI:	Pandu, I have a confession to make. I possess a magic power, a mantra.	

PANDU:	Who gave it to you?	
KUNTI:	A saintly hermit.	435
PANDU:	What power does this mantra give you?	
KUNTI:	The power to call down a god at will.	
MADRI:	And ... to have a child by him?	
KUNTI:	Yes.	
MADRI:	How can you be so sure?	440
KUNTI:	I am sure.	
PANDU:	Have you ever tried it? [KUNTI <i>hesitates a little before replying.</i> ]	
KUNTI:	I told you, I am sure.	
PANDU:	Don't hesitate. Say your mantra.	445
KUNTI:	Which god should I call down first?	
PANDU:	Evoke Dharma. Yes, Dharma. Beyond him all thought must stop. [KUNTI <i>says her mantra. GANESHA and VYASA create an elaborate and ferocious ceremony. The BOY is caught up in it, he becomes part of the ritual; GANESHA puts a sword in his hands. Shadowy figures appear in the background. PANDU says to KUNTI</i> ]: I beseech you, give me another child. Evoke Vayu, god of the wind. [KUNTI <i>says her mantra a second time. GANESHA puts a club in the BOY's hands. KUNTI then says</i> ]:	450
KUNTI:	Now I call on Indra, king of gods. [GANESHA <i>puts a bow and arrow in the BOY's hands. A flame leaps up. MADRI then says to KUNTI</i> ]:	455
MADRI:	Kunti, lend me your mantra, so that I can have children too.	
PANDU:	Madri, evoke the Ashwins, the twin gods with golden eyes. [MADRI <i>says the mantra. A last flame burns.</i> ]	460
	<i>Five men come forward.</i>	
	[VYASA <i>says to the BOY</i> ]:	
VYASA:	They are the five sons of Pandu, the Pandavas. We will never leave them, as they are the heart of my poem.	465
BOY:	Then I have the same blood. I come from the gods?	
VYASA:	That's what the story tells. [The five brothers <i>withdraw, along with KUNTI, PANDU, and MADRI. GANESHA then asks</i> ]:	
GANESHA:	If I understand rightly, Dhritarashtra became king despite his blindness.	470
VYASA:	Yes.	
GANESHA:	And he found a wife?	
VYASA:	Yes, a princess from the south called Gandhari. It's a beautiful story. Write it well.	
GANESHA:	Don't worry.	475
	<i>A princess appears, carried high on a litter. She descends.</i>	
VYASA:	While waiting for the wedding, she lived in seclusion. Every day, her servant visited the city and described to her its thousand wonders. [The young girl-servant, who until then had been full of joy now returns sad and agitated.]	480
GANDHARI:	What's the matter? Why is your face so long? You usually sparkle with joy.	
SERVANT:	Princess ...	
GANDHARI:	Tell me everything. Where did you go? What did you see?	
SERVANT:	I found my way into the prince's palace ...	485

