**Pirouetting Mechanical Ballerina**

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**Pirouetting Mechanical Ballerina**

by [AllannaStone](http://archiveofourown.org)

**Summary**

Twenty years after the deaths of his sister and his wife during the war, King Jacob of London finds himself rattled to the core when a young lady with a familiar face begins to appear around the city…

**Notes**

This FanFiction was inspired by @BlindGeishaTeahouse (known as Oreana on AO3) The Clockwork Soldier up on Tumblr. Read it HERE: [http://archiveofourown.org/works/9574475](http://archiveofourown.org/works/9574475)
chapter one

King Jacob sighed heavily as he passed by the family portrait once more. He barely glanced at it—after all, he had seen it every day of his past forty-one years of being alive, and now all that the portrait bought him was depressed grief.

“I’m so sorry, Evie, Elena,” he whispered yet again, fighting the prickling that came from the corners of his eyes, forcing himself to straighten up despite his cyborg leg. He gripped the bird head on his cane all the more and focused on glancing out the window at the celebrations down below in the town square.

May Day preparations were in full swing as the people of London bustled along their day. Half a dozen young men were hoisting up the wooden dancing pole up, the colorful ribbons that were attached from the top being held by a sulky little girl. Women and their daughters were walking to and fro carrying baskets full of gay flowers that would be made into head wreaths for the next day.

The king’s attention was somehow or other diverted to a young lady who was walking from the bustling city square, carrying a basket with calla lilies, orchids and chrysanthemums, all in white. She wore a once black dress, now faded to a dull grey and wore her dark brown curls in a braided updo. Jacob couldn’t see her face, but he’d know that walk anywhere.

He followed her with his eyes until she dissapered into a group of people walking the other way, leaving him feeling in shock.

“I watched him kill you twenty years ago, Evie,” he whispered, still rooted next to the window. Tears welled up in his eyes and he turned hastily from his vantage spot over the city and limped his way to his rooms.

King Jacob had just seated himself at his desk when a soft knock alerted him to a visitor. After he granted permission to enter, a rare smile spread across his face at his son, Emmett. Built much like his father, with his lean, muscular build and gentle hazel-green eyes, but with his mother’s strawberry blonde curls and freckles, the prince often times had ladies swooning after him.

“Emmett! Come in!” Jacob greeted his only child with a forced grin, hoisting himself up from his seat. “What can I help you with?”

The prince shifted on his feet, avoiding his father’s eyes.
“I was wondering if I could invite Anna to the feast tomorrow night?” the prince asked, biting his lip. “I intend to ask her to marry me.”

Jacob’s grin only grew all the more as he turned back to his desk. He opened a hidden compartment and came up with a ring box, which he handed off to his son.

“It was your mother’s,” the king explained as Emmett opened the box. Inside was a gorgeous gold ring with rubies shaped like a rose. “And my mother’s before.”

The prince wordlessly hugged his father, burying his face in the king’s neck as a few tears slipped out of his eyes.

“Anna will be a damned fool to say ‘No’ to you, son,” Jacob told the prince, hugging him back. They stayed like that for the better of ten minutes, the twenty year old prince thinking back on all the stories of his mother that his father told him, the king reflecting back on the day he lost his sister and his wife.
chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Jacob gets a name...

King Jacob woke up the morning of May Day in a sweat. He sat up in his bed, panting heavily as he rubbed the sleep from his eyes. Upon realization that he was safe, in his bedroom at the royal palace, he swung his legs out of bed and heaved himself up onto his feet. He teetered for a moment, finding his bearings in the early morning light, before he began to get himself ready for the day ahead of him.

As he was dressing, the king found himself wondering about the girl in black he saw the day before. He would recognize the way she walked anywhere- she carried herself with the exact same gait that his deceased sister had used. Everyone else in the city square had been wearing pale colors while she wore somber black- who was she mourning?

He kicked himself as the answer came to him- the cemetery! That’s where she had been walking to when he first laid eyes on her the day before. He hurriedly got his shoes on and limped out into the hallway.

