

BAD
BOYS
OF FASHION

STYLE REBELS AND
— RENEGADES —
THROUGH THE AGES

JENNIFER CROLL

ILLUSTRATED BY ANETA PACHOLSKA



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For my father, Andrew, and his purple plaid bell-bottoms.—J.C.

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INTRODUCTION

WHEN YOU THINK about men's clothing, what do you imagine? A dark-colored suit? Jeans and a T-shirt? Those might be obvious answers, but there are lots of other options: safety-pinned leather pants, bright-pink tailored suits, team jerseys, metallic purple jumpsuits with plunging necklines, preppy polo shirts—or even dresses. Some men like to blend in, while others like to stand out, and there's a dizzying variety of ways sartorial rebels can make their mark, whether they choose a pair of brightly colored high-tops or a bedazzled one-piece. So why do we tend to think of men's clothing in such limited ways?

Up until just over two hundred years ago, men's fashion was far more showy than it is today. Colorful tights, billowy pantaloons, high heels, flowing coats in luxurious fabrics, and large, curly wigs were all considered mainstream men's fashion. Being

able to dress decadently was a sign that a man had money, and in general, having money meant having power and status. Show-offy fashion, for men, was a way to demonstrate that they were important.

Men only began to dress more simply after the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, both of which created massive social change in the late eighteenth century. The French Revolution violently overthrew the monarchy as well as all of its symbols—including fancy dress. Meanwhile, the Industrial Revolution's booming factories created a large middle class of working men who needed practical clothing for their jobs. By the early nineteenth century, the aesthetic of a stylish man had entirely changed from an over-the-top, colorful peacock to a somber, dark-colored silhouette.

But that wasn't the end of it. That simple uniform ended up being

something rebellious men could reject, play with, or replace. The dandies of the nineteenth century polished and perfected stylish dress, adopting crisp tailored suits and elegant accessories. And partway into the twentieth century, growing wealth and the end of child labor helped create an entirely new class in society: teenagers. Before that point, children had moved directly into adulthood and all its responsibilities, but beginning roughly in the 1940s, they spent more years in school, were given allowances, and had spare time to do what they wanted—which often meant misbehaving and rejecting the culture of their parents. New youth subcultures kept appearing, each one with edgy new fashions: greasers with jeans and leather jackets, hippies with bell-bottoms and tie-dye, punks with torn T-shirts and Mohawks. These subcultural styles allowed teenage boys to prove they were nothing like their boring parents just by putting on a new outfit.

Teenagers weren't the only ones

shaking up menswear in the twentieth century. Civil rights movements were pushing for racial equality, gay rights, and sexual equality—and as they did, they brought with them unique fashions that had been growing and thriving in oppressed communities into the mainstream. The end of segregation meant that African American fashion trends, like zoot suits and, later, hip hop fashion, were soon worn by everyone. Dressing ultra-fashionably or androgynously—as some gay men did—became more accepted in the straight community. And the women's movement, with its push for the equality of the sexes, criticized the idea that beauty and fashion were uniquely female obsessions, freeing them up to be adopted by men; if women could spend time on their appearances, men could, too. By the early twenty-first century, many people rejected the idea that gender was a binary between male and female—meaning that gender-nonconforming dress might not just indicate a man in rebellion,

but a person defining their gender in a way that makes sense to them.

Today, a teenager might still wear the jeans and T-shirt that a 1950s greaser did, but he's got choices thanks to the rebellious fashion icons in this book who changed the definition of menswear with their own non-conformist choices. If he thinks of himself as a rule-breaking outsider, that teen could spike his hair and wear a torn punk T-shirt like Malcolm McLaren, or if he considers himself a cultural critic, put on a natty suit and tie and pretend he's a witty nineteenth-century aesthete like Oscar Wilde—or the modern equivalent, a hipster.

He could prep up his image with a pink polo shirt like a young Kanye West or really push some boundaries with a kilt, like a latter-day West. Or if he's a real bad boy, he could throw on a leather jacket, jeans, and motorcycle boots like Marlon Brando. Throughout the pages of this book, McLaren, Wilde, West, Brando, and twenty-six other famous men prove that men's fashion is as varied and interesting as the lives men lead and, most of all, that clothes have meaning—just like those rich eighteenth-century guys in tights and curly wigs did, men today use clothing to tell the world what they're all about. ♦

CHAPTER ONE

LOUIS XIV

FASHION RULER

FULL NAME: Louis-Dieudonné de Bourbon

BORN: September 5, 1638,
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

DIED: September 1, 1715, Versailles, France

OCCUPATION: King of France

BAD BOY CRED: Opulent fashion helped Louis XIV
claim power . . . and keep it.



