



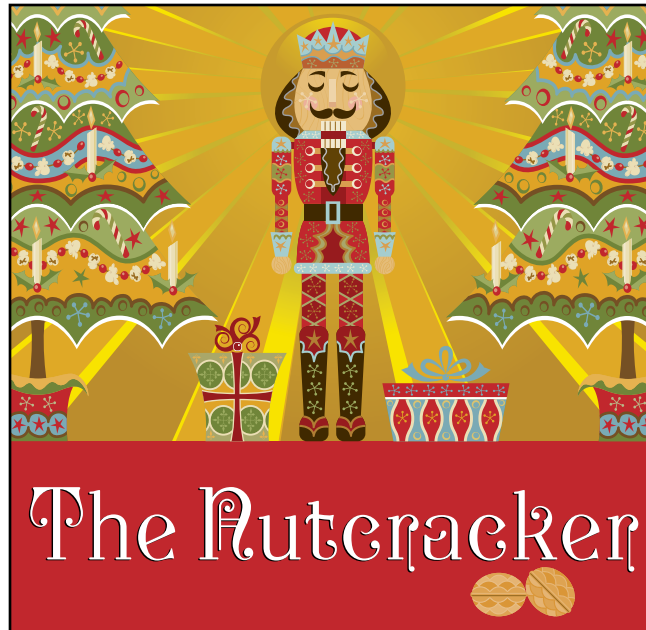
imaginary theatre company

2010–2011 SEASON

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by Sarah Brandt

Original Music and Lyrics by Neal Richardson

Directed by Bruce Longworth

contents

2 *The Nutcracker*

3 Setting the Scene • Who's Who?

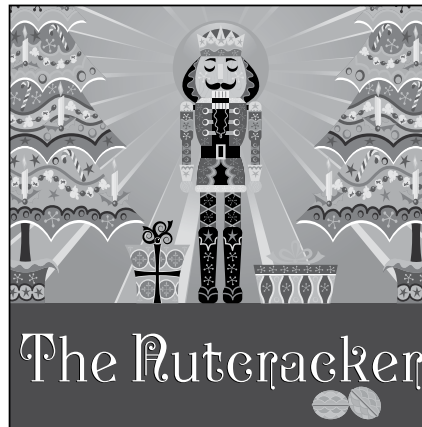
4 What's the Story?

5 Words to the Wise • Read More About It

6 Information and Activity Sheets



Imaginary theatre company



by Sarah Brandt

Original Music and Lyrics by Neal Richardson

Directed by Bruce Longworth

Musical Director

Neal Richardson

Scenic Designer

Scott Loeb

Costume Designer

Dorothy Marshall Englis

Choreographer

Ellen Isom

Stage Manager

Danny Maly

Director of Education

Marsha Coplon

The Company

Marie / **Ann Ashby**

Mother, Mouse, Fairy, Townsperson / **Lakeetha Blakeney**

Godfather, Mouse King, Fairy, Mayor / **Jordan Reinwald**

Father, Nutcracker, Fritz / **Christian Vieira**



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setting the scene

The Nutcracker that you will see is based on a very old story from 1816 called *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* by E.T.A. Hoffmann. This story was then turned into a ballet with very famous music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. There have also been many other adaptations of the Nutcracker's story, including movies, TV shows and even a cartoon starring Mickey and Minnie Mouse!

Imaginary Theatre Company's new version of *The Nutcracker* is written by Sarah Brandt and Neal Richardson, and has a whole new story and new songs. However, even with all these new things happening, the story of the Nutcracker is the same. An ugly, wooden Nutcracker doll comes to life on Christmas Eve to battle a nasty Mouse King and make a new friend out of Marie. As you will see, Marie doesn't think making friends is so easy, but the Nutcracker shows her that friends can be almost anywhere you look. And what's more? There's also magic almost everywhere you look, especially if you have a good imagination.

who's who?

Marie is not too happy to have moved away from all her friends, especially this close to Christmas.

Mom and Dad are trying to help Marie find some new friends, but they aren't too sure about her crazy stories.

Godfather Drosselmeyer is sort of strange, but he cares very much about Marie and her family.

The Nutcracker is under a spell—during the day he's a doll, but at night he is able to come to life.

The Mouse King is one mean rodent, and he's put a nasty spell on the Nutcracker.

The Fairies are silly and sweet, just like most things in the Candy Kingdom.

The Mayor and Townsperson are thrilled to see the Nutcracker when he returns from his journey.

Fritz is Godfather's nephew, but Marie knows there's more than meets the eye with this new friend.

what's the story?

