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Opening extract from

Jessica Juniper

Written by

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Published by

Egmont

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The Royal Party

King Caspar – *the King*

Queen Mab – *the Queen*

Chancellor Godwin Goodfellow – *the Kingdom's Chancellor*

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*



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*



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



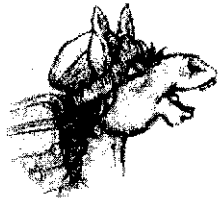
Ursula of the Boughs – *Ballerina from the eastern Forest*



Dorothea – *Ursula's pet bear*



Valentina de la Frou – *Ballerina from the City*



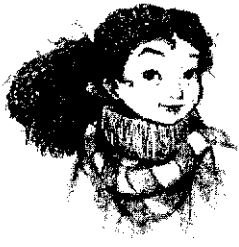
Sinbad – *Jessica's pet donkey*



Crystal Coldwater – *Ballerina from the northern Lake*



Pollux – *Crystal's pet white fox*



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

Who's Who in the Kingdom of the Frosty Mountains

The girls and their pets



Jessica Juniper – *Ballerina from the western Rocks*

sugar, on SpringSprung Day. One pudding will normally feed ten hungry people. Sinbad can eat a whole pudding all by himself, with room for afters.

Toffee Apple Torte: The speciality of the Grand Café and Tea-Rooms in Silverberg. This tart is made with delicate slices of the fruits that grow in the toffee-apple orchards in the deep south of the Valley, then served warm with toffee-butter sauce.

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.

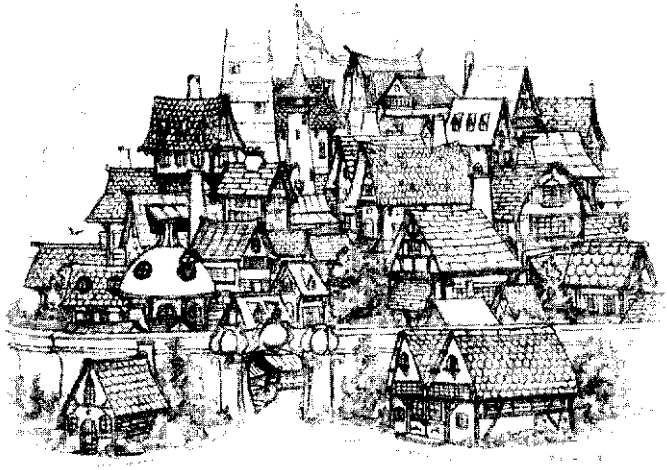
And from that day onwards, I never danced so beautifully again.

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.

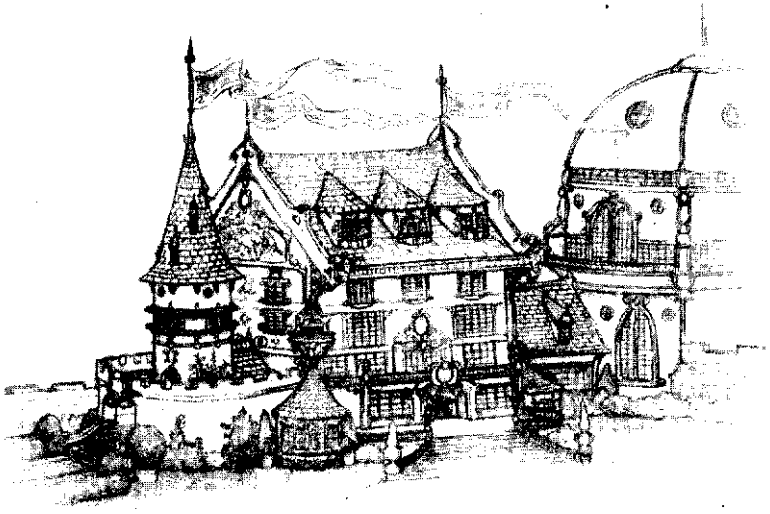
And the City. How could I forget the City? Silverberg, the capital, rising from the



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
A New Start

It isn't easy to leave your home. It isn't easy to leave your mother and father and your eight brothers and sisters to go to boarding school in a faraway city.

