Lovereading4kids.co.uk

Opening extract from

Crystal Coldwater

Written by

Emerald Everhart

Published by

Egmont

All text is copyright of the author

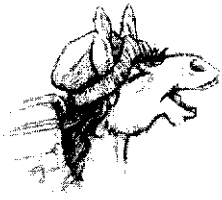
Please print off and read at your leisure.

Who's Who in the Kingdom of the Frosty Mountains

The girls and their pets



Jessica Juniper – *Ballerina from the western Rocks*



Sinbad – *Jessica's pet donkey*



Crystal Coldwater – *Ballerina from the northern Lake*



Pollux – *Crystal's pet white fox*



Laura-Bella Bergamotta – *Ballerina from the southern Valley*



Mr Melchior – *Laura-Bella's pet tiger*



Ursula of the Boughs – *Ballerina from the eastern Forest*



Dorothea – *Ursula's pet bear*



Valentina de la Frou – *Ballerina from the City*



Olympia – *Valentina's pet eagle*

Some other Ballerinas

Rubellina Goodfellow – *Ballerina from the City, and the Chancellor's daughter*

Jo-Jo Marshall – *Another Ballerina from the City, and Rubellina's best friend*

The Teachers

Mistress Odette – *the Headmistress*

Mistress Camomile – *a Ballet teacher*

Master Lysander – *another Ballet teacher, also known as Mustard Stockings*

Master Silas – *the History of Ballet teacher*

Mistress Hawthorne – *the Gym teacher*

Mistress Babette – *the Costume, Hair and Make-up teacher*

Master Jacques – *the Mime teacher*

The Royal Party

King Caspar – *the King*

Queen Mab – *the Queen*

Chancellor Godwin Goodfellow – *the Kingdom's Chancellor*



Prologue

When I was a young Ballerina, an admirer gave me a gift.

It was only a frosted-glass perfume bottle, filled with a sweet scent of lemon and orange. But my admirer told me that



the bottle was the most precious thing he could give, because there was a magical Kingdom inside.

I didn't believe him at first.

But that night, I had a very special dream. I dreamed of a magical Kingdom, the most beautiful land I'd ever seen, filled with delightful people and their very special animals. And the next time I danced, I thought of the Kingdom, and suddenly I danced as I had never danced before. Every night that I wore the perfume, I danced

better than ever, until I was the most famous Ballerina in the world.

But one day, the old frosted-glass bottle was accidentally thrown away.

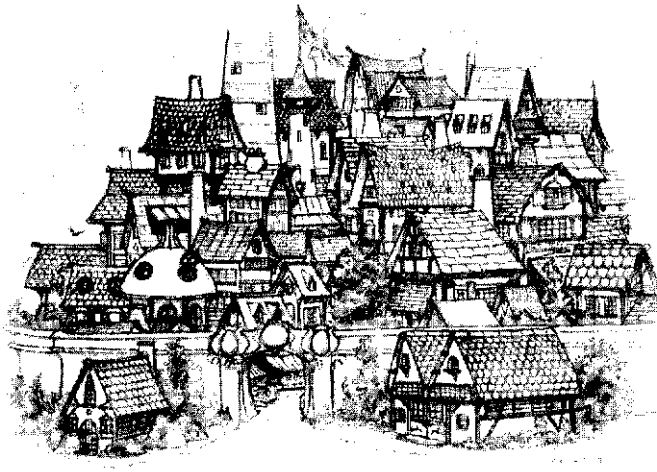
And from that day onwards, I never danced so beautifully again.

I searched for the bottle high and low, but I never found it. I have since had many years to write down what I learned about the Kingdom inside . . .

Inside the bottle, behind snow-capped Frosty Mountains, the Kingdom is divided

into five parts. There are frozen Lakes in the north, warmer meadows in the southern Valley, stark grey Rocks in the west, and to the east, a deep, dark Forest.

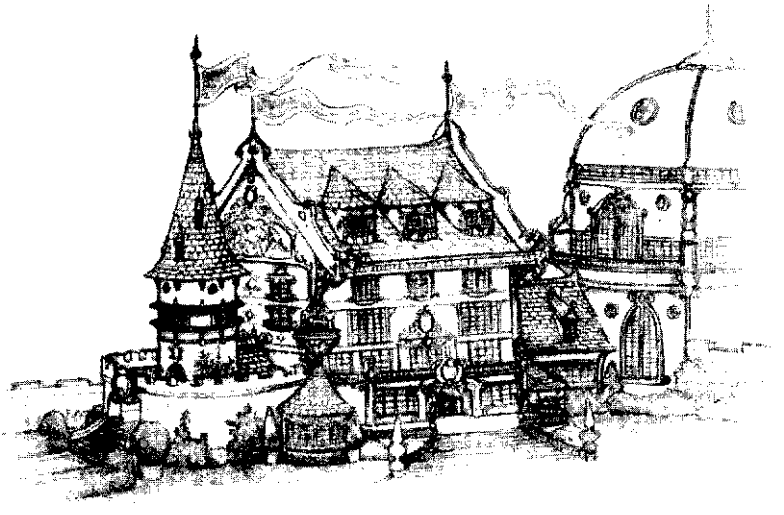
And the City. How could I forget the City? Silverberg, the capital, rising from the



Drosselmeyer Plains like a beautiful new jewel on an old ring.