This Christmas is turning out to be kind of a bummer for Marie. Her family has just moved to a new town and she doesn't know anyone. She even has to spend Christmas Eve at some lame party with her parents' new friends, but at least there's one good thing—presents from Godfather Dross! He always lets Marie open her presents early, and this Christmas is no exception. When they arrive home from the party, she opens his gifts and finds that one of them is a very weird little wooden doll—a nutcracker. Godfather Dross explains that the Nutcracker is very important to him and asks her to take care of it. Marie notices that there is something special about this little doll, so she agrees.

After Godfather leaves, Mom and Dad insist that Marie put the Nutcracker in their china cabinet for safekeeping. Marie would rather keep an eye on the doll, but she gives it to her parents and heads to bed. The whole house is fast asleep when suddenly Marie hears odd noises coming from the living room. She tip-toes out to investigate and is shocked to see that the Nutcracker has come to life and is being attacked by a huge, mean mouse! Marie doesn't know what to do, but she knows she should help, so she throws her slipper at the mouse. Luckily, it distracts him long enough for the Nutcracker to escape, but not before the mouse promises to return. The Nutcracker explains that he was fighting the mouse because the mouse turned him into an ugly nutcracker doll. He wants to find a way to become human again, but to break the spell he has to change someone else. Neither of them can figure out how he

can do that though, so in the mean time he will focus on getting rid of the mouse. He asks for Marie's help, and she agrees to help him find a weapon.

The next morning Marie is confused to find that the Nutcracker is a doll once again. Godfather has returned to celebrate Christmas morning, and Marie tries to explain what happened the night before. Her parents think it was just a dream, after all, dolls don't just come to life. Godfather, however, believes Marie's story and helps her find a sword for the Nutcracker. The family opens presents, eats treats and plays with new gifts, and before they know it, the day is over.

Once again, as the family sleeps, Marie is awakened by odd sounds. She finds the Nutcracker fighting the mouse again, only this time he is able to win, thanks to the sword Marie got for him. To thank her, the Nutcracker takes Marie to his homeland—the magical Candy Kingdom. She sees unbelievable sights and meets new friends, including some fairies and the town's mayor.

She also finds out that the Nutcracker is more than he seems—he's the prince of the Candy Kingdom! He has been trying to find a way to turn himself back into a prince instead of the ugly doll. Marie lays down to rest while the Nutcracker talks to his friends, and she is shocked to wake up back in her own house. How did she get home? And what happened to the Nutcracker?

Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your classroom needs and reproduce them for future use.

The activities in this guide address the following Missouri Show Me Standards and Illinois Learning Standards.

MO: CA1, 2, 3, 4; FA2, 3, 5; MA 1; IL: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 16, 25, 27

words to the wise

Rejoice: to feel or show great joy or delight

Exaggerate: to make something larger, greater, better or worse than it really is

Voilà: a French word meaning “there it is”

Heirloom: a valuable object that has belonged to a family for several generations

Collectibles: items with a certain emotional value worth collecting or of interest to a specific collector

Cue: a thing said or done that serves as a signal for another thing to occur

Councilman: a person who is a member of a city council or other similar organization of elected officials who manage the affairs of a particular city, county or other district

read more about it

Hautzig, Deborah. *The Story of the Nutcracker Ballet*, Random House Books for Young Readers, 1986. Take an illustrated journey through the story of *The Nutcracker* with this illustrated version of the tale.

Hoffmann, E.T.A and Dumas, Alexandre. *The Nutcracker and Mouse King and The Tale of the Nutcracker*. Penguin Classics, 2007. Now that you’ve seen the play, check out the original story by Hoffmann, complete with an adaptation by Alexandre Dumas.

***The Nutcracker*, 2010, Opus Arte/Naxos, 120 Minutes, Blu-ray.** Can’t make it out to see the ballet live? No problem! Check it out in full high def with this blu-ray movie version (also available in DVD)!

***Swan Lake*, 2005, Image Entertainment, 117 Minutes, DVD.** If you enjoyed *The Nutcracker* as a ballet, check out another of Tchaikovsky’s creations, performed by the American Ballet Theatre.

***The Muppet Christmas Carol*, 1992, Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 85 Minutes, DVD.** *The Nutcracker* is a holiday classic for many people, and if you liked Imaginary Theatre Company’s new version of that classic, check out this version of a Charles Dickens classic, starring the Muppets!

The First Nutcracker

The Nutcracker is a story told in many forms—this new play, the ballet (which debuted in 1892, more on that later!), movies and even television shows. But it all started with a novelette (a short novel) written in 1816 by E.T.A. Hoffmann.