GANDHARI:	And?	
SERVANT:	I saw ... I saw Dhritarashtra, your future husband.	
GANDHARI:	You saw him?	
SERVANT:	Yes.	
GANDHARI:	Make me see him. Is he handsome? Strong?	490
SERVANT:	Yes, he's strong. Very strong.	
GANDHARI:	Then why are you crying? Answer me.	
SERVANT:	Princess, you have been betrayed. Dhritarashtra is blind.	
GANDHARI:	What do you mean?	
SERVANT:	Born blind.	495
GANDHARI:	That's impossible. A king cannot be blind. You must be mistaken.	
SERVANT:	I asked an old guard. Dhritarashtra is blind. His eyes are dead.	
GANDHARI:	And they've hidden it from me? My wedding's prepared, it's announced. My hollow-eyed husband taps his way toward me in the dark, someone leads him by the hand ... No, it's not possible, they lied to you. If he's blind he could only reign over the night, over monsters that thrive on darkness, amidst the desperate cries of a diseased people, people who are no longer people ...	500
SERVANT:	He's blind. I've seen him. [ <i>For a moment GANDHARI stays motionless.</i> ]	505
GANDHARI:	What's the use of my paint, of my dresses, if my husband will never see me? Why my hair? Why my red lips? Why my flesh? And my eyes? Give me my veil. [ <i>The servant hands a veil to GANDHARI who suddenly is very calm.</i> ]	510
SERVANT:	What are you looking at?	
GANDHARI:	At you. You are my last image in this world.	
SERVANT:	What are you doing? [ <i>GANDHARI ties the band over her eyes.</i> ]	515
GANDHARI:	I'm putting a band on my eyes. I'm tying it firmly. I will never take it off. Give me your hand, lead me to my husband. Now I can never reproach him his misfortune. [ <i>The servant takes GANDHARI by the hand. At this moment DHRITARASHTRA, the blind king, enters. Music plays. GANDHARI goes to join her husband. He passes his hand over GANDHARI's face, touches the blindfold. Deeply moved, he takes her in his arms. They move away together. GANDHARI disappears for a moment behind a curtain held by VYASA and the BOY.</i> ]	520
VYASA:	When Gandhari was pregnant, she bore her fruit for two years. Nothing stirred. Her belly was heavy, very hard. [ <i>GANDHARI reappears holding her enormous belly with two hands. The servant rushes up to her.</i> ]	525
SERVANT:	Gandhari, Kunti has just given birth to a son. He is called Yudhishtira. The people say he will be king. [ <i>GANDHARI stays silent for a moment, then she says</i> ]:	530
GANDHARI:	I'm in labor. [ <i>A large ball appears between the queen's legs.</i> ]	
BOY:	Is that how babies are born?	
GANESHA:	Not necessarily.	535
GANDHARI:	What has just come out of my womb?	
SERVANT:	A ball of flesh. Like metal.	
GANDHARI:	It's crying? It moves?	
SERVANT:	No, it's cold and hard.	
GANDHARI:	Throw the ball into a well and leave me alone. [ <i>The servant takes the ball but VYASA intervenes</i> ]:	540

VYASA:	No. Throw nothing away. Cut the ball into a hundred pieces, put them into a hundred earthenware jars. Sprinkle them with fresh water. Out of them will come a hundred sons. [ <i>The servant goes out taking the ball with her.</i> ]	545
BOY:	A hundred sons?	
VYASA:	The first one burst into life with the blood-curdling bray of an anguished ass. He was called Duryodhana, the Hard to Conquer. Remember that name.	
GANESHA:	Duryodhana.	550
	<i>Frightful noises are heard as though to greet the birth of DURYODHANA who rolls on the ground screaming. DHRITARASHTRA, the blind emperor, reappears, still guided by BHISHMA.</i>	
DHRITARASHTRA:	Bhishma, what are these sounds?	555
BHISHMA:	Winds, carnivorous animals, angry birds of prey, and the screams of your son.	
DHRITARASHTRA:	The air is thick. It crushes me. I can't breathe. How is the sky?	
BHISHMA:	On fire.	560
DHRITARASHTRA:	You, who have seen so much, tell me. What do these omens mean?	
BHISHMA:	They all point toward your son. They say, Duryodhana comes to destroy. If you wish to preserve your race, sacrifice him. [ <i>DHRITARASHTRA and GANDHARI catch hold of their son, who goes on screaming.</i> ]	565
DHRITARASHTRA:	My newborn son? Sacrifice him?	
BHISHMA:	That's what I hear.	
DHRITARASHTRA:	You've never held a child in your arms. You don't know what it means to say, "I'll shed my own blood." Bhishma, I can't kill my son.	570
GANDHARI:	Even if he howls, even if he brings with him hatred and terror, no one will kill my first-born child without killing me myself. [ <i>They withdraw. The chilling noises have stopped. All becomes peaceful and luminous. MADRI is now in a wood near a river. PANDU reappears and goes over to MADRI.</i> ]	575
PANDU:	Madri, hear how the forest whispers and sings. Can you taste the honey in the breeze? The birds chuckle, the insects tremble with joy, the flowers open, it's the first day of spring and the sun streams through your dress ...	580
MADRI:	Pandu, don't touch me. If you love me, you die.	
PANDU:	I know, but when I look at you, I prefer love to life. Not a word.	
MADRI:	Don't tempt death. Death is seducing you. Keep away.	
PANDU:	There's no risk for you, no danger. Lie down in the grass.	585
MADRI:	[ <i>Pandu cries out and dies. MADRI leaps to her feet, calling:</i> Kunti! Kunti! Come! Without the children. [ <i>KUNTI runs on and sees the king's lifeless body.</i> ] Kunti, Pandu died while trying to make love to me.	
KUNTI:	But weren't you there to watch over him? How could he forget the curse? What have you done?	590
MADRI:	I wanted to save him but his destiny carried him away.	
KUNTI:	Ah, you are happier than I am, because you have seen his face glow with desire. I will follow him to the other shore.	
MADRI:	No, as it's in my arms that he breathed his last breath, it is I	595

