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In 1509, or thereabouts, an artist working for the English School created this portrait of Henry, the Duke of York. The painting was created not long before Henry became King of England, in 1509, after the death of his father, Henry VII. Part of the Berger Collection, the oil-on-canvas is maintained at the Denver Museum of Art. Click on the image for a better view.

Henry Tudor—son of Henry VII, King of England—is studying to be a cleric. In other words, Henry, known as the Duke of York, is following a religious-studies path. His brother Arthur, older by nearly five years, is Prince of Wales.

It is Arthur who will rule England one day. It will be a significant rule because of Arthur's ancestry.

Sometimes it gets a bit complicated, unwinding royal lineages, but Arthur's background is straightforward and understandable. He is the eldest son of the ruling King (Henry VII) and his wife, Elizabeth of York (daughter of King Edward IV).

Arthur's birth cements a union between the House of Tudor and the House of York. That's a good thing because, theoretically, Britain will at least have a King whose ancestry unites the country. (At the time, England and Wales have a combined population of 2.5 million people.)

All of this, of course, presupposes that Arthur will have a healthy life.

All seems well and, at the age of 15, he marries 16-year-old Catherine (Katherine) of Aragon, daughter of the King and Queen of Spain (Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile). Their wedding takes place on Sunday, the 14th November in 1501, at St. Paul's Cathedral (the older version of the church which was later destroyed in the Great Fire of London).

Then ... about six months after his wedding, Arthur suddenly gets sick and dies. Catherine is also ill, but she recovers.

Some historians later speculate that Arthur dies because of the "sweating sickness," since both he and his wife were ill. (More about that illness later.) Catherine, now a widowed-teenager, remains in England.

Arthur's death means that his brother—Henry, the Duke of York—faces an unexpected career change. He will become King, after Henry VII dies.

While the old King is still alive, however, he concocts another plan. Happy with England's Spanish alliance, through Arthur's marriage to Catherine, he wants his second son to marry Arthur's widow. He begins to negotiate with Catherine's father, King Ferdinand, for a new dowry.

Henry is unpersuaded, however, and the Spanish and English kings cannot come to terms on a suitable dowry. For seven years, the Princess of Wales has no husband and an uncertain future.

As his Father is dying of tuberculosis, Henry the Prince finally agrees to marry his sister-in-law, Catherine. When Henry VII dies, his son becomes Henry VIII in April of 1509.

After Julius II—the sitting Pope who commissioned Michelangelo to paint the Sistine-Chapel ceiling and create beautiful statues like the Moses—grants a special dispensation for Henry to marry Arthur's widow, the couple take their vows in a private ceremony.

As part of the dispensation, Julius II annuls Catherine's marriage to Arthur. It will not be the only time Henry tries to get a marriage annulment for Catherine.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-DUKE-of-YORK-BECOMES-HENRY-VIII-Wolf-Hall>

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-DUKE-of-YORK-BECOMES-HENRY-VIII-Wolf-Hall>

Media Stream

Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales

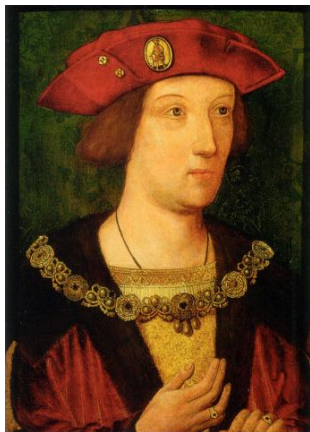
Arthur Tudor, the Prince of Wales, was named for Arthur, the fabled King of England who—with his Knights of the Round Table—became the stuff of legends.

Son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, the young Prince would unite his country by virtue of his ancestry:

Henry was from the House of Tudor and Elizabeth was from the House of York.

Aligning England with a foreign nation, Arthur would marry Catalina of Aragon (also known as Catherine, or Katherine, of Aragon) during November of 1501. He was 15; she was 16.

After their marriage, the young couple moved to Ludlow Castle, at the Welsh border.



Arthur died just six months later, leaving his teenaged wife a widow.

Catherine's future, as Queen of England and then as the cast-off Dowager Princess of Wales, has remained a topic of story-telling for the hundreds of years which have passed since her death.

The image depicts a painting of Arthur, Prince of Wales, by an unknown artist, circa 1500. The oil-on-panel, which measures 15.4 x 11 inches (39.1 x 28 cm) is part of the Royal Collection.

Photograph of Ludlow Castle, by Ian Capper, taken on June 26, 2011. The view is from "Whitcliffe in evening sunshine. In the background is Brown Cleve." License: [CC BY-SA 2.0](#).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Arthur-Tudor-Prince-of-Wales>

Elizabeth of York

This portrait depicts Elizabeth of York, daughter of King Edward IV and wife of King Henry VII, as she appeared a few years before her death.

She is holding a white rose, symbolizing the House of York.

Known in her day as a great beauty, the Queen Consort - who lived between 1465 and 1503 - had seven children:

- Arthur, Prince of Wales
- Margaret, Queen of Scots
- Henry VIII of England
- Elizabeth Tudor
- Mary, Queen of France
- Edmund, Duke of Somerset
- Katherine Tudor

When the Queen died at the age of 37, soon after giving birth to her last child (who also died a few days after her birth), the King and her children were devastated.

A manuscript taken from the *Vaux Passional*, maintained at the National Library of Wales, depicts Henry VII's profound grief at the loss of his wife. With the King, on the left side of the illumination, are his children Margaret Tudor, Mary Tudor and the future Henry VIII (at top left).



Although he considered marrying again, Henry VII remained a widower for the rest of his life.

The original oil-on-panel depicting Elizabeth of York—by an unknown artist, created circa 1500—is maintained at Britain's National Portrait Gallery.

Images, described above, online via Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Elizabeth-of-York>

Catherine of Aragon in Her Youth

When Michael Sittow (circa 1469-1525) created his painting of "Mary Magdalene," a woman whose story appears in the Bible, historians believe he used the youthful Catherine of Aragon as his model.

The oil-on-panel is from the late-15th or early-16th century, when Catalina of Aragon—as she was originally known—was in her late teens or early twenties.

Who was Catherine of Aragon?

Born in December of 1485—the same year [Thomas Cromwell](#) (her future nemesis) came into the world—the young princess was born in Madrid. Her parents were King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella (whose match, as a married couple, had united Spain).

When she was only three years old, Catalina became engaged to Arthur, Britain's Prince of Wales (son of King Henry VII and Elizabeth of York). Arthur was a year younger than Catalina.

The Princess had an excellent education. Her tutor was Alessandro Geraldini, a clerk in Holy Orders, and he taught the young girl about religion and the classics. Schooled in the Catholic faith, Catherine of Aragon remained a devout Catholic throughout her life.

When she was 16 years old, Catherine left her family and traveled by sea to England. She endured an extremely difficult three-month voyage. At this point in her life, she had not-yet met her future husband.

In fact, following the royal customs of the time, neither Arthur nor Catherine (who wore a veil during the marriage ceremony) physically laid eyes on each other until after they spoke their marriage vows in 1501.

After their wedding, the future king and his future queen moved to Ludlow Castle, near the Welsh border. It was there that Arthur died, about six months later.

The painting, described above, is currently owned by the Detroit Institute of Arts. It is online via Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Catherine-of-Aragon-in-Her-Youth>





Sistine Chapel - A View from the Inside

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Moses - by Michelangelo

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Henry VIII Becomes King

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