



# The Enemies of Versailles

*Sally Christie*

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## **The Enemies of Versailles** Sally Christie

In the final installment of Sally Christie's "tantalizing" (New York Daily News) Mistresses of Versailles trilogy, Jeanne Becu, a woman of astounding beauty but humble birth, works her way from the grimy back streets of Paris to the palace of Versailles, where the aging King Louis XV has become a jaded and bitter old philanderer. Jeanne bursts into his life and, as the Comtesse du Barry, quickly becomes his official mistress.

"That beastly bourgeois Pompadour was one thing; a common prostitute quite another kettle of fish."

After decades suffering the King's endless stream of Royal Favorites, the princesses of the Court have reached a breaking point. Horrified that he would bring the lowborn Comtesse du Barry into the hallowed halls of Versailles, Louis XV's daughters, led by the indomitable Madame Adelaide, vow eternal enmity and enlist the young dauphiness Marie Antoinette in their fight against the new mistress. But as tensions rise and the French Revolution draws closer, a prostitute in the palace soon becomes the least of the nobility's concerns.

Told in Christie's witty and engaging style, the final book in The Mistresses of Versailles trilogy will delight and entrance fans as it once again brings to life the sumptuous and cruel world of eighteenth century Versailles, and France as it approaches inevitable revolution.

## **The Enemies of Versailles Details**

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Author : Sally Christie

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## From Reader Review The Enemies of Versailles for online ebook

### Sara Giacalone says

This last installment of the Versailles Trilogy takes us through the revolution, up to year 1800. Each book was very enjoyable, with different voices used throughout to tell the story and interesting insights into the last years of the Bourbons in France.

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### Marlene says

Originally published at Reading Reality

The Enemies of Versailles, and the entire series of the Mistresses of Versailles, beginning with The Sisters of Versailles and continuing with The Rivals of Versailles, is a fascinating blend of historical fiction and herstorical fiction, telling the story of the reign of Louis XV of France through the eyes of the women who shared his bed and/or his heart.

So instead of viewing this history through the lives of its movers and shakers, usually male, we see the king from the perspective of his mistresses and, in the case of this final book in the series, from the point of view of his oldest daughter, the unmarried and extremely upright (also uptight in modern terms) Adelaide.

It's not a pretty picture, and it isn't intended to be, particularly at this point late in the king's life. It is to Louis XV that the famous phrase is attributed, "après moi, le deluge". And while he may not have known precisely what horrors the deluge of the French Revolution was destined to unleash, it is clear from this account that he was well aware that whatever followed him was going to be less rich, less glorious, less regal, and pretty much just less of everything.

It turned out he was right. From the perspective of the monarchy and the aristocracy, the Revolution indeed brought much less of everything, except blood. There was plenty of that. An outcome that Louis himself does not live to see, although the principal narrators of this story, his daughter Adelaide and his last mistress, the Duchesse du Barry, witness the revolution in all its horror.

In this book, and the trilogy as a whole, Louis appears as a self-indulgent and even indolent ruler, willing to let his advisors run the country while he dallies with his mistresses and escapes from the pomp and ceremony of court life as much as possible. And, of course, his advisors are more than happy to take the burdens of monarchy off of his hands, the better to further their own ambitions.

At the center of this book, and of the final years of Louis' life, we see a man caught between two opposing forces. On the one side, his daughter Adelaide, ruthlessly virtuous, desiring above all else to save her father's eternal soul by persuading him to give up his licentious ways. On his other side, the courtesan Jeanne Becu, Duchesse du Barry, encouraging the king to while away his hours in her company, giving her as many beautiful presents as possible and ignoring the world outside her boudoir.

Adelaide never stands a chance. Louis always prefers his mistress' charms, whoever that mistress might be. But as we watch the court squabble over who should have precedence, and how best to capture the attention of the aging king, we know that we are watching the equivalent of re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, or fiddling while Paris, substituting for Rome in the famous saying, burns.

Escape Rating B: This is a series about which I have had mixed feelings from the very beginning, and I leave the series with lots of them. But most of those mixed feelings are about the history portrayed, rather than the portrayal itself. In other words, this series made me think. Among other thoughts, making me glad that I am reading about this period rather than living in it.

