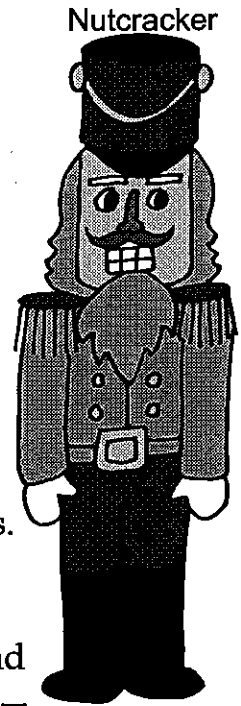# The Story of the Nutcracker

Long ago on a snowy Christmas Eve, Marie and her little brother Fritz were anxiously waiting for their family's Christmas party to begin! Their parents had decorated a beautiful Christmas tree with brightly lit candles and sparkling decorations.

Guests began to arrive. They shook the snow off their coats, and then gathered around the bright Christmas tree. There were gifts for all the children. The boys got stick horses and French horns. The girls got pretty dolls.

Suddenly a mysterious guest arrived. He wore a dark cape and a black eye patch. It was Marie and Fritz's Godfather Drosselmeyer — a famous maker of magical toys. His helper brought in two enormous boxes. As everyone watched, the boxes slowly opened by themselves! One contained a life-sized toy soldier and the other a lovely ballerina. Godfather Drosselmeyer turned a key on their backs, and they began to march and dance around.

Then Godfather Drosselmeyer surprised Marie with a special gift just for her. When she opened the box, she was delighted to see a wooden nutcracker fashioned as a toy soldier.

Godfather
Drosselemeyer

Just as Marie was looking at her new gift, naughty Fritz called the nutcracker an ugly toy, and grabbed it from her hands. He crammed a very big walnut into its mouth. CRACK! Three of the nutcracker's teeth fell out! Marie was very upset. She wrapped a handkerchief around the little soldier's head and put him into a doll bed to rest.

After much dancing and celebrating, the party was over, and Marie, Fritz and their parents, wished the guests a very merry Christmas and said goodnight.

Fritz went to bed, but Marie fell asleep on the couch in the living room, close to the doll bed where her nutcracker rested.