

Light Brown Hair and Blue Green Eyes

INTRODUCTION

When I was around 7 years old my parents took my sister, Wendy, and me to see a movie. As I watched the end of the movie tears began to roll down my cheeks and I was very sad for several days. As I grew up I didn't think much about the movie but it seems it was always there in the back of my mind.

Around 1983, though that is just a guess, I had the desire to watch the movie again. My wife Kathy was a teacher, and since she and all three of our children were in school during the day, and I was my own boss, I decided to take an afternoon off and watch the movie. I didn't tell anyone. I went to the video store and rented the VHS.

As I sat down to watch the movie the same feelings came back to me and by the end the tears were once again rolling down my cheeks. It took some time before I stopped crying. I took the VHS back to the video store hoping no one would see the redness in my eyes. I didn't tell Kathy or our children that I had rented the movie. They didn't even know I had watched it as a little boy.

In April of 2013, I was beginning to plan a trip to a convention in Salt Lake City. I had an iPad and for the last few years, whenever I flew somewhere, I watched movies on it during the flight. So I decided to download the movie from iTunes before my trip. I searched the iTunes library but it wasn't available.

I was very disappointed. I searched for the movie online and finally found a copy for \$119.00. It seemed it had become a collector's item. It was a DVD and not available to download on my iPad and \$119.00 seemed very expensive. I searched the Internet further and finally found a copy that was described, "used like new," for a total of \$32.96. So, on April 23, 2013, I ordered the DVD. I was to fly to Salt Lake City on Wednesday, May 1, and became concerned that it would be delivered while I

was gone. However, on Friday, April 26, the movie arrived.

After dinner, with nervous anticipation, I got comfortable on my divan and started to watch the DVD. The movie was made in 1948 so the quality of the sound and photography was not up to modern standards but that really didn't make any difference to me.

Again, as I watched, the feelings began to return. Then I discovered something in the movie that had become a part of me since I was around 7 years old. In the middle of the movie, just before a major battle, the commander said to the army, in so many words, that whether they are fighting for life and death, they don't need to swear.

At that moment I realized that must be why I don't swear. In fact, when I was coaching the YMCA Swimming Team in the 1960s there was a sign painted on the wall of the Y that said, "SWEARING IS THE CRUTCH OF THE CONVERSATIONAL CRIPPLE." That Y was torn down in the early 1970s after a new downtown YMCA was built. A few years ago I made a suggestion to the Y staff that they put up a sign with the same slogan at the downtown Y. For several years it was displayed over the door of the men's locker room.

As the movie progressed, towards the end, again the tears welled up in my eyes. Then I realized, at about age 7, this was when I was given the gift of compassion. When the movie was over I decided I needed to learn more and thus began one of the greatest adventures of my life.

Light Brown Hair and Blue Green Eyes

By David H. Fisher, Jr.

Let's go back in time. It's summer and you are in a little farming community called Domremy. It has a population of about 100 people made up mostly of farmers and their families. As you look around you can see houses that are barn-like with holes in the walls which serve as windows. Their floors are dirt and they have very little furniture. The children in the village are not bright but are good-hearted and obedient to their parents. They are not well educated and mostly help with the farming and household duties. As you look around you notice there isn't a school in the village but you can see a church.

As you enjoy the clear, warm summer afternoon in Domremy you look south from the edge of the little village and can see a large, beautiful, flowery meadow with green grass, flowers, birds, bees and butterflies. There are also sheep and cattle grazing on the plush grass. The meadow stretches out for about one and three quarters miles until it reaches a wooded area called Oakwood. At the head of the wooded area is a large beech tree.

In the spring the tree is as beautiful as lilies and its branches are spread wide and some of its leaves and branches even touch the ground. From spring until fall the girls and boys who live in Domremy often play around the tree and tell stories, sing songs, dance and often they eat cakes under the shade of the tree. Sometimes they hang colorful garlands on the tree's branches. Many call it "The Fairy Tree." Others call the tree the "The Ladies' Tree."