The world portrayed in the series is fascinating, enthralling, rich, decadent and strange. There are two sayings that seem to apply equally: "The past is another country, they do things differently there" and, to paraphrase just a bit, "the rich are very, very different from you and me".

One of the things that strikes me is the appalling waste. Not just the wretched excesses of the court, but also the waste of the brains and talent of the women in this series, and this era. As much as I would not want to have spent five minutes in her company, I found Adelaide and to a lesser extent her sisters, to be utterly pitiable. They all had brains, and probably talents of one sort or another. And absolutely no outlets for any of that except through moral rectitude to the point of priggishness, extreme protection of their privileges and status, and endless backbiting and jostling for position in a court and an era that simply saw them as less than nothing.

Then of course, there's the wretched excess of the court itself. That so much time and effort was expended, and so much wealth wasted, on ceremony that was extended and elaborated somewhere past the nth degree fascinates and disgusts at the same time.

The Revolution was a bloodbath of epic proportions, and yet it is all too easy to see it looming on the horizon, at least from our viewpoint, and wonder why no one at the time seriously saw it coming. But the same is true, to a much less bloody extent, in the run up to the American Revolution. Hindsight, as always, is 20/20.

About the books and the series. Looking back, there is one thing about each of the books that made the first parts a bit difficult to get over. In each book, the story of the mistress or mistresses begins with their childhood. And while the child certainly makes the woman, that period of each of their lives just wasn't as compelling, or even as interesting, as what happens to each of them as they find themselves, or are thrust in the case of duBarry, into the king's orbit. One reason I found Adelaide sympathetic in this particular book was that by the time this story begins, she is an adult, even if her understanding is somewhat lacking in particulars because of her very peculiar sheltered life.

In some ways, both Adelaide and du Barry remain infantilized by their circumstances until the Revolution robs everyone of any possible pretensions. They had to either grow up or die. That one did and one did not provides a last and final contrast in the remarkable circumstances of their lives.

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## **Ellie says**

How I wish there were going to be Books #4, #5, #6...etc. I loved this trilogy. Sally Christie has brought to life the intricacies of the women of Versailles. The daughters of Louis XIV, as well as the Pompadour, Maintenon, and Madame Du Barry, all come to life in these epic novels. And I shouldn't forget Marie Antoinette along with her high hair. This is the last book, unfortunately, but as delicious as the first and second. The clothes, the whispers, the looks, the snobbery, the laughter....all so well written about. Thank you Sally, I look forward to reading more of your books! This entire trilogy was fantastic. It was wonderful to loose myself in them. Thank you Atria Books and NetGalley for the perusal!!

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## Gretchen says

I'm not even sure how I ended up with an ARC of this book. My reviews of the previous two novels weren't exactly glowing. After the end of the second novel, I had promised not to even bother with the final book in the trilogy. Well if I had a nickle for every broken promise, I'd own a lot more books.

I was not blown away by the final installment of the Mistresses of Versailles trilogy. I was, however, pleasantly surprised. The manner in which the author handled the French revolution and the demise of the nobility was rather well done. I actually found myself feeling sorry for a character. This is quite the accomplishment since most of Christie's leading ladies have been nothing more than brainless, foot-stomping, spoiled brats. The leading ladies in this novel are not much different, especially Madame Adelaide, daughter of Louis XV. The reader is constantly beat over the head with Madame Adelaide's arrogant internal dialogues. I get it. She's a princess. She was raised to believe she's better than everyone else. When one is reading about French princesses who spend most of their time feasting in the halls of Versailles, the arrogance is implied. There's no need to keep reminding me.

Countess du Barry was once again portrayed as just another one of Louis XV brainless mistresses who cares more for shiny jewels and new clothes than whatever is going on in the world around them. However, her end was excellent writing. If the writer had applied that level of emotion and insight to all three of these novels, I would be recommending them until I was blue in the face.

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## Heather C says

I have been fascinated with Christie's Mistresses of Versailles series since the first pages of The Sisters of Versailles. French history in general is an area that I am not as familiar with and therefore the stories are always new and exciting. While I still found many of the things that I enjoyed about the prior novels in the series, Enemies of Versailles didn't carry quite the same level of feelings that I had for the first two books. Let me explain.

