

= Isabeau of Bavaria =

Isabeau of Bavaria (or Isabelle ; also Elisabeth of Bavaria @-@ Ingolstadt ; c . 1370 ? 24 September 1435) was born into the House of Wittelsbach as the eldest daughter of Duke Stephen III of Bavaria @-@ Ingolstadt and Taddea Visconti of Milan . She became Queen of France when she married King Charles VI in 1385 . At age 15 or 16 , Isabeau was sent to France on approval to the young French king ; the couple wed three days after their first meeting .

Isabeau was honored in 1389 with a lavish coronation ceremony and entry into Paris . In 1392 Charles suffered the first attack of what was to become a lifelong and progressive mental illness , resulting in periodic withdrawal from government . The episodes occurred with increasing frequency , leaving a court both divided by political factions and steeped in social extravagances . A 1393 masque for one of Isabeau 's ladies @-@ in @-@ waiting ? an event later known as Bal des Ardents ? ended in disaster with the King almost burning to death . Although the King demanded Isabeau 's removal from his presence during his illness , he consistently allowed her to act on his behalf . In this way she became regent to the Dauphin of France (heir apparent) , and sat on the regency council , allowing far more power than was usual for a medieval queen .

Charles ' illness created a power vacuum that eventually led to the Armagnac ? Burgundian Civil War between supporters of his brother , Louis of Orléans and the royal dukes of Burgundy . Isabeau shifted allegiances as she chose the most favorable paths for the heir to the throne . When she followed the Armagnacs , the Burgundians accused her of adultery with Louis of Orléans ; when she sided with the Burgundians the Armagnacs removed her from Paris and she was imprisoned . In 1407 John the Fearless assassinated Orléans , sparking hostilities between the factions . The war ended soon after Isabeau 's eldest son , Charles , had John the Fearless assassinated in 1419 ? an act that saw him disinherited . Isabeau attended the 1420 signing of the Treaty of Troyes , which decided that the English king should inherit the French crown after the death of her husband , Charles VI . She lived in English @-@ occupied Paris until her death in 1435 .

Isabeau was popularly seen as a spendthrift and irresponsible philanderess . In the late 20th and early 21st centuries historians re @-@ examined the extensive chronicles of her lifetime , concluding that many elements of her reputation were unearned and stemmed from factionalism and propaganda .

= = Lineage and marriage = =

Isabeau 's parents were Duke Stephen III of Bavaria @-@ Ingolstadt and Taddea Visconti , whom he married for a 100 @,@ 000 ducat dowry . She was most likely born in Munich where she was baptized as Elisabeth at the Church of Our Lady . Hers was the ancient and well @-@ established Wittelsbach family , descended from Charlemagne , and she was great @-@ granddaughter to the Wittelsbach Holy Roman Emperor Louis IV . At that period Bavaria was the most powerful of the German states and divided between members of the House of Wittelsbach .

Isabeau 's uncle , Duke Frederick of Bavaria @-@ Landshut , suggested in 1383 that she be considered as a bride to King Charles VI of France . The match was proposed again at the lavish Burgundian double wedding in Cambrai in April 1385 ? John the Fearless and his sister Margaret of Burgundy married Margaret and William of Bavaria @-@ Straubing respectively . Charles , then 17 , rode in the tournaments at the wedding . He was an attractive , physically fit young man , who enjoyed jousting and hunting and was excited to be married .

Charles VI 's uncle , Philip the Bold , Duke of Burgundy , thought the proposed marriage ideal to build an alliance with the Holy Roman Empire and against the English . Isabeau 's father agreed reluctantly and sent her to France with his brother , her uncle , on the pretext of taking a pilgrimage to Amiens . He was adamant that she was not to know she was being sent to France to be examined as a prospective bride for Charles , and refused permission for her to be examined in the nude , customary at the time . According to the contemporary chronicler Jean Froissart , Isabeau was 13 or 14 when the match was proposed and about 16 at the time of the marriage in 1385 , suggesting a birth date of around 1370 .

Before her presentation to Charles , Isabeau visited Hainaut for about a month , staying with her granduncle Duke Albert I , ruler of some of Bavaria @-@ Straubing and Count of Holland . Albert 's wife , Margaret of Brieg , replaced Isabeau 's Bavarian style of dress , deemed unsuitable as French courtly attire , and taught her etiquette suitable to the French court . She learned quickly , suggestive of an intelligent and quick @-@ witted character . On 13 July 1385 she traveled to Amiens to be presented to Charles .