“I’m going to the cemetery,” he grunted to his guard as he passed by him. The guard was wise enough to wordlessly nod, used to the king’s volatile mood swings at this point in his career. He followed at a respectful distance, not too close to make Jacob feel crowded, but not too far away as that he couldn’t help if needed.

Jacob limped through the city, pausing long enough to exchange words with people who called out greetings to their king, even pausing long enough to accept a bouquet of white and yellow daisies from an enamoured little girl, who promptly turned bright pink when he patted her head.

At long last, he reached the cemetery, where he pulled his coat in closer to his body for warmth. The burial grounds were deserted, and with a quick sweep of his eyes, he couldn’t see the white flowers that the girl had bought the day before.

Jacob bit back the disappointment rising in his throat and began to make his way towards the royal crypt, nestled in the back. He blinked in surprise when he reached the steps of the crypt- the steps had been swept clear of leaves and dirt, and laying on the bottom step, was a bouquet of white flowers.
King Jacob stood there in silent shock, his mind racing as he struggled to piece together the confusing puzzle that he had been given—had his twin sister somehow survived?

“Beggin’ yer pard’n, but I thought I were the o’ly person ‘ere.”

Jacob jumped and lost his footing, falling on his cyborg leg with a grunt of pain. He squeezed his eyes shut and waited for the pain to subside long enough to berate whoever had startled him so.

“Oh dear,” sighed the person before Jacob felt someone kneeling next to him. A few seconds later, the pain disappeared, and he opened his eyes.

“A nut was too tight,” explained the girl in black, smiling shyly at the king. She stood up, shaking away the dirt that clung to her skirt and offered the man a hand up. “M’name’s Elsa, by the way.”

He inclined his head with a kind smile. “King Jacob, at your service, love.”

“Oh! Beggin’ yer pard’n, sir!” she gulped, hurrying into a hasty curtsy. Close up, Elsa had freckles that covered her cheeks and nose and pale blue eyes set into pale skin. Unlike the late Queen Evie, she was very petite and had a chubby face.

“It’s quite alright,” chuckled Jacob, resting a hand on her shoulder. “Thank you for fixing my leg, by the way.”

“I ‘ork at a music box shop,” she explained bashfully, blowing an escaped curl out of her face. “I learn ‘ow to ‘ork with all kinds of mechanics.”

“What’s your favorite music box you’ve done so far?” he asked her.

As he listened to her talk, he compared her to his late sister and knew that he had found that missing part of his heart.
“Will I see you at the May Day festivities?” King Jacob asked Elsa as they walked arm in arm back to the city.

“I kin yer the king an’ all, but yer too old fer me,” Elsa fearlessly told him, looking surprised when he chuckled.

“Thank you for pointing that out,” he chortled, patting her tiny hand which was wrapped around his arm. “No, I can’t skip around the may pole like I used to, unfortunately enough.”

“I kin take a closer look at yer leg and do some fine tunin’ so that you don’t realize that yer leg is a cyborg,” she shyly offered him.

“I would like that,” Jacob looked her over yet again, marveling over how much she looked like his twin sister.

Suddenly, shrieking filled the air, and it took Jacob a second to realize that the sound was coming from a group of children, all who promptly swarmed Elsa, knocking her over.

“Take it easy, me wee ones,” she gasped out through laughter, three little ones pinning her down while the others did a sort of war dance. “Geteroff me- I cannot breathe any!”

“Sorry, Elsa,” said one. “Do you have a story to tell us?”

King Jacob chortled at the adorable urchins, covered in dirt and smiles as they all clambered for attention from Elsa, who was more than happy to hand it out by the bucketfuls.

“Beggin’ yer pard’n, sir,” she apologized to him. “But I nanny these lil’ rascals when Miss Sullivan
“Miss Sullivan?” he asked, cursing himself for leaving his high tech goggles at back at the palace. The goggles acted much as a constant news feed, identifying citizens, visitors and criminals.

“She minds the snorfanagae,” volunteered a little boy with a drippy nose. Elsa offered him a clean rag from her pocket and he grinned his thanks before blowing his nose loudly.

“Sounds like yer comin’ down wit somthin’ ‘gain, Nicky,” observed Elsa dryly, scrunching up her nose slightly as he grabbed her by the hand.

