

# The **Nutcracker** Story

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## Act I

Scene I:

*A Christmas Eve party at the Stahlbaum house where Clara is given the **Nutcracker** as a Christmas present.*

The **Nutcracker** Ballet is derived from the story “The **Nutcracker** and the King of Mice” which was written E. T. A. Hoffman. The story begins on Christmas Eve in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Germany. It begins in the Stahlbaum’s house where everyone is preparing for their festive Christmas Eve party. The Stahlbaum’s house is a large and beautiful home, with the grandest Christmas tree imaginable. Mrs. Stahlbaum is hurrying about ensuring that every detail is attended to as the guests begin to arrive. Clara and Fritz the Stahlbaum children are playing as their friends arrive. Clara is a sweet and kind child while her brother Fritz is quite mischievous.

All of the guests arrive. The party is filled with music and cheer. Clara dances with her friends while her Fritz amuses himself with his friends by taunting Clara as she dances. Fritz is promptly scolded by Mrs. Stahlbaum and he stops.....for a moment.

As the party goes full swing, a mysterious man appears in the parlor. He is wearing a long black coat, and all of the attention is turned to him. The children are all afraid. He reveals himself and is recognized instantly by Clara as her Godfather, Uncle Drosselmeyer. Clara is immediately drawn to him and gives him a huge hug. She is always excited to see him.

Uncle Drosselmeyer greets all of the guests and then from underneath his coat, he pulls out three magical dolls; a rag doll, a ballerina doll, and a soldier doll. He winds up each doll and places them on the floor. The rag doll dances very loosely as if she had no joints. She spins and twists and flops around until she finally collapses onto the floor. The ballerina doll has on the most beautiful dress, dances on her toes and pirouettes across the floor. The soldier doll dances stiffly with a stern look on his face. He has strong, proud, powerful movements.

After the dolls dance, all of the children open up their presents. Every child has been brought a gift by Uncle Drosselmeyer. The boys get stick horses which they use to ride around the house making noise. The girls all receive dolls which they gently care for.

Clara initially is disappointed as she sees no gift for her. Uncle Drosselmeyer reaches under his cape, and gives Clara a colorfully decorated box. Inside Clara finds a beautiful **nutcracker** doll. The **nutcracker** has such vibrant colors and has such detail that she believes that he may actually come alive.

Clara is so pleased with the gift of the **nutcracker** that she dances happily with her uncle. When they are done dancing, Clara picks her **nutcracker** up and cradles it in her arms. Out of nowhere, Fritz arrives. He grabs the nutcracker from her hands, holds it in the air,

at which time he and Clara begin to struggle over it. They both pull and tug until, in the struggle, the **nutcracker** breaks!

Clara looks at her **nutcracker** lying broken on the floor. The **nutcracker** was the best gift she has ever got. Drosselmeyer goes over to Clara and comforts her. He picks up the broken **nutcracker** and in a strange and mysterious way, he puts it back together underneath his cloak. When he gives it back to Clara it has a scarf around the **nutcracker** to keep it secure. He gives Clara very specific instructions. He tells her to leave the **nutcracker** under the Christmas tree overnight, and on Christmas morning, her **nutcracker** will be as good as new.

Clara thinks about her godfather's promise and looks longingly at the **nutcracker**. She still has tears in her eyes but is willing to try anything.

Eventually it's time for all the guests to go. Clara and Fritz are sad to see their friends leave but they wave goodbye lightheartedly and wish each guest a merry Christmas. When everyone is gone Mrs. Stahlbaum breathes a sigh of relief. She turns to Clara and Fritz, kisses them goodnight and sends them off to bed. Before she goes to bed Clara takes one more look at her **nutcracker** and places it under the tree just as Uncle Drosselmeyer instructed.

## Act I

### Scene 2:

*The **Nutcracker** and Clara battle the evil mouse queen and her mice.*

As she lay in bed all Clara could think of was her **nutcracker** and how he was lying there, broken and all alone under the Christmas tree. Finally she couldn't stand it any more and she went downstairs to check on him.

