

Letter 200
The Hague, c. 23 May 1882

Dear Theo,

Just a word in haste. Did you receive the drawings and my last letter? I mean the portfolio containing the large "Sorrow" and "The Roots," etc.

I hear that Uncle Vincent is in Paris; I hope you did not speak to him about the matter in question. Of course they would consider it "immoral" or even worse. All right, they can chatter about it as much as they like as long as I don't have to listen to it or be present.

Yesterday I received a kind letter from Father and Mother, which would please me very much if only I could believe that this feeling would continue. But when I speak to them about the affair with Christine (which I shall certainly do in three weeks, when she has gone to Leyden and I have the time to spare, but not before), then, I repeat, will they still speak kindly when they know all this???

But my marriage does not depend on them, and you know well enough what I think in this matter, and that as I do nothing unlawful, and as I doubt their competence to judge moral affairs, their refusal would certainly grieve me, but it would not stop me or give me pause.

I am again busy with the drawings for C. M. but will they please him? Perhaps not. I can conceive such drawings only as studies in perspective, and I am doing them especially for practice.

Even if he does not take them, I shall not be sorry for the trouble they gave me, because I should like to keep them myself, and because I practiced the elements which so much depends on: perspective and proportion.

During the last fortnight I have been weak, not feeling well at all; I haven't given in to it and have gone on with my work. But, for instance, I have not been able to sleep for several nights, and have been feverish and nervous. But I force myself to keep going and working, for this is no time to get sick. I must go on. Christine and her mother moved to a smaller house because when Christine returns from Leyden she will come to live with me, wherever I may be, either in better or in worse circumstances. It is a little house with a courtyard; I hope to make a drawing of it this week [F 941, JH 146; F 942, JH 147].

Every day I see more clearly that the step I am taking opens an interesting field for drawing and getting models. This must also be taken into account when judging me. My profession allows me to undertake this marriage – I could not do it if I had another position.

I am longing for your letter, and hope you will soon find time to write. I think, knowing how things are, you could do much to straighten matters out (and if you want more information, I will give it to you gladly and honestly); I repeat, knowing how things are, you will be able to moderate and change the opinions of those who have only a very imperfect notion of the matter, and so disagreements will be avoided. For you understand that I want to avoid all disagreement, gossip and quarrels as much as possible; I spoke to no one but you about it, for the sake of peace, and I shall not do it more than is absolutely necessary – as, for instance, to Father when the time has come for Christine to go to Leyden.

This is nothing I have sought, but it has come across my path and I have tackled it, and I am glad that it is something which demands action without hesitation or reflection. And I showed you the darkest side of it first, in the hope that later on you won't think it's so bad.

But I wish I knew what to do about the studio I wrote you about. I would be content with a smaller house, but I do not know of one more suitable. And I am afraid that a less suitable one would not be cheaper because then my work would suffer, though I should save a few guilders a month by paying less rent. And perhaps I should say later, Why did I let that studio go? Why didn't I try harder to get it?

I long for your coming even more than for your letter, but I understand that perhaps I shall have to wait some time still. I am not in a mood for writing, but one must do it sometimes. It would be good if you could send me something, for I am rather hard up. Well, at all events write soon. I should especially like to know your opinion about the studio. It may be gone any day. Adieu, I repeat, don't deprive yourself, but if possible send me something.

Yours sincerely, Vincent

And let me know if you have received the drawings.