

As for the question before me, though, that is a narrower one. I do not need to rule on whether a revenant is truly dead, but whether his wife is a widow.”

Blood of Christ, this bishop could out-argue Chaerephon. Men who lived in their own heads were bloody dangerous.

“As to that,” the bishop continued, “It seems clear to me that the husband, whether he is dead or alive, is still able to work and provide for his family, and I see no obligation for the husband to hand over all his goods to his wife, no matter how vigorously she scolds him. However, I caution that this means Willem de Vos still has the care of his wife, and that God’s law requires him to keep her as a man would any wife, in the way he sees fit.”

Margriet. Her face was a mask of anger. He pitied her. She had very little to hold on to, this woman, and yet she held on with a warrior’s strength.

Still it was over, and there was nothing Margriet could do about it now. And Claude did not have the mace, or his freedom, or soon, very likely, his life.

“Do you understand this judgement?” asked the bishop of Margriet.

Margriet stood. “I understand it. I will go now a widow, although this court does not recognize me for what I am. But I wish to take my companion with me.”

She looked at Claude.

Claude looked back, frowning a question at her, until he remembered that she could probably not see his expression with her dim eyes, from that distance. Convenient for her. What was she thinking?

“Who, the girl soldier?” the king asked, after a silence.