“Who’s he?” Nicky asked Elsa in a loud whisper, pointing a pudgy finger at the king.

“Call me Jacob,” he introduced himself with a charming smile.

“You’re the king!” gasped a little girl in wonder.

Suddenly, it was King Jacob who was being swarmed by little urchins, and with a shout of laughter, he toppled over onto a patch of grass and allowed for the children to climb all over him, shrieking with giggles.

Elsa smiled as she perched herself on the park fountain and waited for the overhyper children to settle down and get off the king, who was being a good sport about it all.

“Elsa, there you are, m’dearie!”

The urchins all jumped off of Jacob and promptly hid behind him as he sat up, his dark hair a rumpled mess.

“‘ello, Mr. Tinkerson!” Elsa called out cheerfully to the hunched older man as he limped his way to her and shook her hand.

“I do hope that your ‘wee ones’ aren’t giving you too much trouble,” he chortled, leaning on his cane
“No more than us’al,” she grinned back, blowing an escaped curl out of her eyes. “Do ye need me to come in t’day?”

“Oh no, Elsa!” he said as he squinted at her face a bit. “Remember, I gave you the week off to find your special someone! No, I’m just saying hello, my dear!”

“Thank you again for all the time off,” Elsa sent the children a motherly glare, subtly motioning with her hand for them to come over and say hello.

“You may find your soulmate this year,” Mr. Tinkerson told her with an easy going grin.

Elsa snorted as he stood to depart.

“I’m ner nin’ten years old,” she reminded him. “I’ve bin goin’ to May Day ev’r since I cin ‘member. Maybe I don’t have a soulmate.”

Mr. Tinkerson chortled as he patted her hand and shuffled off.

Elsa also stood and turned to face Jacob and the children.

“Wot on eart is so scary ‘bout Mr. Tinkerson?” she asked rather exasperatedly.

“He’s near blind,” piped up a little boy who had barely placed himself between the younger children and Mr. Tinkerson.

“That’s wot happens wen one gets old’r,” she explained patiently, kneeling so that she was more at level with the children, all who crowded around her for reassurance.

Jacob heaved himself up, wincing as his leg popped and creaked, getting the attention of the children and Elsa.
“Come by the shop an’time and I kin have a clos’r look at yer leg,” she told him, tied up with the children.

Jacob smiled and nodded before hobbling off once more.
King Jacob woke up the following morning with a smile on his face and a spring in his step. Emmett was too nervous worrying about proposing to his sweetheart to notice, but the king’s adopted son, Prince Jack, noticed his excitement.

“Have your eye on a certain someone, Jacob?” the young man slyly jabbed at the king over breakfast. Emmett stopped his fretting to look at his father.

The king made a sour face at Jack and stabbed at his sausage silently.

“Are you alright, father?” Emmett chimed in, a look of worry crossing his handsome features.

“I’m fine, Emmett, Jack,” he stated around a mouthful of breakfast. “I just think that today is the day when Jack will find the one.”

Jack made a face while Emmett only chuckled and clapped his adopted brother on the shoulder.

“Just keep this in mind,” began Emmett with a teasing twinkle. “All you need to do is just smile and you’ll have her under your spell!”

Jack only scoffed and turned back to his meal. Jacob chortled as the family of three finished their meals and stool to leave the palace and go into the city for the May Day festivities. Every which way the three royals turned, there were flowers, ribbons and smiles.

“Get back here, you lily livered, chicken hearted coward!”

The three stopped and turned, all suppressing their mirth at a four year old girl chasing an older boy around, waving a wooden sword while he fled from her wrath. Jacob and Emmett moved on, but
Jack stayed behind to watch the fun and excitement.

“Calm down, Prim!” the boy begged the irate girl, ducking behind a portly woman for a moment while he caught his breath. “I’m sorry, I’ll buy you another cookie!”

“With what money, Zach?” demanded the girl, chasing him into the street.

It all happened so quickly.

The automobile driver was busy arguing with his passenger on which turn to take that he wasn’t aware of little Prim, who stood in the middle of the street in complete terror. Prince Jack lunged forward and collected the child before rolling to the side, clutching the frightened little girl tightly to his chest as she began to bawl.

