

After our first walk on Christmas, Johannes has had a short causal talk with me after mass nearly every Sunday. On those occasions, I have always been chaperoned by my father, Jan Van Wyflet. Today he has finally mustered up his courage to invite my parents, my sister Johanna and myself for dinner. What is the meaning of this? Luckily dad has accepted the invitation, as he wants to inquire into the plans for the future Johannes and I have. Will Johannes ask dad for my hand? ...

The engagement table is festively decorated with festoons, garlands and candles. The chairs of the engaged couple are adorned with peacock feathers, and in the middle of the table there is a vase with red roses. A servant shows us to our seats as Johannes is receiving the other guests at the entrance. Look, his mother's carriage is just arriving, accompanied by Lambert on a grey horse. One by one, the guests join us at the table. Finally, everyone is seated and the dishes can be served. Johannes sits opposite me and regularly looks at me. I have the feeling that he is really longing for me, his eyes and posture make this clear. I am simultaneously terrified by the thought of and looking forward to sharing the bed with this man on our wedding night. I feel so stupid ...

We are so proud! Our marriage will soon be blessed with a child! I observe all the doctor's orders, exercise regularly and have a rest whenever I feel I need to. Johannes wants to capture this wonderful moment. He has a kind of triptych in mind of three separate, independent paintings. It will be painted in the room that has been turned into the birthing room, and a mirror will be the recurring key image. This mirror can show the panel from both sides, from inside and from outside. He will swear the oath of fidelity in the first painting. It will be a self-portrait. The mirror will be placed in the middle of the background so that the audience can witness the taking of the oath in the mirror and is therefore involved in the event. The birthing room will feature the necessary attributes, such as fruit on the windowsill. Not just any fruit, since we are expecting a special child, the first to be born in the family in many years. It will be exotic fruit like oranges from Spain. Of course I have also been asked to pose for this painting, to which Johannes attaches great personal value. He believes that the effort he puts into this work will influence my personal wellbeing as well as the child's. For this painting, I will put on my finest green dress with wide armholes which I wore on our wedding and the horned wimple with white lace ...

Three times I feel my bed getting wet and then a midwife helps me to the birthing room. Our firstborn child, a daughter, is named Filippine. It is customary for members of the court to name their firstborn child after the duke. Johannes hopes our second child will be a boy. He intends to give him the name Livinus in honour of Ghent's patron saint. However, it is a girl again, and she is named Livina. Our third child is stillborn. We do not understand why our third girl was not allowed to live, but we have no other option than to accept the inevitable ...

I, Margaretha Van Eyck - Wyflet