But just after sunrise on a chilly

autumn morning, somewhere in the west of the Kingdom of the Frosty Mountains, Jessica Juniper was about to do just that.

And she was very, very excited.

She did not know how she'd feel if she were setting off all by herself to an ordinary school, to learn maths and reading and geography. But Jessica Juniper had won a place at the famous Royal Ballet School, where she would become a Ballerina-in-Training.

Besides, she was not all alone. Sinbad,

her pet donkey, was going with her.

'Goodbye, Mother Juniper! Goodbye, Father Juniper! Goodbye, Jemima, Jennifer, Jeremiah, Joseph, Jezebel, Janice, Josiah and Jimmy!' Sinbad waved his long brown ears that stuck out from holes in his woolly hat, and bellowed so loudly at the enormous Juniper family gathered beside their tiny house that Jessica completely forgot about the lump in her throat.

'Ssshh, Sinbad, you'll wake the neighbours!' Jessica loved her donkey, but



she did sometimes wish he didn't make so much noise. 'Bye, House!' she called more quietly. 'Bye, everyone! We'll see you soon.' She brushed a tear from her eyes

and set off down the garden path.

'Goodbye, Sally Sheep!' Sinbad hollered at the other family pets. 'Goodbye, Billy Goat!'

'Goodbye, Jessica! Goodbye, Sinbad! We'll miss you.' Jessica's enormous family all waved, jumping up and down to see over each other's heads.

'They'll miss me!' Sinbad wailed, hurrying after Jessica. He wobbled as he trotted along, because of the battered suitcase that was strapped around his



large middle. It was filled with a few of Jessica's clothes, and *all* of Sinbad's hats.

'Isn't this amazing, Sinbad?' Jessica gave a little pirouette, liking the way her pink uniform floated as she moved. It was

nearly new, bought from an older girl in the village, and it was the most beautiful dress Jessica had ever owned. Her soft grey Rock-Dweller's cloak was nearly new too, with her name embroidered on the edge. 'We're off on an adventure!'

Sinbad frowned. 'Are you *sure* we're doing the right thing, Jess?'

'Of course!' Jessica had held this conversation many times since winning her place, both with Sinbad and in her own head. 'I've always dreamed of this,

Sinbad. If I work very hard, maybe one day I'll be a famous dancer, like Aurora Rosmarino, or even Eva Snowdrop!'

'And then you'll forget all about me!' Sinbad stopped. 'I can't let that happen. Let's stay here in the Rocks, where it's safe, and where I'll always be your best friend!'

'Sinbad, you'll always be my best friend wherever we are,' said Jessica.

'But it's an awfully long journey to Silverberg.' Sinbad stared out at the stony

path. 'There might be bandits . . .' – his eyes widened – '. . . giants . . .' – his eyes widened even further – '*dragons*!'

Jessica sighed. 'There's no such thing as giants, or dragons, Sinbad.'

'But I've heard stories all about them!'

'Sinbad, you've *told* stories all about them.' Jessica knew how the donkey loved to gather the other pets around the fire and tell fairy tales.

'*And* the city is full of thieves . . . *and*

you get executed for doing the slightest thing wrong!'

Jessica had never been to Silverberg, but she knew that Sinbad was making this up. 'It's going to be wonderful,' she said. 'Dancing every day, and making new friends, and midnight feasts . . .'

'Midnight feasts?' gasped Sinbad, setting off again as fast as he could. 'Well, why didn't you say so?'

Jessica and Sinbad scampered down the sharp grey Rocks like only Rock



Dwellers can, and then began the trek across the wind swept Drosselmeyer Plains. The light began to brighten the view to the east, and soon Silverberg itself was visible in the distance. The shimmering marble Palace glowed white in the morning sun.

'What do you think of our adventure now, Sinbad?'

Sinbad could not speak for once. And he remained silent until they reached Silverberg's West Gate. High

above them, the Palace bells were chiming eight o'clock.

'Here we are,' said Jessica.

'Help me put my new hat on!' Sinbad shook off his woolly hat. 'I can't arrive without my smart City hat, Jessica!'

Jessica opened the suitcase and pulled out a black bowler with a fresh flower in the brim. Then, putting it on Sinbad's head, she led him through the West Gate.