

Proximity Effect
Issue #3 - "Sacrifice"

by

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PAGE ONE

Splash page -- Joan of Arc and her friend Marie stand on a road bordering a forest. Thick bushes line the road. They look back down the road towards their home town of Domremy, which is aflame. The perpetrators of the arson, several mounted Burgundians brandishing torches, ride away from town, towards the young women. Marie is slightly shorter and more portly than Joan. At this time, Joan is dressed in feminine clothing.

CAPTION: DOMREMY, FRANCE. 1429
 MARIE: BARBARIANS!
 JOAN: NO. **BURGUNDIANS**. THEY PURSUE OUR TRUE KING, CHARLES. AS IF THE DAMNED ENGLISH WEREN'T ENOUGH, OUR OWN FRENCH COUSINS SALT OUR FIELDS AND BURN OUR TOWNS.
 MARIE: JOAN! THEY COME THIS WAY!
 JOAN: BACK INTO THE BUSHES, MARIE.

PAGE TWO

pic. 1

We see Joan and Marie peeking out from behind thick bushes lining the roadside. In front of them we see the horses legs as they gallop past.

MARIE: SHOULD WE NOT RUN?
 JOAN: RUN? HAD I A SWORD, I'D FIGHT THEM MYSELF.

pic. 2

The horses have past. The women stand and move away from the bushes into the forest.

MARIE: ARE YOU SO ANXIOUS TO ADD TO THE VIOLENCE OF MEN?
 JOAN: IF BY DEATH OR COWARDICE THERE ARE NO MEN TO DO MEN'S WORK, THEN I WILL.

pic. 3

Marie is upset with Joan. She gestures back towards the village.

MARIE: DO YOU SEE THE ASHEN FRUITS OF THEIR LABORS AND THINK THEM AN **INSUFFICIENT** HARVEST? HOW LONG MUST--
 JOAN: I'D PREFER THE KING'S STANDARD TO FLY WITHOUT THE FLASH OF THE SWORD, BUT TO THAT END I WOULD DEDICATE EVEN MY--

pic. 4

A low-hanging branch directly over Joan's head suddenly bursts into flames, startling the women.

JOAN: LI -- AAIEE!!

PAGE THREE

pic. 1

The rest of the tree catches fire. The trunk and main branches appear to burn in the shape of a cross. Joan falls to her knees and clutches her hands before her, staring with religious fervor at the intense glow of the flames. Marie runs, looking back and calling after Joan desperately.

MARIE: JOAN! RUN! YOU MUST RUN!

JOAN: NO... MARIE, DO YOU NOT SEE? AS TO MOSES IN THE WILDERNESS... BUT HERE-- A CROSS!

pic. 2

Joan bows her head and prays. A hand reaches out and touches her shoulder.

JOAN: DEAR LORD I SUPPLICATE MYSELF UNTO THEE AND BEG OF THEE THY MERCY UPON MY FAILINGS AND PRAISE THEE WITH ALL THE JOY OF MY HEART. MY GOD, MY GOD-- I BEG OF THEE-- SEND ME A SIGN TO MY PURPOSE, TELL ME HOW I MIGHT ADVANCE THY GLORY ON EARTH -
- oh!

CHARLES: WHAT TRANSPIRES HERE, GIRL?

pic. 3

We draw back to reveal who has approached Joan -- it is Charles, the Dauphin of France. He is not, however, clad in royal garb, but more simple clothing, as he is hiding from his enemies. The glow of the fire engulfs him, and part of the fire forms itself into a crown or halo hovering above his head.

JOAN: OUR TRUE KING-- RIGHTLY CROWNED! CHARLES! THE DAUPHIN!

pic. 4

Joan bows before the King, but he striates out an arm to grab her and help her up.

JOAN: MY LIEGE! YOUR MAJESTY!
 CHARLES: DO NOT BOW TO ME OR SPEAK MY NAME! RISE UP!

PAGE FOUR

Pic. 1

Charles helps Joan to her feet while looking expectantly back over his shoulder.

JOAN: I DO NOT UNDERSTAND...
 CHARLES: I AM IN HIDING. PURSUED ON ALL SIDES BY ENEMIES. I AM IMPERILED—AS IS FRANCE, HERSELF—UNTIL I AM RIGHTFULLY CROWNED.

