



The Animals of Versailles

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Three kings lived at the Palace of Versailles in succession: Louis XIV, Louis XV, Louis XVI.

Louis XIII, the father of Louis XIV, actually lived there first, but at the time it was only a simple hunting lodge. It was Louis XIV who imagined the great Versailles that we know today, although many modifications took place during the two subsequent kings' reigns.

For obvious reasons involved in crafting a narrative running through 12 interrelated stories intended for children aged 5 to 7, the author took care to maintain a coherent sense of place so that young listeners can visit the emblematic sights of the Versailles estate and discover the salons, fountains, sculptures, and objects that can still be admired today. Some places have disappeared, such as the labyrinth, which went out of fashion and was replaced by the Queen's Grove during the reign of Louis XVI.

The little monkey who frolics on the rooftops of Marie-Antoinette's cottages cannot be the same one that welcomes the rhinoceros offered to Louis XV. However, the dogs, Bonne, Blonde, Diane, and Mitte really existed and slept happily in the dogs' room right next to the king's bedroom. And Brillant and the Général are indeed the cats that sharpened their claws on the silk sofas of the king's grand apartments. The king's horses, Fin Barbe and Charmant, also lived in the royal stables. Finally, although it wasn't until the reign of Louis XVI that the monkeys and parrots left the king's menagerie to play freely in the gallery, there were always enough of them around to amuse and amaze the royal court at the Palace of Versailles.

These animals are the stars of 12 "docu-comic" stories that take place in parallel with the lives of the king, queen, crown prince, and princesses. A royal family, simplified and summarized in this way, allows young children to understand an era spread over a long time and a world that has disappeared but still amazes the millions of visitors to the Palace of Versailles today.

Finally, the short notes following some of the stories can, if needed, add helpful information without making the 12 stories too dense.

