*THE BANDAGED EAR*

Notwithstanding his own lack of commercial success, [Vincent](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/selfportrait-dedicated-to-paul-gauguin-1) still wanted Gauguin to join him in Arles. After Theo received an inheritance from his uncle, he paid for Gauguin's trip. His motives weren't entirely altruistic. Beyond desiring a stable environment for Vincent, Theo believed that Gauguin's paintings - which were starting to get noticed - would generate income. Subsidizing Gauguin would thus be a good investment for Theo.

[Gauguin arrived](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/vincent-van-gogh-gauguin-pays-a-visit-1) in Arles on the 23rd of October, 1888. At first, the two artists got along well, and they painted together. But when the weather turned cold, forcing them to stay inside, Vincent got irritable - as he often did during dreary days - and the artists quarreled.

It helped somewhat when [van Gogh](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/selfportrait-van-gogh-december-1888) painted several [portraits](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/portrait-of-marcelle-roulin-1888) of [each](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/armand-roulin-portrait-by-van-gogh) [member](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/armand-roulin-son-of-the-postmaster-joseph) of the [Joseph](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/joseph-roulin-van-gogh-portrait-1888) [Roulin](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/portrait-of-camille-roulin) [family](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/schoolboy-camille-roulin-the), but by late December the [Gauguin](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/gauguins-chair-1888)-van Gogh [relationship](http://www.vggallery.com/painting/p_0498_0499.htm) had changed dramatically.

Vincent's mental health was deteriorating as fast as his eroding rapport with [Gauguin](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/paul-gauguin-man-in-a-red-beret). Becoming irrational on the [23rd of December](http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/18/565.htm), Vincent turned a razor on himself, severing the lower part of his left ear. Greatly weakened due to loss of blood, he collapsed after he returned to the yellow house. The local police brought him to the [Hôtel-Dieu hospital](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/vincents-hospital-in-arles) (todaycalled L'Espace) in Arles where he was cared for by [Dr. Felix](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/dr-felix-ray-vincents-physician) [Rey](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/portrait-by-van-gogh-dr-felix-ray).

Gauguin telegraphed Theo with the distressing news, then left for Paris. He never saw Vincent again, although they periodically corresponded.

Sure his brother was [dying](http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/19/etc-Roulin-1-Theo.htm), Theo briefly stayed with Vincent ([depicted here](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/selfportrait-with-bandaged-ear) with a [bandaged ear](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/selfportrait-with-bandaged-ear-and-pipe)) who actually made a very quick physical [recovery](http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/19/567.htm). But the early part of 1889 was difficult for van Gogh. His good friend, [Joseph Roulin](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/portrait-of-the-postman-joseph-roulin), accepted a higher-paying position in Marseilles. If [Monsieur Roulin](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/portrait-of-the-postman-joseph-roulin-april-1889) left, with his family, Vincent would lose the [companionship](http://www.vggallery.com/misc/roulin/history_e.htm) of [someone](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/postmaster-joseph-roulin-photograph) he [liked](http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/19/etc-Roulin-4-Theo.htm) and [trusted](http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/19/etc-Roulin-3-Theo.htm).

Back to being creative, van Gogh [produced](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/vase-with-twelve-sunflowers-january-1889) some of his most well-known (and [beloved](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/portrait-of-augustine-roulin-la-berceuse)) paintings during January and early February of 1889. On the 7th of February, however, he imagined that he was being poisoned and was readmitted, for observation, to *Hôtel-Dieu*.

Returning to the yellow house, Vincent was hopeful he was well enough to continue [working](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/orchard-blossom-with-view-of-arles). But his neighbors in Arles were concerned about his bizarre behavior. They sent a [petition](http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/19/etc-Salles-3-Theo.htm) to the local officials who [ordered](http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/19/579.htm) Vincent back [to the hospital](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/reinhart-courtyard-of-hospital-at-arles). He stayed [there](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/reinhart-ward-in-hospital-at-arles) for six weeks, leaving the premises on supervised outings so he could paint.

Some of Van Gogh's paintings, during this time of anguish, were remarkable. But even Vincent was worried about himself. He agreed with Theo that he should seek treatment and voluntarily checked into the *Saint-Paul de Mausole* asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence (just [northeast](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/saintremydeprovence-map) of [Arles](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/arles-map-depicting-its-location)).

Van Gogh left Arles on the 8th of May, 1889. He would remain at the asylum for about a year.