Froissart writes of the meeting in his Chronicles , saying that Isabeau stood motionless while being inspected , exhibiting perfect behavior by the standards of her time . Arrangements were made for the two to be married in Arras , but on the first meeting Charles felt " happiness and love enter his heart , for he saw that she was beautiful and young , and thus he greatly desired to gaze at her and possess her " . She did not yet speak French and may not have reflected the idealized beauty of the period , perhaps inheriting her mother 's dark Italian features , then unfashionable , but Charles most certainly approved of her because the couple were married three days later . Froissart documented the royal wedding , joking about the lascivious guests at the feast and the " hot young couple " .

Charles seemingly loved his young wife , lavishing gifts on her . On the occasion of their first New Year in 1386 , he gave her a red velvet palfrey saddle , trimmed with copper and decorated with an intertwined K and E (for Karol and Elisabeth) , and he continued to give her gifts of rings , tableware and clothing . The uncles too , apparently , were pleased with the match , which contemporary chroniclers , notably Froissart and Michel Pintoin (the Monk of St. Denis) , describe similarly as a match rooted in desire and based on her beauty . The day after the wedding , Charles went on a military campaign against the English , and Isabeau went to Creil to live with his great @-@ aunt Blanche , Duchess of Orléans , who taught her courtly traditions . In September she took up residence at the Château de Vincennes , where in the early years of their marriage Charles frequently joined her , and which became her favorite home .

= = Coronation = =

Isabeau 's coronation was celebrated on 23 August 1389 with a lavish ceremonial entry into Paris . Her second cousin and sister @-@ in @-@ law Valentina Visconti , who had married her own cousin Louis of Orléans (Charles ' younger brother) two years earlier by proxy and papal dispensation , arrived in style , escorted across the Alps from Milan by 1 @,@ 300 knights carrying personal luxuries such as books and a harp . The noblewomen in the coronation procession were dressed in lavish costumes with thread @-@ of @-@ gold embroidery , and rode in litters escorted by knights . Philip the Bold wore a doublet embroidered with 40 sheep and 40 swans , each decorated with a bell made of pearls .

The procession lasted from morning to night . The streets were lined with tableaux vivants displaying scenes from the Crusades , Deësis and the Gates of Paradise . More than a thousand burghers stood along the route ; those on one side were dressed in green facing , those on the opposite in red . The procession began at the Porte de St. Denis and passed under a canopy of sky @-@ blue cloth beneath which children dressed as angels sang , winding into the Rue Saint @-@ Denis before arriving at the Notre Dame for the coronation ceremony . As Tuchman describes the event , " So many wonders were to be seen and admired that it was evening before the procession crossed the bridge leading to Notre Dame and the climactic display . "

As Isabeau crossed the Grand Pont to Notre Dame , a person dressed as an angel descended from the church by mechanical means and " passed through an opening of the hangings of blue taffeta with golden fleurs @-@ des @-@ lis , which covered the bridge , and put a crown on her head . " The angel was then pulled back up into the church . An acrobat carrying two candles walked along a rope suspended from the spires of the cathedral to the tallest house in the city .

After Isabeau 's crowning , the procession made its way back from the cathedral along a route lit by 500 candles . They were greeted by a royal feast , and a progression of narrative pageants complete with a depiction of the Fall of Troy . Isabeau , seven months pregnant , nearly fainted from heat on the first of the five days of festivities . To pay for the extravagant event , taxes were raised in Paris two months later .

= = Charles ' illness = =

Charles suffered the first of what was to become a lifelong series of bouts of insanity in 1392 when , on a hot August day outside Le Mans , he attacked his household knights , including his brother Orléans , killing four men . After the attack he fell into a coma that lasted four days . Few believed he would recover ; his uncles , the dukes of Burgundy and Berry , took advantage of his illness and quickly seized power , re @-@ establishing themselves as regents and dissolving the Marmouset council .

The King 's sudden onset of insanity was seen by some as a sign of divine anger and punishment , and by others as the result of magic . Modern historians speculate that he may have suffered from the onset of paranoid schizophrenia . The comatose king was returned to Le Mans , where Guillaume de Harsigny ? a venerated and well @-@ educated 92 @-@ year @-@ old physician ? was summoned to treat him . Charles regained consciousness and his fever subsided ; he was gradually returned to Paris in September .