From a distance, the houses seem to be piled on top of each other. Their brightly painted wooden roofs look as if they hold up the floors of the dwellings above as they wind around and around ever-more-narrow streets. And at the very top of the teetering pile is the biggest building of all: the Royal Palace. It is made from snow-white marble taken from the Frosty Mountains themselves, which glows in the

early morning sun and sparkles in the cold night.



The Royal Palace is the home of the King and Queen. But it is here too, within

the marble walls of the Palace, that you can find the Kingdom's famous Royal Ballet School. This is where the most talented young Ballerinas in the land become proper Ballerinas-in-Training, and really learn to dance. They travel from far and wide. Pale blonde Lake girls journey from the north, dark-haired Valley Dwellers come from the south. Grey-eyed Ballerinas travel from the western Rocks, and green-eyed Forest girls make their way from the east. The City girls have no need to come quite so far.

Of course, they all bring their pets. Each Kingdom Dweller has their own animal companion. And these animals can talk – talk just like you and me. Lake Dwellers keep Arctic foxes or snow leopards, while Valley Dwellers keep small tigers, monkeys or exotic birds. Strong, sturdy Rock Dwellers enjoy the company of sheep, goats and donkeys, while Forest Dwellers keep black bears and leopards. Every City Dweller keeps an eagle.

Out there, somewhere, is my old

frosted-glass perfume bottle.

Out there, somewhere, are the Ballerinas-in-Training who inspired me – Jessica Juniper, Crystal Coldwater, Laura-Bella Bergamotta, Valentina de la Frou and Ursula of the Boughs.

And they will wait for you, until the day that you find them.

Emerald Everhart



CHAPTER ONE
The Project

A new term at the Royal Ballet School had begun. The New Year's air was fresh with possibility, and Jessica Juniper and her four best friends were determined to work harder than ever.

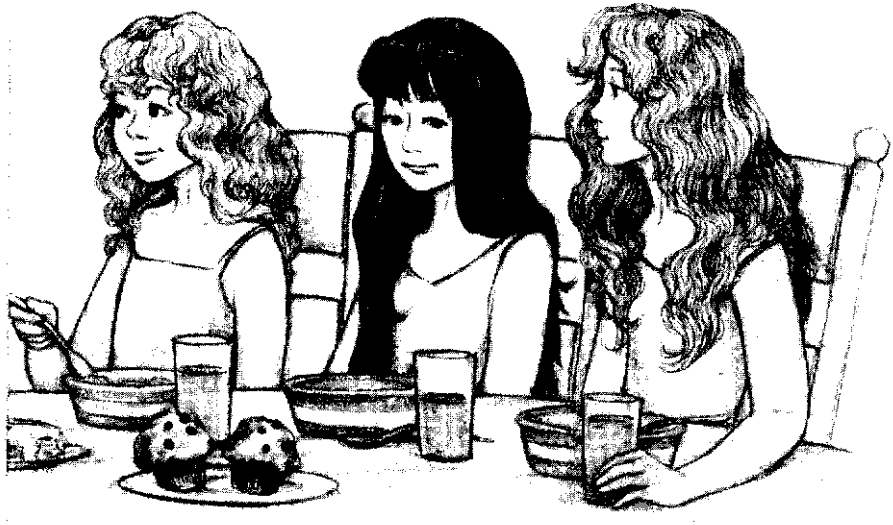
'My New Year's resolution is to get better marks in Mime,' said Jessica, over the breakfast table.

'My New Year's resolution is to do more Ballet practice,' sighed Crys, the



Lake Dweller, although she was already the best dancer in the class.

'I suppose I should try harder at Costume, Hair and Make-up,' laughed Laura-Bella, the Valley Dweller.



'I promised Dad I'd learn a new musical instrument,' said Ursula, in her low voice. 'Forest Dwellers are supposed to play two or three instruments at least.'

'And I'm going to write the best History of Ballet project ever,' said Valentina, tossing her long, long blonde hair. 'Master Silas thinks I'm just a silly, spoilt City Dweller, but I'm going to show him I'm smart, too. Project Day, here I come!'

They were all excited about Project

Day tomorrow. There would be no ordinary lessons. Instead, the girls would form into groups and spend all day working on their projects in the library. The best group project would win each girl a star, and a trip to the Grand Tea-Rooms in town for delicious toasted Flumpets and Caramel-crunch Cupcakes.

'I hope Master Silas chooses a good topic. Last year's Beginners had to do a project about the building of the Palace Theatre,' sighed Laura-Bella. 'Boring!'

'But the year before that was even worse.' Jessica had quizzed a third-year pupil about this. 'Their project was all about the history of the flugelhorn and the pifflepipe.'