LOUIS XIV

In front of the rapt crowd watching the court ballet, a young man dances on a dark stage, barely lit by a silvery light. As he dances, he sings: "The sun following me is young Louis. All the stars will flee once the great king advances!" Then the stage becomes brighter, and a figure dances out. He wears a skirt of golden feathers, golden tights, golden shoes, and, on his head, a golden crown in the shape of a sun. The crowd collectively gasps, and from the back of the theater, some people start yelling. "Vive le roi!" they call. "Long live the king!"

Louis XIV was known as the Sun King, a name he chose to associate himself with godly power and divine beauty. He reigned over France for seventy-two years, a period of prosperity and stability often referred to as "le Grand Siècle" (the Great Century), in which he cemented his country's status as the leading European power. One of the ways he communicated and held on to power was through fashion. Louis dressed in an elaborate, ornate, and expensive manner meant to make him look more like a god than a man. At the same time, he set sartorial rules that positioned France to become the world's center of fashion.

THE LITTLE KING

FOR LOUIS, THERE was never any doubt about what path his life would take. His greatness was ordained. He was the eldest son of Louis XIII, the King of France, which meant that according to succession rules he, too, would be king someday. At the time of his birth, there was a great deal of anxiety about whether his mother would deliver a boy or a girl; only a son could be heir to the throne. So when Louis was born, his parents were so overjoyed that they named him Louis-Dieudonné—French for “gift of God.”

Louis took his name to heart. When he was officially baptized, at age four and a half, he was dressed in a flowing silver gown, and afterward, he was taken to see his father, who was ill. His father, the king, asked Louis what his name was. Louis replied, “Louis the fourteenth.” His father told him, “Not yet, but soon.” Two months later, the senior Louis passed away,



A teenage Louis posing in his coronation robes.

and Louis-Dieudonné became King Louis XIV. He wasn't even five years old. Of course, a small child can't rule a country, and so his mother, the queen, acted as regent until he was old enough to rule.

Louis came of age when he turned thirteen, and he made a formal procession to parliament to declare his assumption of power. Accompanied by a royal cavalcade adorned in red and white feathers, he rode through Paris on horseback, wearing a richly embroidered suit so ornate that

viewers compared him to “a young Apollo.” All along the way, crowds cheered him on, yelling, “*Vive le roi!*” However, his official coronation was delayed for almost two years, mostly due to military conflicts in northern France.

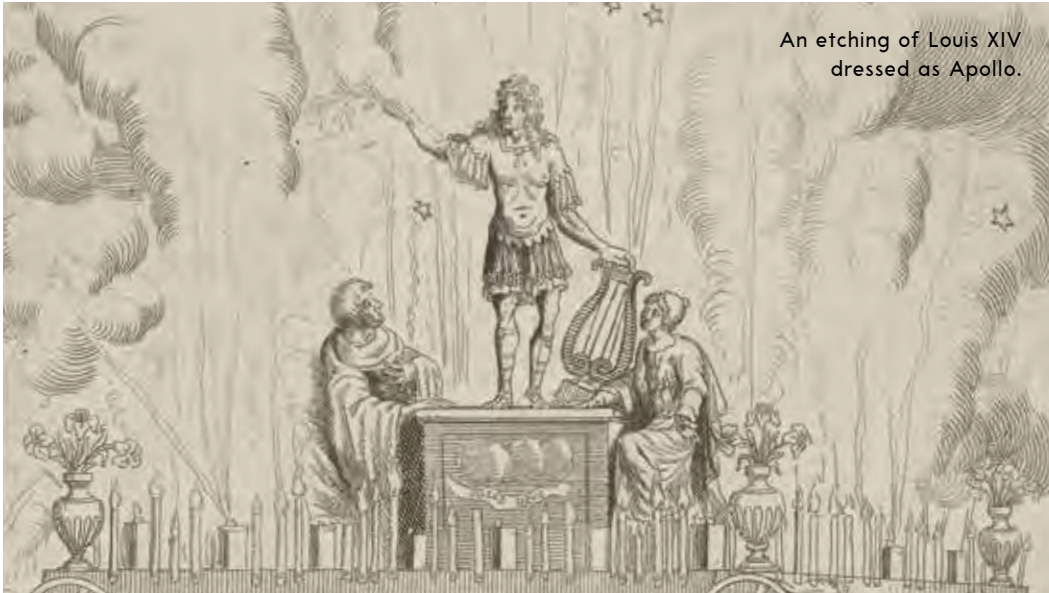
For Louis, those two years were spent making an impression on his subjects.