KUNTI:	who will die. I will go to the land of death to calm his passion. I give you my sons, who no longer have a father in this world. They will be like my sons, they will share everything.	
MADRI:	Burn my body along with the king. Come. Help me to die. [The two women disappear. A pyre is lit. SATYAVATI goes up to VYASA.]	600
SATYAVATI:	Vyasa, my son. Madri has thrown herself into the fire in front of all the people. I am old, my heart is choked with ashes, and I ask myself: why this death?	
VYASA:	Because the earth has lost its youth, which has gone by like a happy dream. Now, each day brings us closer to barrenness, to destruction.	605
SATYAVATI:	What is this terrible struggle you foresee?	
VYASA:	A universal struggle without pity, an outrage to intelligent man. The heroes will perish without knowing why.	610
SATYAVATI:	Who will be the winner?	
VYASA:	I don't know, for all depends on the hearts of men and there I can't see clearly.	
SATYAVATI:	Can I help you?	
VYASA:	You have helped me enough, mother. Go far away, into the forest, disappear among the trees.	615
SATYAVATI:	And you. You will go on?	
VYASA:	To the very end. [SATYAVATI leaves.]	



**EXTRACT 2: THE LARK**

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

The extract is taken from *The Lark* by Jean Anouilh (1910–87), translated into English by Christopher Fry. This version was first performed in London in 1955.

The play explores the story of Joan of Arc, heroine of medieval France, the peasant girl who claimed she heard the voices of God and the saints. She believed God had chosen her to lead France to victory over the occupying English forces.

She was tried for witchcraft and heresy and burned at the stake in 1431, aged 19. However, in Anouilh's treatment the burning is not the end, as the play finishes with a lark singing in the open sky. This symbolises joy and hope rather than defeat and death.

The play is in two Parts and the extract is taken from the opening of Part One.

**CHARACTERS**

WARWICK, an English Earl

CAUCHON, the Bishop of Beauvais

JOAN

FATHER

MOTHER

PROMOTER, a Church official

INQUISITOR

LADVENU, a monk

## PART ONE

*A simple, neutral setting. The stage is empty at first; then the characters enter by twos and threes. The costumes are plain and vaguely medieval. JOAN wears man's clothes throughout the play. WARWICK is the last to enter.*

WARWICK:	Well now; is everyone here? If so, let's have the trial and be done with it. The sooner she is found guilty and burned the better for all concerned.	5
CAUCHON:	But, my lord, before we do that we have the whole story to play: Domremy, the Voices, Vaucouleurs, Chinon, the Coronation.	10
WARWICK:	Theatrical poppycock! You can tell that story to the children: the beautiful white armour, the fluttering standard, the gentle and implacable warrior maid. The statues of her can tell that story, later on, when policies have changed. But, as for now, I am Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick; and I've got my grubby little witch lying on the straw in the dungeon at Rouen, and a fine packet of trouble she has been, and a pretty sum she has cost us; but the money's been paid, and the next thing is to put her on trial and burn her.	15
CAUCHON:	Not immediately. Before we come to that, there's the whole of her life to go through. It won't take very long, my lord.	20
WARWICK	[ <i>going to a corner resignedly</i> ]: Well, if you insist. An Englishman knows how to wait. [ <i>Anxiously</i> ]. I hope you're not expecting me to stand by while you go through that monstrous farce of a coronation again. And all the battles as well—Orleans, Patay, Beaugency?—I may as well tell you now, I should find that in very poor taste.	25
CAUCHON	[ <i>smiling</i> ]: Put your mind at rest, my lord. There are too few of us here to stage the battles.	
WARWICK:	Good.	30
CAUCHON:	Joan. <i>She looks up.</i> You may begin.	
JOAN:	May I begin wherever I like?	
CAUCHON:	Yes.	35
JOAN:	I like remembering the beginning: at home, in the fields, when I was still a little girl looking after the sheep, the first time I heard the Voices, that is what I like to remember. ... It is after the evening Angelus. I am very small and my hair is still in pigtails. I am sitting in the field, thinking of nothing at all. God is good and keeps me safe and happy, close to my mother and my father and my brother, in the quiet countryside of Domremy, while the English soldiers are looting and burning villages up and down the land. My big sheep-dog is lying with his head in my lap; and suddenly I feel his body ripple and tremble, and a hand seems to have touched my shoulder, though I know no one has touched me, and the voice says— —	40
SOMEONE IN THE CROWD:	Who is going to be the voice?	
JOAN:	I am, of course. I turned to look. A great light was filling the shadows behind me. The voice was gentle and grave. I had never heard it before, and all it said to me was: "Be a good and sensible child, and go often to church." But I was good,	50