Hoffmann's original story was actually called *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*. It's slightly different from the play, as Marie isn't an only child in Hoffmann's version (she has a brother and a sister in the story) and Drosselmeyer doesn't specifically give the Nutcracker just to her. It actually belongs to the whole family, but Marie is very fond of the doll and demands to be the one who takes care of it.

While her siblings are fast asleep, Marie stays up a little later with the Nutcracker. As the night wears on, magical things start to happen—it seems like the Nutcracker comes alive for a moment and Drosselmeyer sits atop the grandfather clock, preventing it from chiming. Mice suddenly start streaming into the room from under the floorboards, led by the Mouse King. The dolls from the cupboard (led by the Nutcracker) wage war with the mice. It's only after Marie throws her shoe at the Mouse King that the rodents retreat.

The next morning, Drosselmeyer tells Marie the story of the Nutcracker, Princess Pirlipat and the Queen of the Mice. The Queen of the Mice played a trick upon Princess Pirlipat so that the mice could eat all of the lard that was supposed to be for the King's (human king, not Mouse King) supper. The King was pretty upset about not having his special sausage dinner and set Drosselmeyer to the task of killing all the mice. As you might imagine, the Queen of the Mice wasn't happy about this and cursed Pirlipat



with a huge head, wide grinning mouth and a cottony beard (just like a nutcracker).

The only cure was for Pirlipat to eat the Crackatook nut, to be cracked by a man who had never been shaved nor worn boots since birth. Drosselmeyer journeyed far and wide for both with no success. It was only after Drosselmeyer returned home that he would find the nut in a small shop and the man to crack the nut in his own family—his nephew.

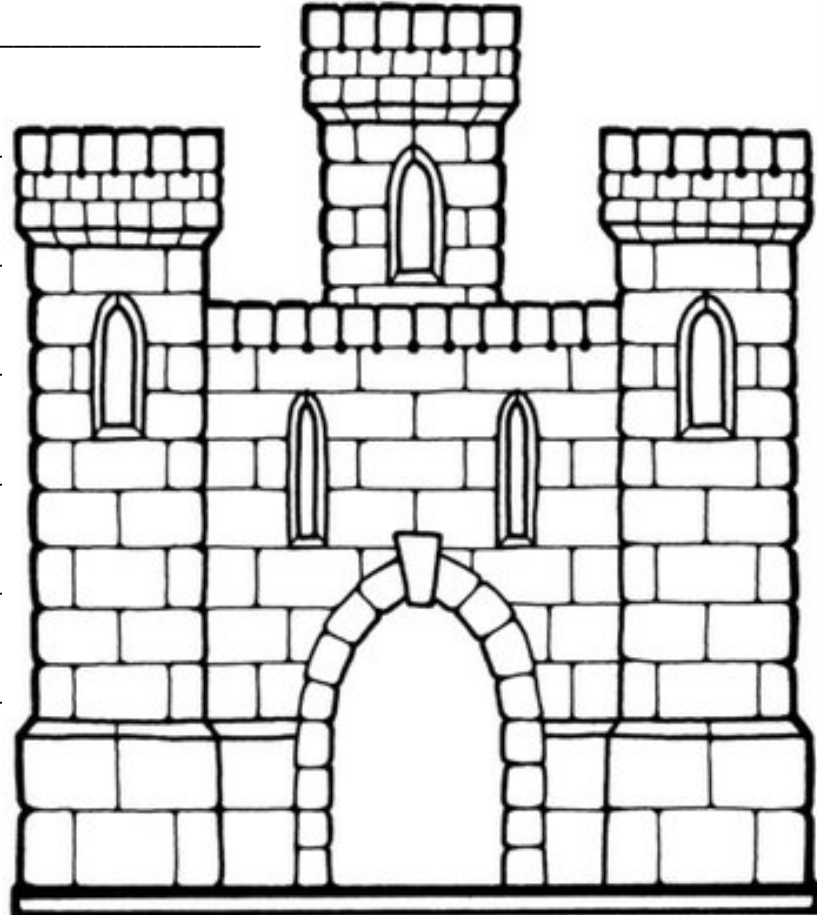
After handing the Princess her cure, the nephew inadvertently stumbles upon the Queen of the Mice, dooming himself to be cursed. Though Pirlipat returned to her beautiful self, the nephew was transformed into the ugly Nutcracker. The King had promised his daughter's hand in marriage to the man who could cure her, but she refused the Nutcracker, saying he was too ugly.

The next night back at Marie's house, the Mouse King whispers into her ear, demanding her candies and dolls in exchange for the Nutcracker's safety. Concerned for the Nutcracker, Marie gives over her things. She also tracks down a sword (thanks to her brother) for the Nutcracker, which allows him to defeat the evil Mouse King.