(link)

CHARLES: ORLEANS IS UNDER SIEGE. SHOULD SHE FALL...
 CHARLES: AND NOW, I AM FEAR I AM VERY, VERY **LOST**.

Pic. 2

Joan, wide-eyed with fervor, entreats Charles, her empty hand held out to him:

JOAN: NO, MY LIEGE! BEGGING YOUR PARDON, YOUR MAJESTY—YOU ARE **FOUND**! PROVIDENCE HAS PUT US TOGETHER AND GOD HAS CONSECRATED THIS UNION WITH **FIRE**!

(link)

JOAN: HE HAS SHOWN ME THE CROWN UPON YOUR HEAD-- HE HAS SET ME TO THE TASK OF SEEING YOU CROWNED! LEND ME A SWORD, YOUR MAJESTY, THAT I MIGHT FIGHT FOR FRANCE.
 CHARLES: YOUNG MAID, I HARDLY THINK—

Pic. 3

An arc of fire from the tree swoops down and drives the two apart. The flame touches down on Joan's hand.

JOAN: OW!
 CHARLES: DEAR GOD!

Pic. 4

Joan and Charles look down at Joan's burnt palm.

JOAN: THERE! SEE! HAS NOT THE LORD MARKED THE HILT
UPON MY HAND?

Pic. 5

Close in on Charles, an expression of grim resolution.

CHARLES: I WOULD SACRIFICE ANYTHING FOR THE GOOD OF
FRANCE—AND NEARLY ALL HAVE I!

(link)

CHARLES: IF IT COMES NOW THAT I CAST A MAID TO THE FLAME OF
BATTLE, I PRAY GOD I AM NOT DAMNED FOR OBLIGING
MY DESPERATION.

PAGE 5

Pic. 1

On a country road, Joan and Charles creep by a man on horseback who leers menacingly down at them as they pass. Joan is now in men's clothing, Charles keeps the hood of his cloak drawn up over his head.

CAPTION: “IT WILL NOT BE EASY. WE MUST TRAVERSE THE
COUNTRYSIDE IN DISGUISE—YOU AS A MAN, SO AS NOT
TO BE MOLESTED BY WHAT PASSES FOR MEN IN THESE
LAWLESS TIMES—

CAPTION: AND I, AS A SIMPLE PAGE, TO KEEP SAFE THE HOPE OF
FRANCE.”

Pic. 2

Joan and Charles press themselves against an exterior wall on the outskirts of Orleans. Two English soldiers lazily stand guard in the street and fail to notice them.

CAPTION: ORLEANS IS UNDER SIEGE FIVE MONTHS, BUT THE
BLOCKADE IS POUROUS—STEALTH WILL WIN US ENTRY
TO THE CITY THAT WE MAY FIND—

Pic. 3

Jean d'Orleans and several other top military men stand in a nondescript room around a large table covered with maps, discussing strategy. They are startled as Joan and Charles enter; Charles holds a scroll out to Jean.

CHARLES: JEAN D'ORLEANS!

JEAN: WHO DARES DISTURB THE WAR COUNCIL?

Pic. 4

Jean eagerly snatches the scroll from Charles's hand.

CHARLES: YOUR LORDSHIP, I CARRY A MESSAGE IN THE KING'S OWN HAND, SEALED WITH THE ROYAL SEAL—

JEAN: REINFORCEMENTS AT LAST?

CHARLES: OF A SORT, YOUR LORDSHIP. THE KING COMMANDS YOU TO ADMIT THIS KNIGHT TO YOUR FORCES—

Pic. 5

Jean stands towering over Joan, glaring down at her contemptuously.

JEAN: **THIS?** THIS IS A KNIGHT? YOU ARE AT BEST A LAD, THOUGH I THINK WORSE, LEST MY EYES DECEIVE ME, A MAID.

PAGE SIX

Pic. 1

Close on Joan as she erupts with defiant passion.

JOAN: I AM JOAN OF ARC—MAIDEN, YES, BUT MORE-- I AM THE KING'S MIGHT AND THE BLAZING SWORD OF HIS GOOD RIGHT ARM.