In both The Sisters of Versailles and The Rivals of Versailles, the women featured were all lovers of the King. This lent the chapters a competitive nature and added to the scandal that it was of the time. The Enemies of Versailles pits du Barry, his last lover, against his eldest daughter, Adelaide, and then to some extent the dauphine and later Queen, Marie Antoinette. Understandably, there is a very different dynamic at play here; at the very least they are fighting over very different types of love and power. This wasn't as compelling a driving force for me as had been previously. It was a different kind of rivalry than I had come to expect from this series that wasn't quite what I was expecting.

Additionally, I couldn't help but take the side of du Barry (because you always pick a side in these types of stories). While she was the King's lover and raised up from the gutter, she was for the most part kind and easy to read her way of thinking in her chapters. Adelaide was more difficult. Her frustration with du Barry all was because of simply her role as the lover of her father was a sin and she wanted to bring him back to the right side of God. It truly felt like a little girl not getting her way, which wasn't cute on like a 50 year old woman. She was vindictive and conniving, yet she was supposed to be above everyone else. So ultimately I enjoyed the du Barry chapters more. One thing that I did enjoy was when Adelaide was with her whole bevy of sisters. There interactions reminded me of that of the Nesle sisters from The Sisters of Versailles; the backbiting, the one-up-manship, etc.

This book presented a different view of Marie Antoinette as well. Typically books about her feature her as a central character and we see her in a sympathetic light, or juxtaposed against the view of her from the

common people. This was interesting to see how the two factions, du Barry and Adelaide sort of fought for control over her when she first came to court. She is a more minor figure in this story, but she is still used as a tool in the battle between the women. I actually enjoyed her portion of the story, even seeing her in a different way.

Overall, this was a good read, but not my favorite of the whole series.

This review was previously posted at The Maiden's Court blog and a copy of this book was received from the publisher as part of a blog tour.

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## **Anna says**

I looove this trilogy Sally Christie has cooked up here. I love it enough to put Christie on my list of favorite historical fiction writers, despite the fact that this trilogy is her only published work so far. She's just so talented.

Taking "The Enemies of Versailles" as a stand-alone, I really enjoyed it, although it was my least favorite of the trilogy (my favorite being Book 2, "The Rivals of Versailles" - it's really, really hard to beat Madame de Pompadour). It tells the story from dual perspectives: that of Louis XV's final mistress, the Comtesse du Barry, and that of one of Louis XV's daughters, Adélaïde.

It's strange to say I liked the book when I didn't really like either of the protagonists. Marie Antoinette is tied for my favorite historical personage ever (with Anne Boleyn), and so I've read a TON about this time period. However, everything I've read/watched thus far portrays du Barry as basically a big bitch, someone who was with Louis XV only for the power and prestige and jewels, and who didn't care at all about being a nice person. Christie chose to portray her in a more sympathetic, kinder light; probably partly due to the fact that she is the protagonist here and not Marie. I still didn't find much in common with her flighty, frivolous personality though - but neither did I find much in common with Adélaïde, the aging, grumpy, rule-stickler, prude daughter of Louis XV. They are almost mirror opposite characters, so they were interesting to see played off one another: Adélaïde is just as straight-laced as Jeanne du Barry is bubbleheaded. Marie Antoinette is relegated to a side character here, so that was a change of pace from my norm (I am hoping Christie eventually decides to write something from her point of view).

Despite not having much love for either du Barry or Adélaïde, that doesn't ruin the book for two reasons. Firstly, Christie manages to portray empathy and humanity in even the most annoying characters. This is the time period in which the French Revolution begins, bloody and terrifying, changing these characters' entire lives. du Barry's attitude and priorities are silly right up to the end (and I'd argue she gets even more frivolous as the danger increases), but instead of making me angry, this made me feel pity for her and her inability to A) realize the full implications of what was happening to her and B) change her fate. Adélaïde, in true mirror fashion, does the opposite: the turbulent times make her realize that everything she thought was so important before really wasn't, and she wishes she would have been more loving and more open to those she loved - although by this point, it made me feel for her because it's a big case of too little too late.

The other reason I adored this book/series is the way that Christie writes about this reign. There is nowhere I'd like to go back in time to see more than Versailles during this time - the fashion, the scandals, all the craziness. Christie portrays it all the best I've ever seen it done. Anyone interested in French history, really good historical fiction, and anything I've written about here should check out this amazing trilogy.

