

Letter 565
Arles, c. 23 December 1888

My dear Theo,

Thank you very much for your letter, for the 100 Fr. note enclosed and also for the 50 Fr. money order.

I think myself that Gauguin was a little out of sorts with the good town of Arles, the little yellow house where we work, and especially with me. [Gauguin had written to Theo that Vincent and he could not go on living together "in consequence of incompatibility of temper." [The quarrel was made up, and Gauguin wrote another letter, speaking of the first as a bad dream.]

As a matter of fact there are bound to be for him as for me further grave difficulties to overcome here.

But these difficulties are rather within ourselves than outside.

Altogether I think that either he will definitely go, or else definitely stay.

Before doing anything I told him to think it over and reckon things up again.

Gauguin is very powerful, strongly creative, but just because of that he must have peace.

Will he find it anywhere if he does not find it here?

I am waiting for him to make a decision with absolute serenity.

A good handshake,

Vincent

[On the following day, December 24, a telegram arrived from Gauguin that called Theo to Arles. Vincent, in a state of terrible excitement and in a high fever, had cut off a piece of his own ear and taken it as a present to a woman in a brothel. There had been a violent scene; Roulin the postman manage to get him home, but the police intervened, found Vincent bleeding and unconscious in bed, and sent him to the hospital. Theo found him there, "poor fighter and poor, poor sufferer," and stayed over Christmas. Gauguin went back with Theo to Paris. By December 31 the news was better, and on January 1 Vincent wrote (Letter 566) in pencil.]

[N.B. Some of the above note by Jo van Gogh-Bonger is doubtful. Roulin would not have left his friend bleeding; most probably Vincent found his own way home. The police only arrived the next morning, and Gauguin went back to Paris on his own.]