

MAINE STATE MUSIC THEATRE

*The* *Robin and Clark's*  
**Story**  
*of the*  
**Nutcracker**  
*Study Guide*



**MSMT**  
MAINE STATE MUSIC THEATRE EST. 1959  
msmt.org

**JULY 22, 2024**  
Tickets: 207.725.8769

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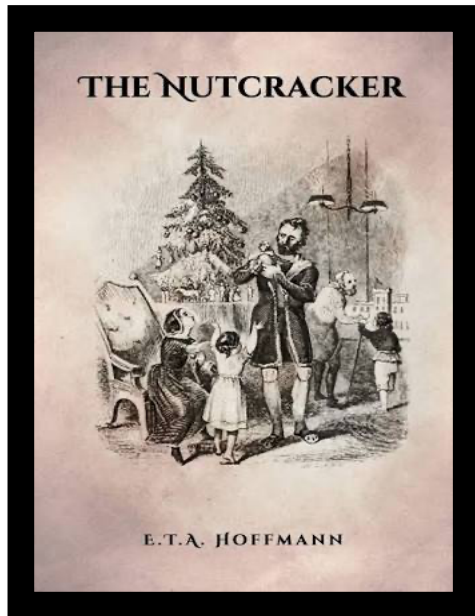
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## THE SOURCE MATERIAL

### THE E.T.A. HOFFMANN ORIGINAL STORY



*The Nutcracker & the Mouse King* is a German story written by E.T.A. Hoffmann in 1816 and published in *Children's Fairytales* in 1892. It is the source material for the famous ballet with music by Pyotyr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

#### **Synopsis of E.T.A. Hoffmann's Tale**

On Christmas Eve, at the Stahlbaum house, Marie and her brother, Fritz, sit outside the parlor speculating about what kind of present their godfather, Drosselmeyer, a clockmaker and inventor, has made for them. They receive splendid gifts; Drosselmeyer has created a clockwork castle with mechanical people moving around inside. However, the children quickly tire of it. Marie notices a Nutcracker and asks to whom he belongs. Her father tells her that he belongs to all of them, but since she is so fond of him, she will be his special

caretaker. She, Fritz, and their sister, Louise, pass him among themselves, cracking nuts, until Fritz tries to crack one that is too big and hard, and the Nutcracker's jaw breaks. Marie, upset, bandages him with a ribbon from her dress.

When it is time for bed, the children put their Christmas gifts away in the special cabinet where they keep their toys. Marie begs to stay with the Nutcracker a while longer, and she is allowed to do so. She tells him that Drosselmeyer will fix his jaw. At this, his face seems to come alive, and she is frightened, but decides it was her imagination.

The grandfather clock begins to chime, and Marie believes she sees Drosselmeyer sitting on top of it, preventing it from striking. Mice begin to come out from beneath the floorboards, including the seven-headed Mouse King. The dolls in the toy cabinet come alive, the Nutcracker taking command and leading them into battle after putting Marie's ribbon on. The dolls are overwhelmed by the mice. Marie, seeing the Nutcracker about to be taken prisoner, throws her slipper at the Mouse King. She then faints into the toy cabinet's glass door, cutting her arm badly.

Marie wakes up in her bed the next morning with her arm bandaged and tries to tell her parents about the battle between the mice and dolls, but they do not believe her. Several days later, Drosselmeyer arrives with the Nutcracker, whose jaw has been fixed, and tells Marie the story of Princess Pirlipat and Madam Mouserinks, known as the Queen of the Mice, which explains how nutcrackers came to be and why they look the way they do.

The Mouse Queen tricked Pirlipat's mother into allowing her and her children to gobble up the lard that was supposed to go into the sausage that the King was to eat at dinner. The King, enraged at the Mouse Queen for spoiling his supper and upsetting his wife, had his court inventor, also named Drosselmeyer, create traps for the Mouse Queen and her children.

The Mouse Queen, angered at the death of her children, swore that she would take revenge on Pirlipat. Pirlipat's mother surrounded her with cats which were supposed to be kept awake by being constantly stroked. The nurses who did so fell asleep, however, and the Mouse Queen magically turned Pirlipat ugly, giving her a huge head, a wide grinning mouth, and a cottony beard like a nutcracker. The King blamed Drosselmeyer and gave him four weeks to find a cure. He went to his friend, the court astrologer.

They read Pirlipat's horoscope and told the King the only way to cure her was to have her eat the nut Crackatook (Krakatuk), which must be cracked and handed to her by a man who had never been shaved nor worn boots since birth, and who must, without opening his eyes, hand her the kernel and take seven steps backwards without stumbling. The King sent Drosselmeyer and the astrologer out to look for both.