Near the large tree is a spring fed by a well. The water is cool and crystal clear. Often people come to drink the refreshing water and many feel if they are sick with a fever they can drink the water to restore their health.

The houses in Domremy are connected by a winding dirt road. One of the homes is occupied by a family of seven, consisting of

a father named Jacques and his wife Isabelle Romée. They have 5 children. Three boys and two girls. The oldest is a boy named Jacques after his father. The next child is a boy named Jean. The third is also a boy named Pierre. The fourth child is a girl who loves her mother tenderly. She is simple, good, charitable, a swift runner, a graceful dancer, gentle but she can neither read nor write. She likes to take care of the sick and enjoys helping her mother with spinning, cooking, and other household chores. She likes to play with her friend Hauviette, loves the color red, never swears, is fascinated by prayer, loves the sound of church bells, adores Saints and blushes when she is told she is too devout and goes to church too often to confess. With just a few words she can speak volumes. She has light brown hair and blue green eyes. The fifth child is a girl named Catherine.

Sometimes during dinner a highwayman or poor man would stop by the house and ask for something to eat. The father, Jacques, would often try to turn the person away but before he could, the oldest girl would give the traveler some of her dinner. And, if he needed a place to stay for the night, she would offer her bed and she would sleep on the floor by the hearth or in the hayloft.

Now imagine you are standing behind their house, about the hour of noon in the summer and you see the beautiful girl, thirteen years old, wearing a homespun red dress in the back of her home working in her father's garden. You notice she has a gold ring on her finger. You can hear the continuous sounds of the birds softly singing as she works. As you watch, a bright light appears over her shoulder coming from the direction of the church. She appears startled. She listens quietly and you can almost hear the voice of Saint Michael. Then the light disappears. When this happens she slowly turns around and goes into her house crying.

On another day you are standing outside the family's house when you hear the church bells ring and you see a girl wearing a red dress come out of her house with a smile on her face and run a short distance to the church for confession, to hear Mass, and to pray.

On a different day you are looking out over the meadow and see

the girl tending some of the villager's sheep. Again the church bells toll and you see her drop to her knees and make the Sign of the Cross. Then she clasps her hands together and prays. She bows her head for awhile and then looks up as if she is listening. You can't hear the sweet and beautiful Voices of Saint Michael, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret say, "Go, Go, Go Daughter of God," but she can hear them. Then she stands up and begins to weep.

Now imagine it's a Saturday afternoon and you are standing near her house when you notice her come out and walk northeast by herself carrying candles. This is a different direction than the Oakwood area with the beech tree and the well fed by the underground stream which are south of Domremy. You decide to quietly follow her.

Soon she crosses the Meuse River at a spot where there are rocks and boulders that make a natural arc across the river. She continues for several miles until she enters a forest. You follow her as she walks through the thick, but not tall trees, and continues along a narrow dirt path. As you walk you can hear the sounds of different summer insects and birds singing. You walk carefully as the path is uneven and makes many little turns. You pass areas of tiny strawberries and watch her as she picks flowers. Soon, while still in the forest, you begin climbing up a long steep hill. After several minutes you can see you are getting near the top and the forest ends.

When you walk out of the forest you are in a high meadow and in front of you is a little chapel. As you feel the warmth of the sun you look back just to the left of the forest and you can see the plush meadow which is the Valley of the Meuse River and in the distance the large beech tree. It is a beautiful, peaceful scene. Then you turn around and watch as some birds eat out of the girl's hands and then she goes inside the little chapel called the Chapel de Beauregard. You wait a few minutes and then walk up and peak in the window and you see her by herself on her knees praying with her burning candles and the freshly picked flowers by the alter. As you watch a feeling of peace fills your heart and soul as you realize the simple beauty of the entire experience.

When she exits the chapel a gentle wind blows softly through her light brown hair and you notice tears have filled her blue green eyes...