## **Erin Al-Mehairi says**

I love the descriptive writing of historical author Sally Christie! I missed out on reading book one in her *Mistresses of Versailles* series, but once I read book two last year I was hooked. I really believe you can read each one as a stand alone, but it's a great series to read together as well.

*The Enemies of Versailles* (book three) continued on a tradition of "being seeped in reading" for me last weekend, the sentences so smooth and delicate, yet filled with emotion and substance, that I breezed through it in no time. I needed swept away to another place, no matter how unconventional, for a short time and the novel certainly gave me that escape. This is a hallmark of quality writing, the type of such I aspire to achieving.

I love how Sally focuses her novel around protagonists that are female and fiesty, hustling in rags to decadent gowns sometimes to forward their life. *The Enemies of Versailles* sees Jeanne Becu go from back streets to the palace in eighteenth century France – a France not far from a Revolution.

Sally makes her female characters shine. If you didn't think you could fall any more in love with the next mistress of the King, you do. Another steals your heart in a way that plausibly you don't even think should happen. Somehow she endears us as readers to these women by giving them strong, vibrant personalities under a surface innocent-like quality. Sally created Jeanne in a manner in which she blazes up the page with her light-heartedness. It's apparent Jeanne gave Louis XV a new sense of normalcy to readers that is genuinely lost otherwise, and especially after book two in my opinion, and she remains true to herself even as the people surrounding her at court are nothing less than monsters. However, the intrigue that the book displays as we see the drama unfold creates a desire to turn pages quickly.

Madame du Barry is the focus of the book, but this time around, Sally does juxtapose chapters between her and Adelaide, the daughter of King Louise XV. I suppose that Adelaide is the villain in that she persecutes du Barry in her mind as well as outwardly. We see a poor woman's rise to court paralled with a woman who has known luxury throughout her life. We see the extravagant nature of this time, spiraling in increasing fashion out of control, and why it led to the horrific revolution. We even get to see Marie Antoinette in this book, and I was thrilled, as she's one of my favorite historical people to read about. The reasons for the uprising, even though we all know them, are made evident in this novel, and we see the desecration of the royal family. However, this happens all the while as we still focus on the emotions and action of the female characters at the heart of the story.

In the spirit of author Juliet Grey/Leslie Carroll, Sally Christie has brought readers an excellent series of historical fiction sprinkled with beautiful sentences and scenes ripe with descriptions so as if you are living right there in the moment. *The Enemies of Versailles* is the best of the three. I can't wait to see what else she writes in the future. I'll be one of the first in line. Highly recommended!

I was given a complimentary copy in exchange for a review.

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## **Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says**

Here we are at the end, the last book in *The Mistresses of Versailles* trilogy that started with the *Sisters of Versailles* and the five Nesle sister sisters, with four of them becoming mistresses to the King before

Marquise de Pompadour took over the story and the King's affection in *The Rivals of Versailles*. In *The Enemies of Versailles* is Marquise de Pompadour dead and it's Jeanne Becu later Comtesse du Barry that will be the last mistress of the King. With du Barry comes also the end as the French revolution is looming on the horizon. She may not be the one to bring down a dynasty. But, the world she will come to belong to, the court is miles away from the ordinary people. And, the people have had enough! Off with the heads!

*The Enemies of Versailles* is a fabulous ending to a fabulous trilogy. I have enjoyed each book, but I have to admit that *The Rivals of Versailles* is the book I loved the most. Why, because I came to adore Marquise de Pompadour. She was such a marvelous person and the one that perhaps was the best for the Louis XV. I found her to be both strong and smart. Jeanne, Comtesse du Barry, on the other hand, is in her own way a very nice person. I did not, however, like her as much as I liked de Pompadour. But, what I liked with Comtesse du Barry is her like of scheming, it was everyone else around her that schemed. I think she would have been just as happy with a comfortable life with someone that she loved. Now, the book also had the point of view from Adelaide, the daughter of Louis XV. And I liked the contrast between the two main characters. Adelaide is such a stuck up person, who all through her life only wants her father's love. But, every mistress he has is an enemy to her, but it's not much she can do about that.

The books can be read separately, but I recommend starting from the beginning. By starting from the first book will you meet a young Louis XV and you get to follow his life through the women that he chose as mistresses. Also, through the books, can one also follow the growing dissatisfaction among the people.