“Oh my!” yelled someone, a head of dark brown curls rushing up to Jack, who was carefully cradling the crying child. Zach had rushed over as well, concerned for his friend as Elsa opened a healing scanner and quickly looked her over for any injuries.

“Primrose luv, how man’ times must I tell ye, stay out of the streets?” Elsa asked the child, snapped the healing scanner shut and stuffing it back into her basket.

“I’m sorry, Elsa!” sobbed Prim, accepting the handkerchief that Jack held up for her to blow her nose with. “I was mad at Zach because he ate my cookie- I was going to gut him!” she added with a hint of pride.

“I see,” Elsa said with a hint of humor in her voice.

“Elsa, I’m sorry! I didn’t know that cookie was hers!” Zach piped in, his brown eyes filled with unspilt tears.

“I swear Zach, ye have a cookie monster inside yer belly,” Elsa smiled, shaking her head.

“I swear, I’ll buy Prim another cookie!” Zach promised them.
“With what money?” hiccupped little Prim, burying her face in Jack’s shoulder.

“What’s this?” the prince suddenly asked, pointing down with his hand at the ground, where there were six gold shillings, which someone had dropped.

Zach’s eyes widened. “Looks like someone lost a day’s wages!” he gasped. “I’ll go ask around and see if anyone is missing any money!” He then rushed off, leaving Jack watching with admiration.

“He certainly is an honest lad,” he said, shifting little Prim in his arms.

“Ye shouldn’t ‘ve dropped him coins like tha’,” Elsa told him bluntly, blowing an escaped curl out of her blue eyes.

“Who says that I did?” he smiled as he held out a hand. “I’m Jack.”

“Me name’s Elsa,” she responded, dipping down into an awkward curtsy and slipping her hand into his. Her befreckled cheeks turned a deep pink as he brought the back of her hand up to his lips.

“Forgive me for prying, but you seem too young to be a mother,” Jack half asked as they both fell into step, the prince carrying little Prim and Elsa besides him.

“There’re ain’t mine own, I jest watch them,” she told him. “Besides, I’m but nin’ten. There’re girls young’r then I havin’ babes of their own.”

“Oh?” Jack asked her, slightly leaning towards her as a group of young men came into sight. Luckily, they were too busy fussing with their May Day clothes to even notice the prince and Elsa walking past them.

“I work un’er Miss Sullivan,” Elsa explained with a tired sigh, rubbing her eyes.

“She’s still in charge of the orphanage?” Jack asked in surprise.
“She had a bad stroke ‘bout six years ‘go and needs help keepin’ up with the little ones,” Elsa explained to him with a tired smile. “Some of the little ones were up all of last night, excited for today.”

“You haven’t slept at all?” Jack asked her as they came up to the orphanage. She shook her head and stumbled for a few steps. Jack quickly caught her and helped her up to the front door.

“You go get some sleep, I’ll look after the children until you wake up,” Jack promised her.

“You sur?” she asked, her eyes drooping as he led her into the front sitting parlor and onto a couch.

“Yes, I’m sure,” he smiled tenderly at her. “Don’t worry, I’ll wake you up for the May Day festivities in about four hours.” He laid little Prim down next to Elsa and found a hand sewn quilt, which he unfolded and spread over the two.

Elsa smiled before closing her eyes and falling asleep quickly. Jack tenderly cupped her face before leaving the room for the back yard, where he could hear excited shrieking and clattering.

As the opened the back door, all the chatter and playing came to a stop as all the children stared at the prince.

“Hello again, Miss Sullivan,” he greeted his old caretaking with a smile. “Elsa and Prim are lying down in the front parlor and I thought I would come out and play.”

“Come play tag with us?” asked a little girl with an eye patch and a bruised smile.
Elsa woke up with a smile and bright red cheeks. She sat up and saw that she was on the couch in the front parlor of the orphanage. She carefully got up, being sure not to disturb little Prim any, and went out to the backyard, wondering what all the yelling and laughter was.

She opened the door and bit back a smile. Prince Jack was spinning around in a circle, holding a little girl under her armpits and making her dizzy. As soon as he set her down, he was swarmed by half a dozen little ones, all who jumped him and sent him onto the grass with shouts of giggles.