Now it's May 7th about four years later. You are looking out over the beautiful Loire Valley. At the lowest point of the valley is the Loire River and just on the other side of the river is a town called Orleans. It is early in the morning and the sun is just beginning to come up.

As the darkness changes to light, on your side of the river, you notice an army of around four thousand soldiers on their knees with their heads bowed. In front of the army is a white knight also kneeling. It's quiet and you can just hear the knight saying, "*Have great confidence in God and confess your sins.*" Then you watch as the army gets up and heads for the river. Soon the soldiers begin to cross the Loire River in boats with sails. Some of them have their horses with them as they cross.

On the opposite side of the river you see a stone castle type wall, called the Tourelles, which is between the river and the city of Orleans. On top of the wall of the Tourelles are specially skilled men-at-war called longbowmen.

You see the white knight is also crossing in a boat beside a white horse and holding a white banner. But you're too far away so you can't read the lettering that's on the banner. You watch knights, squires, archers and the four thousand or so soldiers cross the Loire River. Many with lances 10 feet long and others with swords and shields and crossbows. When they get to the other side, very early in the morning, you see the knight in white armor approaching the Tourelles followed by the army and the battle begins.

A shower of arrows fly through the air. Occasionally there is the sound of an explosion and a canon ball pierces through the top of the stone wall of the Tourelles. After the battle has gone on for sometime you see scaling ladders placed against the high stone wall and men-at-war begin to climb up the ladders only to have the ladders pushed away and those on them fall to the ground.

This goes on for some time with little success for the attacking army. Then you see the white knight approach the wall. Suddenly there is a swishing sound and you see an arrow flying from an enemy longbow and hits the knight between the breastplate and the armor chainmail. The arrow penetrates half-a-foot between the neck and the shoulder and the white knight falls to the ground. The soldiers defending the Tourelles begin to cheer and shout in triumph.

Immediately the attacking army loses its spirit and some pull back carrying the white knight with them. When they reach safety they lay the knight on the ground and remove the helmet and you can see that it is a 17 year old girl. Her light brown hair is matted against her head and she is crying so hard you can barely see her blue green eyes.

You watch the white knight withdraw the shaft herself as her confessor, Father Jean Pasquerel stands by. The upper part of her armor is removed. She continues weeping with the tearing pain as blood spurts out from her wound. But then she becomes calm. You can't hear the gentle voice of Saint Catherine that she hears. Soon she returns to the battle taking no remedy for her wound. The attack lasts until 8 o'clock in the evening. Then you hear trumpets sounding the retreat and you watch as the tired attacking army pulls back from the battle.

From your vantage point you watch as the white knight is assisted to mount her horse and she rides a short distance to a vineyard all alone, dismount and get on her knees. She prays there for about a half an hour. Then you see her she get up, mount her horse, hold her banner with both hands and ride among the tired, retreating soldiers shouting, *"This is the hour. Now is the time. In God's name, strike! Strike boldly!"* Her captains try to stop her but she continues riding towards the Tourelles and her army follows her back into battle.

When the defending army sees the white knight with her banner they are demoralized. The attacking army again begins to scale the walls of the Tourelles. You can hear the ringing of swords and

other weapons in hand-to-hand combat and after a hard fought battle the attacking army is victorious and the siege of Orleans is relieved...

Let's move forward in time once again. You are in a town called Reims and it is July 17th. You are watching a large procession winding through the narrow streets of the city which are filled with cheering people dressed in colorful clothing. Those that are not lining the streets are leaning out windows as they watch the procession go by. Banners are everywhere and many display the fleur-de-lis. Vendors are in the streets and everyone is extremely happy. You decide to join the procession. You walk by the cheering crowds for several minutes.

Finally, up ahead, you see a large cathedral called the Cathedral de Reims. You continue walking until you arrive at the cathedral's main entrance. You follow the procession as it goes inside. As soon as you enter the church you are lost in the crowd which is full of priests and important people of the city and country. As you look up the ceiling seems to be at least 100 feet high.