***Sally Christie is a superb author and when I came to the end of this book was all I could think "I want more, I want her to continue the story, I want the story of Napoleon through the eyes of the women around him".***

**4.5 stars**

*I want to thank the publisher for providing me with a free copy through NetGalley for an honest review!*

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### **The Lit Bitch says**

Here we are yet again with another book series reaching its conclusion! On the whole this has been a solid, well written, and interesting series and I was sad to see it coming to an end.

I had big expectations for this conclusion and overall I wasn't disappointed.

There is something so elegant and magnetic about the French court.....at least for me. While my heart will always be in the British court, the French have an elegance and lure that is different than other books on royalty. Having enjoyed the other two books in the series, I was excited to see where this book would take us in the court.

I've read some books on royal mistresses so I know a little about the Comtesse du Barry before reading this story. Of all Louis's mistresses, this was the one that intrigued me the most. Reading her story (albeit the historical fiction version) was insightful and intriguing. One of the things that I noted about Christie's other books, was the way she portrays her female lead characters.

I've read a a lot of nonfiction books on royalty and that talk about the relationships Louis had with his mistresses, but none of the books made the mistresses stories as 'real', sexy, and yet modern as Christie has done in her books. And this installment was no different.

Christie keeps the dialogue modern, the text crisp, and the historical facts to the point and relevant. She doesn't go off on tangents and I love that about her novels! The story alternates between Jeanne and Madame Adelaide's perspectives which kept things interesting and moving along briskly.

The one things that bothered me at times throughout the novel was Madame Adelaide's inner dialogue and thoughts. I felt like she was spoiled and arrogant and kind of annoying at times. Yes she was a princess and as other reviewers commented, her inner dialogue was a little over the top which I would agree with.

Overall I thought the account of their lives was believable and interesting. I wasn't as invested in this one as I had been with the other books in the series but on the whole I felt like it ended on a high note. I liked how this book incorporated the Revolution as well as the having Marie Antoinette come into play. This is a well researched but yet fresh and modern novel with scandal and intrigue built it!

See my full review here

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### **Elysium says**

The book focuses on the last official mistress of Louis XV, Jeanne Becu, better known as Comtesse du Barry. Coming from humble origins she gets a lot of enemies on her way to Versailles and one of them is Madame Adelaide, daughter of the king.

I've never liked the women in these books but still somehow loved the books. I don't know why but here it didn't work out so well. They were both selfish and wanted the easy life. Adelaide might know Greek but knows nothing about real life. And Jeanne practically grew on the streets; you would think that kicked some sense into her but no. She certainly wasn't picked for her wits for sure... Even Marie Antoinette was silly and frivolous but even she grew up a bit (too late but still) when needed.

I did feel sad about Louis XV, though. I haven't been a huge fan of him but I could feel his frustrations with his grandson. Of course, he didn't help his grandson's time as a king. Getting a kingdom on a brink of a revolution and debauched life Louis lived and money spending...

I would have liked if it was better stated in what year we were because suddenly you notice the story jumped 2 years, 10 years...

Overall I think this was ok. Which is a shame because I really loved the previous books and in this, I didn't really care if people got guillotined or not.

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### **Jenny Q says**

#### **Giveaway @ Let Them Read Books!**

4.5 Stars. If you follow my reviews, you know that I adored the first two books in Sally Christie's Mistresses of Versailles trilogy, both making my list of best books in the years they were released, and I was awaiting the final installment with a mix of anticipation and sadness. Madame du Pompadour's novel was a tour-de-force, and she left huge footsteps to follow. I was skeptical that I could fall in love with the woman who took her place alongside an ageing king who had grown so debauched, cruel, and oblivious that no woman could possibly want to be his mistress for anything other than the perks. But I was wrong.

We first meet Jeanne Becu as a seven-year-old child working as a servant in a courtesan's household. Her unparalleled beauty, even at such an early age, makes life difficult for her as lecherous men seek to take advantage of her and women are jealous of her. She soon finds herself shipped off to a convent, where she spends the next ten years of her life. Though she stifles under such harsh living conditions and religious teachings, Jeanne's generous heart and sweet nature earn her many friends, and when she is finally released, she quickly lands a job at one of Paris's most exclusive dress shops, where beautiful girls attract customers and help sell the wares. Then one day the Comte du Barry walks in, and the rest is history. I knew little about Jeanne other than that she was Louis XV's last mistress, so there were a few surprises for me as I savored this story, some delightful, some tragic, so I will leave the details of what happens from here for the reader to discover.

