

SAVING VERSAILLES!  
(Durée 30mn)

**CHARACTERS**

**Jacques JAUJARD, Deputy Director of France's National Museums**

**Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ, Deputy Head Curator at the Palace of Versailles**

**Pierre LADOUÉ, Head Curator at the Palace of Versailles**

**Narrator (female voice)**

Joined by

**Patrice BONNET, Architect in Chief for the Estate and Palace of Versailles**

***Narrator***

*Palace of Versailles, June 1939*

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Gentlemen... *[he strikes a match and lights a cigarette]* thank you both for your time. *[pause]* As you well know, these are serious times. I had a brief discussion with the minister earlier this week, and the current situation leaves little room for optimism. We came within a whisker of another war last year, but as things now stand conflict seems inevitable. In light of these "special" circumstances, we now urgently need to prepare our museums, our staff and their families for war. Last year, the Sudeten Crisis revealed some of the chinks in our organisation, perhaps even some of its weaknesses. I am counting on you to make effective preparations at Versailles over the coming months. Every detail needs to be considered, every eventuality anticipated, starting now.

***Narrator***

*In the summer of 1938, Adolf Hitler threatened to annex the Sudetenland, a predominantly German-speaking region of Czechoslovakia. This political stand-off, referred to as the 'Sudeten Crisis', set alarm bells ringing all over Europe: war was afoot. In France's museums, time was of the essence: Versailles placed an order for fifty wooden cases to hold its most precious artworks, which were to be removed from Paris as a matter of utmost urgency. Six trucks were requisitioned for this evacuation operation. However, due to a lack of time, planning, materials and manpower, not a single work was removed from the palace. The Louvre, meanwhile, had evacuated a considerable proportion of its collections to the Château de Chambord, including the priceless Mona Lisa.*

*The Munich Agreement, signed in late September 1938, restored a degree of calm to Europe. But the experience had been a chastening one for Versailles: the palace's response to the emergency had been wholly inadequate. War had been avoided, for now, but conflict seemed more inevitable than ever before. When would the hostilities commence? Nobody knew, but everybody had a duty to be prepared...*

*Jacques Jaujard, the unassuming Deputy Director of National Museums, is calling on the head curators of France's leading museums to discuss their plans for protecting their collections,*

*orchestrating a vast campaign of “passive defence.” At Versailles, the gargantuan task of protecting the palace’s masterpieces falls to Pierre Ladoué, only recently appointed as director of the museum, but also to Charles Mauricheau-Beaupré, his deputy, who has worked at Versailles for decades... Between them they have the unenviable task of deciding which works will be prioritised in the event of an evacuation.*

**(reprise)**

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Mauricheau, I have before me the evacuation strategy for furniture and artworks which you submitted to the Ministry in 1933... *[rustling of paper]* We have already spoken about this on several occasions: we need to agree upon a more stringent selection policy for the works to be saved. We don’t want to make the same mistakes we did last year. You simply cannot evacuate as many works as the Louvre, it’s just not possible. We don’t have the capacities.

**Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ**

The Head Curator at the time was Gaston Brière; he asked me to make plans for protecting as many works as possible. The plan is perfect in that respect. But we were short on technical detail, on directives. We had no guiding vision.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Since 1933, we’ve all witnessed the evacuation of museums in Spain... We are better prepared, these days.

**Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ**

When we were drawing up that evacuation strategy, we had no idea that things were going to get so bad, so quickly. Obviously, we will be happy to revise our plans immediately.

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

As the new Head Curator, that’s my job, not yours, my dear deputy.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Mr. Ladoué, I never suggested otherwise. This is hardly the time for squabbling, so if you don’t mind I would ask you to put your differences to one side. We need to act quickly and put the interests of Versailles first, because that is what is at stake here. Mauricheau has been handling these matters for years now, it is only right that he should continue to be involved with the evacuation strategy, even if only for the Trianon collections, which he knows better than any of us.

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

Of course, Sir. In any case, thank you for clarifying our roles. There have been suggestions from some quarters that I do not know Versailles well enough to be of any use in saving it... But let me take this opportunity to say it again: you can count on me. I have already said as much to our Director, Henri Verne.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Hmm, very well then. Mauricheau, remind us how many works you included in your first evacuation strategy.

**Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ**

For the palace alone we counted, for those works to be evacuated as a matter of emergency [*rustling of paper*]: 481 paintings, 245 chairs and furniture items, 30 tapestries, 34 clocks... A total of 840 items from the palace itself and 157, to be precise, from the Trianon collections.

Of course, these numbers correspond only to 'Category One' artworks: artefacts which it would be simply unthinkable to leave *in situ* ...

**Jacques JAUJARD**

And what about Category Two?

**Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ**

For the second round of evacuations, we have identified [*rustling of papers*] 2,000 works. 2,000 ... approximately 1,000 paintings, 700 pieces of furniture, 250 sculptures, 80 ceramic works...

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Too many... far too many...

**Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ**

In this second category I have included works which would be difficult to transport: David's *Distribution of the Eagle Standards*, Delacroix's *Battle of Taillebourg*, to name but a few... they would need to be rolled up, which requires a lot of manpower and I know... the circumstances are not ideal. If it really came to it, I would recommend leaving these large paintings at the palace, protecting them in dedicated shelters, then evacuating them at a later date if we are able to do so.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Thank you Mauricheau. Speaking of manpower, what is the current situation Mr. Ladoué?

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

At Versailles we currently have a staff of 90, 10 of whom are nearing retirement. I'm afraid that a certain number of the remaining 80 will not be of much use when it comes to loading and unloading cases, for example our wounded veterans of the last war [*Pause*] As things stand, I can guarantee around 35 men. What we need to do now is to decide how to divide these men on site, between the Palace of Versailles and the Trianon palaces.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

[*Writing*] So you have 35 able-bodied men, I'll make a note of that. If the Germans were to invade, the number of men available would be severely limited. And of course there is the question of

guarding the depots, which will require extra manpower from your own staff, and from other museums.

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

Apart from the Château de Chambord, have the top brass given any indication of where the other depots will be?

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Ah yes, the depots [*Rustling of papers*], a complicated subject: as you both know, the depots are selected based on location and a number of other key characteristics: the volume of storage space available, the thickness of the walls, proximity to water in the event of a fire, and general cleanliness. As things currently stand, we are confident that we will be able to stock many works from the national collections in a number of highly secure locations. As well as the Château de Chambord, which will be our main depot, the Château de Brissac, in Anjou, has space for a fair proportion of the artworks evacuated from Versailles. We are still in the process of identifying other locations, both private and public. For the time being, this is all highly confidential.

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

Understood. I'll have a memo ready for you by next week, with my proposals for dividing our men between the palace and the depot sites. Will there be special arrangements for men with families?

**Jacques JAUJARD**

We can talk about that on a case-by-case basis. But remind your men that this mission is a natural extension of the work they do here on a daily basis.

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

Whatever happens, we will be sure to abide by the directives. The war will demand great efforts of us all.

**Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ**

If I may interject: I agree with the sentiment, of course, but it is important to remember that some of our staff are very attached to Versailles, they have been with us for many years and many of them live nearby. Their life is here, within these walls. If we were to send them off elsewhere, away from their families, I'm afraid they'd find it very difficult...

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Give me the names and family circumstances of all your staff and we will see what we can do.

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

As I'm sure you are aware, Mr. Brière, my illustrious predecessor, has volunteered to supervise one of the depots, with his wife. I believe he has a connection to the Domaine de Brissac.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Yes, you're quite right, it was mentioned to me the other day. Brière's proposal does not surprise me one bit. He may be retired now, but he remains dedicated body and soul to our museums, especially Versailles [*Pause, sound of pages being turned*] But let's get back to the matter in hand: when will you be able to provide me with a list of the moving companies who will be handling the transportation? This is becoming a matter of some urgency...

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

We finalised the list a few days ago, sir, it was sent directly to your secretary. In addition to the specialist movers, Mauricheau-Beaupré and myself could transport some items in our own vehicles. In 1938, the military authorities could not spare us any moving vans...

**Jacques JAUJARD**

I am aware of that... And I'm afraid to say that you are not the only ones affected by requisitions... [*Pause*] Moving on to the issue of packing the works, and handling the cases... Have your staff been issued with the necessary instructions? What about the list of volunteers willing to help pack the artworks, has there been any change on that front?

