



This portrait depicts Elizabeth of York—daughter of [King Edward IV](#) (a great collector of [illuminated manuscripts](#)) 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 (married to Scotland's James IV)
- 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 white rose which Elizabeth holds in her portrait, parenthetically, represents far more than just a nice touch for a painting.

When Elizabeth (of the House of York and daughter of Edward IV) married Henry Tudor (a claimant to the throne from the House of Lancaster), the pair effectively united the two rival branches (York and Lancaster) of the royal House of Plantagenet.

Put a different way, the marriage of Elizabeth (whose family badge was a white rose) to Henry Tudor (whose family badge was a red rose) effectively ended the “War of the Roses” by uniting the two rival factions.

It also led to a new heraldic emblem - the Tudor Rose - which combines the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster. (The Tudor Rose is also known as the “Union Rose”).

Elizabeth was the first Queen Consort for a Tudor King. Her children/grandchildren/great-grandchildren later took the British throne as:

- Henry VIII;
- Edward VI;
- Mary I;
- Elizabeth I (also known as “Elizabeth the Great”); and
- James I (also known as James VI of Scotland, son of Mary, Queen of Scots).

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

Credits:

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Henry VII Grieves His Wife

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