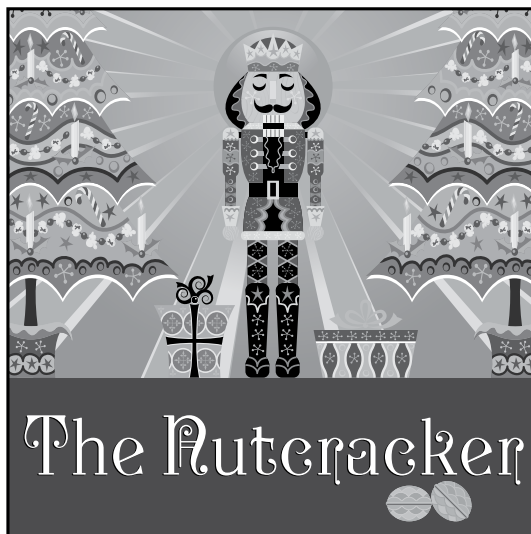


BOOK BY SARAH BRANDT
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY NEAL RICHARDSON
DIRECTED BY SUKI PETERS

contents

- 2** *The Nutcracker*
- 3** Setting the Scene • Who's Who? •
Words to the Wise
- 4** What's the Story?
- 5** The Spirit of Giving
- 6** Information and Activities



BY SARAH BRANDT
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY NEAL RICHARDSON
DIRECTED BY SUKI PETERS

Musical Director	Charlie Mueller
Choreographer	Ellen Isom
Scenic Designer	Scott Loebel
Costume Designer	Elizabeth Eisloeffel
Stage Manager	J.M. Bock*
Director of Education	Marsha Coplon
Associate Director of Education	Sarah Brandt
Education Programs Associate	Brian Coats

THE COMPANY

Aaron Orion Baker*	GODFATHER, MOUSE KING, FAIRY, MAYOR
Charlie Barron*	FATHER, NUTCRACKER, FRITZ
Lana Dvorak*	MARIE
Jeanitta Perkins*	MOTHER, MOUSE, FAIRY, TOWNSPERSON

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



Financial assistance for this theatre has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis; and the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission.



setting the scene



The Nutcracker 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, a lot about the the Nutcracker is the same. An ugly, wooden Nutcracker doll comes to life on Christmas Eve to battle a nasty Mouse King and become a new friend to 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 DROSSELMAYER 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.





words to the wise



REJOICE: to feel or show great joy

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

VOILA: 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 of interest to a collector

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

MAYOR: an elected official who manages the affairs of a particular city



read more about it



The Nutcracker

Retold by Stephanie Spinner
Illustrated by Peter Malone

In this retelling of the original 1816 German story, Godfather Drosselmeier gives Marie a nutcracker for Christmas, and she finds herself in a magical realm where she saves the nutcracker and sees him change into a handsome prince.

The Nutcracker in Harlem

by T.E. McMorrow
Illustrated by James Ransome

In Harlem in the 1920s, in the middle of a family Christmas party, Marie receives a nutcracker from her Uncle Cab, which leads to a marvelous dream in this resetting of E.T.A Hoffmann’s familiar tale.

The Nutcracker Comes to America

by Chris Barton
Illustrated by Cathy Gendron

In this book, you’ll meet William, Harold and Lew Christensen, three small-town Utah boys who caught the ballet bug from an uncle in the early 1900s. Russian immigrants shared the story of *The Nutcracker* with them, and during World War II—on a shoe-string budget and in need of a hit—they staged their own Christmastime production in San Francisco. It was America’s first full-length version and the beginning of a delightful holiday tradition.

Becoming a Ballerina: A Nutcracker Story

by Lise Friedman

This book traces the daily experiences of a 13-year-old ballerina who is preparing to perform the lead role in the Boston Ballet’s production of *The Nutcracker*.

Ballet Shoes

by Noel Streatfeild

Determined to make a name for themselves, three adopted sisters living in London train for the ballet and the stage and in the process discover that each has a special talent.

The Nutcracker, An American Ballet Theatre and Mikhail Baryshnikov Production (DVD)

From an Imperial-era Russian Christmas party, a young girl named Clara is whisked in her dreams to an imaginary world populated by the animated creations of the wizard toy maker Drosselmeier. Clara’s Christmas gift of a nutcracker turns into the Nutcracker Prince in this magical land.



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.

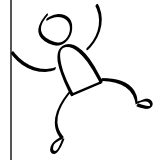
The Nutcracker explains that he was fighting the mouse because the mouse put a spell on him, turning him into an ugly doll. He wants to find a way to become human again, but to break the spell he has to change someone else. Neither of them can figure out how he can do that though, so in the mean time 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 First Nutcracker

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

Hoffmann's original story was called *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*. It's different from the play in many ways. 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. While everyone is fast asleep, magical things start to happen—it seems like the Nutcracker comes alive for a moment and 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 they retreat.

The next morning, Drosselmeyer tells Marie the story of the Nutcracker, Princess Pirlipat and the Queen of the Mice. It seems the Queen of the Mice 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 magic Crackatook nut, to be cracked by a certain special man. Drosselmeyer journeyed far and wide and finally found the nut in a small shop and the man to crack the nut in his own family—his nephew.



After giving the Princess her cure, the nephew was also cursed by the Queen of the Mice.

Pirlipat returned to her beautiful self, but now 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.

After Drosselmeyer's story is over, the Mouse King returns, demanding Marie's 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.

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.

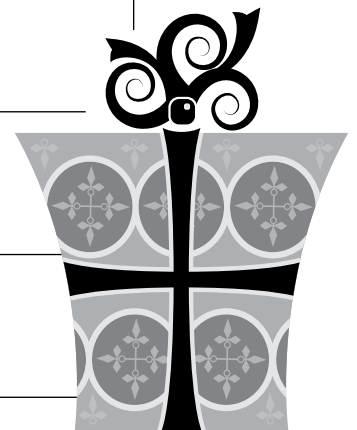
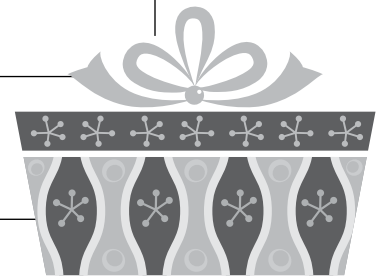
The Spirit of Giving

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 a holiday, a birthday or another occasion. Who gave you this gift and why was it so valuable to you?**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



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 green 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 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 Christmastime. 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. 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



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

$$2 \text{ chocolate blossoms} + 5 \text{ gumdrops} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$8 \text{ sugar cubes} + 1 \text{ lollipop} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$3 \text{ cinnamon sticks} + 2 \text{ caramels} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$4 \text{ licorice sticks} + 5 \text{ gumdrops} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$3 \text{ rock candy pops} + 6 \text{ sugar cubes} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$



Nutcracker

$$1 \text{ cinnamon stick} + 3 \text{ sugar cubes} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$4 \text{ caramels} + 2 \text{ gumdrops} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$2 \text{ chocolate blossoms} + 1 \text{ rock candy pop} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$8 \text{ lollipops} + 3 \text{ sugar cubes} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$5 \text{ licorice sticks} + 7 \text{ chocolate blossoms} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$3 \text{ rock candy pops} + 6 \text{ sugar cubes} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$



Costume Design

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

