

# Joan of Arc's Journey

Golden Star | Una M. | Oct. 19, 2018

The stake burst into flames, along with one of France's greatest heroes. It was a pivotal time in The Hundred Years War, the long-lasting feud between England and France that was the battleground upon which Joan of Arc fought. She believed it was up to her to bring King Charles of Valois to his rightful place on the throne and save France from its "pitiful state." She was 8 years old when Henry VI was crowned king and the terrible fate of France was nearly certain.

At 13 years old, Joan of Arc started hearing voices, voices which she believed belonged to God. She was born in Domremy, in North Eastern France, and lived with her parents Jacques and Isabelle d' Arc. Her parents were poor tenant farmers, so Joan was raised taking care of the farm animals. She gained from her mother a love for sewing and a passion for the Catholic Church. Joan was 16 when her father arranged a marriage for her, but she managed to convince the local court of her right to not be forced into the marriage. She hadn't forgotten about the voices though. She was convinced God had an important message for her: she was to embark on a mission to save France and restore Charles as king.

Joan was 18 when she set off in May of 1428 for Vaucouleurs, a stronghold for those loyal to Prince Charles. She had no military training, however she was determined to get a horse, armour, and an escort to Chinon, where Charles was. She approached the magistrate in Vaucouleurs, Robert de Baudricourt, asking for these things, but Baudricourt refused. A popular prophecy in France involved a virgin who would save the country from its enemies, and several people believed Joan was the virgin described. Even after gaining a following of those who believed this, Joan's second attempt at persuading Baudricourt also resulted in rejection. Joan refused to give up though, resorting to cutting her hair short and dressing in men's clothes. With her disguise Joan went to the magistrate a third time and was at last granted her request.

With her new armour, horse, and escort, Joan traveled for 11 days through enemy territory into Chinon where Charles's Palace stood. There she asked him something astonishing. She asked for an army. Joan of Arc promised the prince she would see him crowned, but most

of the counselors and generals were strongly against giving her anything, let alone a troop to lead. But Charles agreed, and with her troop Joan of Arc set off for Orleans in March of 1429.

Enveloped in white armour atop a white horse, Joan of Arc rode before her French troop into the bastion of the Anglo-Burgundians, allies of the English. Her army drove them out of their bastion and forced them to retreat across the Loire river, extinguishing Charles's biggest immediate threat. A few months after their success and return to Charles, Joan of Arc brought Charles of Valois through enemy territory into Reims and had him crowned king, just as she'd promised. However it wasn't until she was 19, roughly a year later, when she set out on a mission once more.

After remaining inactive on behalf of the royal court, Joan of Arc and a troop of French soldiers were ordered by the king to protect Compiègne, a commune in Northern France, from a Burgundian attack. In the midst of her mission, Joan of Arc was thrown off her horse and left outside the closing town gates. Now alone, the fallen heroine was captured by a group of Anglo-Burgundians. For numerous crimes such as dressing as a man and supposed witchcraft, Joan of Arc was put on trial by her captors. The Anglo-Burgundians, seeing her as a threat to their otherwise set victory over the French, saw this as an opportunity to execute her. Despite Joan being the reason for King Charles's victory and restored throne, Charles didn't want to associate himself with a so called witch, and didn't negotiate in Joan's favor. Soon after the trial, in 1431, Joan was turned over by the Anglo-Burgundians to the English. Bound by ropes, licking flames beneath her, Joan of Arc was burned alive.

Joan of Arc was an inspiring hero whose life wove into an incredible story, winding from Vaucouleurs to Chinon to Orleans, more often than not with an army behind her. For the short time that she fought in The Hundred Years War, Joan played a big role in saving the king and saving France. It wasn't until May 16, 1920, nearly 500 years later, when she was established as a Roman Catholic saint. But even before that, and certainly long after, Joan of Arc has been remembered as a symbol of unity and courage, and a hero of France.

# Bibliography

- “Joan of Arc Biography.” *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, [www.notablebiographies.com/Ho-Jo/Joan-of-Arc.html](http://www.notablebiographies.com/Ho-Jo/Joan-of-Arc.html).
- “Joan of Arc.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 9 Nov. 2009, [www.history.com/topics/middle-ages/saint-joan-of-arc](http://www.history.com/topics/middle-ages/saint-joan-of-arc).
- “Joan of Arc.” *Biography.com*, A&E Networks Television, 27 Feb. 2018, [www.biography.com/people/joan-of-arc-9354756](http://www.biography.com/people/joan-of-arc-9354756).