

synopsis

ACT I

At the home of Dr. and Mrs. Stahlbaum, guests attending the Stahlbaum family's holiday party arrive and are graciously greeted by the hosts and their children, Fritz and Clara.

Scene I: The Party

At the party, parents and children dance, visit and exchange gifts. Clara's godfather, the mysterious Dr. Drosselmeyer, arrives with festive, awe-inspiring boxes from which a life-sized Porcelain Doll, Harlequinette and Toy Soldier come to life and dance. The children can hardly believe their eyes. After an argument arises between Fritz and Clara, Dr. Drosselmeyer comforts his goddaughter with the gift of a wooden nutcracker soldier. The new toy enchants Clara but, out of jealousy, Fritz grabs the toy and breaks it. Coming to the rescue once again, Dr. Drosselmeyer mends the nutcracker. All the girls join Clara in a lullaby dance with their new dolls—protecting them from Fritz and his fellow mischief-makers. As the party winds down and the guests begin to leave, the Stahlbaums retire for the evening. Clara wants to take her injured nutcracker to her room, but her mother has her place the toy under the tree with the other gifts.



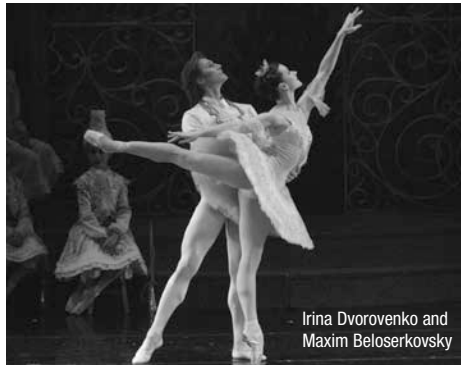
Scene II: The Battle

During the night, a worried Clara checks on her beloved nutcracker. While in the parlor, she is frightened by large mice and their gruesome leader, the Mouse King. Dr. Drosselmeyer appears, and using his magical powers, commands the Christmas tree to grow and brings the nutcracker to life. Now a life-size soldier, the Nutcracker leads an

army of toy soldiers in a battle against the ferocious Mouse King and his minions. When the Mouse King wounds the Nutcracker, Clara runs to his rescue and distracts the evil beast. The Nutcracker protects Clara by slaying the Mouse King and is transformed into a handsome Prince. As a show of gratitude, he takes Clara on a magical journey.

Scene III: The Land of Snow

The Nutcracker Prince and Clara travel through the Land of Snow, presided over by the graceful Snow Queen. The delicate Snowflakes whirl to the delight of Clara and her Nutcracker Prince, and with the help of their gracious Snow Queen, send them off to the Kingdom of Sweets.



Irina Dvorovenko and
Maxim Beloserkovsky

ACT II

Clara and the Nutcracker Prince arrive in the Kingdom of Sweets where they are welcomed by the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier. In the Palace of the Sugar Plum Fairy, the Nutcracker Prince reenacts the fearsome battle with the Mouse King and credits Clara's courage for saving his life. An immediate celebration in honor of our heroine is proclaimed. One after another, Spanish dancers, Chinese dancers, Arabian dancers, Russian dancers, Merltons, Mother Ginger and her Gingersnaps, as well as the elegant Dew Drop and her delicate flowers dance in honor of Clara. As a final tribute to Clara and her Prince, the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier perform a special pas de deux. At the close of the ballet, Clara is left wondering if this incredible journey was real or just an exciting, wonderful dream.