Then the trumpets sound and the church becomes quiet. Priests and other important people assemble toward the front by the altar which is surrounded by beautiful burning candles. Then a simple looking man starts down the aisle that leads to the altar and the Crucifix. When he arrives he kneels on a cushion and the chief priest starts a solemn ceremony with the Sign of the Cross. This is followed by many long prayers.

Eventually, as you watch, a vial of Holy Oil of Saint Clovis is brought out and the kneeling man is anointed with the oil. Then a *fine* gold crown is brought out. The gold is so soft that it can't support any diamonds or other precious jewels. The man, called the Dauphin, is then crowned King Charles VII. When the ceremony is over and the new king rises the church bells begin ringing in celebration.

Then you notice a girl standing near the altar by a beautiful, tall marble pillar. She has a gold ring on one of her fingers and is holding the only banner in the church. It is white but battle worn.

On it is written, *“Jhesus Maria.”* She is wearing red and her light brown hair is cut in the style of a page boy and this time her blue green eyes are filled with joyful tears.

You watch the new King go over to her to thank her and she drops down and hugs his legs while crying and says, *“Noble King, now is accomplished the will of God who desired...that I should bring you to this city of Reims to receive your holy anointing.”*

Finally let’s go forward in time once again. It is May 30th. You are standing in the Old Market-Place in a town called Rouen. The Market-Place is full of 700 to 800 men-at-war with axes and swords along with many of the people who live in Rouen. Some of the residents are sitting on rooftops and others are leaning out windows. You see a high wooden platform on one side of the small Market-Place. On it are a group of Catholic Priests lead by the overweight, 60 year old, Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais.

On another high wooden platform on the other side of the small Market-Place you see captains and high ranking men-at-war. In the middle, in front of the Church of Saint Sauveur between the two platforms, is a raised scaffold surrounded by dark rocks and wooden logs and sticks piled up around a pier or stake.

You hear the crowd shouting witch, harlot, and other words of profanity which I won’t repeat. One rough looking man-at-war is particularly loud and obnoxious. He continues to yell and shout obscenities. As you watch the crowd shouting burn the witch you begin to hear sobbing.

Then the crowd grows silent. You can’t see where the crying is coming from but it seems to be near the Market-Place. Then, as the crowd turns towards the sobbing you see a cart drawn by one horse enter the small packed Market-Place from a narrow twisting street. In it are 3 people. Two of them are Monks, Brother Martin Ladvenu and Brother Ysambard De La Pierre and the third person is a 5 foot 2 inch girl dressed in a long black linen tunic. At her request she has just been confessed by Brother Martin.

Her light brown hair is short, almost cut completely off. Her

disfigured face is bathed in tears from her sunken red-rimmed blue green eyes. She is thin and appears to have been beaten. Sometimes she had been held in a very dark room in a standing position in an iron cage in which she was secured by the neck, hands and feet. Her hands and feet are still shackled by chains. The cart is surrounded by between 80 and 120 soldiers. Some with swords and some with clubs. As the cart enters the Market-Place the little girl stops crying. Again you hear the crowd shouting obscenities calling out harlot, witch and other swear words.

The cart pulls up to the platform occupied by the Catholic Priests and Judges and Bishop Pierre Cauchon orders the girl brought up to the top of the platform. She is escorted by Brother Martin and Brother Ysambard. As she climbs the stairs you notice the gold ring is gone. You can hear the sounds of the dragging chains around her feet as the weak, tearful, 19 year old frail girl very slowly shuffles up the stairs. Her knees tremble as she holds on to the Monks.

Bishop Cauchon then reads a decree that she has violated the faith by wearing men's clothing and therefore is cast out of the church and will now be turned over to the secular authorities and, looking at her he says, "you know what that means."

He then asks her if she has anything to say. For almost 30 minutes, in her weak voice, she humbly begs all of the people there to pardon her and asks them to pray for her, and at the same time she pardons them for any harm they have done to her. She says she hopes God will forgive her of her sins and the sins of those who are treating her like this...and, how they could do this to someone who is so faithful and pure.