(link)

JOAN: I AM THE BANE OF OUR ENGLISH OPPRESSORS AND THE LIBERATOR OF ORLEANS!

Pic. 2

Jean and the other military leaders are struck silent by the outburst.

Pic. 3

Then they erupt into derisive laughter. Jean waves the unfurled scroll around carelessly.

JEAN: I SEE NO COMMAND HERE THAT YOU BE PART OF THIS COUNCIL. FALL IN WITH THE INFANTRY IF YOU MUST, "SIR KNIGHT", BUT TRY NOT TO ROUSE THE RABBLE.

Pic. 4

Joan simmers with rage at this dismissal.

JOAN: THE WILL OF THE COUNCIL, THEN, IS TO “WAIT”.

Pic. 5

The laughter continues as Jean turns his back on Joan.

JEAN: THE WILL OF THIS COUNCIL IS NOT YOUR CONCERN. NOW GO, FOR WE WISH TO FART AND USE BAWDY LANGUAGE.

PAGE SEVEN

Pic. 1

Joan marches down the street, her fists clenched tight, her spine stiff and erect. Charles trails behind her. Many dispirited French soldiers and civilians trudge about or wait, morosely hanging their heads.

CHARLES: I DID NOT THINK MY WORDS WOULD BE SO EASILY TRIVIALIZED. I MUST REVEAL MYSELF.

JOAN: NO, YOUR MAJESTY. YOU ARE SAFE ONLY UPON THE THRONE.

CHARLES: BUT WE MUST KNOW THE WAR COUNCIL’S PLANS.

Pic. 2

Joan jumps up onto the back of a hay cart and begins addressing the crowd and pointing at them. Many in the crowd begin to rouse and approach the speaker.

JOAN: WE KNOW **TOO WELL** THE WAR COUNCIL’S PLANS: WAIT! STARVE! CRINGE AND COWER UNTIL REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE.

(link)

JOAN: THE GENERALS DO NOT SEE THE POWER HERE IN FRONT OF THEM! **YOU**, THE PEOPLE! YOU, FRANCE!

Pic. 3

The crowd swells and follows Joan as she urges them down the street. They enthusiastically shake their weapons in the air. Charles hands Joan a sword.

JOAN: LOOK TO YOUR HEARTS AND THE LOVE OF YOUR KING!

SEE THERE AS WELL THE SMOLDERING HATE FOR OUR
ENGLISH OPPRESSORS.

(link)

JOAN: TAKE UP ARMS AND FORM YOUR BATTALIONS! WITH
YOUR SWORDS STROKE THAT HATE AND LET YOUR ANGER
RISE AS ONE!

JOAN: TAKE UP ARMS AND FOLLOW ME FOR THE GLORY OF GOD
AND THE FUTURE OF FRANCE!

Pic. 4

Joan looks up at the sword she holds over her head as flame dance around it.

JOAN: THE FIRE HAS RETURNED!

PAGE EIGHT

Pic. 1

Joan and her forces plow into the front lines of the English soldiers. Tongues of fire leap around Joan.

JOAN: LOOK, ENGLISH PIGS! GAZE UPON THE RIGHTEOUS FURY
OF THE LORD AS IT BEARS DOWN ON YOUR MISBEGOTTEN
SOULS!

Pic. 2

Joan and her forces push forward. Columns of flame shoot forth from Joan's sword, scattering the fearful English.

JOAN: ONWARD, PEOPLE OF FRANCE! FOLLOW ME TO GLORY!
PUSH EVER FORWARD AND KEEP FAITH THAT THESE
FLAMES MIGHT NEVER--

Pic. 3

Joan is surprised as the flames weaken and scatter.

JOAN: --FALTER?

JOAN: THE FIRE ABANDONS ME. WHY?

Pic. 4

Joan sees Charles down on the ground some distance away, desperately fending off the attack

of an Englishman.

JOAN: MY KING—NO!

PAGE NINE

Pic. 1

Joan barrels through the fighting throng towards Charles.

JOAN: GET OUT OF MY WAY! OUT OF—

Pic. 2

A ball of fire shoots forth as Joan nears Charles, blasting his attacker away from him.

JOAN: --MY WAY!

Pic. 3

Joan kneels down beside Charles and takes his hand in hers.

