

Dear brother,

If I did not give vent to my feelings every so often, then, I think, the boiler would burst.

I must tell you something that, were I to keep it bottled up inside me, might distress me, but which, if I just come straight out with it, may turn out to be not so bad.

As you know, Father and Mother on the one hand and I on the other do not see eye to eye about what should or should not be done with regard to a certain "no, never, never."

Well, after I'd been listening to the fairly strong expressions, 'indelicate and inopportune' for some considerable time (just imagine that you were in love and they called your love 'indelicate', wouldn't you, with a certain amount of pride, take exception and say, Enough!), at my urgent request that these expressions not be no longer used, they stopped, but only to come up with a new order of the day. Now they say that 'I would be severing family ties.'

Well, I have told them over and over again, seriously, patiently and with feeling, that this is not the case at all. This helped for a time, and then it started all over again. Now the complaint was that I kept 'writing letters'.

And when – rashly and wantonly in my view – they kept using that wretched expression 'severing ties,' I did the following. For a few days I said not a word and took no notice at all of Father and Mother. A contrecour [Reluctantly], but I wanted them to see what it would be like if ties really had been severed.

Of course they were amazed at my behavior, and when they said so, I replied, 'You see, that's what it would be like if there were no tie of affection between us; but luckily there is one and it will not be broken so easily, but I beg you to appreciate how dreadful that phrase, "severing ties" really is, and not to use it any longer.' The result was, however, that Father grew very angry, ordered me out of the room, and, and cursed me, or at least that is exactly what it sounded like!

Now while I am very distressed and sorry about it all, I simply cannot agree that a father who curses his son and (remember last year) proposes to send him to a lunatic asylum (which naturally I resisted with all my might) and who calls his son's love 'inappropriate and indelicate' (!!!), is in the right.

Whenever Father loses his temper he is used to having everyone, myself included, give in to him. However, I had made up my mind in God's name to let this fit of temper rage on for once.

In anger Father also said something about my having to move away somewhere else, but because it was said in anger, I do not attach much importance to it. I have my models and my studio here, elsewhere life would be more expensive, working more difficult and the models dearer. But if Father and Mother were coolly and calmly to tell me, 'Go,' of course I should go.

There are things a man simply cannot let pass. If one hears people saying 'you are mad' or 'you are someone who severs family ties' or 'you are indelicate', then anyone with a heart in his body will protest with all his might. To be sure, I have told Father and Mother a thing or two as well, namely that they were quite wrong about this love of mine, that they had hardened their hearts, and seemed absolutely incapable of a gentler and more humane way of thinking. In a word, that to me their way of thinking seemed narrow-minded, neither full nor generous enough; and also that to me 'God' would ring nothing but hollow if one had to hide one's love and were not allowed to follow the dictates of one's heart.

Now I am quite ready to believe that there have been times when I have been unable to suppress my outrage upon hearing 'indelicate' or 'severing ties', but who would keep calm when that sort of thing never stops?

Quoi qu'il en soit [be that as it may]. In his anger, Father muttered nothing more nor less than a curse. But then, I had already heard something of the sort last year, and thank God, far from being properly damned, felt new life and new energy springing up within me. And I firmly believe that it will be the same this time, only more so, and more forcefully than last year.

Theo, I love her, her and no other, her forever. And, and, and, Theo, although the 'no, never, ever' still "seems" to be in full sway, there is a feeling of something like redemption within me, and it is as if she and I had stopped being two and were united for all eternity.

Have my drawings arrived? I made another yesterday, a peasant boy in the morning lighting the fire in the hearth with a kettle hanging over it, and another, an old man laying kindling wood on the hearth [F 868, JH 080]. I am sorry to say there is still something harsh and severe in my drawings, and I think that she, that is, her influence, is needed to soften that.

Well, my dear fellow, it seems to me there is no reason to take 'the curse' so terribly hard. Perhaps I used too harsh a method to make Father and Mother feel something they did not want to hear, yet is not 'a father's curse' a great deal stronger and harsher, going indeed a little too far? Enfin, je te serre la main, et crois-moi [Well, I shake your hand, and believe me],

Ever yours, Vincent