

## The Letter

Wednesday evening 12/21

*Dearest Richard,*

*It's so difficult to know how and where to begin. I've been thinking long and hard through many ideas trying to find a way. . .*

*I finally struck one little thought, a musical metaphor, through which I have been able to think clearly and find understanding, if not satisfaction, and I want to share it with you. So please bear with me while we have yet another music lesson.*

*The most commonly used form for large classical works is sonata form. It is the basis of almost all symphonies and concertos. It consists of three main sections: the exposition or opening, in which little ideas, themes, bits and pieces are set forth and introduced to each other; the development, in which these tiny ideas and motifs are explored to their fullest, expanded, often go from major (happy) to minor (unhappy) and back again, and are developed and woven together in greater complexity until at last there is: the recapitulation, in which there is a restatement, a glorious expression of the full, rich maturity to which the tiny ideas have grown through the development process.*

*How does this apply to us, you may ask, if you haven't already guessed.*

*I see us stuck in a never-ending opening. At first, it was the real thing, and sheer delight. It is the part of a relationship in which you are at your best: fun, charming, excited, exciting, interesting, interested. It is a time when you're most comfortable and most lovable because you do not feel the need to mobilize your defences, so your partner gets to cuddle a warm human being instead of a giant cactus. It is a time of delight for both, and it's no wonder you like openings so much you strive to make your life a series of them.*

*But beginnings cannot be prolonged endlessly; they cannot simply state and restate and restate themselves. They must move on and develop—or die of boredom. Not so, you say. You must get away, have changes, other people, other places so you can come back to a relationship as if it were new, and have constant new beginnings.*

*We moved on to a protracted series of reopenings. Some were caused by business separations that were necessary, but unnecessarily harsh and severe for two so close as we. Some were manufactured by you in order to provide still more opportunities to return to the newness you so desire.*

*Obviously, the development section is anathema to you. For it is where you may discover that all you have is a collection of severely limited ideas that won't work no matter how much creativity you bring to them or—even worse for you—that you have the makings of something glorious, a symphony, in which case there is work to be done: depths must be plumbed, and separate entities carefully woven together, the better to glorify themselves and each other. I suppose it is analogous to that moment in writing when a book idea must be/cannot be run from.*

*We have undoubtedly gone further than you ever intended to go. And we have stopped far short of what I saw as our next logical and lovely steps. I have seen development with you continually arrested, and have come to believe that we will never make more than sporadic attempts at all our learning potential, our amazing similarities of interest, no matter how many years we may have—*

*because we will never have unbroken time together. So the growth we prize so highly and know is possible becomes impossible.*

*We have both had a vision of something wonderful that awaits us. Yet we cannot get there from here. I am faced with a solid wall of defences and you have the need to build more and still more. I long for the richness and fullness of further development, and you will search for ways to avoid it as long as we're together. Both of us are frustrated; you unable to go back, I unable to go forward, in a constant state of struggle, with clouds and dark shadows over the limited time you allow us.*

*To feel your constant resistance to me, to the growth of this something wonderful, as if I and it were something horrible—to experience the various forms the resistance takes, some of them cruel—often causes me pain on one level or another.*

*I have a record of our time together, and have taken a long and honest look at it. It has saddened me, and even shocked me, but it has been helpful in facing the truth. I look back to the days in early July, and the seven weeks that followed, as our only truly happy period. That was the opening, and it was beautiful. Then there were the separations with their fierce and, to me, inexplicable cutoffs—and the equally fierce avoidance-resistance on your returns.*

*Away and apart or together and apart, it is too unhappy. I am watching me become a creature who cries a lot, a creature who even must cry a lot, for it almost seems that pity is necessary before kindness is possible. And I know I have not come this far in life to become pitiful.*

*To be told that canceling your date to help me when I was in a state of crisis "wouldn't work for you" brought the truth crushing down on me with the force of an avalanche. Facing facts as honestly as I can, I know I cannot continue, no matter how much I might wish to do so; I cannot bend further.*

*I hope you will not see this as the breaking of an agreement, but rather the continuation of the many, many endings you have begun. I think it is something we both know must be. I must accept that I have failed in my effort to let you know the Joys of caring.*

*Richard, my precious friend, this is said softly, even tenderly and lovingly. And the soft tones do not camouflage an underlying anger: they are real. There are no accusations, no blames or faults. I am simply trying to understand, and to stop the pain. I am staling what I have been forced to accept; that you and I are never going to have a development, much less the glorious climactic expression of a relationship grown to full blossom.*

*I have felt if anything in my life deserved departure from previously established patterns, going beyond all known limitations, this relationship did. I suppose I might be justified in feeling humiliated about the lengths to which I have gone to make it work. Instead, I feel proud of myself and glad to know I recognized the rare and lovely opportunity we had while we had it, and gave all I could, in the purest and highest sense, to preserve it.*

*I am comforted by this now. In this awful moment of ending, I can honestly say I do not know of one other thing I might do to get us to that beautiful future we could have had.*

*Despite the pain, I'm happy to have known you in this special way, and will always treasure the time we've had together. I have grown with you, and learned much from you, and I know I have made major positive contributions to you. We are both better people for having touched one another.*

*At this late juncture, it occurs to me that a chess metaphor might also be useful. Chess is a game in which each party has its own singular objective even as it engages the other; a mid-game in which a struggle develops and intensifies and bits and pieces of each side are lost, both sides diminished; an*

*end-game in which one traps and paralyzes the other.*

*I think: you see life as a chess game; I see it as a sonata. And because of these differences, both the king and the queen are lost, and the song is silenced.*

*I am still your friend, as I know you are mine. I send this with a heart full of the deep and tender love and high regard you know I have for you, as well as profound sorrow that an opportunity so filled with promise, so rare and so beautiful, had to go unfulfilled.*

**Leslie**