JOAN: MY KING!

CHARLES: I AM UNHURT, JOAN. RETURN TO BATTLE.

JOAN: AND YOU WITH ME. I SEE NOW—

(link)

JOAN: GOD HAS TASKED ME TO ADVANCE **YOUR** GLORY, NEVER MY OWN. I DEDICATE MYSELF TO YOUR CAUSE AND I WILL NOT LEAVE YOUR SIDE.

Pic. 4

Joan helps Charles to his feet.

CHARLES: VERY WELL THEN. IF YOU'LL NOT PRESS ON WITHOUT ME, THEN TOGETHER WE MUST—

Pic. 5

Charles and Joan charge back into the melee, ringed by fire.

CHARLES: PRESS ON!

CAPTION: “AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?”

PAGE TEN

Pic. 1

Big panel, 2/3 page. A general battle picture showing Joan and Charles continuing the fighting, swords flashing, flames shooting about. The larger picture is ringed in flame, then bracketed by two peasants talking face-to-face in a pub.

PEASANT: SHE SWEEP THEM ENGLISH RIGHT OUT OF SAINT LOUP!
AND EACH DAY AFTER—ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER
FORTRESS LIBERATED!

(link)

PEASANT: THERE WEREN'T NONE OF THEM THAT COULD STAND
AGAINST HER AND THE FIRE OF GOD THAT WENT WITH
HER! WHY SHE—

Pic. 2

The peasant's narrative drifts off when he notices a priest standing over their table, listening to their conversation.

PEASANT: OH, UH—Y-YOUR GRACE, I DIDN'T—
PRIEST: PLEASE GENTLEMEN. CONTINUE, THAT I MIGHT HEAR
MORE OF THIS MAIDEN, ER...

Pic. 3

The priest seats himself at their table.

PEASANT: JOAN OF ARC, THEY CALL HER, YOUR GRACE.
PRIEST: YES. I AM MOST INTRIGUED BY OUR YOUNG JOAN'S...
EXPLOITS.
CAPTION: "AND WHAT DID THEY TELL YOU THEN?"

PAGE ELEVEN

This page should be divided into four even rows, each with one long panel on the left side, then a smaller panel (or inset) on the right for the Bishop's face.

Pic. 1

Standing in the nave of the grand cathedral of Notre-Dame de Reims, the priest makes his report to an austere and grim Bishop; he is flanked by the Grand Chamberlain de Guines, a flamboyant politico and military man, while other, lesser church officials gather deferentially behind them.

PRIEST: ON THE FOURTH DAY OF HER ATTACKS AGAINST THE ENGLISH, JOAN D'ARC WAS WOUNDED IN HER SHOULDER AND TAKEN FROM THE FIELD OF BATTLE. OUR FORCES FALTERED AND THE ENGLISH RALLIED UNDER A CRY OF "THE WITCH IS DEAD!"

BISHOP: THE WITCH? THE ENGLISH CONSIDER HER A WITCH?

PRIEST: YES, YOUR EMINENCE.

Pic 2

Close on the Bishop.

BISHOP: USEFUL. PROCEED.

Pic. 3

Joan tries to rise up from the table where she is being treated for her wound. The doctors try to hold her down, but she pushes them away fiercely.

CAPTION: "UPON RECOVERING IN HER TENT, JOAN WAS WILD WITH EXCITEMENT. NONE COULD DISSUADE HER FROM RETURNING TO BATTLE. WHEN SHE REACHED THE FRONT, THE FLAMES OF GOD--"

Pic. 4

Close on the Bishop, frowning deeply.

BISHOP: **WE SHALL DECIDE THE ORIGIN OF THESE FLAMES.**

Pic. 5

Jean d'Orleans and the generals look on disapprovingly at Joan, who holds her sword high above her head in victory; flames dance about over her head, the crowd cheers. Charles stands nearby, pulling down his hood to remain anonymous.

CAPTION: "ER, YES, YOUR EMINENCE. WHATEVER THEIR SOURCE, THEY RETURNED AS SOON AS SHE STOOD AGAIN WITH THE VANGUARD."

Pic. 6

The Bishop appears deep in thought.