This book differs from the others in that we have alternating chapters from the viewpoint of Jeanne's avowed enemy, Princess Adelaide. Desperate for any scrap of attention from her father, she determines to be a spinster and convinces her younger sisters to do the same, so that she may always be at her father's court. Thus she never knows romantic love and cannot understand the appeal of intimacy. Though she has a list of reasons why Jeanne, "the harlot," as she calls her, is an abomination in the world of Versailles, underneath it all, her hatred stems from nothing more than pure jealousy. She fosters animosity toward Jeanne in every courtier she speaks to and quickly turns the new dauphine, Marie Antoinette, against her. Adelaide is so resistant to change, so wrapped up in comporting herself in the manner she thinks befitting a princess of France, so blinded by her own self-importance that she allows the best of what life has to offer pass her by. In the end, the death of Louis XV sets both women adrift.

The contrast between these two women could not be more stark. I love Jeanne! A truly sweet soul, she is a free spirit, easily contented, a breath of fresh air at court for those smart enough to embrace her, and she genuinely enjoys making people happy. She managed to see qualities in Louis that not many did, and she brought out a side of him that actually managed to make me feel sorry for him, which I thought impossible after declaring my undying hatred for him at the end of Pompadour's book. I dreaded seeing how the court would snuff out her light. She faces more criticism and ostracizing than any of his other mistresses due to her low birth and the few years she spent as a courtesan under Barry's tutelage. Her beauty, charm, and *joie de vivre* do manage to win over some of the courtiers, but she faces constant ridicule and rude behavior. My heart ached for her at times. On the other hand, Adelaide is so ridiculous in her rigidity that I would despise her if I didn't feel so sorry for her. She becomes a relic in a world that is moving on without her.

Because I really didn't warm to Adelaide, even though she is necessary to give us a complete picture of the court and the political crisis developing, and because I sometimes had trouble following the passage of time--in some places the story jumped ahead years in a blink and in others only a few months had passed when it felt like years--and because I also found parts to be somewhat repetitive as Jeanne and Adelaide often described the same events as they alternated chapters, I thought I would end up rating this book a tad lower than the others. But the final chapters, in which the French Revolution comes for both women, were so intense, so fraught with emotion, and so devastating, that my estimation went right back up. And that final page had me in tears, as did the author's note.

The author describes this as a trilogy that "examines the personal life of a controversial monarch through the lives of his many mistresses, with a focus on those intimate moments that make history, just as surely as wars and great men do." And that is a perfect description. All three of these books focus on the very human side of history, the lives lived behind the facts that made the history books, the women relegated to the shadows of famous men's legacies. These are sexy, decadent, intimate, and emotional glimpses into the final years of Versailles' glory and the downfall of the nobility, and though I am sad to see this trilogy come to an end, I can't wait to see what Sally Christie will write about next.

## **Carole P. Roman says**

I loved this book. Don't ask me why I started with this one, but I did and I ordered the other two and will read them next. The story of Jeanne Du Barry captivated me from the very first page. Sally Christie breathes life into her pages, creating a court of very different women, their voices so real, I felt like I was wandering the halls of Versailles right along with them. Madame Adelaide, Louis XV elitist daughter disdains her father's immoral lifestyle creating a rift in their relationship that leaves her both bitter and heartbroken. No man can measure up to her perfect father and she clings to her royal superiority. Her rigid viewpoints won't bend when the young dauphine, Marie Antoinette brings change to the stuffy court. She believes relaxation of routines and rules will bring down the entire society. She incites the new princess to join their resistance to welcoming her father's mistress.

Jeanne du Barry sweeps into the king's life creating a haven of peace from the rigors of ruling. Her refreshing candor is a fine escape for him, but she wants more. She wants to be accepted by his court. A civil war ensues pitting daughter against mistress leaving the king embroiled in their conflict. While he is an absolute monarch in total control of his country, he cannot make his children accept his lady love and bring her the happiness she gives to him.

