

Florian's Tale

<https://www.patreon.com/ralwatt>

Chapter 6

Although the figure at the center of the gathering could not perceive it, lost as he was in that surreal act of neuro-hypnotism, the other guests had impressed upon them a similarly deep notion of Lord Grosvenor's puissance in that art, so recently put down in monograph by the esteemed Doctor Braid.

Setting quite aside the various grudges and gripes which had gathered so many of them to see the young philanderer returned to his place, many were near as mesmerized as his lordship's subject, discussing also Florian's striking physical performance, and the remarkable way the light caught every detail of that impressively *unreal* costume.

Some few, inducted into the full secret of the art which was quite wrongly named that of Mesmer, enjoyed all the more the true nature of the display of implacable mind over transigent matter.

At the center of the commotion, Florian's head seemed to spin, as if it too were held on only by a wooden peg, no more understanding what had happened than the variously disturbed or delighted onlookers debating audibly how the trick must be done.

Conjuring was the principal thesis, as expounded upon loudly by the elderly Duke of Wellington and his dutiful retinue.

But even he, who had bested Napoleon in person, was struck dumb when challenged by Lady Esmeralda to explain how the trick was accomplished.

"That, my lords and ladies, and most esteemed gentlemen, concludes my performance for the evening."

Rising above the hubbub, Lord Grosvenor's words settled the matter with a resolute finality.

"Mister Florian, however, has volunteered himself for your amusement throughout the remainder of our merriment, and I invite you to satisfy yourselves however you please as to the *artificiality* of our entertainer. Attention, soldier!"

With mindless ease, Florian's body obeyed, clacking limbs and creaking joints shifting awkwardly into the proper posture.

A gaggle of younger women stepped forward, and at their lead he recognized several of his past knowing.

Each had eyes which probed him without restraint, admiring, enjoying the unease he could not portray with his face, yet which was plain to see in his bearing.

"Henceforth, you shall heed *every* order you are given. Now, present 'arms' for the ladies. Such as you possess, at least."

Humiliating as it was, Florian marched forwards, to strike the proper pose before them. He could feel his wooden body creak as he went. His bare, painted boot-feet clacked on the marble, stiff and hard yet sensitive as though he were unshod. Legs brushed past that tense knot of wood at his nethers, highlighting the nonsensical loss of all structure inside, as if whispering encouragement.

The sensation of his own nothingness was gripping, *more* sensual than would have been his actual phallus, his body tingling with his own exposed blankness, so alluring in that cruel, contrarian fashion that he had no choice but to grind his thighs against it with each step.

Intensely aware of how he was debasing himself though he was, he had no choice in the matter. There remained no power in him to refuse this enchanting lord, who ruled over his own body with sheer force of will. It was simply too soothing, too *relieving*, to be impotent in Lord Grosvenor's hand, his seductive haplessness and sensual submission the unburdening of his consciousness, despite his embarrassment.

What Florian wanted, neither mind nor body cared.

What his owner commanded, Florian *needed*.

Even if that meant subjecting himself to those leering eyes, roving unrestrained over his frozen face and his bared, blanked, nullified loins.

The toy soldier's rattling arousal only made them laugh.

Hands pressed to him then, real and warm and soft as true living flesh should be, and Florian gave the groan of a creaking door as he leant into those shameful touches.

"My word, it is ever so crude, even without any *gentlemanly* parts!" the lead lady announced, to a chorus of chattering mirth.

They were fondling his bare, exposed form, fingers caressing his nakedness, roaming over bare skin... yet there was nothing for them to find now. He was wholly, utterly exposed, to all the great and good of the city, yet nothing remained for them to see.

"I recall you rather enjoyed it when last I did this," she murmured into the loop of wood which emulated an ear, "your pleasure, you called me then... but I assure you, this time the pleasure will be *mine*."

Her palm pressed in, spreading against his nullness as she groped the toy's hardened nethers, her silken hand seeking out and missing any trace of that rod which she had once so eagerly pleased.

In her touch now was none of the obsequience of infatuation.

Her nails clutched, dug into his surface, and the toy shuddered, rocking back on unstable legs as she clawed oversensitive yet unyielding lacquer.

The girl pursued, leaning in to make a show of the examination.

Balled up, fingers rapped on his rump, then on the tormented hillock of frozen nerves opposite, knocking on his crotch as if calling for its open.