BISHOP: THEIR **SOURCE**... TELL US—IS THERE ANY SOLDIER SHE

FAVORS, OR ONE WHO IS ALWAYS WITH HER?

Pic. 7

Moving in from the previous panel, focusing more closely on Charles.

CAPTION: "I'M TOLD SHE HAS A PAGE OR SQUIRE, YOUR EMINENCE."

Pic. 8

Close on the Bishop again.

BISHOP: WAS THERE ANYTHING ELSE?

PAGE TWELVE

Pic. 1

The priest concludes his report. De Guines steps forward. Behind him, we see the other church officials look with surprise in the direction of the grand entrance.

PRIEST: ORLEANS WAS SOON LIBERATED. THOUGH JEAN D'ORLEANS' JOY WAS MUCH... **MUTED**, REPORTEDLY, AS WAS THE CASE WITH MOST OF THE GENERALS.

DE GUINES: SMALL WONDER! THE GLORIOUS ART OF WAR DIMINISHED BY THE LUCK OF A MAIDEN.

(link)

DE GUINES: HER SUCCESS WILL BE SHORT LIVED. UNDOUBTEDLY SHE PRESSES FORWARD TO PARIS, WHERE THE ENGLISH WILL MEET HER IN FORCE.

Pic. 2

Joan stands defiantly in the nave of the cathedral, the great doors swung wide behind her. Charles is beside her; he puts his hands up to the hood of his cloak as if to pull it back.

JOAN: NO, GRAND CHAMBERLAIN—SHE TRAVELS **HERE**—TO NOTRE DAME DE REIMS!

Pic. 3

The Bishop is livid at Joan's arrogance. He points a finger accusingly.

BISHOP: YOU DARE ENTER UNINVITED, GIRL? WE SHALL SEE YOU — EH?

Pic. 4

Same shot, but now the Bishop's eyes are wide with surprise.

Pic. 5

Charles has revealed himself. All present bow before him.

CHARLES: I BELIEVE YOU HAVE SOMETHING OF MINE.

PAGE THIRTEEN

Pic. 1

The coronation of King Charles takes place in the cathedral. Joan stands not far from Charles as the archbishop sets the crown upon his head. The Bishop and Priest from the previous scene stand on the other side of the throne along with de Guines. The Bishop leans close to the Priest's ear.

BISHOP: IT IS CLEAR: JOAN OF ARC IS A **SIPHON**, AND OUR YOUNG KING CHARLES IS A **SOURCE**.

(link)

BISHOP: HE IS THE **WELLSPRING** FROM WHICH SHE DRAWS FORTH THE POWER TO **MANIFEST** THE FIRE.

Pic. 2

The Bishop and Priest walk a side hall in the cathedral.

PRIEST: TO THINK THIS MAIDEN MIGHT HAVE ACCESS TO SUCH POWER—IT IS AN ABOMINATION!

BISHOP: INDEED. IF THE WORLD COULD KNOW OF OUR EFFORTS AGAINST SUCH DEVILRY, THEY WOULD SURELY THANK US.

Pic. 3

They stop in a secluded corner and draw close to each other.

PRIEST: BUT WHAT WOE BEFALLS THIS GENERATION THAT A SOURCE MIGHT WEAR THE **CROWN**! OUR SIMPLEST SOLUTION IS UNAVAILABLE TO US.

BISHOP: DON'T BE NAÏVE. CHARLES WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST KING WE'VE KILLED. A KING IS EASILY KILLED, BUT

BETTER CONTROLLED.

(link)

BISHOP: HOW OFTEN HAS NATURE GIVEN US AN ASS FOR A LION?
LET HIM STAMP AND BRAY 'TIL HE TIRES, THEN PEN HIM
IN AND BREAK HIM TO YOUR WILL.

Pic. 4

Back in the nave, the newly crowned King presents himself to the assembly, arms stretched out to his sides.

(Color note: The two captions should be different colors)

CAPTION: "AND THE MAIDEN, JOAN?"

CAPTION: "WILL DO WHAT HER KING ASKS. THE LEAST SMUDGE OF
HER DEMISE WON'T DIRTY OUR HANDS."

Pic. 5

Inside a military tent, reprising the pose from the previous panel, the King's arms are stretched out to his sides while attendants dress him for battle. Joan is not present, but de Guines and the Bishop are.