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

No, no changes. We have five people who are definitely exempt from military service. One of them is Marguerite Jallut, who has been a curator at the museum for a number of years now. I have full confidence in her. We are fortunate enough to have some very knowledgeable people on our team, trained in the handling of artworks. Because it's certainly not something you want to do in a hurry...

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Very well. [*Pause*] So, to sum up the current situation [*pages rustling*]: we've discussed the issue of artworks being evacuated to depots; as for those works which are impossible to transport, and those considered to be of lesser importance, we need to identify secure, hygienic shelters for them.

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

Yes. Some of the vaulted cellars might be used for storage. For works that are too large or too fragile to transport by car or truck, keeping them on site would allow us to avoid causing irreparable damage. Accidents are certainly to be expected, especially since the roads will not necessarily be safe if war breaks out.

**Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ**

If I may interject again, the major drawback of those cellars is the humidity. In 1919, a year after the end of the war, we finally removed the paintings that had been stored down there and some of them were in a very sorry state. As far as is possible, we need to avoid making the same mistakes this time... In my opinion, the problem is not so much the shelters as the cases we use to stock artefacts. We need bigger cases, with metal linings, for the works that will stay here.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

*[Pause, he thinks]* I approve in principle, but I will need to see a quote. Can you take care of it, Mauriceau?

**Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ**

Thank you, yes of course; I'll get it to you as soon as possible.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Mr Ladoué, do you know if Patrice Bonnet has made any headway with his plans to install shelters for your staff?

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

*[Haughty]* Mr Bonnet has a rather grandiose vision of things... like all head architects! If the rumours are to be believed, he plans to tear up the entire palace courtyard to build an underground concrete bunker. As far as I am concerned, I believe we already have everything we need in the event of an alert. But nobody asked my opinion on the matter. I'm sure the architect in chief will say all the right things in all the right places to get his costly designs approved. In any case, I shall leave these matters to Mr. Bonnet and the ministry.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

I see. I shall have a word with the Director. The safety of the collections is important, but let's not forget the safety of our people. Well then! Gentlemen, before I take my leave of you, are there any other subjects you would like to raise?

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

No. That's all clear enough for me.

**Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ**

And for me, thank you sir.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Perfect. In that case, I shall hop on the next train back to Paris.

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*INTERIOR*

*Sounds of footsteps on wooden floors, then walking down a wooden staircase, then an opening door.*

*Background noise of men at work in the palace (echo etc).*

*EXTERIOR*

*Footsteps on paving slabs.*

*(In the background)*

**Patrice BONNET**

Mr. Jaujard!

**Pierre LADOUÉ**

Speak of the devil... I'm afraid I must leave you. Thank you for your visit, sir, I shall keep you personally informed of the advancement of these matters. I fought the Germans myself in the Great War, they don't frighten me... *[his voice trails off as he moves away]* We'll be ready and waiting for them, although I'm sure our courageous army will stop them in their tracks well before that... !  
*[sound of footsteps receding into the distance]*

**EXTERIOR**

*Sound of footsteps approaching across paving stones. Jaujard take out a cigarette and lights it. This whole outdoor sequence includes background noise for atmosphere: distant conversations, footsteps, birdsong etc.*

**Patrice BONNET** *[voice approaching from a distance]*

Mr. Jaujard. To what do owe the honour? Nothing serious afoot in the capital, I hope...

**Jacques JAUJARD**

No palace revolutions to report... not yet, anyway. But you're just the man I wanted to see. A moment ago I was asking Ladoué about shelters for the staff, in the event that war should break out.

**Patrice BONNET**

Aah... I thought I could feel my ears burning... and I was right!

**Jacques JAUJARD and Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ** *laughter*

**Narrator**

*As part of the passive defence preparations, architect in chief Patrice Bonnet has been put in charge of protecting the gardens, the palace itself and the estate's employees.*

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Nothing to worry about, we barely touched upon the subject, and not a bad word was said about your work! But tell me, what arrangements have been made for the shelters?