*http://www.awesomestories.com/biographies/vincent-van-gogh/the-bandaged-ear*

*Link to the painting*

[*http://www.awesomestories.com/biographies/vincent-van-gogh/the-bandaged-ear*](http://www.awesomestories.com/biographies/vincent-van-gogh/the-bandaged-ear)

*THE SADNESS WILL LAST FOREVER*

Describing Vincent's funeral to their mother, Theo [wondered](http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/21/etc-Theo-mother1.htm) whether his brother ever really knew how people felt about him:

***If he could have seen how people behaved toward me when he had left us and the sympathy of so many for himself, he would at this moment not have wanted to die . . . Life weighed so heavily upon him, but as happens so often everyone is now full of praise, also for his talent.*** (Theo's letter to his Mother, 1 August 1890.)

Even his last hours were troubled, however, as the local police investigated what had happened. Emile Bernard:

***The coffin was already closed, I arrived too late to see the man again who had left me four years ago so full of expectations of all kinds ... The innkeeper told us all the details of the accident, the offensive visit of the gendarmes who even went up to his bedside to reproach him for an act for which he alone was responsible ... etc ...*** (Emile Bernard, [August 2nd letter](http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/21/etc-Bernard-Aurier.htm).)

At his funeral, people noted the "brilliance of the genius that radiated from" his paintings:

***On the walls of the room where his body was laid out all his last canvases were hung making a sort of halo for him and the brilliance of the genius that radiated from them made this death even more painful for us artists who were there. The coffin was covered with a simple white cloth and surrounded with masses of flowers, the sunflowers that he loved so much, yellow dahlias, yellow flowers everywhere. It was, you will remember, his favourite colour, the symbol of the light that he dreamed of as being in people's hearts as well as in works of art.*** (Emile Bernard, [August 2nd letter](http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/21/etc-Bernard-Aurier.htm).)

Many people attended Vincent's funeral:

***Many people arrived, mainly artists, among whom I recognized Lucien Pissarro and Lauzet, the others I did not know, also some local people who had known him a little, seen him once or twice and who liked him because he was so good-hearted, so human.***

It was a beautiful, warm day - one that van Gogh would likely have used to create another beautiful painting:

***. . .The sun was terribly hot outside. We climbed the hill outside Auvers talking about him, about the daring impulse he had given to art, of the great projects he was always thinking about, and of the good he had done to all of us.

. . .Anyone would have started crying at that moment ... the day was too much made for him for one not to imagine that he was still alive and enjoying it ...

. . .He was, Gachet said, an honest man and a great artist, he had only two aims, humanity and art. It was art that he prized above everything and which will make his name live.***

Earlier in 1890, Theo [told his brother](http://webexhibits.org/vangogh/letter/20/T25.htm) success would surely come in his lifetime:

***I think we can wait patiently for success to come; you will surely live to see it. It is necessary to get well known without obtruding oneself, and it will come of its own accord by reason of your beautiful pictures.*** (Theo to Vincent, 22 January 1890.)

[Success came](http://www.metmuseum.org/TOAH/HD/gogh/hd_gogh.htm), but it was after both Vincent *and* [Theo](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/theo-van-gogh) were gone. In poor health himself, van Gogh's younger brother died six months after Vincent's suicide. They are [buried](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/van-goghs-grave) side by side.

Jo - Theo's widow - inherited Vincent's art and worked very hard to promote it after Vincent's death. Ironically, [van Gogh's](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/view-of-arles-by-van-gogh) [drawings](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/haystacks-by-farm-drawing-by-van-gogh) became [commercially](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/unloading-sand-barges-in-arles-by-van-gogh) [successful](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/fishing-boats-at-sea-drawing-by-van-gogh) before his paintings.

[In today's world](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/modern-culture-and-vincent-van-gogh1), Vincent's art is so desirable it is rarely available for purchase. When a painting does come on the market, it commands "top dollar" prices:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [Vase with Fifteen Sunflowers](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/vase-with-fifteen-sunflowers-1) **-sold March 30, 1987** | **$39.5 million** |
| [Irises](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/irises-539-million) **-sold November, 1987** | **$53.9 million** |
| [Portrait of Doctor Gachet](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/portrait-of-doctor-gachet-825-million) **-sold May 15, 1990** | **$82.5 million** |
| [Self-Portrait (Without Beard)](http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/van-gogh-selfportrait-715-million) **-sold Nov 19, 1998** | **$71.5 million** |
| **TOTAL - FOUR PAINTINGS** | **$247.4 million** |

Vincent didn't "live to see it," as Theo had predicted. But his heirs, through Theo's son, did. And from that work, the van Gogh Foundation helped to establish the [van Gogh Museum](http://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/vgm/index.jsp) (which opened in Amsterdam in 1973).

http://www.awesomestories.com/biographies/vincent-van-gogh/the-sadness-will-last-forever