Just like in the play, Marie visits the Nutcracker's magical kingdom (which is a Doll Kingdom in the story). She can't understand why the Princess wouldn't marry the Nutcracker, and she swears that if he were ever real she would love him no matter what he looked like. With this, Drosselmeyer arrives at the front door with his nephew—no longer a nutcracker! Marie and the nephew get married and become the rightful King and Queen of the Doll Kingdom.

Just Imagine!

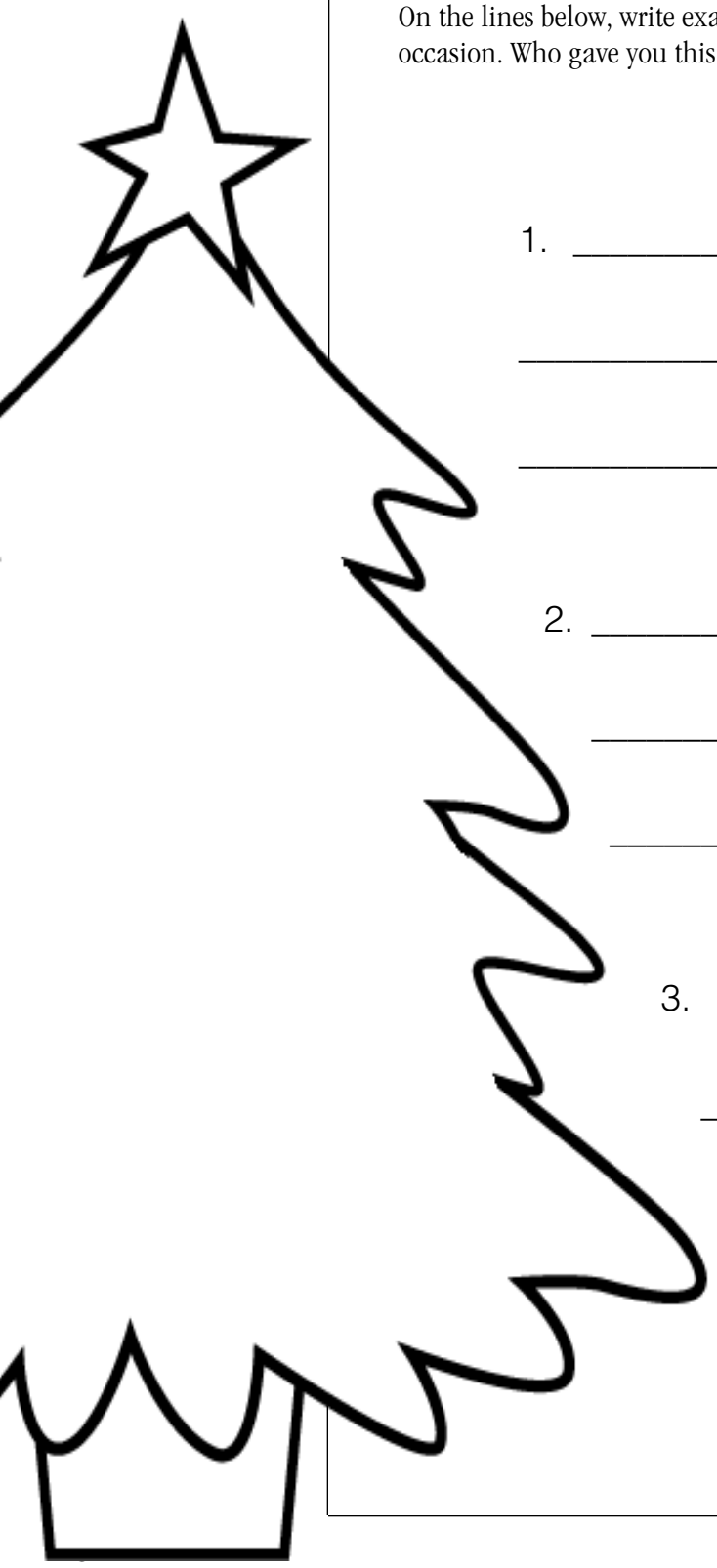
The Nutcracker is a tale of action, adventure, and most importantly, imagination. Even though the Nutcracker and his Candy Kingdom are very real for Marie, her parents think it's just a dream. Have you ever imagined your own Candy Kingdom or other similar place? Were there fairies or other magical creatures? What about sparkling forests and castles made of sugar cubes? Or is your imaginary place a different world altogether? In the space below, write about your own imaginary place and the kind of creatures that live there.