The two men journeyed for many years without finding either the nut or the man, until finally they returned home to Nuremberg and found the nut with Drosselmeyer's cousin, a puppet-maker. His son turned out to be the young man needed to crack the nut Crackatook. The King promised Pirlipat's hand to whoever could crack the nut. Many men broke their teeth on it before Drosselmeyer's nephew cracked it easily and handed it to Pirlipat, who swallowed it and immediately became beautiful again. But Drosselmeyer's nephew, on his seventh backward step, stepped on the Mouse Queen and stumbled, and the curse fell on him, giving him a large head, wide mouth, and cottony beard, making him a nutcracker. The ungrateful and unsympathetic Pirlipat, seeing how ugly he had become, refused to marry him and banished him from the castle.



Marie, while she recuperates from her wound, hears the Mouse King, son of the deceased Madam Mouserinks, whispering to her in the middle of the night, threatening to bite the Nutcracker to pieces unless she gives him her sweets and dolls. She sacrifices them, but he wants more and more. Finally, the Nutcracker tells her that if she gets him a sword, he will kill the Mouse King. Fritz gives her the one from his toy hussars. The next night, the Nutcracker comes into Marie's room bearing the Mouse King's seven crowns, and takes her to the doll kingdom, where she sees wonderful things. She falls asleep in the Nutcracker's palace and is brought home. She tries to tell her mother what happened, but again she is not believed, even when she shows her parents the seven crowns, and is forbidden to speak of her "dreams" anymore.

Marie sits in front of the toy cabinet one day while Drosselmeyer is repairing one of her father's clocks. She swears to the Nutcracker that if he were ever really real she would never behave as Pirlipat did, and would love him whatever he looked like. At this, there is a bang and she faints and falls off the chair. Her mother comes in to tell her that Drosselmeyer's nephew has

arrived from Nuremberg. He tells her that by swearing that she would love him in spite of his looks, she broke the curse and made him human again. He asks her to marry him. She accepts, and in a year and a day he comes for her and takes her away to the doll kingdom, where she is crowned queen.

### **The Nutcracker Ballet**

*The Nutcracker Ballet* is based on the story "The Nutcracker and the King of Mice" written by E.T.A. Hoffmann. Although what is seen on the stage today is different in detail from the original story, the basic plot takes its inspiration from Hoffmann. The French writer Alexandre Dumas wrote his own version, which the Russian choreographer Marius Petipa used to create his ballet to music by Pyotyr Ilyich Tchaikovsky in 1892.



### **Synopsis of The Nutcracker Ballet**

It is Christmas Eve at the Stahlbaum house, and the family is hosting its annual Christmas party, welcoming the arrival of their family and friends. The children, Clara and Fritz, are dancing and playing as they welcome their friends too.

The party grows festive with music and dance as godfather Drosselmeyer arrives. He is a skilled clock and toy maker and always full of surprises. Drosselmeyer draws everyone's attention as he presents two life-size dolls. They are the delight of the party, each taking a turn to dance.

The children begin to open gifts when Drosselmeyer presents his to Clara and Fritz. Although his gift to Fritz is quite nice, he gives Clara a beautiful Nutcracker that becomes the hit of the party. Fritz becomes jealous and grabs the nutcracker from Clara and promptly breaks it. Clara is heartbroken looking on as Drosselmeyer quickly repairs the Nutcracker with a handkerchief he magically draws from the air.

As the evening grows late, the guests depart, and the Stahlbaum family retires for the evening. Clara, worried about her beloved Nutcracker, sneaks back to the tree to check on him, falling asleep with him in her arms.

As the clock strikes midnight strange things begin to happen. Clara begins shrinking as her beautiful Christmas tree grows high above her. The toys around the tree come to life while the room fills with an army of mice, led by the fierce Mouse King. As the Nutcracker awakens, he leads his army of toy soldiers into battle with the mice. The Mouse King corners the Nutcracker and battles him one-on-one. The Nutcracker seems to be no match for the Mouse King.

The Nutcracker and his army can go on no longer and are captured by the mice and their King. Clara makes a final daring charge throwing her slipper at the Mouse King, hitting him square on the head. The Mouse King drops to the floor and the mice run away, carrying off their leader's lifeless body.

The Nutcracker turns into a Prince and takes Clara on a journey to the Land of Snow, an enchanted forest wonderland where they are welcomed by dancing snowflakes.