BISHOP: WE WOULD ASK YOUR MAJESTY TO RECONSIDER. THE
FUTURE OF FRANCE IS ENDANGERED WHEN HER KING
RIDES FORTH INTO BATTLE.

KING: I HAVE DONE SO MANY TIMES ALREADY.

DE GUINES: AS A SIMPLE INFANTRYMAN, SIRE, NOT ADORNED AS A
MONARCH.

PAGE FOURTEEN

Pic. 1

Charles drops his arms as the attendants tighten the clasps around his armor.

CHARLES: THE FIRE OF THE LORD WILL SEE ME SAFELY THROUGH TO
VICTORY.

BISHOP: IF WE FOLLOW RIGHTLY THE PATH OUR LORD WILLS FOR
US, HIS FIRE WILL COME **WITHOUT** YOUR MAJESTY'S
PRESENCE AT THE FRONT.

DE GUINES: AND IF IT DOES NOT COME, WE MUST SEE THIS AS A SIGN
JOAN'S STRATEGY IS **FALSE**, AND THAT SIEGE AND
NEGOTIATION SHOULD BE OUR COURSE.

Pic. 2

The conference continues as the Bishop goes to a table and pours wine in a goblet.

KING: HER STRATEGY SERVED US WELL ENOUGH AT ORLEANS.
 DE GUINES: INDEED IT DID! BUT, LIKE ANY FOOL WITH A LITTLE
 SUCCESS, SHE WON'T CHANGE HER APPROACH TO SUIT
 THE NEEDS OF THE CAMPAIGN. PERSISTENCE IS A
 JUGGERNAUT SOON TURNED TO FOLLY.
 BISHOP: WELL SAID, GRAND CHAMBERLAIN!

pic. 3

In the foreground we see the Bishop empty the contents of a poison ring into one of the cups of wine, while Charles responds to de Guines.

CHARLES: INDEED. BUT WELL-CRAFTED ARGUMENTS DID NOT SEE
 ME CROWNED AT REIMS, COUNT DE GUINES. NOR WILL
 THEY LIBERATE **PARIS**.

pic. 4

With a smarmy smile, the Bishop hands a cup of wine to Charles, while keeping one for himself.

BISHOP: THEN LET THE LORD'S BLESSINGS BE UPON YOU AND ALL
 FRANCE. THOUGH I MAY NOT JOIN YOU IN BATTLE, WILL
 YOU FIRST JOIN ME IN A TOAST TO...

pic. 5

Close on the Bishop as he brings his wine to his lips with profound self-satisfaction.

BISHOP: ...OUR IMPENDING **VICTORY**.

PAGE FIFTEEN

pic. 1

Joan and Charles are mounted on horseback, in the midst of battle on the outskirts of Paris with the usual flourish of flames. Charles puts a hand to his head as he becomes woozy.

JOAN: MY BURGUNDIAN COUSINS! LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS AND
 LEAVE THIS BATTLE!
 CHARLES: JOAN...

pic. 2

Charles slumps forward in the saddle. The flames around Joan falter.

JOAN: WHY DO YOU RESIST WHAT **HEAVEN** HAS DECREED? WHY
WILL YOU NOT RECOGNIZE THE ONE, TRUE--

pic. 3

With alarm, Joan notices the King's condition.

JOAN: KING? MY LIEGE!

pic. 4

De Guines rides up and grabs hold of Charles's horse's bridle.

DE GUINES: HE HAS BEEN STRUCK ABOUT THE HEAD! I MUST TAKE
HIM FROM THE MELEE!

JOAN: BUT--

PAGE SIXTEEN

pic. 1

Joan is struck in the leg by a crossbow bolt.

JOAN: AAAHH!

pic. 2

Joan falls from her horse, clutching at the wound. A Burgundian notices and calls out to his comrades.

BURGUNDIAN: THE MAID HAS FALLEN!

pic. 3

The Burgundians surge forward. Joan's comrades attempt to shield her and draw her back from the combat.

BURGUNDIAN: WE'VE STOPPED THEM!

BURGUNDIAN2: PRESS THEM BACK!

pic. 4

pic. 4

Joan bursts into the tent. She is bandaged where the crossbow bolt hit her and leans on a crutch. Charles moves away from de Guines, reacting with surprise at Joan's condition.