When she gets downstairs she finds her **nutcracker** under the tree just as she had left it. For a moment and to her surprise, Clara thought she saw her **nutcracker** smile. She picks the **nutcracker** up and looks at it closely but she doesn't notice anything different. Perhaps she was just seeing things. It's late and Clara has had a long day. So she puts her **nutcracker** carefully back under the tree and lies down on the sofa next to the tree.

Clara lays her head down and closes her eyes, but just as she is about to drift off to sleep she hears a scurrying noise. Clara sits straight up and stares into the darkness. Her **nutcracker** is still there under the tree. But what's that? As she looks into the darkness in the corner of the parlor she sees something moving towards her. It's grey and has a long leathery tail and is about the size of a dog. It looks just like a giant mouse. Then right before her eyes another giant mouse scampers across the floor and disappears into the darkness, and then another. More and more mice begin to appear. One after the other they run out from the darkness.. One mouse runs right up to the Christmas tree around the **nutcracker** and right up to Clara. When he sees Clara he snarls and runs out of the room.

Clara is very frightened. She jumps off the sofa and tries to run away but when she gets to the end of the parlor she stops dead in her tracks. Standing right in front of her blocking her way is the giant mouse queen. The mouse queen has long slimy claws and two terribly ugly front teeth. She is as tall as a bear, wears a tiny crown on her head and carries a crooked sword. She swings her sword at Clara and the little mice chase Clara around the parlor.

In no time at all the mice and the mouse queen have cornered Clara and just as the mouse queen is about to strike, a mysterious figure appears. It's Uncle Drosselmeyer! At the sight of Drosselmeyer the mouse queen runs away. Drosselmeyer picks up Clara and returns her to the sofa next to her **nutcracker**.

Just when Clara thinks everything is back to normal, Uncle Drosselmeyer casts a spell. He begins to wave his hands and gestures in one powerful motion. As he does this everything begins to change. The room gets bigger and the Christmas tree grows taller and taller until it towers over Clara. She didn't know if she was getting smaller or was everything else getting bigger. Then she remembers! The **Nutcracker**! He has gotten bigger too; he was as tall as a real person. The nutcracker has come alive and he has brought an army of soldiers with him. He motions to Clara to stand clear and the battle begins. The **Nutcracker** then leads his soldiers courageously into a battle against the mice.

Clara sits perched atop of the sofa and watches The **Nutcracker**. The battle rages back and forth between the nutcracker and his soldiers and the mice. Eventually the **Nutcracker** and the mouse queen face each other one on one and begin to battle. The mouse queen fights so fiercely that Clara is frightened for her **Nutcracker**. But, The **Nutcracker** is fast and strong and he holds the mouse queen at bay for a very long time. In the end, though the mouse queen gets the better of The **Nutcracker** and stabs him in the ribs. The **Nutcracker** stumbles backwards. The mouse queen laughs and raises her sword to finish off The **Nutcracker**. But just as she's about to strike, Clara throws her slipper and hits the mouse queen square in the head. At that moment The **Nutcracker** summons up every last bit of energy and thrusts his sword through the mouse queen. The mouse queen stumbles back and falls to the ground. She shakes and quivers until at last she stops moving.

The mouse queen is dead. Clara and The **Nutcracker** did it! But The **Nutcracker**? The **Nutcracker** has fallen to the floor. His wound is too deep! Clara kneels down beside the wounded **Nutcracker** and starts to cry.

As she sits there, sobbing over her **Nutcracker**, Uncle Drosselmeyer appears again in his long black cape. He lowers his cape over the **Nutcracker** and when he pulls it away Clara sees that her **Nutcracker** soldier is really a **Nutcracker** prince. Furthermore the **Nutcracker** prince is alive! The **Nutcracker** thanks Clara for saving him; he holds out his hand and offers to take Clara to his kingdom, The Land of the Sweets. Clara takes the **Nutcracker** prince's hand and off they go.

On their way to the land of the sweets Clara and the **Nutcracker** pass through a beautiful snow covered forest. The snow queen and all of her snowflakes dance for Clara. They

jump, swirl around and create a beautiful dance. When they are done dancing, the snow queen wishes Clara and the **Nutcracker** a safe journey as they leave to the land of sweets.

