

Dear Theo,

I've a good deal to say about your calling my last letter "particularly unpleasant." In the first place this – some time ago you wrote me quite a number of unpleasant things which I have been hearing from you and others for over fifteen years now – and that's a long time – about domestic relations here.

And especially added to this "that you are suspicious." If it had only been the former, it is probable that I should have paid no more attention to it.

But your additional remark about your suspiciousness was a bit too much me, and I have repeatedly begged you to withdraw the word or to explain it, for I will not tolerate such a thing being said to me without my asking for an explanation.

In my last letter I compared suspiciousness in general to looking through black glasses.

And I said the ugliest misunderstandings were caused by it.

And this is true.

If you on your part turn this inside out now, and write me, "You make me think of old people who are always saying that in their young days everything was better, meanwhile forgetting that they themselves have changed," this does not stagger me in the least.

The thing we were discussing was suspiciousness, which was not mentioned by me but by yourself, i.e. on your part with regard to me; first apply what you say about old people to this, and after that see whether it may apply to me. If it does apply to me after that – then I shall have to reform.

As to what I wrote about a certain atmosphere at home, which I have more opportunity to observe than I care for, I am much afraid it is only too true.

As in your letter you ask me how it is that you no longer hear me say, "I should like to be like this or like that" the fact is that in my opinion those who proclaim most loudly that they "want to be like this or like that" are the ones who try least to improve themselves.

As a rule those who say it don't do it.

If I should want to utter some such wish, I should hardly do it in the atmosphere of our present relations.

So this is the cause – and seeing that I strenuously exert myself to improve my work there is no need for me to be forever lapsing into wishful exclamations.

I am sorry you did not send L'Illustration, for I have followed Renouard's work pretty regularly, and for many years I have saved up what he did for L'Illustration. And this is one of the most splendid, which I think would delight you too. When one orders the old Illustrations in the bookshops, at least here, one does not get them. I do wish you could get it for me. If it is too much trouble for you, then forget it, but heaven knows it is not so much trouble after all.

And – apres tout – please note that with regard to that suspiciousness, and what I wrote you by way of rejoinder, this was not done so much because I won't suffer you and others to think whatever they like of me, but I cautioned you that it would give you little satisfaction if your character congealed in that mold.

Considering that you say repeatedly that you know me better than others do, and that it still all ends in suspicion, then it is serious enough for me to protest against it, to protest firstly against that "knowing me so well," and secondly against "being suspicious." I went through such an affair with Father – I decline to start all over again with Father No. II.

If I had resisted Father from the start instead of remaining silent, nothing much would have happened.

So don't resent me telling you unreservedly what I think of it. That is better for both of us. And for the rest, old fellow, I think I am working a bit too hard to doubt that it will not be long before I shall be able somewhat to lighten the financial burden I am imposing on you. Maybe it will take longer than I think agreeable, to you as well as to me, but plodding on is a way that will not lead to complete failure.

And if I insist on taking vigorous measures, it is to obviate the possibility of quarreling. For the possibility of a quarrel is gone at the very moment I find the means to cover my financial needs. Then my work will no longer be at issue, and now it is.

Therefore don't despair. But now it's wretched for both of us. \*

Thanks for the remittance.

Goodbye.

Ever yours, Vincent

\* And to me my work is valuable; I must paint a lot – and therefore I am continually in want of models, which – at a time when my work is difficult and exhausting – is an additional reason for thinking it rather dismal to get suspicions in exchange. Never mind, it is a period I have to go through, and one does not paint in order to have an easy time of it.