

# Max and Voltaire

## *Sightseeing and Catnapping*



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**The Max and Voltaire Series™ Book Two**



## CHAPTER ONE

### GETTING THERE

**I**t's a sunny and warm spring day in Ferney-Voltaire, a small town in France close to Switzerland and near the Alps, the highest mountain range in Europe.

*Madame* Rosemarie and her dog Voltaire have just come home from a long walk. His white fur is muddy from playing in the fields. Before going into the house, *Madame* Rosemarie cleans him up with the garden hose.



Voltaire used to live next door. His owners had to give him up for adoption. Although *Madame* Rosemarie already had four cats, she agreed to welcome Voltaire into her home.

When *Madame* Rosemarie and Voltaire enter the house, they are greeted by Voltaire's cat buddies – Max, Zoa, Tish and Say What.

*Madame* Rosemarie adopted Max when he was a kitten. He lived in a bakery in the small town. Max is a handsome cat. His fur is a mixture of brown and beige. He has a sweet tooth and likes to eat *croissants*, a French pastry.

Zoa's fur is all white. She's the only female cat in the household. Like Greta Garbo, an actress who was popular in the 1930s, she likes to be left alone.

Tish has black fur with white markings on his face, chest and the tip of his tail. He likes to cuddle. He also drools.

Say What spends a lot of time outside hunting for mice. When he runs fast, his gray and silver fur sparkles in the sun.

*Madame* Rosemarie greets her furry friends and gives them loving pats on their heads. Just then she hears a ringing sound and so she goes into her den to answer the phone.



Max and Voltaire go outside through the open veranda door to the backyard and are followed by Zoa, Tish, and Say What.

“Today I went for a long walk in a beautiful park,” says Voltaire. “There were lots of other dogs there. We ran and ran and ran through the grass and into a lovely forest. I love trees. There was a great big lake at the other end of the forest. Some dogs were swimming in the lake, so I jumped in and started to do a doggy paddle. I had a lot of fun.”

“Sounds like you had a wonderful day,” says Max. “I’m happy for you.”

“*Merci*,” says Voltaire. “I heard some people talking about this park. It was donated by a very rich man as a special place only for dogs. He loved dogs and wanted to give them a nice space where they could play.”

“I’ve never heard of a park for cats,” says Zoa. “I think cats should have a park of their own, too, so they can run, climb trees, and sit in the sun. Although I don’t like to swim, I’m a good swimmer. I might like to take a swim every now and then.”

*Madame* Rosemarie hangs up the phone and walks into the living room. At the far end of the room is a wall-to-wall bookcase. *Madame* Rosemarie loves to read books. A French provincial style sofa and two arm chairs surround the bookcase. At the other end of the room is a comfortable long reclining chair. This is where *Madame* Rosemarie likes to sit and read.



Max and Voltaire come inside and lie down on the floor near the fireplace in the living room. Zoa is perched on the window sill with Say What. Tish is playing with his tail.

“My friend Suzanne has invited me to visit her,” *Madame* announces. “She lives in a big house close to the sea in a lovely town called Nice (pronounced niece) in the south of France. It’s only about a six-hour drive from here. I’ll ask our neighbor, *Madame* Sweet, to take care of you while I’m away. I’ll only be gone for a week.”

*Madame* Rosemarie walks out of the house to see if her neighbor is home. Max and Voltaire look at each other.



“I was hoping that she would take us with her,” says Max. “I don’t think it’s a good idea for her to be traveling by herself.”

“I agree,” replies Voltaire.

The next morning *Madame* Rosemarie is sitting in her living room reading a travel guidebook about Nice. Voltaire, Max, Zoa, Tish, and Say What are on the veranda.

“I heard *Madame* Rosemarie speaking with our neighbor,” says Max. “*Madame* Sweet agreed to take care of us while *Madame* Rosemarie is away.”

“We have to think of some way to go to Nice with *Madame* Rosemarie,” says Voltaire.

Max paces while he thinks. Zoa jumps up on the table on the veranda and stares out the window. Tish rubs against a chair. Say What chases a fly that is buzzing around on the veranda. Voltaire licks his paws.

“I have an idea,” says Voltaire. “I’ll start limping so she thinks I’m not well. I’m sure *Madame* Rosemarie wouldn’t want to leave me if I’m sick.”

“It’s worth a try,” replies Max.

Voltaire walks into the living room. *Madame* Rosemarie is still reading her travel guidebook. He comes close to her, sits down, and starts to whimper.

“What’s wrong with you?” asks *Madame* Rosemarie.

Voltaire gets up and starts limping around in the living room.



“Oh dear,” she says. “What happened to your leg?”

She touches Voltaire’s leg and he makes a high pitched sound. Max, Zoa, Tish, and Say What are sitting at the other end of the living room watching *Madame* Rosemarie and Voltaire.

“I'd better take you to the vet,” says *Madame* Rosemarie.



“I didn’t know that Voltaire had potential as an actor,” remarks Max.