Florian's whimper was the plucking of tines, as his music-box mouth emitted an incoherent patter of notes.

"I pronounce this plaything quite harmless," she declared merrily, "I don't believe he could hurt a fly now! Or impugn one's honor...."

It was true. As desperately as his dignity had tried to refute it, as relentlessly as his reason had defied the reality of his senses, Florian had no refuge left, even in his own flesh.

For he was *not* flesh.

All the evidence of eyes and ears, of overwrought nerve and aching nether-region agreed.

Florian was a toy soldier.

Pushed beyond bearing by the dull ache of need and the savage heat of humiliation, he longed for the ease and safety of his Lord's voice.

It came, like a benediction from upon high.

"Admirable, Florian, most admirable indeed. You are a fine plaything, now we have dispensed with any... *improper* anatomy."

Once more he *rattled*, with the blissful, bewildered lust of a body and mind each remade beyond recognition.

Bursting out all around, the laughter of his audience seemed to declare that they had determined this all a salacious act on his part.

Lord Grosvenor clapped his shoulder with a powerful hand, and the toy tottered.

"Now, at ease, soldier! You have your orders, so enact them! And the rest, my guests tonight, I implore you, back to the business of the ball!"

With that the orchestra struck up anew, and the painful concentration of gazes drilling into his wooden trunk was lessened, at least a little.

Florian was uncertain that he was even glad of that, for relief was it was, that sense of... exposure... and the tormenting throb of his humiliated body, were almost as queerly compelling as the submission into which his master had so easily bent him.

Fortunately, he would have plenty still.

"You there, artist!"

The curt bark was of the decidedly Pomeranian Sir Schill, for whom Florian had painted the previous year.

His blushing wife refused to meet the immobilized eyes of the puppet as he wobbled over.

"Drinks! Wine for myself and the viscount."

Said nobleman wore a triumphant expression, as he watched the frozen features of the young man whom he had, some few months past, so angrily ejected from his manor.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" Schill snapped.

"Sorry. Sir."

The simulation of words sounded from Florian's hinging mouth, devoid of emphasis or connection, and he could do nothing else but turn and shuffle off in search of the commanded beverages.

Each step was a clap of wood on stone, and a laughable series of creaking joints and squeaking pins, as he swayed towards the nearest waiting servant.

Despite the resumption of the ball in earnest, many of the attendees were still wholly absorbed in that remarkable physical performance.

Once reaching his waypoint, a bemused servant with a tray of glasses, he realized the true difficulty of his task, as he stood, hesitating before the equally bewildered footman.

"What is it now?" Schill demanded from a distance.

"Sir. My. Hands. My.... Fingers."

Haplessly, *hornily* he held up the mittens which were his extremities, feeling himself aching with sensation as the air wafted over the sculpted shapes of digits, mere *impressions* in their surfaces, the grooves and pits and ridges all aligning with those of real hands, yet without any points of articulation, to allow them to function.

Just like his crotch.

It was absurd, yet the toy was shivering audibly with his anguished arousal, as he felt so keenly his ruined body.

“That is hardly our concern,” the viscount scoffed, disdain belied by eyes glittering with malice.

Florian had little option but to persevere.

Moving his hands followed strange new rules, the freedom of the past hemmed in tight by the range of motions his joints were designed to permit, and in his inexperience with such truculent limbs, his wrist caught several glasses, and sent them flying from the tray.

Mortified by the music of crystal crashing to the pristine floors, he focused all his energies on the nearest remaining target. His hands could not close, but he could maneuver them around the cup of the vessel well enough. Bringing them together, his palms clinked against the stem, and he raised them up through tilting his chest backwards.

Holding that pose was a trial as he stumbled back, jerking with unnatural movements, almost sloshing the contents out.

Finally he made it, and presented the drink to his former employer.

The viscount took it lightly between two fingers, as though to highlight the oafish mess made of the whole affair by his soldier.

“Well? Fetch me one too!” Schill commanded.

Off he marched again, to repeat the pains-taking process, laughing lords and ladies admiring his progress every step of the way.

“Look at it go!” one man bellowed, his drunken voice raised far too high, “moves just like the ones I had as a boy!”