JOAN: YOUR MAJESTY!
CHARLES: JOAN! YOU ARE WOUNDED!

pic 5

Close on Joan, distraught.

JOAN: THE DAMAGE OF A CROSSBOW BOLT IS AS NOTHING TO
 WHAT HAS RECENTLY ASSAILED MY EARS-- RUMORS OF
 RETREAT! IT CANNOT BE!

PAGE EIGHTEEN

pic.1

Charles uncertainly glances aside at the Bishop and de Guines.

CHARLES: JOAN...

pic.2

The Bishop and de Guines stare back at Charles, hard and cold.

pic. 3

Charles moves to Joan and puts his hands on her shoulders reassuringly.

CHARLES: WE MUST WITHDRAW. THIS NEW KINGDOM IS YET TOO
 FRAGILE TO ENDANGER HERE.

(link)

CHARLES: YOUR STRENGTH IS NEEDED ELSEWHERE. YOU ARE THE
 LIBERATOR, JOAN. THE ENGLISH LAY SIEGE TO
 COMPIEGNE. GO THERE AND--

JOAN: YOUR MAJESTY, **NO!**

pic. 4

All present stare at Joan. She realizes she is being insubordinate, and her will weakens.

JOAN: I-- I...

pic. 5

Joan kneels before Charles. He bends towards her compassionately.

JOAN: FORGIVE ME, YOUR MAJESTY.
CHARLES: RISE UP, JOAN. GO AND DO YOUR WORK AT COMPIEGNE.

pic. 6

Close on Joan and Charles as they speak in hushed tones.

JOAN: BUT-- THE FIRE, YOUR MAJESTY. IT IS TOGETHER THAT WE--
CHARLES: WHAT BLESSING CAN I GIVE YOU THAT GOD HAS NOT? KEEP FAITH IN YOUR KING AND THE FIRE WILL SEE YOU THROUGH, EVEN UNTO HEAVEN.

PAGE NINETEEN

pic. 1

A gray, dismal day. Joan and one of her Captains confer on the battlefield at Compiegne. They are away from the main fighting right now, but are surrounded by the dead and wounded.

CAPTAIN: IT GOES BADLY, MISTRESS.
JOAN: I SEE IT. OUR ENEMIES ARE LEGION. SOUND THE RETREAT.

pic. 2

The Captain runs away, looking back as he goes.

CAPTAIN: WILL YOU NOT COME, MISTRESS?
JOAN: I CLAIM THE HONOR OF LAST TO LEAVE THE FIELD. GO. I WILL SOON...

pic. 3

Joan finds herself suddenly surrounded by enemy forces, and alone.

JOAN: ...FOLLOW.

pic. 4

The Bishop and the Priest walk up the steps of the Cathedral at Rouen, wherein Joan is on trial.

PRIEST: WELCOME TO ROUEN, YOUR EMINENCE.
 BISHOP: HOW GOES THE TRIAL?
 PRIEST: **POORLY**, I'M AFRAID. THE MAID--
 BISHOP: THE WITCH.
 PRIEST: AH, YES. THE WITCH IS CHARISMATIC AND INTELLIGENT. EVEN WITH NO DEFENSE IN HER FAVOR, SHE--

PAGE TWENTY

pic. 1

The Bishop and Priest enter into the nave of the church; past them we see that the trial is in session.

BISHOP: MY GOD, IT'S A TRIAL FOR **WITCHCRAFT**. IS THE INQUISITOR FOOL ENOUGH TO TRY TO PARSE **TRUTH** FROM THE PROCEEDINGS?

pics. 2-4 are structured like page eleven, but with the small panels or insets on the left, and the larger panels on the right. On the left, we are close on the pudgy, and pasty inquisitor in all his pomp seated on an elegantly crafted chair, interrogating Joan with stumbling uncertainty; on the right, Joan stands in a wooden docket, her hands bound, clad in a simple white tunic, resolute and unyielding.

pic. 2

INQUISITOR: WE HAVE HEARD MUCH TESTIMONY ABOUT THESE FLAMES THAT ACCOMPANIED YOU INTO BATTLE.
 JOAN: THE FIRE WAS THE WRATH OF GOD; I WAS FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO SERVE AS HIS MESSENGER.