**Patrice BONNET**

I have submitted a proposal to the Director of Fine Arts, and am awaiting his response... Have no fear, the staff here at Versailles will be safe from harm in the shelters I have designed, even in the event of intensive enemy bombing. And of course, there shall be no preferential treatment for the employees of the architectural service or those of the museum. Everybody will benefit from the same protection, in a spirit of equality.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Perfect. The Director of Fine Arts does indeed speak highly of your dedication to protecting Versailles.

**Patrice BONNET**

I have been trying to raise these issues with our directors for many years now. All of our precautionary efforts have been focused on the risk of a fire breaking out, but we have also discussed the risk that Versailles could suffer bombing, which is clearly a possibility.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Of course [*Silence*]... Bombing of France's most iconic monuments is our greatest fear. The Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the Arc de Triomphe... all are easy to recognise from the air. And if Paris is at risk, the risk to Versailles is surely twice as urgent...

***Narrator***

*Twenty years previously, on 28 June 1919, the treaty formally sealing Germany's defeat in the Great War was signed in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. The victors imposed the terms of this peace treaty on the defeated Germans, an agreement which was soon decried as a "diktat" by the German people. This peace treaty also represented a form of symbolic revenge over Germany, since it was in the very same Hall of Mirrors, some 48 years earlier in 1871, that the proclamation of the German Empire had taken place. To many, the Palace of Versailles was a potent symbol of the rivalry between the two neighbours.*

*In the late 1930s, as war became increasingly inevitable, the future of Versailles became a cause for concern. In his speeches, Adolf Hitler constantly railed against the injurious peace treaty, which he accused of enslaving the German people.*

*When he railed against Versailles, was Hitler thinking of Versailles the symbol or the place itself? It was impossible to be sure, but at the palace precautions were already being taken to avert a catastrophe. From the risk of looting to the threat of bombing or fires, the palace teams were prepared for all eventualities...*

**Patrice BONNET**

The stakes are twice as high for Versailles, I quite agree... So we need to prepare for the worse and be ready to evacuate as much as possible, if the time should come.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

What exactly would you hope to evacuate?

**Patrice BONNET**

In the palace, the paintings on the ceilings cannot be dismantled and transported. But the wooden panelling can. Those panels are priceless works of art, and must be saved at all costs. Now as you



know, Ladoué does not share my opinion. He believes the wood panelling will be better off staying put. He's wrong. He's wrong about lots of things, as it happens.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

In light of what is at stake here, it is important that we listen to all points of view and consider them objectively. As I see it, the issue of what to do with the wood panelling, and the sculpted décors in general, is a vexed question... Do we really need to dismantle them? In the Louvre, we're not planning to do anything of the sort. It seems too risky to me, there are too many operations involved: dismantling, transportation, storage, not to mention the difficulty of putting them back when it's all over... Some of the panels are warped and curved, as Pierre Ladoué rightly points out. As far as I am concerned, I don't believe that transportation is the best solution.

**Patrice BONNET**

*Mmm ... [Pause, as he thinks]* I understand your point of view, however... As for Mr. Ladoué, I'd rather he concentrated on protecting his own collections. Because he has plenty of work to do on that front, and I know you won't disagree with me, Mauriceau... To protect Versailles you have to know Versailles... and Ladoué has only been here for a few months... you have to earn your place here in Versailles!

**Jacques JAUJARD**

*[Smoking his cigarette, he seems amused]* As eloquent as ever, Mr. Bonnet, but don't forget who the real enemy is...

**Patrice BONNET**

*[Clearing his throat]* As you well know, sir, I care very deeply about protecting this palace. The interiors will be shielded with sandbags to protect against bomb damage. I plan on boarding up the windows with thick planks of wood, but leaving one in every four open, particularly in the Hall of Mirrors and the royal apartments. We are also working on installing fire doors, and some spaces will be fireproofed. The fireplaces in the state apartments will be protected in situ. In the Hercules Room, I recommend shielding the fireplace with a large panel with a triple coating of staff and asbestos...

**Jacques JAUJARD** *interrupting*

And what plans have you made for the exteriors?