The Prince next escorts Clara to the Land of Sweets where they are greeted by the Sugar Plum Fairy. The Prince tells her about their daring battle with the army of mice and she rewards them with a celebration of nationally-themed dances. As a finale, the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Cavalier dance a beautiful pas de deux.

Clara awakens from her dream and finds herself by her Christmas tree with her beloved Nutcracker.



## THE ROBIN & CLARK MUSICAL VERSION

### SYNOPSIS

#### Scene 1

It is Christmas Eve at the Thatcher house, and the family and their servants are preparing for the holiday celebration. The parents, Lottie and Henry, and the children, Fritz and Marie, sing of their anticipation in "Christmas Is Coming Soon."

Fritz, a hyper-active little boy, chases his sister, trying to get her doll, Clara. Henry admonishes them and grouses at his wife about dinner. He offers his son a Toy Soldier in an effort to break up the siblings' fight. Fritz claims he doesn't want the toy until Marie says she will take the soldier to protect her doll,, Clara. The bickering stops temporarily as dinner is served, but then Dr. Drosselmeyer,

the children's uncle arrives, saying he has some special gifts for the children that cannot wait until tomorrow.

Fritz's gift is a toy mouse, which Drosselmeyer says is the Mouse King. Fritz protests that he has no crown. Marie's present is the Nutcracker, who is wearing a gold crown. Fritz argues that his Mouse King should have the crown, not the Nutcracker, and he engages his sister in a tug of war trying to wrest the crown from her. In the process he breaks the Nutcracker. His angry father orders him to give the crown back to Marie and go to his room. Fritz exits threatening to be the one who gives the orders one day.

Drosselmeyer tells Marie the Nutcracker's crown is magic; he promises to fix the Nutcracker for her and urges her to believe in her dreams. As Marie introduces the Nutcracker to her doll Clara and the toy soldier, Drosselmeyer casts a spell; she falls asleep and begins to dream.

#### Scene 2 The Land of Dreams

The dolls awake. Clara and the Toy Soldier dance, at the end of which, the Mouse King appears seeking the gold crown. Two mouse minions, Joe and Shmo, join him. The Mouse King and the Nutcracker confront each other, but the Mouse King holds his sword to Marie's throat, demanding the crown. The Nutcracker surrenders it, but the Mouse King does not keep his promise to release Marie. Instead he ties her, Clara, and the Toy Soldier up and casts a spell to imprison them. He then sets off to find the Land of Sweets.

Marie invokes the magic of Christmas to free them from the spell; they break out of their bonds and head to the Land of Sweets via the Land of Toys.

#### Scene 3 The Land of Toys

In the Land of Toys where old toys have been left forgotten, a Harp, a Jack-in-the-Box, and a Rocking Horse all come to life, as the Mouse King, Joe, and Shmo arrive. The toys pretend to be asleep as they listen to the Mouse King's words. Offended by his insults and by his plan to give gold crown to the Sugar Plum Fairy and defeat the Nutcracker, they determine to help the



Nutcracker. As the Mouse King and company leave, Marie, Clara, the Toy Soldier, and the Nutcracker arrive. She finds the old toys beautiful, and the toys direct the Nutcracker and his party to the Land of Snow.

#### Scene 4

The Mouse King stops on his way to revel in his power, singing that he will be King of the World, as the Nutcracker and his friends approach. The Snow Princess and the Penguins appear singing "Let It Snow." She advises the Nutcracker and his friends that her sister, the Sugar Plum Fairy, must be seen by appointment, but she promises to send word ahead on their behalf.

#### Scene 5

Drosselmeyer has set the stage for the Land of Sweets. The quartet enters and hides behind the giant lollipops. They manage to sneak up on Joe and Shmo and capture them before Mouse King enters. The Nutcracker engages him in a wild chase and crown toss, eventually regaining the gold crown for himself. At the end of the melee, the Sugar Plum Fairy majestically appears. She orders the Mouse King to admit defeat, which he reluctantly does, and then chases him, Joe, and Shmo away. The Nutcracker confesses to the Sugar Plum Fairy his wish to become human, and she promises to grant his request by morning. She then commands the festivities for the coronation of the Nutcracker to begin. There are Arabian Dancers, followed by the Soldier's Dance, Clara's Dance, and the Mouse Dance. The Sugar Plum fairy crowns the Nutcracker, who sings "Magic of the Day," joined by everyone.

The Sugar Plum Fairy tells Marie it is time "to go home," to wake up. Marie is worried that if she wakes, the Nutcracker will not become human, will not live again. The Sugar Plum Fairy tells her he "will always live in you." The Nutcracker sings, "If you believe that I am real, I will live again."