'Well, let's hope this year it's about the history of the hair ribbon and the powder puff,' teased Crys, nudging Valentina. 'That way, our team is bound to do well, isn't it, Val?'

'My New Year's resolution,' came the loud voice of Jessica's pet donkey, Sinbad,



'is to eat nothing but Raspberry Flancakes.' He shook his long ears happily. 'You may ask, why particularly Raspberry Flancakes. Why not Cinnamon Twists and Iced Passion-Fruit Tarts? Well . . .'

'I can assure you, Mr Donkey, that we shall be asking nothing of the sort!' Laura-Bella's tiger, Mr Melchior, frowned. But Ursula's pet bear, Dorothea, and Valentina's eagle, Olympia, gave oohs and ahhs, impressed by Sinbad's New Year's resolution. Only Pollux, Crys's white fox, made no comment. As usual, he stayed quiet and simply blinked his wise, gentle eyes.

Everyone in the Beginners' class was excited about the project announcement.

Even Rubellina Goodfellow, the Chancellor's daughter, forgot to whisper nasty things about Jessica and her friends as they all took their seats in Master Silas's classroom. Rubellina was too busy showing off her new pink sequinned pencil case, stuffed with golden ink-pens and scented erasers.

'Daddy gave it to me,' she boasted to her friend Jo-Jo. 'He told me I was bound to win on Project Day anyway, but this will help.'

Jessica and Crys rolled their eyes at each other.

'Rubellina will win – if the project is about Horrible Chancellors' Daughters,' whispered Jessica.

'Horrible Chancellors' Daughters With Brand New Pencil Cases!' Crys said back, slightly too loudly. She got a spiteful glare from Rubellina for her trouble.

'Good morning, girls,' said Master Silas, entering the classroom in a swirl of

blue velvet, and giving them a rare, sudden smile. 'You are all on time this morning, for a change! Even you goats at the back.'

Master Silas was not being rude. There really was a group of goats at the back. They were all sitting down comfortably beside Sinbad the donkey. Usually, pets did not attend classes. Even the City Dwellers' eagles, who could simply have sat quietly on their owners' shoulders and dropped off to sleep,



usually spent lesson times gossiping in the cosy dormitory. Sinbad, however, came to every single class, except the ones he had been banned from. Now several of the Rock Dwellers' goats, who all adored Sinbad, had started to come to class, too.

'And me, Master Silas!' Sinbad waggled his long ears. 'Don't forget me!'

'Forgetting you, Sinbad, is impossible,' said Master Silas, with a twitch of his eyebrow. 'Now, girls, turn to

page fifty-two in your Nutcracker Ballet textbooks . . .'

The lesson was long and not very interesting. Even Jessica, who adored History of Ballet classes, fidgeted and sighed her way through the session, desperate to hear what the project would be. Precisely two minutes before the end-of-class bell rang up in the Clock Tower, Master Silas closed his own textbook with a thud, and limped around to stand in front of his desk.

'I can tell by your excitement that none of you has forgotten about Project Day. I've never seen a group of dancers so eager to be given homework!'

No one giggled at his joke. They were too impatient to find out what their project would be about.

Master Silas smiled. 'Well, girls, I won't keep you waiting. This is the subject for Project Day.' He turned to the blackboard behind him, picked up his usual piece of pale blue chalk, and wrote

seven words in his looping handwriting.

The Life and Work of Eva Snowdrop

Jessica forgot how strict Master Silas was, and clapped her hands in delight. Fortunately everyone else in the class was doing the same.

Eva Snowdrop!

Eva Snowdrop was everybody's favourite dancer, the most famous Prima Ballerina the Kingdom had ever known.



The girls all had pictures of her pinned up in their lockers and above their beds, in the hope that a tiny part of Eva Snowdrop's talent would rub off on

them. But she had not been Prima Ballerina for very long. Twenty years ago, she had fallen in love with a man known only as the Mystery Lake Fisherman. She left the Royal Ballet behind, to live with him up in the northern Lakes. The beautiful Prima Ballerina with the whole Kingdom at her perfect feet gave up dancing for love. She had never been seen in Silverberg again.

'Your projects must be handed in at the end of the day tomorrow,' Master

Silas said, smiling at their excitement. 'There will be no normal lessons, but you must all spend the day working hard!'

Laura-Bella grabbed Jessica's hand. 'Aren't we lucky, Jessica? Eva Snowdrop is my favourite ballerina ever! This is so much better than writing about silly old flugelhorns or pifflepipes.'

Jessica turned to Crys, who was still sitting at her desk. 'Eva Snowdrop!' Jessica began. 'Isn't it brilliant . . .'

Then she stopped.

Crys's face was the colour the sky turns when it is about to snow. She looked as if she might be sick.

'Crys, are you all right?' Jessica hurried towards her, but Crys sprang to her feet.

'Fine,' she said. Her voice was trembling. 'I'm fine.'

And, almost knocking her friends over in her haste, Crys ran from the classroom.