

The *Nutcracker* Story

The story begins on a crisp winter's evening at the home of Clara's parents, where close family and friends have gathered to celebrate a joyous holiday season. At the height of the evening's festivities, Clara's favorite uncle Herr Drosselmeyer arrives with his nephew, bearing glorious gifts for everyone at the party. Clara is presented with a wonderful Nutcracker doll, which Fritz, her mischievous brother, ends up breaking as he goes about teasing all the girls in attendance. Herr Drosselmeyer saves the day by mending the doll for Clara.

After the party, the tired young Clara falls fast asleep and Herr Drosselmeyer uses enchantment to guide her through a series of vivid dreams. The Mouse King arrives on the scene and attempts to kidnap Clara; but with the help of Drosselmeyer's magic, the beloved Nutcracker doll comes to life as a handsome Prince who battles the Mouse King, ultimately saving Clara from an unhappy fate. The Nutcracker Prince then transports Clara to the glittering Land of Snow, where they meet the Snow King and Queen.

Again, with Drosselmeyer's magic, Clara and the Nutcracker Prince are transported to the Land of Sweets in an enchanted walnut boat where they are greeted by the Sugar Plum Fairy and the sweets of the kingdom. The Sugar Plum Fairy entertains Clara with dancing sweets including: Chocolate, a Spanish dance; Tiramisu, a Neapolitan dance; Tea, a Chinese dance; Coffee, an Arabian dance; and Candy Cane, a Russian dance. They are also delighted with performances from the Marzipan Shepherdesses, a quite large Mother Ginger and the beautiful Waltz of the Flowers. The Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier perform a final dance for Clara and the Nutcracker Prince before the sweets of the kingdom wave goodbye to Clara as she departs in her enchanted boat.