The physician recommended a program of amusements . A member of the court suggested that Charles surprise Isabeau and the other ladies by joining a group of courtiers who would disguise themselves as wild men and invade the masquerade celebrating the remarriage of Isabeau 's lady @-@ in @-@ waiting , Catherine de Fastaverin . This came to be known as the Bal des Ardents . Charles was almost killed and four of the dancers burned to death , when a spark from a torch brought by Orléans lit one of the dancer 's costumes . The disaster undermined confidence in Charles ' capacity to rule . Parisians considered it proof of courtly decadence and threatened to rebel against the more powerful members of the nobility . The public 's outrage forced the King and Orléans , whom a contemporary chronicler accused of attempted regicide and sorcery , into offering penance for the event .

Charles suffered a second and more prolonged attack of insanity the following June ; it removed him for about six months and set a pattern that would hold for the next three decades as his condition deteriorated . Froissart described the bouts of illness as so severe that the King was " far out of the way ; no medicine could help him " , although he had recovered from the first attack within months . For the first 20 years of his illness he sustained periods of lucidity , enough that he continued to rule . Suggestions were made to replace him with a regent , although there was uncertainty and debate as to whether a regency could assume the full role of a living monarch . When he was incapable of ruling , his brother Orléans , and their cousin John the Fearless , the new Duke of Burgundy , were chief among those who sought to take control of the government .

When Charles became ill in the 1390s , Isabeau was 22 ; she had three children and had already lost two infants . During the worst of his illness Charles was unable to recognize her , and caused her great distress by demanding her removal when she entered his chamber . The Monk of St Denis wrote in his chronicle , " What distressed her above all was to see how on all occasions ... the king repulsed her , whispering to his people , ' Who is this woman obstructing my view ? Find out what she wants and stop her from annoying and bothering me . ' " As his illness worsened at the turn of the century , she was accused of abandoning him , particularly when she moved her residence to the Hôtel Barquette . Historian Rachel Gibbons speculates that Isabeau wanted to distance herself from her husband and his illness , writing , " it would be unjust to blame her if she did not want to live with a madman . "

Since the King often did not recognize her during his psychotic episodes and was upset by her presence , it was eventually deemed advisable to provide him with a mistress , Odette de Champdivers , the daughter of a horse @-@ dealer ; according to Tuchman , Odette is said to have resembled Isabeau and was called " the little Queen " . She had probably assumed this role by 1405 with Isabeau 's consent , but during his remissions the King still had sexual relations with his wife , whose last pregnancy occurred in 1407 . Records show that Isabeau was in the King 's chamber on 23 November 1407 , the night of Orléans ' assassination , and again in 1408 .

Charles ' bouts of illness continued unabated until his death . The two may have still felt mutual affection , and Isabeau exchanged gifts and letters with him during his periods of lucidity , but

distanced herself during the prolonged attacks of insanity . Adams writes that Isabeau 's attachment and loyalty is evident in the great efforts she made to retain the crown for his heirs in the ensuing decades .

= = Political factions and early diplomatic efforts = =

Isabeau 's life is well documented , most likely because Charles ' illness placed her in an unusual position of power . Nevertheless , not much is known about her personal characteristics , and historians even disagree about her appearance . She is variously described as " small and brunette " or " tall and blonde " . The contemporaneous evidence is contradictory : chroniclers said of her either that she was " beautiful and hypnotic , or so obese through dropsy that she was crippled . " Despite living in France after her marriage , she spoke with a heavy German accent that never diminished , which Tuchman describes as giving her an " alien " cast at the French court .

Historian Tracy Adams describes Isabeau as a talented diplomat who navigated court politics with ease , grace and charisma . Charles had been crowned in 1387 , aged 20 , attaining sole control of the monarchy . His first acts included the dismissal of his uncles and the reinstatement of the so @-@ called Marmousets ? a group of councilors to his father , Charles V ? and he gave Orléans more responsibility . Some years later , after Charles ' first attack of illness , tensions mounted between Orléans and the royal uncles ? Philip the Bold , Duke of Burgundy ; John , Duke of Berry ; and Louis II , Duke of Bourbon . Forced to assume a greater role in maintaining peace amidst the growing power struggle , which was to persist for many years , Isabeau succeeded in her role as peacekeeper among the various court factions .

As early as the late 1380s and early 1390s , Isabeau demonstrated that she possessed diplomatic influence when the Florentine delegation requested her political intervention in the Gian Galeazzo Visconti affair . Orléans and the Duke of Burgundy were in the pro @-@ Visconti faction while the anti @-@ Visconti faction included Isabeau , her brother , Louis VII , Duke of Bavaria , and John III , Count of Armagnac . At that time Isabeau lacked the political power to effect change . Some years later , however , at the 1396 wedding of her seven @-@ year @-@ old daughter , Isabella , to Richard II of England (an event at which Charles attacked a herald for wearing Galeazzo 's livery) , Isabeau successfully negotiated an alliance between France and Florence with Florentine ambassador Buonaccorso Pitti .

