

Mon tres cher Epoux

a Bayonne Le 1.^e juillet 1745

Pour Me ce presenter L'occasion si favorable la
quelle est un fils de Gratianne la Couturiere
qui doit partir pour la Marthenique
avec un navire de garderes qui Est une prise
qui un Corsaire de icy nommé Labelone
a Mené aqui dieu Garde de tout mal et
Conduise abon port, je ne puis pas menpecher
de vous Ecrire la presente tant pour vous
Representer le pauvre Estat ou je me trouve
avec mes pauvres enfans etant de Laisse
depuis cy longtems de navoir pas aucune
satisfaction de votre part, Comme aussy pour
vous dire qu'on a fait Courir le bruit par icy
que vous m'aviez abandonné, et quil faloit
que je vous heuze donné occasion pour cela
Ce qui est Cause que Beaucoup de personnes
Me Regardent par dessus les Epoles, et Etre
Reduite a navoir pas le credit dun pain dune
Livre dans aucun Boulanger pour mes pauvres
Enfans Ce qui me doit Etre Bien doureux
de me voir a la fleur de mon age Reduite
a une Pareille Extremité, et je vous proteste qu'a
navoir pas les enfens je ne sçay ce que j'aurois
fait jusqua present, et avoir etee obligee
de faire une letre disant que je Lavez Recue
de vous a Cause des Mauvaises Langes, et meme
pour voir si la boulangere apres Lui avoir montre
sil me vouloit faire credit de quelque pain
ce quil fit autant Comme la Croix de vant le

Mort, et je vous Remets incluse une Copie de
La lettre que je fis faire a Cete fin que vous
voyez sy je m enprenes dune Bonne façon
sur quoy je vous laissé apenser dans quel
Estat puis je etre nayant pas fait aucun
Efet, ainsy je vous prie de Grâce au nom de
de Dieu de faire mieux que vous navez pas
fait jusqua present, nom pastant pour
Moy Comme pour les Enfans et ne levoulant
faire ny pour Les uns nipour les autres
de Le faire aumoins pour lamour de
Dieu, et sy au Cas que vous vouliez
me Remetre quelque Chose je vous prie
de Le faire avec despaisailles qui doit venir
Convoyé, Et suis en attendant tous avous
Montres a My
Votretres humble servante
Jannotte Rostant

Monsieur
Monsieurjean
Roustant Cousinier
A la Marthenique

ala martinique ce 2 descembre 1744

Je ne fais simplement matres chere epouze que
profiter de loccazion du capitaine lafourcade pour tedire
quej ay receu tes trois lettres compriz celle du fils delamuniere
je tediray queje nay pas voulu rien faire passer en
europe avec ledit lafourcade nepouvant me figurer quil
netombe entreles mains des englois je tenverray sans
faute par lavoye de Bord(eau)x de quoy te dedomager
des peines quetu as essayé : il doit partir bien tot
un convoy de 20 navires sous lescorte de deux vaisseaux
de guerre : dont laplus grande partie va a bordeaux
ce sera avec quelque navire de cette flotte queje
tenverray ce quil te faut, prie en attendant madame
marion duloyer de te secourir ; jy feray honneur
dans peu comme au maitre de lamaison jay receu
lalettre de marion ou jay été bien aisé quelle est
finy avec [mona..] tu pourras tadresser a elle si tu
as Besoin de quelque argent : jevais luy remettre
des effets par la comoditté qui est dans lille et
qui va faire voile dans peu, ne te chagrinepoint
point je ten prie et donne toujours de tes nouvelles
monsieur avec lequel je suis assossie veut
que nous tenions chacun une maizon apart et tout
en sossietté nous avons de loccupation graces adieu
apouvoir faire des bons affaires si cela continue
je meporte bien graces au ciel fais en dememe
tu feras mes complim(en)s a Madame duloyer et ason
mary et a Monsieur et Mlle Larre avec tous ceux de
Cazebat : noublie pas Monsieur et Mlle Lafitte
a quy jay tant dobligation je reste jusque
audepart des premiers navires matres cher epouze
ton tres humble et fidel epoux rustan

My dearest husband,

in Bayonne, 1 July 1745

since a favourable opportunity
in the form of Gratianne the seamstress' son,
who is set to leave for Martinique
on a ship of Garderes – which was taken as a prize
by a privateer from here called Labelone – and whom
God may protect from all harm and
safely guide to his destination, has presented itself, I cannot refrain
from writing you this letter to not only
inform you about the poor condition which me and
my poor children find ourselves in after having been neglected by you
for so long, but also
to tell you about the rumour,
that you have abandoned me, which has spread here. It is also being said that I
gave you reason to do so
which causes many people to
look down on me
and has reduced me to not even having the credit to buy a loaf of bread
for my poor children at any bakery.
What pains me even more is to see
myself reduced in such an extreme manner during the prime of my life
and I assure you that I do not know how I would have responded to this situation,
if it had not been for my children.
Due to all of this I felt obliged
to write a letter in your name, saying that I had received it
from you in order to silence the scandalmongers and even
to try and see if the baker would grant me credit for some bread
after showing him the letter,
which he did as the cross in front of the

dead man.¹ I am enclosing a copy of
the letter which I wrote [or dictated] for the said purpose, so that you
can see for yourself, if I have done this sufficiently.

On this note, I leave it up to you to imagine what
condition I may be in since I have not made any
impact so far, which is why I beg you – in the name of
God – to do better than you have
done up until now – if not for me
then for the children. If you neither want
to do it for the former nor for the latter then
at least do it for the love of
God and if you do want to send me something then I would ask you
to do so with the help of Despesailles who is to come
as part of the convoy. In the meantime I am all yours,
my dearest friend

Your most humble servant

Jannotte Rostant

Mister

Jean Roustant

cook

In Martinique

¹ Meaning with no effect; it makes no difference to him, as it does to the cross in front of a dead man.

in Martinique, this 2nd day of December 1744

My dearest wife,

with the help of captain Lafourcade, I am taking the opportunity to tell you that I have received your three letters – including the one from the son of Delamuniere.

I have to tell you that I do not want to send anything to Europe with the aforementioned Lafourcade since I cannot imagine that it will not fall into the hands of the English.

Instead, I will definitely send you something via Bordeaux in order to compensate you for the pain you have suffered.

Under the escort of two ships of war, a convoy of 20 ships will soon set out - most of which are headed for Bordeaux - and it will be with the help of one of the ships of this fleet that I will send you what you need. In the meantime, ask madame Marion Duloyer to help you; I will honour her help shortly, and the help of the master of the house. I received Marion's letter and I was very pleased to hear that she had finished with [mona...]. You can go to her if you need any money since I am going to send her some goods by sea with the help of a ship that lies at anchor here and will be sailing any time soon. Please, do not worry and always give me your news.

The mister whom I am associated with wants each of us to manage a separate house and the whole of the company and – thank God – we are not only busy, but will be doing good business if this continues.

I am doing well, thank heaven and you do the same.

Send my greetings to Madame Duloyer and her Husband, to Mr and Miss Larre with all those at Cazebat and do not forget Mr and Miss Lafitte to whom I am so much obliged. I will remain here until the departure of the first ships my dearest wife.

Your most humble and faithful husband

Rustan

Transcription: Lisa Magnin, Translation: Gordon Harker