pic. 3

INQUISITOR: WOULD YOU PRESUME TO SAY THAT YOU ARE IN GOD'S GRACE, THEN?
 JOAN: IF I AM NOT, MAY GOD PUT ME THERE; AND IF I AM, MAY GOD SO KEEP ME.

pic. 4

INQUISITOR: ER... WELL. DO YOU NOT KNOW IT IS HERETICAL TO WEAR

MEN'S CLOTHES? DID YOU NOT DRESS AS A MAN TO DO BATTLE?

JOAN: MY SIN IS **IMPATIENCE**, THEN, FOR I COULD NOT WAIT FOR THE BLACKSMITH TO FASHION A STEEL DRESS.

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

pic. 1

Reversing the setup from the previous three panels; Joan is small and on the right, where now the Inquisitor we see in an expanded view on the left, as the Bishop appears standing behind him, looking unhappy.

INQUISITOR: YES... LET US, ER... RETURN TO THE MATTER OF THIS FIRE. THOUGH THE TESTIMONY IS IMPRESSIVE, I WONDER WHETHER YOU COULD NOT PRODUCE THAT FIRE HERE FOR US NOW.

JOAN: I CANNOT, YOUR GRACE. THE FIRE WILL ONLY MANIFEST WHEN I AM IN THE PRESENCE OF--

pic. 2

The Inquisitor is startled as the Bishop suddenly lunges forward to stop the proceedings.

BISHOP: **ENOUGH!**

INQUISITOR: ER... WE SHALL RECESS TO CONSIDER THE EVIDENCE.

pic. 3

In a smaller chamber, the Bishop stands at a table, looking over papers scattered there while the Inquisitor sheepishly addresses him.

INQUISITOR: YOUR EMINENCE, I MUST PROTEST. ONLY I CAN--

BISHOP: BE SILENT. THESE ARE THE TRANSCRIPTS?

INQUISITOR: YES, YOUR EMINENCE.

pic. 4

The Bishop hands a sheet of paper to the Inquisitor.

BISHOP: HERE. CHANGE "INFERNO" TO "INFERNAL" AND CONVICT THE WITCH.

INQUISITOR: IT-- IT MAKES NO GRAMMATICAL SENSE--

pic. 5

The Bishop turns his back to depart from the nervous Inquisitor.

BISHOP: YOU MAY JOIN HER AT THE **STAKE** IF YOUR SENSES ARE TOO OFFENDED.

INQUISITOR: Y-YES. I MEAN, NO, NO, YOUR EMINENCE.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

pic. 1

Joan is about to be burned at the stake. The wood at her feet is being set alight. A young girl stands in front of her, holding a cross. The Inquisitor stands nearby, at the front of the gathered crowd. Joan is unafraid.

INQUISITOR: WHAT SAY YOU NOW, JOAN OF ARC? CAN YOU MAKE OF THESE FLAMES SOMETHING DIVINE? CAN YOU KEEP THE FIRE FROM SEARING YOUR FLESH?

JOAN: IT IS IN GOD'S HANDS. THIS FIRE CAN ONLY KILL ME, AND SO REVEAL TO ME OUR LORD'S FINAL VICTORY. HOLD THE CROSS BEFORE ME, YOUNG MAID.

pic. 2

At the outer edge of the crowd, the Bishop and Priest turn away from the execution.

BISHOP: HMNF. MARTYRDOM, HOW **CONTEMPTIBLE**. LET US GO BEFORE SHE PROFANES THE NAME OF OUR LORD WITH HER SCREAMS.

BISHOP: INSTRUCT DE GUINES TO WRITE TO THE KING. LET HIM KNOW AND LAMENT THE WITCH'S "SACRIFICE".

pic. 3

Charles sits alone, slumped on his throne, holding his head in one hand and a letter in the other.

CAPTION: "AND LET HIM KNOW HIS EFFORTS WILL UNIFY HIS BELOVED FRANCE."

CHARLES: THAT MAY BE TRUE. BUT I GREATLY FEAR I AM DAMNED FOR HOW THE DEED IS ACCOMPLISHED.