APOLLO

In Greek mythology, Apollo was an important god who was associated with the arts, poetry, medicine, and the sun. Since ancient times, Apollo has been a popular subject for artists, who have usually depicted him as a handsome young man—sometimes accompanied by sun imagery.



SONG AND DANCE MAN



An etching of Louis XIV dressed as Apollo.

AT THE TIME of Louis's reign, court ballets were staged for the purposes of entertainment—and propaganda. These ballets weren't like the ballets of today. They did involve dancing, but they also incorporated singing, poetry, and elaborate sets and costumes. The roles were all played by monarchs and members of their court, but the performances were staged in public, so anyone could come. Because of that, they offered opportunities for rulers

to present themselves in a flattering light before ordinary people.

When he was fourteen years old, in 1653, Louis performed in a thirteen-hour-long court ballet called *Ballet de la Nuit*. The timing was important; from 1648 to 1653, France had been embroiled in a series of civil wars called the Fronde, in which the French nobility rose up against the monarchy. Louis and his forces ultimately won, but the experience made him distrust

the aristocracy and more determined to prove his absolute power. Dressed in an over-the-top golden costume, Louis played the role of Apollo, or, as he was named in the ballet, the Sun King. The ballet's message was clear—Louis was a sort of god whose power should be respected. Forever after, he was associated with the divine, and became known as the Sun King.

Midway into his reign, Louis moved his court from Paris to Versailles, a residence just outside of Paris that he spent a fortune on transforming into an expansive, glittering palace, full of

mirrors and silver. He pressured the nobility to spend time there—if they were at court, Louis could keep them under control. At Versailles, court life became a performance as elaborate as a ballet. Nobles wanted to get close to the king—often during his *lever*—but there was a dress code required for attendance at Versailles. Louis issued an edict declaring that all his courtiers had to be fashionable. Men were required to wear a silk or velvet coat, covered in embroidery and jewels, called a *habit habillé*. The higher a man ranked, the more elaborately he

LEVER AND COUCHER

Dressing and undressing was a highly ritualized performance for Louis XIV. During his *lever* (rising), Louis would welcome visitors into his chamber while he dressed, beginning with those closest to him in terms of power and influence. While the tradition existed before Louis, he transformed it into a spectacle, and a formal one, too: courtiers weren't granted an audience with the king unless they were dressed in their finest clothing. The entire procedure, which began when the curtains of his bed were thrown back and ended with him heading to mass, took about an hour and a half. He had a similar procedure at night, called a *coucher*.



was expected to dress. A room full of courtiers was like a showcase for the French fashion industry, as Louis had banned all foreign-made clothing—a rule that immediately increased business for French fashion. Dressing this way was extraordinarily expensive, and some thought that Louis’s rules were another way to keep courtiers at bay—if they were spending all their money on clothing and spending all their time at court, they wouldn’t have the time or resources to rebel against him.

Above: Examples of court fashion during Louis XIV’s reign.

IT’S 8:00 A.M. Inside the bedroom at Versailles, the curtains on a four-poster bed are drawn back to reveal the king. Several attendants rush to help him remove his shirt and put on a fresh one. Soon there is a crowd gathered as the king shaves; dons a beautiful frock coat; puts on a long, curly black wig; and pulls on his gloves. Finally, he showily pulls silk stockings over his legs and slides his feet into shoes with diamond buckles and red heels.

IF THE SHOE FITS



OF COURSE, LOUIS set the bar with what he wore himself. At the point that Louis came to power, Spanish fashions were in vogue—and the Spaniards wore rigid, black, somber clothing. Louis overturned all of that with his brightly colored, over-the-top attire. He would wear silk and satin coats, silk stockings held up by garters, French-lace shirts, a curly black wig, and red high heels. His collection of clothing was so expansive and

elaborate that he had to hire a fashion director, or *grand maître de la garde-robe*, to manage his wardrobe, which was stored in several different rooms. He had an official shoemaker, too, who designed high heels that were meant to make him look taller (Louis was only five four, and he felt the extra height helped him look more kinglike) and accentuate his stocking-clad legs, which Louis considered to be one of his good features. The shoes had red heels, often about four inches high, which were sometimes engraved with battle scenes. Louis decreed that only members of his court could wear red heels, and after that, red heels became a status symbol for men.

