

Letter 359  
Nuenen, c. 9 March 1884

Dear Theo,

One of these days I am going to send you another pen-and-ink drawing of a weaver – larger than the other five; the loom seen from the front – it will make this little series of drawings more complete; I believe they will look best if you have them mounted on grey Ingres.

It would rather disappoint me if you sent these little weavers back to me. And if none of the people you know would care to take them, I should think that you might take them for yourself, as the beginning of a collection of pen-and-ink drawings of Brabant artisans.

Which I should love to make, and which, as I shall be in Brabant pretty often now, I should be very eager to do.

On condition of making a series of them, which must be kept together, I will price them low, so that though I might make many drawings of the same kind, they might be kept together. But I, for my part, will agree to what you think best.

And you see it is not my aim to break off relations with you; I only wanted to point out that it seemed necessary to me that, when I send the pen drawings, you at least show them to somebody.

As to the matter you wrote me about, I think in such a case, when one sees no possibility of carrying it through, there is one thing one must not forget.

That is, if the woman has loved you, has really cared for you, and you for her, this period of love is a piece of good fortune in life.

She, the woman, may be beautiful or plain, young or old, better or worse, that affects it only indirectly. The only thing that matters is that you have loved each other. On parting – don't smother it or try to forget it – the only cliff to be avoided then is that of self-righteousness, one must not pretend then that the woman is under great obligations to the man, one must part as if one were under an obligation oneself – that is, in my opinion, more courteous and humane – perhaps that is your opinion too. Love always brings difficulties, that is true, but the good side of it is that it gives energy.

Of myself I believe – and I think it possible that it is the same with you – that I have not yet had enough experience with women. What we were taught about them in our youth is quite wrong, that is sure, it was quite contrary to nature, and one must try to learn from experience. It would be very pleasant if everybody were good, and the world were good, etc. – yes – but it seems to me that we see more and more that we are not good, no more than the world in general, of which we are an atom – and the world no more good than we are. One may try one's best, or act carelessly, the result is always different from what one really wanted.

But whether the result be better or worse, fortunate or unfortunate, it is better to do something than to do nothing. If only one is wary of becoming a prim, self-righteous prig – as Uncle Vincent calls it – one may be even as good as one likes. Well, goodbye,

Yours sincerely, Vincent