	and I <i>did</i> go to church often, and I showed I was sensible by running away to safety. That was all that happened the first time. And I didn't say anything about it when I got home; but after supper I went back. The moon was rising; it shone on the white sheep; and that was all the light there was. And then came the second time; the bells were ringing for the noonday Angelus. The light came again, in bright sunlight, but brighter than the sun, and that time I saw him.	55
CAUCHON:	You saw whom?	
JOAN:	A man in a white robe, with two white wings reaching from the sky to the ground. He didn't tell me his name that day, but later on I found out that he was the blessed St. Michael.	60
WARWICK:	Is it absolutely necessary to have her telling these absurdities all over again?	65
CAUCHON:	Absolutely necessary, my lord.	
	WARWICK goes back to his corner in silence, and smells the rose he has in his hand.	70
JOAN	[ <i>in the deep voice of the Archangel</i> ]: —Joan, go to the help of the King of France, and give him back his kingdom. [ <i>She replies in her own voice.</i> ] Oh sir, you haven't looked at me; I am only a young peasant girl, not a great captain who can lead an army.—You will go and search out Robert de Beaudricourt, the Governor of Vaucouleurs. He will give you a suit of clothes to dress you like a man, and he will take you to the Dauphin. St. Catherine and St. Margaret will protect you. [ <i>She suddenly drops to the floor sobbing with fear.</i> ]—Please, please pity me, holy sir! I'm a little girl; I'm happy here alone in the fields. I've never had to be responsible for anything, except my sheep. The Kingdom of France is far beyond anything I can do. If you will only look at me you will see I am small, and ignorant. The realm of France is too heavy sir. But the King of France has famous Captains, as strong as you could need and they're used to doing these things. If they lose a battle they sleep as soundly as ever. They simply say the snow or the wind was against them; and they just cross all the dead men off their roll. But I should always remember I had killed them. Please have pity on me! ... No such thing. No pity. He had gone already, and there I was, with France on my shoulders. Not to mention the work on the farm, and father, who wasn't easy.	75
	<i>Her FATHER, who has been wandering around her MOTHER, suddenly speaks.</i>	80
FATHER:	Where has that girl got to?	85
MOTHER	[ <i>going on with her knitting</i> ]: She is out in the fields.	90
FATHER:	Well, I was out in the fields, and I'm back home again. It's six o'clock. She's no business to be out in the fields.	95
BROTHER:	She's sitting under the Fairy Tree, staring at nothing. I saw her when I went to fetch in the bull.	100
PROMOTER	[ <i>from among the crowd</i> ]: The Fairy Tree! Note that, gentlemen, if you will. Note the superstition. The beginning of witchcraft already. The Fairy Tree! I ask you to note that!	
CAUCHON:	There are Fairy Trees all over France, my Lord Promoter. It's in our own interest not to refuse the fairies to these little girls.	105
PROMOTER	[ <i>primly</i> ]: We have our saints. That should be sufficient.	
CAUCHON	[ <i>conciliating him</i> ]: Later on, certainly. But I mean while they are still very young; as Joan was; not yet fifteen.	
PROMOTER:	By fifteen they know everything: they're as old as Eve.	