This story was rich and it transported me to another time. Versailles in all its glory was...glorious. The food, the jewels, the glamour of the court was enjoyable to read about. In contrast, the king's death, followed by political unrest and the horrors that became the French revolution entered the book tiptoeing softly until it smothered the splendor of the great court, extinguishing the end of the 18th century and ushering a new age that would change the world. Sally Christie's book is simply brilliant.

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## **Christina says**

Sally Christie closes the doors of Versailles with the last book of her magnificently tantalizing trilogy we have all been impatiently waiting for since her last release. Through the splendor of palaces, to love and heartbreak, Christie has created such a fun, colorful—and in the end tragic—picture of life during such an important time in history. She gives life and a voice to several women, all interesting in their own right, throughout her books. In *Enemies of Versailles*, it is the infamous Comtesse du Barry and Princess Adelaide. Much like *The Sisters of Versailles* and *The Rivals of Versailles*, *The Enemies of Versailles* contains all the charm, the naughtiness of court life, and the addictive gossipy fun plus more.

You will be tempted to drop everything to finish this book and the entire series if you haven't yet had the chance to pick these books up.

Personally, I found the contrast and the stark differences between the comfort loving Comtesse du Barry and the proper Princess Adelaide to be highly entertaining—from Adelaide's shock and disgust to Comtesse du Barry's want of affection and acknowledgment. The two women were strong and knew what they wanted in life and both facing tragedy within the rise of the revolution. I'm very sympathetic for their fates.

I can't wait for Sally Christie to write more books (and soon I hope).

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## **Lois says**

This was easily my favorite installment of the trilogy. This book featured 2 distinct voices: Adelaide the daughter of Louis XVth and Madame Du Barry, the last mistress of Louis XV.

I do not necessarily agree with the authors portrait of DuBarry as kind, placating and people pleasing. I rather like her but she was most definitely scheming and caluculating. Versailles was a court that required much scheming and calculation.

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## Leeanna says

This review originally appeared on my blog, Leeanna.me.

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*The Mistresses of Versailles* is a trilogy I've been recommending to anyone I know with an interest in historical fiction, especially fiction about French royalty. Most of the French historical fiction I've read centers on Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette or Napoleon. This is the first series I can remember reading that dives into Louis XV and the remarkable list of women and mistresses in his life. Looking at history, the build up to the French Revolution, the problems in the country, and Louis's own problems through the lens of his mistresses and their relationships with him -- it's good reading.

**THE ENEMIES OF VERSAILLES** follows the end of Louis XV's reign through the eyes of two women in his life: Jeanne Bécu, the Comtesse du Barry and Marie Adélaïde, one of his daughters. Jeanne was the first prostitute to be raised to maîtresse-en-titre. Previously, I'd only seen her in fiction through the eyes of Marie Antoinette; the two had a contentious relationship. So it was refreshing to see Jeanne in her own words, so to speak, rather than through the eyes of a teenager who was led to hate Jeanne for her low birth and the influence she had on the king.

The same thing with Adélaïde -- I'd only ever seen her as the stern, spinster aunt, more concerned with etiquette than anything else. There's a lot of that Adélaïde here, but I understood more about her and why she was so set on proper behavior, thanks to the author writing from her viewpoint. Adélaïde's story is quite tragic really, and I appreciated the chance to see inside Versailles from such different perspectives.

Jeanne and Adélaïde both want the same thing: to make the king happy. But they go about it in vastly different ways, with Jeanne actually providing happiness and Adélaïde failing miserably because she tries to safeguard what little is left of her father's virtue. As the women age, Adélaïde's evolution from royal to citizen reminded me of the Marquise de Pompadour's evolution from bourgeois to marquise.

If you haven't read the other books in the series, and say you're interested in Jeanne or Adélaïde, you can read **THE ENEMIES OF VERSAILLES** without being lost. I do recommend you read the other two, because I think each volume builds upon the last, both with the women in Louis's life and the history leading up to the French Revolution. This final volume isn't escapist as the first two (I compared them to a historical soap opera), but a worthy end to the trilogy. I look forward to see what Sally Christie tackles next!

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### Disclosure:

Disclosure: I received a copy of this book from the publisher for review consideration; this did not influence my review in any way.

**See more of my reviews:**

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