Giving Gifts

Have you ever gotten a gift like Marie—a wonderful and magical gift like the Nutcracker that didn't seem quite so wonderful and magical when you first opened it? Children have been getting (and giving) Christmas gifts for hundreds of years, some more appreciated than others. Have you ever gotten a gift that maybe you didn't think was so great but you realized later that it was special? What do you think the gift giver was thinking about when they got each present for you?

On the lines below, write examples of gifts you received for Christmas, a birthday or another occasion. Who gave you this gift and why was it so valuable to you?



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

The Nutcracker Ballet

So you know that there's a play and a short story, but why do you keep hearing that *The Nutcracker* is a ballet?

The Nutcracker is a two-act (basically two part) ballet by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (that's "CHY-KOV-SKI"). He's a pretty famous Russian composer who is the mastermind behind all kinds of famous ballets, symphonies and operas. Anybody who knows classical music will tell you that Tchaikovsky composed *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty* (both ballets) and also wrote the famous opera *Eugene Onegin*.

Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* is probably one of the most famous ballets around, and you can find it everywhere during Christmas time. The ballet is so famous, in fact, most people don't know that it's a play and a short story (but you do!).

Wait a minute though—how does the ballet work? Isn't it just a bunch of dancing around? How do they tell the story?

That's exactly how they tell the story—through dance! Just like a silent scene in a movie, everything is told through action and music. You can tell what's happening by how the music sounds (tense music in a battle scene, for example) and how the characters dance (excited movement for exciting moments, for example).

All your favorite characters are there—Marie, Drosselmeyer and, of course, the Nutcracker. All of your favorite scenes are there too—epic battles with the Mouse King and the journey through the magical kingdom. The story, characters, even your favorite moments from *The Nutcracker* are all revealed in the ballet through the grace and elegance of beautiful music and movement. But if you really want to impress your friends, throw around some of these ballet vocabulary words (and maybe even try to do them yourself!).

PLIE: bending of the knee or knees

PIROUETTE: complete turn of the body on one foot

RONDE DE JAMBE: a circular movement of the leg

SISSONNE: jumping step which begins on two feet and lands on one

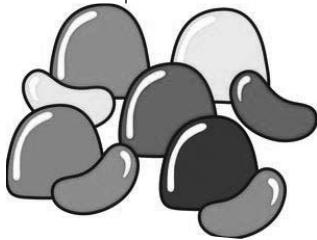
BATTEMENT: high (GRAND) or low (PETIT) kick

CHASSE: step in which one foot literally chases the other foot out of its position; done in a series



Add It Up

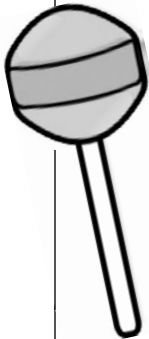
Marie and the Nutcracker are enjoying the goodies in the Candy Kingdom. Add up all the sweets and see who's eating the most!



MARIE
2 chocolate blossoms
+ 5 gumdrops



8 sugar cubes
+ 1 lollipop



3 cinnamon sticks
+ 2 caramels

4 licorice sticks
+ 5 gumdrops

3 rock candy pops
+ 6 sugar cubes



NUTCRACKER

1 cinnamon stick
+ 3 sugar cubes



4 caramels
+ 2 gumdrops

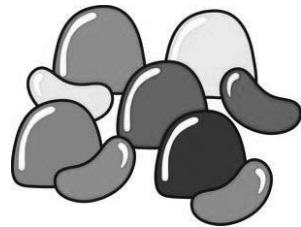


2 chocolate blossoms
+ 1 rock candy pop

8 lollipops
+ 3 sugar cubes



5 licorice sticks
+ 7 chocolate blossoms



Getting to Know You

Marie thought finding new friends would be tough, but the Nutcracker helped her realize that all she had to do was open up and give it a try. You can give it a try too! Share information about yourself with your classmates and find out new things about them. Maybe you'll find a new friend.

Find a person who fits each of the descriptions below. When you find someone, write his or her name on the line.

Someone who has a pet cat _____

Someone who has curly hair _____

Someone who was born in December _____

Someone who rides the bus to school _____

Someone who ate McDonalds this week _____

Someone who has visited Florida _____

Someone who has blue eyes _____

Someone who likes broccoli _____

Someone who is an only child _____

Someone whose favorite color is pink _____

Someone who has a pet fish _____

Someone who likes pie better than cake _____

Someone who took swimming lessons _____

Someone who went to Six Flags this summer _____

Someone who is wearing something purple _____

The Nutcracker

What do you think the Nutcracker should look like?
Design his costume in your favorite colors.