CAUCHON:	Not Joan: Joan at that time was very simple and innocent. It will be another matter when we come to the trial; I shan't spare her Voices then. But a little girl shall keep her fairies. [ <i>Firmly.</i> ] And these discussions are under my charge. <i>The PROMOTER bows, and retires, unmollified.</i>	110
FATHER	[ <i>bursting out afresh, to the BROTHER</i> ]: So that's where you say she is? And what does she think she's doing there, sitting under the tree?	115
BROTHER:	Try and find out! She's just staring in front of her as if she was expecting something. And it isn't the first time either.	
FATHER:	Well, why didn't you tell me when you saw her before, then? Aren't you old enough to know what trouble there is with girls of her age, you little fool? What do you think she was expecting, eh? Somebody, not something, idiot! She's got a lover, and you know it! Give me my stick!	120
MOTHER	[ <i>gently, still knitting</i> ]: You know quite well, Joan's as innocent as a baby.	125
FATHER:	Maybe she is. And girls as innocent as babies can come to you one evening and hold up their faces to be kissed, and the next morning, though you've kept them locked in their room all night, what has happened? You can't see into their eyes at all: they're avoiding you, and lying to you. They're the devil, all at once.	130
PROMOTER	[ <i>raising a finger</i> ]: The word has been said, my lords, and by her father!	
MOTHER:	How do you know that? The day I married you I was as innocent as Joan, and I daresay you could look into my eyes just as well next morning.	135
FATHER	[ <i>muttering</i> ]: That's nothing to do with it.	
MOTHER:	Who are these other girls you've known, then, that you've never told me about?	140
FATHER	[ <i>thundering to cover his embarrassment</i> ]: I tell you it's got nothing to do with it! We're not talking about other girls, we're talking about Joan! Hand me that stick. I'm going to look for her, and if she's been meeting somebody on the quiet I'll skin them alive!	145
JOAN	[ <i>smiling gently</i> ]: I was meeting someone on the quiet, and his solemn voice was saying: "Joan! Joan! What are you waiting for? There's a great sorrow in the realm of France."—"Holy Sir of Heaven, I'm so afraid, I'm only a young village girl; surely you've made a mistake?"—"Does God make mistakes, Joan?" [ <i>She turns to her Judges.</i> ] How could I have answered Yes?	150
PROMOTER	[ <i>shrugging</i> ]: You should have made the sign of the cross.	
JOAN:	I did, and the Archangel made it, too, all the time keeping his eyes carefully on mine, and the church clock sounded.	155
PROMOTER:	You should have cried: Vade retro Satanus!	
JOAN:	I don't know Latin, my Lord.	
PROMOTER:	Don't be an idiot! The devil understands French. You should have cried: Get thee behind me, foul Satan, and don't tempt me again.	160
JOAN:	But, my Lord, it was St. Michael.	
PROMOTER	[ <i>sneering</i> ]: So he told you. And you were fool enough to believe him.	
JOAN:	Yes, I believed him. He couldn't have been the devil. He shone with light; he was beautiful.	165

PROMOTER	[ <i>losing his temper</i> ]: So is the devil, so is the devil, I tell you!	
JOAN	[ <i>scandalised</i> ]: Oh, my Lord!	
CAUCHON	[ <i>calming the PROMOTER with a gesture</i> ]: These subtle theological points, my lord Promoter, are proper for debating between ourselves, but they're beyond the understanding of this poor girl. No good is served by shocking her.	170
JOAN	[ <i>to the PROMOTER</i> ]: You're telling a lie, Canon! I haven't any of your learning, but I know the devil is ugly, and all that's beautiful is the work of God.	
PROMOTER	[ <i>sneering</i> ]: Very charming, simple and stupid! Do you think the devil is stupid? He's a thousand times more intelligent than you and I put together. Do you think when he comes to snare a soul he would come like a horror of the flesh, with ploughed skin and a snouting tusk like a rhinoceros? If he did, souls would fly to virtue at the sight of him. I tell you he chooses a moonlit summer night, and comes with coaxing hands, with eyes that receive you into them like water that drowns you, with naked women's flesh, transparent, white... beautiful——	175 180
CAUCHON	[ <i>stopping him sternly</i> ]: Canon! You are losing your way! This is very far from Joan's devil, if she has seen one. I beg you not to confuse your devil with hers.	185
PROMOTER	[ <i>flushed and confused in front of the smiling crowd</i> ]: I beg your pardon, my lord; there is only one devil.	
CAUCHON:	Go on, Joan.	190
JOAN	[ <i>still troubled</i> ]: If the devil is beautiful, how can we know him?	
PROMOTER:	By asking your parish priest.	
JOAN:	Can we never know by ourselves?	
PROMOTER:	No. That is why there is no salvation outside the church.	
JOAN:	Only rich people have a parish priest always at hand. It's hard for the poor.	195
PROMOTER:	It is hard for everyone to escape damnation.	
CAUCHON:	My lord Promoter, let her talk with her Voices in peace and quiet. It is the beginning of the story. We mustn't reproach her with them yet.	200
JOAN	[ <i>continuing</i> ]: Another time it was St. Catherine and St. Margaret who came to me. [ <i>She turns to the PROMOTER with a slightly mischievous defiance.</i> ] They were beautiful, too.	
PROMOTER	[ <i>blushing, but unable to prevent himself</i> ]: Did they appear to you naked?	205
JOAN	[ <i>smiling</i> ]: Oh, my lord! Do you imagine that God can't afford clothes for the saints in heaven? <i>The CROWD chuckles at this answer, and the PROMOTER sits down confused.</i>	
CAUCHON:	You see, you make us all smile with your questions, my lord Promoter. Be wise enough to keep your interruptions until we come to the serious heart of this business. And when we do so, particularly when we come to judge her, remember that the soul in this little arrogant body is in our care. Aren't you risking very much confusion in her mind, to suggest to her that good and evil are no more than a question of clothes? It is true certainly, that our saints are traditionally represented as clothed; yet, on the other hand——	210 215
JOAN	[ <i>to the PROMOTER</i> ]: Our Lord is naked on the cross.	
CAUCHON	[ <i>turning to her</i> ]: I was going to say so, Joan, if you had not prevented me. It isn't for you to correct the reverend Canon.	220