“Well, it looks like *Madame* Rosemarie is convinced that he’s in pain,” replies Zoa. “I didn’t realize that he had these hidden talents.”

*Madame* Rosemarie helps Voltaire into the car and they drive off to see the vet.

The doctor starts the examination. Every time she touches Voltaire’s leg, Voltaire starts to whine.



“I can’t find anything wrong with Voltaire’s leg,” says the vet. “Just keep an eye on him. If the limp gets worse, bring him back.”

When they get home, *Madame* Rosemarie helps Voltaire into the house. She gives him some water and then helps him to his bed.

“You need to rest your leg,” she tells Voltaire.

*Madame* Rosemarie goes into her study to make a phone call. Max is sitting on the floor next to her.



*“Bonjour,”* says *Madame* Rosemarie. “I’m very much looking forward to seeing you, but Voltaire hurt his leg and I’ll have to watch him closely for a few days. Is it okay if I bring him along?”

Max walks out of the study and finds Voltaire. “The plan is working,” he says.

Later that day, Zoa, Tish, and Say What are sitting in the living room.

“I wonder where Max is,” says Zoa.

“Here he comes,” says Tish. “Where were you Max?”

“I’ve been keeping an eye on *Madame* Rosemarie,” replies Max. “She’s next door visiting with our neighbor, *Madame* Sweet.”



“I like *Madame* Sweet,” says Tish. “She still cuddles with me even though I drool.”

“I think *Madame* Sweet is a bit lonely,” adds Max. “Her children are all grown and have left home. Sometimes I go over to visit her and keep her

company. She gives me *croissants*.”

“I’ve been thinking about *Madame* Rosemarie’s trip,” says Zoa. “We can’t all go with *Madame* Rosemarie. She’s taking Voltaire to keep an eye on his leg. I think that only one of us will be able to sneak into the car. *Madame* Sweet has agreed to come over every day to make sure we have food and water so whoever stays behind will be well taken care of.”

“I like *Madame* Sweet,” says Tish. “I’ll stay home.”

“I prefer to stay home as well,” says Zoa. “I can look after Tish. I can also spend some quality time with myself.”

“What about you, Say What?” asks Max.

“I’ll be busy chasing mice and hanging out with my neighborhood pals,” replies Say What.

“Well, that settles it,” says Max. “I’ll go with Voltaire to make sure *Madame* Rosemarie doesn’t get into any trouble.”

The next morning *Madame* Rosemarie gets up early. She packs her suitcase and takes it out to the car. She goes back into the house to get Voltaire. She helps him out of the house and onto the back seat of the car.

“*Madame Sweet* will take good care of you while I’m away,” she tells Max, Zoa, Tish, and Say What, who are all standing near the car.

Just then, *Madame Sweet* arrives. *Madame Rosemarie* turns to greet her.

“Now, Max!” says Voltaire. “The car door is open. Jump up here and hide under the blanket.”



“I just stopped by to say good-bye,” says *Madame Sweet*. “Have a wonderful trip. Don’t worry. I’ll take good care of our furry friends.”

“*Merci*,” replies *Madame Rosemarie*.

*Madame Rosemarie* gets into the car and waves good-bye to *Madame Sweet*.

“We should be in Nice by late afternoon,” she says as she pulls the car out of the driveway.

Max and Voltaire fall asleep in the car. *Madame*



Rosemarie listens to the radio. After about three hours of driving, she stops the car in a small village. *Madame* Rosemarie opens the back door to let Voltaire out and sees Max sitting on the floor of the car.

“How did you get in here, Max?” asks *Madame* Rosemarie.

Max looks at her and starts to purr.



“Oh dear,” says *Madame* Rosemarie, pointing a finger at Max. “It was very naughty of you to hide in the car.”

*Madame* Rosemarie, Max, and Voltaire walk over to a bench on the sidewalk. Voltaire remembers to limp. *Madame* Rosemarie takes out a bottle of water and two plastic bowls from her bag. She fills the bowls with water and places them on the sidewalk.

"I'm still wondering how you managed to get inside the car, Max," says *Madame* Rosemarie. "I must call *Madame* Sweet and tell her what happened. She'll be worried when she realizes you're not at home. I must also call *Madame* Suzanne and let her know that I'm bringing you along, Max. I left my cell phone in the car. You two sit here and wait for me. Don't wander off."

"She does seem a little upset," says Max.

"I'm sure she'll forgive us," replies Voltaire.

"I hope so," says Max.

"So far, so good," adds Voltaire. "I wasn't sure our plan would work, but I guess that the famous Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, who lived a long time ago, was right."

"What did he say?" asks Max.

"I overheard *Madame* Rosemarie speaking about him with a friend of hers," replies Voltaire. "He said that 'the journey of a thousand miles begins with a

single step’.”

“So I figured that my limp would be that single step,” says Voltaire.

*Madame* Rosemarie comes back from the car. Max and Voltaire are sitting just where she left them.

“I see you two are behaving yourselves,” says *Madame* Rosemarie. “Let’s go for a little walk. I would also like to get a cup of coffee before I continue driving.”