In the 1390s Jean Gerson of the University of Paris formed a council to eliminate the Western Schism , and in recognition of her negotiating skills he placed Isabeau on the council . The French wanted both the Avignon and Roman popes to abdicate in favor of a single papacy in Rome ; Clement VII in Avignon welcomed Isabeau 's presence given her record as an effective mediator . However , the effort faded when Clement VII died .

During his short @-@ lived recovery in the 1390s , Charles made arrangements for Isabeau to be " principal guardian of the Dauphin " , their son , until he reached 13 years of age , giving her additional political power on the regency council . Charles appointed Isabeau co @-@ guardian of their children in 1393 , a position shared with the royal dukes and her brother , Louis of Bavaria , while he gave Orléans full power of the regency . In appointing Isabeau , Charles acted under laws enacted by his father , Charles V , which gave the Queen full power to protect and educate the heir to the throne . These appointments separated power between Orléans and the royal uncles , increasing ill @-@ will among the factions . The following year , as Charles ' bouts of illness became more severe and prolonged , Isabeau became the leader of the regency council , giving her power over the royal dukes and the Constable of France , while at the same time making her vulnerable to attack from various court factions .

During Charles ' illness , Orléans became financially powerful as the official tax collector , and in the following decade Isabeau and Orléans agreed to raise the level of taxation . In 1401 , during one of the King 's absences , Orléans installed his own men to collect royal revenues , angering Philip the Bold who in retaliation raised an army , threatening to enter Paris with 600 men @-@ at @-@ arms and 60 knights . At that time Isabeau intervened between Orléans and Burgundy , preventing bloodshed and the outbreak of civil war .

Charles trusted Isabeau enough by 1402 to allow her to arbitrate the growing dispute between the Orléanists and Burgundians , and he turned control of the treasury over to her . After Philip the Bold died in 1404 and his son John the Fearless became Duke of Burgundy , the new duke continued the political strife in an attempt to gain access to the royal treasury for Burgundian interests . Orléans and the royal dukes thought John was usurping power for his own interests and Isabeau , at that time , aligned herself with Orléans to protect the interests of the crown and her children . Furthermore , she distrusted John the Fearless who she thought overstepped himself in rank ? he was cousin to the King whereas Orléans was Charles ' brother .

Rumors that Isabeau and Orléans were lovers began to circulate , a relationship that was considered incestuous . Whether the two were intimate has been questioned by contemporary historians , including Gibbons who believes the rumor may have been planted as propaganda against Isabeau as retaliation against tax increases she and Orléans ordered in 1405 . An Augustinian friar , Jacques Legrand , preached a long sermon to the court denouncing excess and depravity , in particular mentioning Isabeau and her fashions ? with exposed necks , shoulders and décolletage . The monk presented his sermon as allegory so as not to offend Isabeau overtly , but he cast her and her ladies @-@ in @-@ waiting as " furious , vengeful characters " . He said to Isabeau , " If you don 't believe me , go out into the city disguised as a poor woman , and you will hear what everyone is saying . " Thus he accused Isabeau as having lost touch with the commoners and the court with its subjects . At about the same time a satirical political pamphlet , *Songe Veritable* , now considered by historians to be pro @-@ Burgundian propaganda , was released and widely distributed in Paris . The pamphlet hinted at the Queen 's relations with Orléans .

John the Fearless accused Isabeau and Orléans of fiscal mismanagement and again demanded money for himself , in recompense for the loss of royal revenues after his father 's death ; an estimated half of Philip the Bold 's revenues had come from the French treasury . John raised a force of 1 @, @ 000 knights , and entered Paris in 1405 . Orléans hastily retreated with Isabeau to the fortified castle of Melun , with her household and children a day or so behind . John immediately left in pursuit , intercepting the party of chaperones and royal children . He took possession of the Dauphin , and returned him to Paris under control of Burgundian forces ; however , the boy 's uncle , the duke of Berry , quickly took control of the child at the orders of the Royal Council . At that time Charles was lucid for about a month and able to help with the crisis . The incident , that came to be known as the enlèvement of the dauphin , almost caused full @-@ scale war , but it was averted . Orléans quickly raised an army while John encouraged Parisians to revolt . They refused , claiming loyalty to the King and his son ; Berry was made captain general of Paris and the city 's gates were locked . In October Isabeau became active in mediating the dispute , in response to a letter from Christine de Pizan and an ordinance from the Royal Council .

