



Casanova's Parrot: And Other Tales of the Famous and Their Pets

Mark Bryant

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Sir Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler, Alexander the Great and Charlemagne, Ernest Hemingway, Margaret Mitchell, and Mark Twain—they orated, marched, and wrote their way into history. Less publicly, they also doted on their pets. So have generals, presidents, monarchs, poets, painters, philosophers, explorers, scientists, and countless other celebrities down through the centuries. This entertaining compendium of tales, from that of a ten-year-old Alexander taming a wild black stallion to the story of a Nazi dictator's infatuation with his Alsatian, Blondi, casts the human nature of frequently formidable public figures in new light. The pets in this book's lively pages leap, shriek, squawk, crawl, curl, fly, spill, taunt, rule, and inspire. They also bite, as did Josephine's dog, Fortune, on his mistress's wedding night, evidently convinced that she was being attacked by Napoleon in her bed. More dignified, Freud's chow, Jo-Fi, for seven years faithfully attended the illustrious doctor's sessions of analysis—to no recorded effect on the analysands, or the dog. Then there was the Cromwells' pet monkey, which kidnapped baby Oliver and dragged him to the rooftop of the family house. And Casanova's parrot, which raucously repeated in the streets a stream of obscenities attached to the name of his master's former amour. Or the pooch that Dorothy Parker called Woodrow Wilson. Like most of the colorful cases in this amusing volume, Parker's relationship with her pooch reveals as much about the private quirks and personal idiosyncrasies of the owner as it does the pet. Black-and-white illustrations throughout add to this engaging collection of true and often comical tales.

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