

Letter 101a
Amsterdam, 9 July 1877

Dear Theo,

Well, what have you got to say about Anna? I was surprised, I can tell you, and it seems to be serious too – and it just might come off. The difficulties connected with occupying a subordinate position – especially if you have to persevere in it for a long time, as she has done for so many years in all honour and decency – are very great, at times becoming a severe struggle making what seems easy, extremely hard.

Yet there is much poetry in it, and such years are a treasure which one does not easily lose, and if, particularly at first, one denies and humbles oneself, one attains a glorious feeling of inner peace. For all that, one could well understand – even if this were so – that at times the future may have seemed dark to her, too. As far as she is concerned, her decision on this step may seem sensible. Also I am inclined to believe she loves him sincerely. I am firmly confident of this, else things would not have gone so far. And therefore with all my heart I hope she will not be disappointed, but that, with God's guidance, she may have found the road toward enduring happiness. May the Lord grant that she might find rest, that dearest sister, and may He bless her, and give her all good things in life. I congratulate you, too, on this occasion – likewise Anna, Father, and Mother.

How are you, my dear fellow? I should have liked to write you sooner in answer to your last letter, but I have such a lot to do, and the work is not easy. Besides, I often go to church; there are beautiful old churches here and excellent preachers. I often hear Uncle Stricker; what he says is very good, and he preaches with much warmth and true feeling. I have heard the Reverend Mr. Laurillard three times; you would like him too, for it is as if he paints, and his work is at the same time high and noble art. He has the feelings of an artist in the true sense of the word, for instance, like Andersen, when he said:

Elke avond kwam de maan, en fluistrend sprak zij mij
Van wat zij in de stille, stille nacht...

[Translation of the whole stanza]

Every night the moon came, whispering to me
What she had seen in the silent, silent night
From her high observatory in the heavens;
She who remembers the ages – she wandered on
High above the foam of the deluge, and shone
On the floating ark with a gentle silvery glow,
As she does now on my solitary window.
And also, when Israel with overflowing eyes
Bowed down by Babylon's streams,
With a sad lustre she cast her rays
Onto the stringless harp hanging on the willows.

The moon is still shining, and the sun and the evening star, which is a good thing – and they also often speak of the Love of God, and make one think of the words: Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

À Dieu, Theo, a warm handshake in thought, good luck to you, and believe me, often thinking of you,
Your so loving brother, Vincent

Herewith another little contribution to your scrapbook, how is it progressing? Regards to the family, and to anyone who inquires after me.