

Letter 162  
The Hague, 1 – 3 December 1881

Dear Theo,

As you see, I am writing you from The Hague.

I have been here since Sunday. You know Mauve had planned to come and stay in Etten for a few days. I was afraid that something would prevent it or that the visit would be too short, and I thought, I will try it in another and I hope better way.

I said to Mauve, Do you approve of my coming here for a month or so, and occasionally troubling you for some help and advice? After that I shall have overcome the first petites misères of painting, and then I shall go back to the Heike.

Well, Mauve at once sat me down before a still life with a pair of old wooden shoes and some other objects, so I could set to work [F 001, JH 081]. And I also go to him for drawing in the evening.

I am staying in a little inn near Mauve, where I pay 30 guilders a month for a room and breakfast. So if I may count on the 100 fr. from you, I can manage.

And Mauve gives me hope that perhaps I shall soon make something saleable. I can assure you that this simple sentence of Mauve's pleased me more than a cartload of Jesuistical compliments would have.

Perhaps Mauve will soon write you himself.

"Meanwhile" I have been to Amsterdam. Uncle Stricker was rather angry, though he gave vent to it in more polite words than "God damn you." But nevertheless I am not sorry I paid that visit. What must be done now? For you know that I came back no less in love than I went, but not because she had encouraged me; on the contrary, she made me for a moment – or rather, for twenty-four hours – profoundly miserable, but when I thought it over I seemed to see some light after all. When I thought it over, I say, and somewhat more seriously than romanticism or sentimentality would allow. But it looks less and less like gathering strawberries in spring; well, the strawberries will no doubt come in due time.

I also went to see Mr. Tersteeg, and among the painters I met (the merry) Weissenbruch and Jules Bakhuizen, and De Bock.

In short, Theo, I think I shall daily become more realistic in everything. Thank God she is something very real, too.

Mauve and Jet send you their compliments, believe me,

Yours sincerely, Vincent

P.S. As soon as Mauve allows it, I will send you another drawing; but he says that I must keep all my studies, especially those of the figure. But within a relatively short time, Mauve says, I shall learn to make little watercolours.