Many in the crowd, including some of the men-at-war, begin to sympathize with her. Some have tears in their eyes. But not the loud soldier who has been shouting profanities. You hear him continually yelling harlot and burn the witch.

When Bishop Cauchon sees the crowd is becoming sympathetic with the girl he orders her to be quiet. Then you see him wave to the executioner saying "Do your office." He then instructs Brother

Martin and Brother Ysambard to take her from the platform to the stake. As you watch she shuffles her feet to walk and you again hear the sound of the chains dragging with each short wobbling step she takes. She is so weak she can barely walk and nearly collapses several times. Along with almost everyone in the crowd you begin to cry too as it's so sad as you watch the innocent little girl being taken to the stake. But not the loud soldier. He continues to call her a witch and harlot.

When she reaches the stake the executioner loosens her chains and orders her to kneel. He then takes the chains and ties them around her body and the stake while you hear her appeal to Saint Michael. When this has been completed she asks, will someone please give me a cross. A soldier standing near the pile of wood reaches down and picks up a stick and breaks it into 2 pieces and binds them together and hands the little cross to her. You see her devoutly receive the Cross with outstretched arms, kiss it and pull out the neck of her black tunic and place the wooden cross on her breast between her body and her tunic.

Then she asks if someone would hold a cross in front of her face so she can see it. You see Brother Ysambard run to the church of Saint Sauveur and come out with a silver Crucifix on top of a long pole. At this time, while the obnoxious soldier is still yelling, the executioner lights the fire. Many in the crowd are overcome with grief and leave weeping as they can no longer look at the little girl all alone at the stake.

You watch as the wood begins to burn and you hear the crackling sound of the fire and begin to smell the rising smoke. Then you hear the girl say, *"Hold the cross high so I may see it through the flames!"*

All the time you hear the loud soldier yelling witch and harlot. Now through the blinding smoke and snapping, crackling sound of the fire you hear the girl saying 7 words, Jhesus; Jhesus; Jhesus; Jhesus; she chokes and starts coughing and then you see her face become beautifully radiant. You try to resist but then warm tears begin to streak down your cheeks as you see the beauty of the little girl's sweet pure faith. And then, as you hear the crying

and wailing all around, you lose control and break down weeping with sorrow. Jhesus; Jhesus; and with a louder voice, Jhesus. Her head falls on her breast and her body slumps down supported only by the chains and she suffocates and dies. Many men who were there said they saw the name of Jhesus written in the fire in which she was burned.

When she dies you see the obnoxious soldier faint and fall to the ground. His companions pick him up and take him to a neighboring tavern just off the Market-Place. As he slowly regains consciousness they ask him what happened? With a startled and confused look on his face he tells them that when she died he saw a white dove fly out of her mouth!

Meanwhile back in the Market-Place the fire has burned down and you watch the executioner slowly go up to examine the remains. When he gets close he can't believe what he sees. Her body was burnt and reduced to powder but her heart was whole and full of blood.

Later, at the Trial of Nullification, Brother Ysambard testified, "Immediately after the execution, the executioner came to me and to my companion, Brother Martin, stricken and moved with a marvelous repentance and terrible contrition, quite desperate and fearing never to obtain pardon and indulgence from God for what he had done to this holy woman. And the executioner said and affirmed that, *notwithstanding the oil, the sulfur, and the charcoal which he had applied to the entrails and heart... in no way had he been able to burn them up, nor reduce to cinders either the entrails or the heart, at which he was much astonished, as a most evident miracle.*"

Who is the 5' 2" girl with light brown hair and blue green eyes who loves the color red, who often went to confession and was called by the Angles "Daughter of God?" When she was young she was called Jhanette. Later she was called Jehanne; then L'Angelique (which she didn't like); La Pucelle; La Pucelle d'Orleans; Jehanne du Lys (the name the king gave her); and Jehanne d'Arc. Here in the United States we call her The Maid and Joan of Arc.