	You forget who you are; you forget that we are your priests, your masters and your judges. Beware of your pride, Joan. If the devil one day wins you for his own, that is the way he will come to you.	225
JOAN:	I know I am proud. But if God didn't mean me to be proud, why did He send an Archangel to see me, and saints with the light of heaven on them to speak to me? Why did He promise I should persuade all the people I have persuaded—men as learned and as wise as you—and say I should ride in white armour, with a bright sword given me by the King, to lead France into battle: and it has been so. He had only to leave me looking after the sheep, and I don't think pride would ever have entered my head.	230
CAUCHON:	Weigh your words, Joan; weigh your thoughts. It is your Saviour you are accusing now.	235
JOAN	<i>[crossing herself]</i> : God guide me. His will be done, if His will is to make me proud and damned. This is His right, as well.	
PROMOTER	<i>[unable to contain himself]</i> : Terrible! What she says is terrible! God's will to damn a soul? And you all listen to this without a murmur, my lords?	240
	<i>The INQUISITOR has risen. He is an intelligent looking man, spare and hard, speaking with great quietness.</i>	
INQUISITOR:	Listen carefully to what I am going to ask you, Joan. Do you think you are in a state of grace at this moment?	245
JOAN	<i>[firmly]</i> : At what moment, my lord? Is it the beginning, when I hear my Voices, or the end, when my King and all my friends have deserted me, when I doubt and recant and the Church receives me again?	
INQUISITOR:	Don't evade my question. Do you think you are in a state of grace?	250
	<i>All the PRIESTS are watching her in silence; it seems a dangerous question.</i>	
LADVENU	<i>[rising]</i> : My lord Inquisitor, it is a formidable question for a simple girl who believes in all sincerity that God has called her. I ask that her reply shall not be held against her: she is risking quite unwittingly—	255
INQUISITOR:	Quiet, Brother Ladvenu! I ask what I consider good to ask. Let her answer my question. Do you think you are in a state of grace, Joan?	260
JOAN:	If I am not, may God in His goodness set me there. If I am, may God in His goodness keep me so.	
	<i>The PRIESTS murmur. The INQUISITOR sits again, inscrutable.</i>	
LADVENU	<i>[quietly]</i> : Well answered, Joan.	265
PROMOTER	<i>[muttering, annoyed by JOAN's success]</i> : What of it? The devil has cunning, or he wouldn't be the devil. It isn't the first time he has been asked that question. We know what he is; he has his answers all ready.	
WARWICK	<i>[bored, to CAUCHON]</i> : No doubt this is all very interesting, my lord, but if you go on at this rate we shall never get to the trial, never have her burnt, never get anywhere. I said she could take us over the old ground again, if you thought it so necessary, but let her get on with it. And let us come to the essentials. It's imperative that we should let Christendom know that the Coronation was all a humbug, the performance of a witch, a heretic, an army's whore.	270
		275