“’ello, Miss Sullivan,” Elsa greeted her, sitting down next to her on the porch swing. “Wat all did I miss?”

“Not much, my dear, not much,” Miss Sullivan responded with a weak smile, setting her knitting down. “Jack certainly has grown up since I’ve seen him last.”

“How so?” asked Elsa, not meaning to pry.

“When his mother was murdered- and in front of him, no older than six at the time- he came to the orphanage as an angry child. Woke up screaming in the middle of the night with unspeakable nightmares,” gossiped Miss Sullivan. “Got into fights with anyone he could, until I had to send him to Lambeth.”

Elsa felt a shiver run down her spine at the name of the local asylum. She caught Jack smiling at her and she stood and ambled over to him, stuffing her hands into the pockets of her too big jeans.

“Feel better?” he asked her from under a pile up of little ones.

“Much,” she grinned a cat- that- ate- the- caged- bird smile before clapping her hands loudly. “Come
now, iz tis anyway to treat roy’lty?”

The children meekly got off of Jack, mumbling apologies to both the prince and their caretaker. Elsa helped him up and stood back as he dusted himself off.

“You didn’t have to scold them like that,” he chuckled as his green eyes met her blue eyes. “I really don’t mind having them treat me like their own personal jungle gym.”

“I’m tryin’ to teach tem to show ‘spect towards others,” she responded, not backing down as he tucked a rebellious curl back behind her ear.

“Well, it looks like you’re doing a good job,” he commented as a boy asked a little girl if he could see her doll. She handed it over and he quickly popped the dangling arm back into place before wrapping it in a crude sling and handing it back.

“They’re good kids, jest need a lil’ bit of derction,” she pointed out.

Jack smiled down at her and was about to say something before the clock tower began to chime the half hour.

“Mercy me! I must get ready!” Elsa yelped before turning to go inside.

“You look fine, why the need to change?” Jack asked her.

“A’cuz I’m taking part in the May Day fest’ivies,” she called out before vanishing back inside.

Jack’s heart was beating a fast jig as he realized that Elsa was looking for her mate as well.

He sat down under a tree and began to watch the children play.

_I hope she’ll look past the fact that I’m royalty_, he thought of Elsa at his side as his soulmate, and smiled.
Inside, Elsa was changing from her jeans into a pretty white dress with ribbon detailing at the neck and sleeves.

*I wonder if Prince Jack’ll look past the fact that I’m a bastard child of nobility,* she wondered as she tried to reach around the back to button up the dress, but huffing as she remembered that she had needed help the year before. She went over to the window and was about to open it and call out when a knock at her door revealed the prince himself.

“Miss Sullivan sent me up to see if you needed any help,” he said, biting back a blush as she asked him to help her with the back of her dress.

Jack’s warm fingers fumbling with the buttons made Elsa want to sigh and lean into him more, but she pushed it down. He was royalty, after all.

Jack began to hum a song familiar to Elsa and before she knew it, she opened her mouth and began to sing along to the sweet melody.

“Oh, misty eye of the mountain below
Keep careful watch of my loved ones’ souls
And should the sky be filled with fire and smoke
Keep watching over my friends
If this is to end in fire
Then we should all burn together
Watch the flames climb high into the night
Calling out father oh
Stand by and we will
Watch the flames burn auburn on
The mountain side
Desolation comes upon the sky
Now I see fire
Inside the mountain I see fire
Burning the trees
And I see fire
Hollowing souls
I see fire
Blood in the breeze
And I hope that you remember me"

“You are the one, aren’t you?” Jack asked her tenderly, raising his knuckles to brush against her cheek.

Elsa smiled shyly.

“You don’t care any that I’m a bastard?” she asked bashfully, taking a step closer to him.

“Why would I care any?” he demanded to know, taking her hands in his and bringing them up to his heart. “You’re my soulmate, the one that I’ve been dreaming of for as long as I can remember.”

“Won’t the king and the prince mind any?” she whispered as he drew closer to her.

“I really don’t give a damn what they think,” he grumbled before placing one hand on the back of her head and the other in the small of her back and pulling her in for a deep kiss.

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