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Harkaway, Nick. Angelmaker

All his life, Joe Spork has been caught between the legacy of his grandfather Daniel, a brilliant and honest clockmaker, and his father Mathew, a vivacious and larger-than-life criminal mastermind who ruled London's underground world. As a child, Joe ran wild in Mathew?s world as Crown Prince of Crime, learning the hidden ways of the gangster. But after his father?s death and his mother?s retreat into a convent, Joe took up Daniel?s legacy, becoming a clockmaker and running the store he inherited from his grandfather. When an old friend of Joe?s brings him a client with a fabulous piece of antique clockwork needing repair, Joe?s quiet life is disrupted with explosive consequences. The clockwork device is no toy, it seems, but is actually part of a weapon of mass destruction developed by a French genius a generation before but never deployed?until Joe repaired it and turned it on unknowingly. Now Joe is caught between shadowy governement agents, a strange group of cultists calling themselves the Ruskinites, an old enemy from Britain?s past, and a now-elderly former spy named Edie Banister, all of whom want control of the device?the Angelmaker. And Joe must embrace parts of himself he?d thought long in his past if he?s going to not only survive, but save the world in the bargain.

This impressive, intriguing, and complex novel is impossible to categorize. Part steampunk romp, part espionage thriller, part gangster adventure, with dollops of romance and philosophy dropped in for good measure, the only thing one can call this novel for sure is great fun. You might not know quite what you?re reading, but you?re going to love it all the same. Muscular prose, endless inventiveness, and truly engaging characters put the icing on this particular cake.

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