**Patrice BONNET**

The statues will remain in place, protected with sandbags and brick shields... This will render them totally invisible, and will offer much more protection in the event of bombing. A far cry from the piles of branches my predecessor installed during the Great War. I don't want to see anymore nonsense in the press about so-called "beavers' dens"... In Versailles, the slightest error gets blown out of proportion! In the groves of the gardens, some of the more elaborate sculpted groups, particularly the Apollo Fountain, will remain in place because they are too bulky to move, but will be protected

on all sides. Last but not least, those statues which can be transported – those on the great lawn, for example – will be evacuated.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

And where do you propose to take them?

**Patrice BONNET**

I recently undertook a bit of reconnaissance work in the region. The statues from the gardens will probably be stored not far from here, at the Abbey of Vaux-de-Cernay, a property owned by Henri de Rothschild. The gardens are easily big enough *[pause]*.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

And the wood panels? Where will they end up?

**Patrice BONNET**

Once we have dismantled them and put them into cases, the wood panels will be sent to the Château de Serrant and the Château de Voré.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

Mmm ... And I suppose you are already making plans for the teams who will guard the depots.

**Patrice BONNET**

Absolutely. Nothing will be left to chance. Or rather, nothing will be left to catch the enemy's eye. That's why we plan to "disappear" the Grand Canal, which is the most recognisable feature of the estate from the air. In 1918, they camouflaged the canal using branches and pontoons, but modern aviation is much more efficient. *[Pause, he takes a deep breath]* We will drain the canal entirely, which will prevent enemy aircraft from locating the palace. A few weeks ago, the prefectural authorities conducted test runs for blacking out all lights in the town. If necessary, Versailles can become totally invisible from the sky.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

*(Doubtful)* I don't think draining the Grand Canal will be a universally popular proposal... Especially if we ask the opinion of the carp living in there...

**Patrice BONNET**

Fortunately for us, carp can't talk... *[Jaujard and Mauricheau laugh]* They will be the least of our worries! Whatever it takes, Versailles will be disguised against aerial reconnaissance... That will also mean painting the vast windows on the roof of the palace: the glass roofs of the Gallery of Great Battles and the Congress Chamber are the biggest of the lot, and the risk is that they will reflect the light of the moon.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

An excellent idea, well spotted.

**Patrice BONNET**

Yes, but none of this will make an iota of difference if we see a repeat of 1938, when machine gun turrets were installed on the rooftops of Versailles. Scandalous! I can think of no better way of attracting enemy bombs.

**Jacques JAUJARD**

I understand your concern, and I myself opposed the move at the time, as soon as I got wind of the sacrilege... I'm afraid I can't make any promises, but you can be sure that I will argue against such measures in the strongest possible terms.

**Patrice BONNET**

Even in peace time, the royal estate of Versailles is fairly surrounded by military facilities: schools, barracks, army camps... All strategic targets for the Luftwaffe... So why tempt fate by having more guns pointed at the sky?

**Jacques JAUJARD**

I'm afraid this is not a new debate... Anyway! Gentlemen, I'm afraid I must be going.

**Patrice BONNET**

Yes of course, I have plenty to be getting on with myself! (*Footsteps*) (*Patrice BONNET, walking away*) And as for the carp in the Grand Canal, don't worry about it: we'll find them a new home. It might not be as glamorous as Versailles, though. If the worst comes to the worst, the local fishermen will be happy!

**Jacques JAUJARD and Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ (laughter)**

**Jacques JAUJARD**

*[Amused]* Excellent, thank you!

*[Footsteps walking away across the courtyard. Charles and Jacques are walking toward the Honour Gate, we can hear their slow, deliberate steps resound on the paving stones]*

**Jacques JAUJARD**

*[Relieved]* What a character... My dear friend, you know as well as I do that we have no time left to waste... I am counting on you, now more than ever, to take charge of this evacuation strategy. My fear is that we may well see a total shutdown of the country's museums within a matter of weeks. Come to think of it, perhaps it is better that we close them rather than invite the public in to gawp at the empty rooms and bare walls.

**Charles MAURICHEAU-BEAUPRÉ**

*[Pensive]* If we have to close down for our own safety, so be it... Whatever the future may hold, you can count on me.