#### Scene 6

Marie awakens in her own home. She tells Fritz he looks like the Mouse King and asks where the Sugar Plum Fairy is. Fritz scoffs at her and says he is going to play with his "real" friend Christopher. Marie hears fading voices of Clara and the Toy Soldier urging her to believe in her dreams. Drosselmeyer returns with the Nutcracker in a box. Fritz and Marie begin to argue again, but Drosselmeyer casts another spell to halt the action. Christopher appears. He is the Nutcracker incarnated as a human child. He has a gold crown in his hand and asks to whom it belongs. Marie answers, "My Nutcracker." Christopher invites her to join him, his sister Clara, and Fritz to play. As the children exit, Drosselmeyer blows Marie a kiss from center stage and says, "Believe in the magic of Christmas and anything is possible."





## THE CHARACTERS

**Lottie** – The wife of Henry and mother of Fritz and Marie.

**Henry** – The husband of Lottie and father to Fritz and Marie.

**Dr. Drosselmeyer** – Lottie's brother, Marie and Fritz's uncle who is a clockmaker and inventor and brings magical gifts.

**Marie** – A dreamy, young girl who loves to play with dolls and who receives the Nutcracker as a special Christmas gift.

**Fritz/Mouse King**– Marie's obstreperous younger brother who likes to terrorize others; he appears in Marie's dream as the power-hungry Mouse King.

**The Nutcracker/Christopher** – a toy that Drosselmeyer gives to Marie; he fights with the Mouse King over his gold crown, and journeys with Marie to the Sugar Plum Fairy in the hopes of becoming human; in his human form, he is Christopher, a neighbor child who comes to play with Fritz and Marie and brings a gold crown.

**Clara** – Marie's doll who comes to life in her dream.

**Toy Soldier** – Dr. Drosselmeyer's gift to Fritz, which he rejects, and Marie takes him to "protect" her doll, Clara.

**Joe & Shmo** – Two silly mice who are part of the Mouse King's entourage.

**Sugar Plum Fairy** – Ruler of the Land of Sweets who crowns the Nutcracker and promises him his humanity.

**Snow Princess** – Sugar Plum Fairy's sister who performs a song with her penguins and helps Marie and friends to reach the Land of Sweets.

**Harp, Jack-in-the-Box, Rocking Horse** – Old abandoned toys in the Land of Toys who come to life and help Marie and the Nutcracker in their quest.

**Servants** in Henry and Lottie's house.

THE SONGS

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Overture</i>  | Orchestra                             |
| <i>Christmas Is Coming Soon</i>                                    | Lottie, Henry, Marie, Fritz, Servants |
| <i>Dream Music</i>   | Orchestra                             |
| <i>Dolls Awake</i>   | Orchestra                             |
| <i>Battle Music</i>  | Orchestra                             |
| <i>Evil Spell</i>  | Orchestra                             |
| <i>Magic Breakout Music</i>  | Orchestra                             |
| <i>King of the World</i>   | Mouse King, Joe, Shmo                 |
| <i>Let It Snow</i>   | Snow Princess                         |
| <i>Crown Toss/Chase</i>  | Orchestra                             |
| <i>Sugar Plum Fairy Fanfare</i>                                    | Orchestra                             |
| <u><i>Dance Music: Arabian Dance, Clara Dance, Mouse Dance</i></u> | Orchestra                             |
| <i>Coronation/Magic of the Day</i>                                 | Nutcracker, All                       |
| <i>If You Believe</i>  | Nutcracker                            |
| <i>Drosselmeyer Magic # 1 &amp; 2</i>                              | Orchestra                             |

THE THEMES

Robin & Clark's musical version follows the basic storyline of the beloved ballet, incorporating some of the well-known dances and adding vocals. The writers emphasize the magical season of Christmas where "dreams come true if you believe" and focus on kindness and caring in the family setting.

## THE CREATORS



Marc Robin and Curt Dale Clark are the creators of this musical version of *The Story of the Nutcracker*. Together they have written the book (or story and dialogue), the music, and the lyrics of the songs for a total of fifteen musicals. Marc Robin is also a well-known theatre director and choreographer, actor, dancer, and singer and now heads up the Fulton Theatre in Lancaster, PA. Curt Dale Clark is an actor, singer, dancer, and director, and with his managing partner, Stephanie Dupal, he is Artistic Director of Maine State Music Theatre in Brunswick. Marc and Curt believe that it is very important to introduce young audiences like you to live theatre because these shows open a whole world of imagination and creativity. They hope you will enjoy this production of *The Story of the Nutcracker* and come to Maine State Music Theatre in the summer to see another Theatre for Young Audiences performance with all the costumes, lights, and beautiful sets, the dancing and the music, performed by fantastic actors and musicians.

