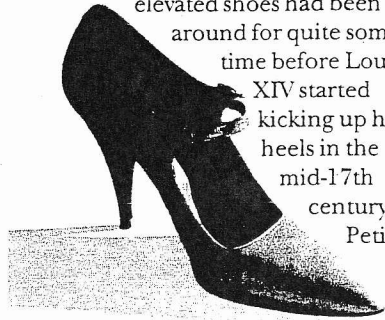


# Fact or Fiction?

**Q** Did the French king Louis XIV really invent high heels?

**A** No. The trendsetting Sun King often gets credit, but elevated shoes had been around for quite some time before Louis XIV started kicking up his heels in the mid-17th century. *Petite*



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brides Catherine de Medici and Mary Tudor (a.k.a. Bloody Mary) both wore high heels to their royal weddings a century before Louis was born.

The diminutive king did make shoes

with ornately embellished heels

wildly popular among

the *men* of his day, however. The fashion not only showed off the king's shapely calves (an asset he was quite proud of), but it turned the monarch and members of his royal court into people others could literally look up to. In fact, Louis was so fanatical about the power height symbolized that he made it a

crime for anyone other than the privileged classes to wear high-heeled footwear.



King Louis XIV, a man who loved high heels