= = Orléans ' assassination and aftermath = =

In 1407 John the Fearless ordered Orléans ' assassination . On 23 November hired killers attacked the duke as he returned to his Paris residence , cut off his hand holding the horse 's reins , and " hacked [him] to death with swords , axes , and wooden clubs " . His body was left in a gutter . John first denied involvement in the assassination , but quickly admitted that the act was done for the Queen 's honor , claiming he acted to " avenge " the monarchy of the alleged adultery between Isabeau and Orléans . His royal uncles , shocked at his confession , forced him to leave Paris while the Royal Council attempted a reconciliation between the Houses of Burgundy and Orléans .

In March 1408 Jean Petit presented a lengthy and well @-@ attended justification at the royal palace before a large courtly audience . Petit argued convincingly that in the King 's absence Orléans became a tyrant , practiced sorcery and necromancy , was driven by greed , and had planned to commit fratricide at the Bal des Ardents . John should be exonerated , Petit argued , because he had defended the King and monarchy by assassinating Orléans . Charles , " insane during the oration " , was convinced by Petit 's argument and pardoned John the Fearless , only to rescind the pardon in September .

Violence again broke out after the assassination ; Isabeau had troops patrol Paris and , to protect

the Dauphin Louis , Duke of Guyenne , she again left the city for Melun . In August she staged an entry to Paris for the Dauphin , and early in the new year Charles signed an ordinance giving the 13 @-@ year @-@ old the power to rule in the Queen 's absence . During these years Isabeau 's greatest concern was the Dauphin 's safety as she prepared him to take up the duties of the King ; she formed alliances to further those aims . At this point the Queen and her influence were still crucial to the power struggle . Physical control of Isabeau and her children became important to both parties and she was frequently forced to change sides , for which she was criticized and called unstable . She joined the Burgundians from 1409 to 1413 , and switched sides to form an alliance with the Orléanists from 1413 to 1415 .

At the Peace of Chartres in March 1409 , John the Fearless was reinstated to the Royal Council after a public reconciliation with Orléans ' son , Charles , Duke of Orléans , at Chartres Cathedral , although the feuding continued . In December that year Isabeau bestowed the tutelle (guardianship of the Dauphin) upon John the Fearless , made him the master of Paris , and allowed him to mentor the Dauphin , after he had Jehan de Montagu , Grand Master of the King 's household , executed . At that point the Duke essentially controlled the Dauphin and Paris , and was popular in the city because of his opposition to taxes levied by Isabeau and Orléans . Isabeau 's actions with respect to John the Fearless angered the Armagnacs , who in the fall of 1410 marched to Paris to " rescue " the Dauphin from the Duke 's influence . At that time members of the University of Paris , Jean Gerson in particular , proposed that all feuding members of the Royal Council step down and be immediately removed from power .

To defuse tension with the Burgundians a second double marriage was arranged in 1409 . Isabeau 's daughter Michelle married John the Fearless ' son Philip the Good ; Isabeau 's son , Dauphin Louis , married John 's daughter Margaret . Before the wedding , Isabeau negotiated a treaty with John the Fearless in which she clearly defined family hierarchy and her position in relation to the throne .

= = Civil war = =

Despite Isabeau 's efforts to keep the peace , the Armagnac ? Burgundian Civil War broke out in 1411 . John gained the upper hand during the first year , but the Dauphin began to build a power base ; Christine de Pizan wrote of him that he was the savior of France . Still only 15 , he lacked the power or backing to defeat John , who fomented revolt in Paris . In retaliation against John the Fearless ' actions , Charles of Orléans denied funds from the royal treasury to all members of the royal family . In 1414 , instead of allowing her son , then 17 , to lead , Isabeau allied herself with Charles of Orléans . The Dauphin , in return , changed allegiance and joined John , which Isabeau considered unwise and dangerous . The result was continued civil war in Paris . Parisian commoners joined forces with John the Fearless in the Cabochien Revolt , and at the height of the revolt a group of butchers entered Isabeau 's home in search of traitors , arresting and taking away up to 15 of her ladies @-@ in @-@ waiting . In his chronicles Pintoin wrote that Isabeau was firmly allied with the Orléanists and the 60 @,@ 000 Armagnacs who invaded Paris and Picardy .

King Henry V of England took advantage of the internal strife in France , invading the northwest coast , and in 1415 he delivered a crushing defeat to the French at Agincourt . Nearly an entire generation of military leaders died or were taken prisoner in a single day . John , still feuding with the royal family and the Armagnacs , remained neutral as Henry V went on to conquer towns in northern France .