A great paw of a hand slapped meatily into his rear, and the toy tottered forwards, arms flailing for balance as his carved buttock tingled with pleasure.

“At least this version won’t chase your daughter up a tree like an ill-bred dog!” bayed another, in raucous laughter which rippled all about.

Aghast, at himself, as well as such undignified address and handling, Florian was all the more aroused to fully comprehend his situation. In the eyes of these noblemen and ladies, he was not the painter or philanderer they had known. Rather he was a puppet in the truest sense, dancing on spoken strings for their amusement.

A toy.

"I say, do come this way," crooned a familiar voice.

Florian tried to resist, to stay his legs against carrying into whatever fresh disgraces awaited, but they were already obeying, as he knew they would.

Walking him into the waiting circle of ladies, led by Lady Esmeralda herself.

She met him with the same silk touch he had so enjoyed mere hours before, her hands taking him by the face.

Their lips met, his hard and smooth, hers hot and soft, and she made love to his locked mouth with a passion he had never felt in her when he had been capable of returning her kisses.

Hers was powerful now, demanding pleasure rather than offering it, and the sensation of her holding him, *using* him for her stimulation, sent a surreal flutter through the fibers of his chest, as she caressed his carved cheeks.

It was as good as ever before – better, amid that wanton haze – yet now there was a sharpness to the pleasure, a frustrating edge to each peak of sensation, his lips incapable of kissing her back, or asserting his own passions in any way.

Lady Esmeralda seemed to relish that, redoubling her own advances instead, tipping him backwards on rigid legs, as though he were the girl and she the cad.

Undignified as it was, his hands clutched futilely at her hips, his loins pressing out against her thigh, as it grazed over his exposed and removed sex. Addicted, enraptured, his mind demanded ever more, seeking some pathway to release and relief, even as his body assured him of the absolute impossibility of such.

That denial was itself an aphrodisiac unlike any he had known, the perverse, *masochistic* intoxication of a drug for which there was no safe *or* sufficient dose, and whose addiction must ruin him more surely than even laudanum or absinthe.

With a pathetic note of want, he pressed himself into her, rattling limbs vibrant with twisted passion and rampant desire.

He could not even grow erect, as her hand came to rest, cupping his wooden crotch, yet that was a greater stimulant than any, compelling him to buck his hips shamelessly against her touch.

"Such a marvelous creation you are," she murmured, "for a time I thought you near as bewitching as my lord husband... we had great plans for you, Reginald and I... of course we both know that it could never have been, don't we, Florian?"

Her words were a puzzle his overstrained mind was ill-suited to tackle, yet as their eyes met he felt clearly the realization of her emotion.

Domineering, hungering pleasure, at the control she had over her former painter.

Then she let go.

Released abruptly, he wobbled backwards, half-spinning on a heel and nearly throwing himself to the floor.

Body aching, mind quaking, he beat his best military retreat, marching from this fresh defeat as fast as unstable legs would carry him.

The squeak as his boot-feet slipped in the stone was surreal.

His arm was caught, and his body so light that he was striding in place.

"May I have this dance?"

A waltz was starting, he realized, and with hand trapped in Lady Esmeralda's clutch, he was all the more compelled to accede to the command, posed so elegantly as a request.

His free arm rose up, to judder to rest against her hip, as he tried to move to the sound.

The attempt at leading was, all agreed, quite pitiful, his lady partner forced to support his weight as many times he came close to falling.

Once so agile and light, his feet were clattering and clumsy, his form a mess of tripping boot and clacking limb. His hands could not actually hold her, any more than his legs could dance, and so he instead found she led him, gripping those inflexible fingers and that hard, yet hot and sensitive buttock, the lady manipulating her toy for all to see.

Her legs carried them both now, and as she rocked and swirled with the plaything, she murmured sweetly into his suggestion of an ear.

"I see how much you enjoy your new self, my dear," she whispered, "I assure you that you are far from alone in that. I do believe that all the young ladies of London have seen your performance here tonight... have noted your... *perversion*. A silly show indeed, but most revealing, was it not?"

"I. Would. N-"

Her hand tightened on his rear.

The other clutched his nethers, not so unlike how she had gripped him that afternoon in the garden... yet now there was naught to hold but a bump of paintwork stitching at the front of

a wooden trouser... and nothing of the deference and awe of a young woman, charmed and adoring of her lover as he took his pleasure with her.