CAUCHON:	My lord, we're trying her only for heresy.	
WARWICK:	I know that; but I have to make more of it for the sake of the troops. The findings of your trial, I'm afraid, will be too rarefied for my soldiers. Propaganda, my lord Archbishop, is black or white. The main thing is to say something pretty staggering, and repeat it often enough until you turn it into a truth. It's a new idea, but believe me, it will make its way. So rattle her through the rest of it, and have her burned, and not so much talk. I give it ten years, and this whole incident will have been forgotten.	280
CAUCHON	[ <i>sighing</i> ]: God grant so, my lord.	
WARWICK:	Where had we got to?	
FATHER	[ <i>coming forward with his stick</i> ]: To where I was going out to find her, sitting under her tree, waiting to get herself into trouble, the little bitch. And I can tell you she'll be sorry she ever began it! [ <i>He drags JOAN up by the wrists.</i> ] What are you doing here, eh? Tell me what you're waiting about here for, when you know you ought to be indoors, eating your supper!	285
JOAN	[ <i>stammering, shy at being surprised, raising her arm to protect her face</i> ]: I didn't know it was so late. I had lost count of the time.	290
FATHER:	That's it, you lost count of the time! And what else have you lost that you daren't tell me? [ <i>He shakes her.</i> ] Who made you forget it was so late? I heard you as I came along, calling out goodbye to somebody. Well, who was it?	295
JOAN:	St. Michael, father.	
FATHER:	You make fun at your father, you'll be sorry! I won't have any girl of mine sitting out in the fields waiting for any man who wants to find her. You'll marry the decent fellow we choose for you, or I'll break every bone in your body!	300
JOAN:	I've done nothing wrong, father: truthfully it was the blessed St. Michael who spoke to me.	305
FATHER:	And when you can't hide your sinning any longer, and every day it grows bigger in you for all to see, and you've killed your mother with grief, and your brothers have to join the army to get away from the scandal in the village, it will be the Holy Ghost who brought it on us, I suppose? I'll tell the priest: not content with whoring, you have to blaspheme: and you'll be shut up in a convent on bread and water, my girl.	310
JOAN	[ <i>kneeling before him</i> ]: Father, stop shouting, you can't hear what I say. I promise you, by our Saviour, I'm telling you the truth. They've been coming for a long time now to ask things of me. It is always at the mid-day Angelus or the evening Angelus; always when I'm praying, when I am least sinful and nearest to God. Above all doubt, surely it must be true. St. Michael has appeared to me, and St. Margaret, and St. Catherine. They speak to me, and they answer when I question them, and each one says the same as the others.	315
FATHER	[ <i>pulling her about</i> ]: Why should St. Michael speak to you, you little idiot? Does he speak to me? Natural enough, if he had something to say to us, he'd say it to me, the head of the family.	320
JOAN:	Father, as well as shaking me and shouting at me, try to understand what I'm saying. I'm so alone, and they want me to do so much. For three years I've been trying not to believe	325
		330

	them, but all that time they've been saying the same thing. These voices I hear: I can't go on fighting them all by myself. I've got to do what they say.	335
FATHER:	The voices you hear? Do you want to drive me mad?	
JOAN:	They say it can't wait any longer; the time has come when I have to say yes.	
FATHER:	What can't wait any longer, idiot? What are they telling you to do, what you call these Voices? Voices! Well, it's better than being deaf!	340
JOAN:	They tell me to go and save the realm of France which is in grave danger of being destroyed. Is it true?	
FATHER:	Heavens above! Of course the realm of France is in danger of being destroyed. It isn't the first time, and it won't be the last: and she always gets out of it. Leave it in God's hands; there's nothing you can do about it, you poor girl. Even a man can't do anything about it, unless he's a soldier.	345
JOAN:	But I can. My voices have said so.	350
FATHER:	[ <i>laughing</i> ]: Oh, you can, can you? Dear me! You're sharper than all our great captains, of course, who can't do anything these days except be beaten every time they fight?	
JOAN:	Yes, father.	
FATHER:	Yes, father! Perhaps you're not a bad girl, but worse. You're a mad idiot girl. What do you think you can do then, poor idiot?	355
JOAN:	What my Voices tell me. I can ask the Squire of Beaudricourt for an armed escort. And when I've got my escort, I can go straight to the Dauphin at Chinon, to tell him that he's the rightful King; and I can lead him out at the head of the soldiers to save Orleans; and then I can persuade him to be consecrated with holy oil by the Archbishop, and then we can hurl the English into the sea.	360
FATHER:	[ <i>suddenly understanding</i> ]: Now you're explaining yourself, at last, you filthy little slut! You want to go off with the soldiers, like the lowest of the low?	365
JOAN:	[ <i>smiling mysteriously</i> ]: No, father, like the highest under God, riding first into the battle, and not looking back until I have saved France. [ <i>Suddenly sad.</i> ] And after that is done, what happens is God's will.	370
FATHER:	I've heard enough shameless lying! I won't stand any more of it! I'll teach you what happens to girls who go chasing after soldiers, pretending to save France!	
JOAN:	[ <i>crying</i> ]: Stop, father, stop! stop! <i>The FATHER has taken off his belt.</i>	375
LADVENU CAUCHON:	[ <i>rising</i> ]: This must be stopped! He means to injure her. [ <i>gently</i> ]: We can do nothing, Brother Ladvenu. At this part of the story we have never met Joan; we don't get to know her until the trial. We can only act our parts, each his own, good or bad, as they are written, and in his turn. And later on, you know, we shall do worse things than this to her. [ <i>He turns to WARWICK.</i> ] This domestic scene is not very pleasant to witness, my lord?	380
WARWICK:	[ <i>with a gesture</i> ]: Why not? We're firm believers in corporal punishment in England; it forms the character. I myself have been flogged many times as a boy; and I took it extremely well.	385
MOTHER:	[ <i>coming forward</i> ]: Have you killed her?	

