

Synopsis

A classical ballet in two acts, based on E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale of
The Nutcracker and the Mouse King (1816).

Act I

Guests begin making their way to the Stahlbaums' Christmas party. After everyone arrives, presents are handed out to the children. The guests continue to make merry, and suddenly, Herr Drosselmeyer arrives. He entertains the guests with various magic tricks, including dancing Columbine and Harlequine dolls and a soldier doll. Drosselmeyer produces a wooden Nutcracker that he gifts to Clara. The children squabble and play, the parents dance, and eventually the party ends and the guests depart.

Drosselmeyer remains at the Stahlbaums' mansion, setting the nutcracker in the grand room. Clara rejoins him there as the clock strikes midnight. Suddenly, mice enter, and they are only driven away by Drosselmeyer's magic as he holds the Nutcracker. Glowing angels arrive, and the room begins to transform. Drosselmeyer sets the Nutcracker before the Christmas tree and brings him to life. The mice and rats return in force, led by the Rat King, but the Nutcracker and his army of toy soldiers fight them off.

The Nutcracker completes his transformation into a handsome prince. He leads Clara into the land of snow, where they are greeted by the Snow Queen, Snow Prince, and their snowflakes. Clara and the Nutcracker Prince step into a gilded sleigh, ready to continue their enchanted journey.

Act II

Clara and the Nutcracker Prince find themselves in the Kingdom of Sweets. Cooks rush in with delightful treats, and the flowers of the court arrive to introduce the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Clara takes a seat as the entertainment begins. She watches a Spanish dance, a Chinese dance, an Arabian dance, and the Dance of the Mirlitons. Madame Bonbonnaire and her children bring sweets and joviality; and a Trepak dancer astounds with his powerful jumps.

The flowers return for a graceful waltz, and the Sugar Plum Fairy and Nutcracker Prince perform a grand pas de deux. The many members of the court join together to dance in a dazzling finale.

As Clara steps down from the throne, the dancers take their bows, and the Kingdom of Sweets begins to fade away. She finds Herr Drosselmeyer waiting for her out in the snow with a warm coat and her beloved Nutcracker.

This performance is approximately two hours, including one 20-minute intermission.