The toy trembled, as a claw enclosed his erogenous mound of blankness, squeezing with a mocking tenderness that exulted in his emasculation, yet fired him to new heights of eroticism.

As *she* took her pleasure with *him*.

"Of course it isn't *for* you to say anymore, is it? A person has opinions, thoughts and ideas, but that isn't what you are now."

Their eyes met, and for a moment he was underwater again, sunk into those glowing points of light which held such magnificent power.

He tensed, such as a doll could, and she smiled to see the non-expression of his perfectly composed carving of a face.

"You look surprised, but I am well aware of my lord husband's talents," she said, with a callous laugh, "just as he was thoroughly appraised of our own sordid little affair. He was most disappointed when you so callously let me down... even if neither of us were entirely shocked."

Florian could not imagine how he had erred so grossly.

Lady Esmeralda was no doe-eyed girl, besotted and needy for his attentions.

She was a woman, of self-possession and puissance... just like her husband.

No two could have been better matched than they.

For the first time, Florian felt genuine, earnest desire for his lover.

His hand tried all the harder to grip her side, his spoiled sex grinding into her grip as he pushed his head close, as though to kiss her.

She just laughed.

The girl he had held in the palm of his hand... so he had imagined... saw him as nothing more than an amusement. A crude plaything to while away a dance or two.

He should have been the one to make her eyes beg, to lure her into pleading kisses and wanton touching, yet there he was, pawing at her breast with all the grace of a dog, as she spun him about the ballroom in mirth.

Florian had never wanted any woman so dearly, yet he was physically incapable of taking her.

Her fingers on his crotch told him so, more eloquently than words.

Each squeeze was a fresh torment of tantalization, the bursts of impotent desire driving him to shuddering cries in her embrace, much as he had done to her, in days now past into faint and distant memory.

"This suits you far better, my dear little soldier," she announced, as she fondled his null sex.

"That is why I did it to you."

He stared.

"Oh but indeed. I had Reginald impose this form upon your body. A toy cannot break any fragile young hearts, after all."

She kissed him once again, and the music of his moan sounded for all to hear, as he ground into her caresses.

"And better yet, a toy has no heart to break."

Pulling back, she released him at last, and he clacked back a step, unable to express the breathless passions he felt.

Her fist knocked on the resonating dome of his chest, almost throwing him to the floor again... then on the equally sonorous hump of his loins.

"Best of all, my wooden puppet has none of the 'wood' of a real man, with which it might lead fair maidens astray...."

Florian had never been so infatuated, had never *imagined* such obsession could exist, yet both Lord *and* Lady Grosvenor now held absolute sway over him, in mind as well as body.

Yet as she massaged that scandalously exposed expanse of... nothingness between his legs, he realized, understood how utterly futile his want was. Suddenly, now, when he could not have her, he wanted her more than anything. Despite that, even wooden eyes could see clearly the futility of his longing. Even were she to grant that wish, he was wholly incapable of ever fulfilling his desire for her, or consummating the captivating pleasure to which she was subjecting him with each moment.

Florian understood at last the grave peril he had entered into, when he transgressed against this seeming lamb, for he saw now the wolf, a predator, hungry and implacable, determined to take what she wanted.

The young woman he had seem merely as an indulgence, a distraction for a few pleasant months, was the architect of Florian's ruin.

His reduction, from man to maquette.

The couple had remade him into a mere sketch of a human.

And he was besotted with them both despite it.

Because of it.

“You want more, do you not?”

So casually posed, the question was a thunderbolt to his mind.

In voicing that very notion which he had dared not admit, even to himself, she blew open his thoughts and lay bare that shocking truth.

Denied pleasure and motility, robbed of freedom of will though he was, devoid even of breath and pulse, Florian had never felt more alive.

His crotch creaked as he bucked against her hand, and he made a cumbersome nod of his head, ashamed beyond description, but not beyond words.

“Please. I. Need. You. I. Want. You. I. Lo-”

Lady Esmeralda giggled, a light and airy sound, distant as her gaze had become.

“I have monopolized enough of your time I’m sure, my good soldier – the ball is large and you have many guests yet to entertain.”

Her hand left him creaking and shuddering with one final kissing caress of her nails.

“Besides, I am quite too old to play with toys.”