FATHER:	Not this time. But if she talks any more about going off with the soldiers, I'll drown that girl of yours in the river with my own hands, do you hear me? And if I'm nowhere about, I give her brother full permission to do it for me. [ <i>He strides off.</i> ] <i>The MOTHER bends over JOAN and dries her face.</i>	390
MOTHER: JOAN	Joan, my little Joan, my little Joan. Did he hurt you? [ <i>giving a pathetic smile when she recognises her MOTHER</i> ]: Yes.	395
MOTHER: JOAN	He's your father, Joan; you must bear it patiently. [ <i>in a small voice</i> ]: I do bear it, mother. I prayed that our heavenly Father would forgive him.	400
MOTHER	[ <i>shocked</i> ]: Our heavenly Father doesn't have to forgive fathers for beating their daughters. It's their right.	
JOAN: MOTHER	And I prayed for him to understand. [ <i>fondling her</i> ]: Understand what, my silly one? Why did you have to tell him all this nonsense?	405
JOAN	[ <i>in agony</i> ]: Someone has to understand; otherwise I'm by myself, and I have to face them alone!	
MOTHER	[ <i>rocking her in her arms</i> ]: Now, now, now, you don't have to upset yourself. You remember when you were little, we would rock away your nightmares together. But now you're nearly a woman: nearly too big to hold in my arms any more, and I can tell you it's no good breaking your heart to make men understand anything. All you can do is say "yes" to whatever they think, and wait till they've gone out to the fields. Then you can be mistress in your own house again. Your father's a good man; but if I didn't trick him sometimes for his own good I don't know where we should be. Who is it, Joan? You can tell your mother. Don't you even know his name, perhaps? And yet I don't know but it must be someone in the village. Why, your father might even agree to him; he's not against a good marriage for you. We might even be able to persuade him he chose the boy himself, the poor old stupid. You know what men are: roar a lot, and lay down the law, but, the same as with a bull, you can lead them by the nose.	410 415
JOAN:	It isn't marriage that I have to think of, mother. The blessed St. Michael has told me I should leave the village, put on a man's clothes, and go and find his highness the Dauphin, to save the realm of France.	425
MOTHER	[ <i>severely</i> ]: Joan, I speak nicely and gently to you, but I won't have you talking wickedness. And I won't have you put on a man's clothes, not if you beg at my grave. Have my daughter a man! You let me catch you, my goodness!	430
JOAN:	But, mother, I should have to, if I'm to ride horseback with the soldiers. It's the blessed St. Michael who says so.	
MOTHER:	I don't care what the blessed St. Michael says, you shall never go off on a horse. Joan of Arc on a horse! It would be the talk of the village.	435
JOAN: MOTHER:	But the lady of Vaucouleurs rides a horse to hawking. You will not ride a horse, never! It isn't the station of life you were born to. Such grand ideas, indeed!	440
JOAN: MOTHER:	But if I don't ride a horse, how can I lead the soldiers? And you won't go with the soldiers, either, you wicked girl! I'd rather see you cold and dead. You see, how you make me talk the same as your father. There are some things we feel the same about. A daughter spins, and scrubs, and stays at	445

home. Your grandmother never left this village, and neither have I, and neither will you, and when you have a daughter of your own, neither will she. [*She suddenly bursts into tears.*]  
Going off with the soldiers! Do you want to kill me?

JOAN

[*throwing herself into her mother's arms, crying too*]: No, mother!

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MOTHER:

You do: I can see you do. And you'll destroy yourself in the end if you don't soon get these thoughts out of your head.  
[*Exit.*]

JOAN *straightens herself up, still in tears, while her* MOTHER *goes back to the* CROWD.

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