The wig that Louis wore also sparked a trend, and long, curly wigs—which weren't cheap—became another class marker. Long hair for men had already been in fashion, however, and Louis adopted a wig for reasons other than style. His hair

began thinning when he was only seventeen years old, likely due to syphilis, a very common sexually transmitted disease that at the time had no cure. One of the symptoms of syphilis was baldness, and Louis, worried that a bald head would tarnish his reputation, commissioned a grand wig to hide it. The ploy worked, and rather than being seen as a cover-up, a wig became de rigueur.

In order to make sure everyone knew how grand and powerful he was, Louis turned to printed propaganda. He created a printmaking department within the monarchy and employed France's best etchers and engravers to help record his likeness. The prints, which depicted Louis, as well as important festivals and military victories, were given as gifts to foreign rulers and sold at French

HIGH HEELS

High heels were originally designed for Persian soldiers who fought on horseback; the heels helped them stand up in their stirrups so they could shoot bows and arrows. Eventually the trend caught on in Europe. Because they were military garb, high heels were associated with masculinity, and men wore them to look more virile. Soon they were worn by men of all classes, and the aristocracy set themselves apart by adopting heels that were higher and more impractical. Women only began wearing high heels later—to give their outfits a masculine edge.

Right: Louis XIV pointing a toe in his famous red heels.



markets. Louis also produced a series of medallions engraved with his likeness, which circulated through French society. This meant that everyone had a certain picture of Louis in their minds: an image that had been carefully tailored by Louis to make himself appear as impressive and kingly as possible. Distributing prints of his likeness also helped popularize the king's fashion style.

Over the years Louis was in power, French fashion spread across the European continent, and soon, people

were dressing like Louis everywhere from Spain to England. The proliferation of French fashion across Europe cemented France as the center of the fashion industry: due to Louis, French fabrics and designs were considered to be the best, and the increased demand created jobs in a myriad of fashion-related fields. Today, France still holds a position of dominance in the global fashion industry, all thanks to what Louis started.

Louis's reign marked the peak of extravagant men's fashion. Not long



A SMALL GROUP of people cluster around a booth in the crowded Paris market. They pass between them a piece of paper, which bears an illustration of a pompous-looking man posing with flowing curly hair and high heels. "His shoes are exquisite," one says. "I should buy this. Then I can show my cobbler what good shoes really look like!"

Left: A medallion bearing Louis XIV's image.

after his death in 1715, the tide turned. The French Revolution in 1789 toppled the aristocracy headed by Louis's grandson, Louis XVI. During the violent years afterward, clothing was considered an important way to show your political affiliation—and dressing like the aristocracy was dangerous. Members of the aristocracy were guillotined, and clothing that signified noble status, like silks, velvets, and taffetas, was banned. The Industrial Revolution, which began in 1769, had an even more pronounced effect. Prior to that, fashion had largely been dictated by the upper classes, but the factory jobs of the Industrial Revolution popularized streamlined fashions for the new middle class. Gone were elaborate robes, frilly shirts, silk stockings, and buckled shoes, and in their place were simple, practical, dark-colored suits. This shift was so dramatic that it even has a name: the Great Masculine Renunciation.

Though men today don't dress anything like him, Louis had a huge influence on modern fashion.

Typical French fashion from the end of Louis XIV's reign.



The rules he created for the dress of courtiers and French suppliers turned France into the world's dominant fashion power, a role it has never given up. More than that, King Louis XIV proved that fashion isn't frivolous: it's a potent tool that helped him communicate power to whoever looked his way. ♦

FASHION SPOTLIGHT

NELSON MANDELA

FULL NAME: Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

BORN: July 18, 1918, Mvezo, Union of South Africa

DIED: December 5, 2013, Johannesburg, South Africa

OCCUPATION: Revolutionary, political leader, president of South Africa

BAD BOY CRED: Mandela's patterned Madiba shirts proved he was a different kind of leader.



REJECTION OF AUTHORITY was Nelson Mandela's political trademark. The former revolutionary leader who became South Africa's president brought that same ethos to his fashion, making what other world leaders wore look boring, conservative, and predictable.

Despite his later rebellion, Mandela was actually born into royalty: he was part of the royal family of the Thembu tribe in South Africa. As a child, he was given the name Rolihlahla, which means "troublemaker"; he only became "Nelson" when he attended a missionary school run by