In December 1415 Dauphin Louis died suddenly at age 18 of illness , leaving Isabeau 's political status unclear . Her 17 @-@ year @-@ old fourth @-@ born son , John of Touraine , now the Dauphin , had been raised since childhood in the household of Duke William II of Bavaria in Hainaut . Married to Countess Jacqueline of Hainaut , Dauphin John was a Burgundian sympathizer . William of Bavaria refused to send him to Paris during a period of upheaval as Burgundians plundered the city and Parisians revolted against another wave of tax increases initiated by Count Bernard VII of Armagnac ; in a period of lucidity , Charles had raised the Count to be the Constable of France . Isabeau attempted to intervene by arranging a meeting with Jacqueline in 1416 , but

Armagnac refused to allow Isabeau to reconcile with the House of Burgundy , while William II continued to prevent the young Dauphin from entering Paris .

In 1417 Henry V invaded Normandy with 40 000 men . In April that year Dauphin John died and another shift in power occurred when Isabeau 's sixth and last son , Charles , age 14 , became Dauphin . He was married to Armagnac 's daughter Marie of Anjou and favored the Armagnacs . At that time Armagnac imprisoned Isabeau in Tours , confiscating her personal property (clothing , jewels and money) , dismantling her household , and separating her from the younger children as well as her ladies in waiting . She secured her freedom in November through the help of the Duke of Burgundy . Accounts of her release vary : Monstrelet writes that Burgundy " delivered " her to Troyes , and Pintoin that the Duke negotiated Isabeau 's release to gain control of her authority . Isabeau maintained her alliance with Burgundy from that period until the Treaty of Troyes .

Isabeau at first assumed the role of sole regent but in January 1418 yielded her position to John the Fearless . Together Isabeau and John abolished parliament (Chambre des comptes) and turned to securing control of Paris and the King . John took control of Paris by force on 28 May 1418 , slaughtering Armagnacs . The Dauphin fled the city . According to Pintoin 's chronicle , the Dauphin refused Isabeau 's invitation to join her in an entry to Paris . She entered the city with John on 14 July .

Shortly after he assumed the title of Dauphin , Charles negotiated a truce with John in Pouilly . Charles then requested a private meeting with John , on 10 September 1419 at a bridge in Montereau , promising his personal guarantee of protection . The meeting , however , was a ploy to assassinate John , whom Charles " hacked to death " on the bridge . His father , King Charles , immediately disinherited his son . The civil war ended after John 's death . The Dauphin 's actions fueled more rumor about his legitimacy , and his disinheritance set the stage for the Treaty of Troyes .

= = Treaty of Troyes and later years = =

By 1419 Henry V occupied much of Normandy and demanded an oath of allegiance from the residents . The new Duke of Burgundy , Philip the Good , allied with the English , putting enormous pressure on France and Isabeau , who remained loyal to the King . In 1420 Henry sent an emissary to confer with the Queen , after which according to Adams , Isabeau " ceded to what must have been a persuasively posed argument by Henry V 's messenger " . France had effectively been left without an heir to the throne , even before the Treaty of Troyes . Charles VI had disinherited the Dauphin , whom he considered responsible for " breaking the peace for his involvement in the assassination of the duke of Burgundy " ; he wrote in 1420 of the Dauphin that he had " rendered himself unworthy to succeed to the throne or any other title " . Charles of Orléans , next in line as heir under Salic law , had been taken prisoner at the Battle of Agincourt and was kept in captivity in London .

In the absence of an official heir to the throne , Isabeau accompanied King Charles to sign the Treaty of Troyes in May 1420 ; Gibbons writes that the treaty " only confirmed [the Dauphin 's] outlaw status " . The King 's malady prevented him from appearing at the signing of the treaty , forcing Isabeau to stand in for him , which according to Gibbons gave her " perpetual responsibility in having sworn away France " . For many centuries Isabeau stood accused of relinquishing the crown because of the Treaty . Under the terms of the Treaty , Charles remained as King of France but Henry V , who married Charles ' and Isabeau 's daughter , Catherine , kept control of the territories he conquered in Normandy , would govern France with the Duke of Burgundy , and was to be Charles ' successor . Isabeau was to live in English - controlled Paris .

