

**1. Cherry Tree:** The top of the cherry tree would suggest they are on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the house. The upper-level rooms of a house were used for entertaining

**2. Oranges:** A sign of wealth that would want to be shown off. They add to the image of wealth combined with the furs and expensive bed. Showing off Arnolfini's wealth as a merchant.

**3. Furs:** A show of wealth and Arnolfini's merchant work (trading furs).

**4. Shoes:** The clogs could be a symbol of respect, as a marriage scene is taking place on hallowed ground. They are also turned towards the light, which would suggest that the man belongs outside in the working world.

**5. Fido:** The dog meaning fidelity and loyalty, which would suggest that the couple is married. It also symbolises lust, which may express that the couple want children.

**6. Green:** The colour green symbolises fertility and could imply the woman's hope to have a child. If this is the case then the symbols of death would suggest that she died in childbirth.

**7. The Dress:** The train is very delicately gathered and positioned. This would imply that they had a maid-servant (another symbol of wealth).

**8. Woman's Shoes:** They are towards the back, which could represent women being lesser in society. They point towards to the wall, which could symbolise a woman's domestic place inside the house.

**9. Gathered Dress:** Many women at this time would gather their dresses in front of their stomachs but many argue that this woman is pregnant.

**10. St. Margaret & Dragon:** The patron saint of childbirth, pictured on the bedpost, would enforce the idea of the woman being pregnant.

**The Arnolfini Portrait**  
Jan van Eyck – 1434  
Oil on oak panel  
National Gallery, London



**14. Mirror:** There are 10 depictions of Christ around the mirror, which could mean that the mirror represents the eye of god overseeing this supposed marriage. A spotless mirror is also a symbol of the Virgin Mary.

**15. Signature:** A clever watermark of the artist that says, "Jan van Eyck was here" in Latin. It also confirms him as a witness to the marriage if it indeed took place.

**13. Chandelier:** Another display of wealth but can also be interpreted as a symbol of death, due to the skull-like candleholder.

**12. Candles:** There is one lit candle on the side of the man and a burnt-out stub on the side of the woman. This could symbolise the woman has died, which would make this a memorial. They could also emulate the light of God by this theory.

**11. Broom:** A symbol of the hearth and could be a symbol of the woman's role on society. Just as the man's clogs are turned to the outside one of the woman's slippers is turned towards the broom.