

Paris, 22 June, 1777

My Dearest Gwendolyn,

I am writing to request your presence at a small gathering I am hosting at my home in Auteuil. It promises to be a delightful affair, and you will find the guest list simply irresistible. Madame Necker has graciously accepted my invitation. Denis Diderot, Nicholas Chamfort and Jean-Antoine Roucher will represent the authors of Paris for us, while Jean-Antoine Houdon must stand in for our artists. Baron Gerard will be on hand to provide his very lively conversation, which always provides much distraction. Madame Roland has consented to bring her revolutionary thoughts to spark debate, although I have no confirmation that her husband will join her. The American Thomas Jefferson has confirmed his attendance and as always has vowed to bring along the statesman Benjamin Franklin who is travelling in Europe at the time. I shall hold out hope that this will be the gathering that finally entices him to attend – the tales of his wit and charm are well noted.

The date of the affair is 29 July and the hour will be four o'clock in the afternoon, lasting past dinner until the guests are satisfied.

I beseech you to find the time to attend, as any salon without your delightful repartee seem small and drab.

I remain your steadfast and humble friend,

Madame Helvetius, Your Minette