Charles VI died in October 1422 . As Henry V had died earlier the same year , his infant son by Catherine , Henry VI , was proclaimed King of France , according to the terms of the Treaty of Troyes , with the Duke of Bedford acting as regent . Rumors circulated about Isabeau again ; some chronicles describe her living in a " degraded state " . According to Tuchman , Isabeau had a farmhouse built in St. Ouen where she looked after livestock , and in her later years , during a lucid

episode , Charles arrested one of her lovers whom he tortured , then drowned in the Seine . Desmond Seward writes it was the disinherited Dauphin who had the man killed . Described as a former lover of Isabeau as well as a " poisoner and wife @-@ murderer " , Charles kept him as a favorite at his court until ordering his drowning .

Rumors about Isabeau 's promiscuity flourished , which Adams attributes to English propaganda intended to secure England 's grasp on the throne . An allegorical pamphlet , called Pastorelet , was published in the mid @-@ 1420s painting Isabeau and Orleans as lovers . During the same period Isabeau was contrasted with Joan of Arc , considered virginally pure , in the allegedly popular saying " Even as France had been lost by a woman it would be saved by a woman " . Adams writes that Joan of Arc has been attributed with the words " France , having been lost by a woman , would be restored by a virgin " , but neither saying can be substantiated by contemporary documentation or chronicles .

In 1429 , when Isabeau lived in English @-@ occupied Paris , the accusation was again put forth that Charles VII was not the son of Charles VI . At that time , with two contenders for the French throne ? the young Henry VI and disinherited Charles ? this could have been propaganda to prop up the English claim . Furthermore , gossip spread that Joan of Arc was Isabeau and Orleans ' illegitimate daughter ? a rumor Gibbons finds improbable because Joan of Arc almost certainly was not born for some years after Orléans ' assassination . Stories circulated that the dauphins were murdered , and attempts were made to poison the other children , all of which added to Isabeau 's reputation of one of history 's great villains .

Isabeau was removed from political influence and retired to live in the Hôtel Saint @-@ Pol with her brother 's second wife , Catherine of Alençon . She was accompanied by her ladies @-@ in @-@ waiting Amelie von Orthenburg and Madame de Moy , the latter of whom had traveled from Germany and had stayed with her as dame d 'honneur since 1409 . Isabeau died there in 1435 . Her death and funeral were documented by Jean Chartier (member of St Denis Abbey) who may well have been an eyewitness .

= = Reputation and legacy = =

Isabeau was dismissed by historians as a wanton , weak and indecisive leader . Modern historians now see her as taking an unusually active leadership role for a queen of her period , forced to take responsibility as a direct result of Charles ' illness . Her critics accepted skewed interpretations of her role in the negotiations with England , resulting in the Treaty of Troyes , and in the rumors of her marital infidelity with Orléans . Gibbons writes that a queen 's duty was to secure the succession to the crown and look after her husband ; historians described Isabeau as having failed in both respects , and she came to be seen as one of the great villains of history . Gibbons goes on to say that even her physical appearance is uncertain ; depictions of her vary depending on whether she was to be portrayed as good or evil .

Rumored to be a bad mother , she was accused of " incest , moral corruption , treason , avarice and profligacy ... political aspirations and involvements " . Adams writes that historians reassessed her reputation in the late 20th century , exonerating her of many of the accusations , seen particularly in Gibbons ' scholarship . Furthermore , Adams admits she believed the allegations against Isabeau until she delved into contemporary chronicles : there she found little evidence against the Queen except that many of the rumors came from only a few passages , and in particular from Pintoin 's pro @-@ Burgundian writing .

After the onset of the King 's illness , a common belief was that Charles ' mental illness and inability to rule were due to Isabeau 's witchcraft ; as early as the 1380s rumors spread that the court was steeped in sorcery . In 1397 Orléans ' wife , Valentina Visconti , was forced to leave Paris because she was accused of using magic . The court of the " mad king " attracted magicians with promises of cures who were often used as political tools by the various factions . Lists of people accused of bewitching Charles were compiled , with Isabeau and Orléans both listed .

The accusations of adultery were rampant . According to Pintoin 's chronicle , " [Orléans] clung a bit too closely to his sister @-@ in @-@ law , the young and pretty Isabeau of Bavaria , the queen .

This ardent brunette was twenty @-@ two ; her husband was insane and her seductive brother @-@ in @-@ law loved to dance , beyond that we can imagine all sorts of things " . Pontois said of the Queen and Orléans that they neglected Charles , behaved scandalously and " lived on the delights of the flesh " , spending large amounts of money on court entertainment . The alleged affair , however , is based on a single paragraph from Pontois 's chronicles , according to Adams , and is no longer considered proof .