### OTHER MUSICALS BY ROBIN & CLARK

#### FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

*Aladdin*  
*Alice in Wonderland*  
*A Christmas Carol*  
*Beauty & the Beast*  
*Cinderella*  
*Jack and the Beanstalk*  
*The Little Mermaid*  
*Peter Pan*  
*Pinocchio*  
*The Princess and the Pea*  
*Rapunzel*  
*Sleeping Beauty*  
*Snow White*  
*'Twas the Night Before Christmas*

#### FULL-LENGTH MUSICALS

*Treasure Island: A Musical Adventure*  
*Sarah (in the works)*



## LINKS

If you want to learn more about *The Nutcracker* in its original version and other theatrical forms, here is a list of reading and internet resources you can check out:

### ON THE WEB

#### **About the E.T.A. Hoffmann Tale**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csTwcqDJONA> Full length video of E.T. A. Hoffmann story read in English and accompanied by Maurice Sendak illustrations

#### **About The Nutcracker Ballet**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDqqVHsGybw> A short video telling the history of The Nutcracker story with music from Tchaikovsky's ballet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-5n9MVRxL4> Video excerpts from Paris Ballet production of *The Nutcracker*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qy6dlGpC3Ns>

Video of Sugar Plum Fairy pas de deux, Royal Ballet, Covent Garden, London

## ACTIVITIES

### TELL THE PERFORMERS WHAT YOU THINK

#### THE SHOW

1. If you have seen another stage version of *The Nutcracker*, how is this musical different?
2. Who is your favorite character, and why?
3. What is your favorite scene or song?

#### THE THEMES

4. What is the musical saying about the power of dreams?
5. Why is Christmas an especially magical time of year?
6. Why does Marie's dream come true at the end?
7. What traits make Fritz such an obnoxious little brother?
8. Do you think he learns his lesson in the end?



CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Using the clues below, fill out this crossword puzzle. The answers are all related to the *Nutcracker* theme.

|    |    |    |  |      |  |    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| 3. |    |    |  | 4.5. |  |    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|    |    |    |  |      |  |    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| 7. |    |    |  |      |  |    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|    |    |    |  |      |  |    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|    |    | 8. |  |      |  |    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Across**

- 1. Ruler of the Land of Sweets: \_\_\_\_\_ Fairy
- 4. The children's father
- 6. Who challenges the Nutcracker for the crown?
- 7. The first place Marie and friends stop: Land of \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. The children's uncle and toymaker Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

**Down**

- 2. The Snow Princess' companions
- 3. Marie's naughty brother
- 5. A masculine pronoun

### LET'S DRAW AND WRITE

1. The story of *The Nutcracker* is about the power of Christmas magic. **Write your own story** about a special Christmas (or other holiday).
2. **Draw a picture of The Nutcracker and the Mouse King** as you imagine them.
3. **Color the drawing from The Nutcracker**, which you will find on the last page of this booklet. You can make it as fantastical as you like.

We want to see what you create, so send us your stories and art work. We will post some of the pictures and writing on MSMT's Facebook page.

Here's how to send:

- Mail them to **DJ Fourquet, Assistant Director of Development, Maine State Music Theatre, 22 Elm St., Brunswick, ME 04011** or
- Email your writing or a picture of your drawing to DJ Fourquet at [dj@msmt.org](mailto:dj@msmt.org)



### SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

Let us know what you thought of this program by filling out the survey below and returning it to **DJ Fourquet at Maine State Music Theatre, 22 Elm St., Brunswick, ME 04011** or by replying in an email to DJ at [dj@msmt.org](mailto:dj@msmt.org). We hope to be able to continue to bring you similar programs, so your thoughts and comments are very important to us! Thanks for taking the time!

FOR CHILDREN

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being highest), how entertaining did you find *The Story of the Nutcracker*?
2. What did you like best about the presentation?
3. Who was your favorite character?
4. What was your favorite song?
5. What is the most important lesson you took away from the story and this program?
6. Did the program make you want to be in a play yourself?

FOR ADULTS

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being highest), how entertaining and educational did you find *The Story of the Nutcracker*?
2. What did you like best about the presentation?
3. What is the most important lesson your child took away from this musical?
4. Did the program make you want to bring your child(ren) to the Young Audiences productions this summer?
5. What other children's stories and musicals would you like to explore in future programs?
6. How useful were the printed materials for your child?
7. Please offer us any other suggestions or thoughts you may have.

NAME:

AGE: (optional)

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CONTACT INFORMATION (optional)

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