On May 30, 1431, at age 19 Jehanne was burned at the stake.

On June 7, 1456, she was cleared of all charges.

On May 16, 1920, she was declared a saint by the Catholic church.

Conclusion

My paper is based on my own interpretations resulting from reading the documented transcripts from Jehanne's Trial and later her Trial of Nullification (each transcript consisted of around 86 typewritten pages); and, also from watching 4 movies and 2 documentaries, and reading over 10 books (which were all based on the two trials); and my own personal experiences since I was a young boy around the age of 7.

In June of 2014 and again in June of 2015, I went to France.

I sat all alone on a rock in the front of Jehanne's home in Domremy. For sometime I listened to the continuous sounds of the birds singing around her home and felt the gentle breeze. Sometimes with my head bowed and my eyes closed.

I went around to the back of her house and looked at the garden. While standing there I remembered her words, and I quote from her trial transcript, "When I was thirteen years old, I had a Voice from God to help me govern my conduct. And the first time I was very fearful. And came this Voice, about the hour of noon, in the summer-time, in my father's garden; I had not fasted on the eve preceding that day." She further testified, "...the Voice came on her right side, in the direction of the church...the Voice was hardly ever without a light, which was always in the direction of the Voice."

As I stood in the backyard looking at the garden, I turned and looked over my right shoulder and there was the church! I visited her home several times and often heard the church bells ring just

like Jehanne heard them around 600 years ago.

Though the beech tree was gone, the flowing fountain is still there. I walked down a hill in the beautiful meadow located about a mile and three quarters south of Domremy and sat on a rock listening to the sound of the cool clear water coming from the fountain in front of me. It is impossible to describe the wonderful feeling I had praying there in the exact spot where Jehanne prayed and often heard the Voices of Saint Michael, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret.

I stood across the Loire River and saw Orleans on the other side. For a moment I imagined around four thousand French soldiers crossing in boats along with the white knight holding her white banner displaying the words Jhesus Maria.

I went to Reims and went into the huge Cathedral de Reims. I looked up at the ceiling which appeared to be around 100 feet high. I walked around the quiet candle lit cathedral sensing the presence of the Holy Spirit. I lit a candle in remembrance of Jehanne and then I stood by the marble pillar where she stood with her battle worn banner and watched the Dauphin crowned King Charles VII.

I stood in the Old Market-Place where Jehanne was burned at the stake. They weren't sure of the exact spot until several years ago when they dug down in the clay dirt and found ashes mixed with the clay. Many people were burned there. Jehanne's ashes were not there as they were scattered in the Seine River. As I walked on the dirt path around the site where Jehanne and many others were burned I reached down and touched the dirt. It had the texture of clay that was mixed with very fine ashes.

During the movies and documentaries I watched, the books and lengthy trial transcripts I read, I kept wondering why Jehanne always wanted to go to confession. King Charles VII even gave her Father Jean Pasquerel as her own personal confessor who testified that when she confessed she wept. This thought was on my mind as we traveled in France. The more I learned the more I

began to sense how she must have thought. As I mentioned, when Jehanne was speaking to the crowd just before being taken to the stake she said, and I quote,...”how they could do this to someone who is so faithful and pure?” She always wanted to faithfully confess ALL of her sins so her body would be clean and pure. Wouldn't this be a different world today if everyone did this!

With these experiences I could sense the magnitude of what happened in each location. But the greatest feeling for me was when I walked along the path that Jehanne took when she walked through the forest and up the incline on her way to the Chapel de Beauregard. While walking, I was alone for several minutes and could feel how she must have felt as she walked through the forest, full of joy and faith, on her way to pray. When I got to the top I looked back at the Valley of the Meuse River and while standing in the warm sun I could see the beautiful meadow below and in the distance the location of the fountain and I was overwhelmed by a feeling of a gentle closeness with Jehanne, with Jesus, and with God!