## Act II

### Scene I:

*The **Nutcracker** Prince and Clara arrive in the land of the sweets where all the sweets dance for her.*

Clara and the **Nutcracker** Prince finally arrive in the land of the sweets. Clara is amazed at the beautiful palace. There is candy everywhere! The walls and floors are made of sweets and there are giant candy canes growing from the ground. The **Nutcracker** Prince introduces Clara to the queen of the land of the sweets, the Sugar Plum fairy. The Sugar Plum Fairy calls out to her friends; who are the different types of sweets from all around the world. They are all excited to meet Clara and she greets them with a smile and a curtsy.

The **Nutcracker** Prince describes the battle with the mouse queen and the mice. He tells of how Clara saved him from certain death by hitting the mouse queen between the eyes with her slipper. The Sugar Plum Fairy is so impressed with Clara that she declares a day of celebration. Sweets from all over the world gather at the palace and dance for Clara. The **Nutcracker** Prince escorts Clara to the seat of honor so she can watch the performance.

The first to dance is smooth and spicy chocolate from Spain. Their dance is very saucy. They move their heads around and dance from one spot to the other so skillfully. As the Spanish dancers leave, the lights begin to darken and the smell of coffee, from Arabia fills the air. The Arabian coffee appears and he dances like a genie. He has two dark spirits that he awakes from two bubbling cauldrons. The Arabian dancers wear simple, but decorative billowy clothing. They move slowly and with purpose. The next to perform is tea from China. The Chinese dancers wear bright colored clothing made of silk and they carry shiny fans. The Chinese tea dances a very lively dance. Next the Russian candy canes leap on to the stage. They are filled with energy. They jump and turn. By this point Clara's head is spinning. She has never seen so many candies and their dancing was so amazing. When the Russian candy canes leave a group of marzipan candies enter. They perform a graceful peasant dance to flute music. As they are leaving, a huge woman with a giant skirt and a mixing bowl enters. It's Mother Ginger and she is baking something special for Clara. Clara just can't sit still any longer. She gets up out of her chair and runs to see what Mother Ginger is cooking. But when she gets closer, Clara realizes that Mother Ginger is not alone. Under her skirt are all her children. One after the other the little children run out from under the skirt and begin to dance with Clara. What fun it is to dance with the little children. Eventually, Mother Ginger finishes her cookies, and the children finish dancing. Mother Ginger hands Clara a cookie and waves goodbye. As Clara sits back down a garden of flowers enter. They are the brightest most perfect flowers ever. Not one has even the slightest blemish or imperfection. The Flowers dance a beautiful waltz. There are many different colored flowers and they make wonderful patterns and lines when they move. Clara is almost breathless when they finish.

The last to dance is the **Nutcracker** Prince and the Sugar Plum fairy. They dance a beautiful Pas de Deux. At first their dance is slow and romantic. The **Nutcracker** Prince lifts the Sugar Plum Fairy and carries her across the stage. The Sugar Plum Fairy dances on her toes. When the slow part of the dance finishes the Sugar Plum Fairy leaves and The **Nutcracker** Prince performs for Clara by himself. The **Nutcracker** Prince performs a lively dance with a lot of jumps and turns. Then the Sugar Plum Fairy dances by herself. Her dance is sprightly. At the very end they both perform a fast dance together. When they were done Clara stands up and started Clapping. Oh how exciting! Clara wishes that she could stay in the land of the sweets forever.

The **Nutcracker** Prince walks up to Clara and tells her it is time to go. All the sweets return to dance for Clara one more time. When they are done the **Nutcracker** Prince waves goodbye and fades away.

The palace is getting darker. For a moment Clara is confused and doesn't know where she is. She rubs her eyes and when she opens them she some light shining in through a window. She is home in the parlor and its morning. Where is the nutcracker Clara wonders? The **Nutcracker**. Yes, The **Nutcracker**! Uncle Drosselmeyer promised that The **Nutcracker** would be as good as new in the morning. Clara runs to the Christmas tree and picks up her beloved **Nutcracker** doll. Uncle Drosselmeyer's promise came true. The **Nutcracker** is as good as new.

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