Isabeau was accused of indulging in extravagant and expensive fashions , jewel @-@ laden dresses and elaborate braided hairstyles coiled into tall shells , covered with wide double hennins that , reportedly , required widened doorways to pass through . In 1406 a pro @-@ Burgundian satirical pamphlet in verse allegory listed Isabeau 's supposed lovers . She was accused of leading France into a civil war because of her inability to support a single faction ; she was described as an " empty headed " German ; of her children it was said that she " took pleasure in a new pregnancy only insofar as it offered her new gifts " ; and her political mistakes were attributed to her being fat .

In the 18th and 19th centuries historians characterized Isabeau as " an adulterous , luxurious , meddlesome , scheming , and spendthrift queen " , overlooking her political achievements and influence . A popular book written by Louise de Karalio (1758 ? 1822) about the " bad " French queens prior to Marie Antoinette is , according to Adams , where " Isabeau 's black legend attains its full expression in a violent attack on the French royalty in general and queens in particular . " Karalio wrote : " Isabeau was raised by the furies to bring about the ruin of the state and to sell it to its enemies ; Isabeau of Bavaria appeared , and her marriage , celebrated in Amiens on July 17 , 1385 , would be regarded as the most horrifying moment in our history " . Isabeau was painted as Orléans ' passionate lover , and the inspiration for the Marquis de Sade 's unpublished 1813 novel *Histoire secrete d'Isabelle de Baviere , reine de France* , about which Adams writes , " submitting the queen to his ideology of gallantry , [the Marquis de Sade] gives her rapaciousness a cold and calculating violence ... a woman who carefully manages her greed for maximum gratification . " She goes on to say that de Sade admitted to " being perfectly aware that the charges against the queen are without ground . "

= = Patronage = =

Like many of the Valois , Isabeau was an appreciative art collector . She loved jewels and was responsible for the commissions of particularly lavish pieces of *ronde @-@ bosse* ? a newly developed technique of making enamel @-@ covered gold pieces . Documentation suggests she commissioned several fine pieces of *tableaux d'or* from Parisian goldsmiths .

In 1404 , Isabeau gave Charles a spectacular *ronde @-@ bosse* , known as the Little Golden Horse Shrine , (or *Goldenes Rössli*) , now held in a convent church in Altötting , Bavaria . Contemporary documents identify the statuette as a New Year 's gift ? an *étrennes* ? a Roman custom Charles revived to establish rank and alliances during the period of factionalism and war . With the exception of manuscripts , the Little Golden Horse is the single surviving documented *étrennes* of the period . Weighing 26 pounds (12 kg) the gold piece is encrusted with rubies , sapphires and pearls . It depicts Charles kneeling on a platform above a double set of stairs , presenting himself to the Virgin Mary and child Jesus , who are attended by John the Evangelist and John the Baptist . A jewel encrusted trellis or bower is above ; beneath stands a squire holding the golden horse . Isabeau also exchanged New Year 's gifts with the Duke of Berry ; one extant piece is the *ronde @-@ bosse* statuette Saint Catherine .

Medieval author Christine de Pizan solicited the Queen 's patronage at least three times . In 1402 she sent a compilation of her literary argument *Querelle du Roman de la Rose* ? in which she questions the concept of courtly love ? with a letter exclaiming " I am firmly convinced the feminine cause is worthy of defense . This I do here and have done with my other works . " In 1410 and again in 1411 , Pizan solicited the Queen , presenting her in 1414 an illuminated copy of her works . In *The Book of the City of Ladies* , Pizan praised Isabeau lavishly , and again in the illuminated collection , *The Letter of Othea* , which scholar Karen Green believes for de Pizan is " the culmination of fifteen years of service during which Christine formulated an ideology that supported

Isabeau 's right to rule as regent in this time of crisis . "

Isabeau showed great piety , essential for a queen of her period . During her lifetime , and in her will , she bequeathed property and personal possessions to Notre Dame , St. Denis , and the convent in Poissy .

= = Children = =

According to modern historians Isabeau stayed in close proximity to the children during their childhood , had them travel with her , bought them gifts , wrote letters , bought devotional texts , and arranged for her daughters to be educated . She resisted separation and reacted against having her sons sent to other households to live (as was the custom at the time) . Pintoin records she was dismayed at the marriage contract that stipulated her third surviving son , John , be sent to live in Hainaut . She maintained relationships with her daughters after their marriages , writing letters to them frequently . She sent them out of Paris during an outbreak of plague , staying behind herself with the youngest infant , John , too young to travel . The Celestines allowed " whenever and as often as she liked , she and her could enter the monastery and church ... their vineyards and gardens , both for devotion and for entertainment and pleasure of herself and her children . "

= = Ancestry = =