*[Sound of a gate closing, and a large metal key turning in a lock]*

**Narrator**

*On 25 August 1939, just a few days before the outbreak of war, all national museums including the Palace of Versailles closed their doors to the public. In secret, operations began to evacuate their collections. While Patrice Bonnet concentrated on implementing his passive defence strategy, the first convoys left Versailles on 29 August, headed for depots in central and southern France.*

***Sound of general commotion, multiple voices*** *[sounds: typewriters; rapid speech as if dictating a telegram; engines starting; several voices talking]*

Evacuation of 29 August 1939: 7 vehicles

1<sup>st</sup> convoy: 8 trucks loaded with artworks, headed for the châteaux of Brissac and Chambord: numerous paintings including the portrait of Chateaubriand by Girodet, the portrait of Marie-Antoinette with a Rose by Vigée Lebrun, Bonaparte Crossing the Alps by David, various works by Nattier, Van der Meulen etc.; two pieces of furniture: a Louis XIV chest of drawers from the King's Chambers and a Louis XVI chest of drawers from the Queen's Drawing Room

4<sup>th</sup> convoy: 22 paintings, including Louis XV dressed for his coronation by Rigaud

6<sup>th</sup> convoy: 28 paintings, including the Death of Marat by David, and a portrait of Marie Leszczyńska

Evacuation of 2 September 1939: 4 vehicles

2nd convoy: Four trucks laden with artworks destined for the châteaux of Chambord and Brissac; numerous paintings including the Tennis Court Oath by David, works by Van der Meulen, Boucher, Coypel and Vigée Lebrun, along with the twenty-four canvases from the Grand Trianon gallery; the table on which the Peace Treaty was signed, the sofa from the Queen's Drawing Room, armchairs and side tables.

**Narrator**

*On 3 September 1939, France and the United Kingdom declared war on Germany [sound of sirens and boots marching]. The Palace of Versailles, stripped of its treasures, its rich décors and its visitors, was plunged into darkness...*

*On 19 October 1939, Pierre Ladoué wrote to his colleague Gaston Brière, responsible for the depot in Brissac:*

**Pierre LADOUÉ** *[sound of pen on paper]*

*"The palace is putting the finishing touches to its wartime attire. It is dreadful. The leaves are falling in the gardens, gathering on the naked plinths. The wood panels are gradually being stripped off the*

walls. We are roaming about the place with lanterns, since all of the windows have been blacked out, wandering through rooms with pitiful bare walls, yet still capped off with golden ceilings... All we do is write reports, and complain of money problems, and submit requests, often in vain, to the top brass... But you know all this. If Mrs. Brière is with you, please pass on my warmest best wishes, and those of my wife also. We wish you both strength and fortitude in these dark times. Better days will come, of that we can be sure.”

### **Narrator**

*In late 1939 and early 1940, the estate’s artworks and most fragile decorative items were transferred to secret locations for safekeeping. Trucks loaded with hundreds of works of art left Versailles, travelling at an average speed of 25mph along routes which were kept secret, depositing their precious cargoes in Chambord, Brissac, Serrant, Vaux-de-Cernay and Voré. Stripped of the majority of its masterpieces, the palace was not damaged by fighting but did suffer from the harsh weather conditions of that winter: without heating, frost built up in several of the rooms. When the frost melted several ceilings gave way, with water running down the walls and damaging some of the works which had not been evacuated.*

*Meanwhile, the political situation in Europe went from bad to worse. In the spring of 1940 the western front was breached and the bombs of the Luftwaffe rained down on France. As the population fled south, in Versailles an emergency evacuation saw some of the remaining artworks transferred to the Château de Saurches.*

*By 13 June 1940, the German army was on the outskirts of Versailles. The next morning, the first German soldiers ventured into the silent streets of the deserted town.*

*On 14 June only four men stayed behind to defend the palaces of Versailles and Le Trianon...*

### **Narrator**

This podcast was brought to you by the Palace of Versailles. *Saving Versailles!* was written by Nejma ZGAOULA in collaboration with Claire BONNOTTE KHELIL, art historian and scientific adviser to the Palace of Versailles.

Cast:

Narrator: Sélène Assaf

Georges d’Audignon as Jacques Jaujard

Christophe Brault as Charles Mauriceau-Beaupré

François Hatt as Pierre Ladoué

Claude Bernard Perot as Patrice Bonnet

Directed by: Opixido, Mathias Bourre and Andrea Perugini