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The Nutcracker Ballet is based on the story "The Nutcracker and the King of Mice" written by E.T.A. Hoffman. Although what is seen on the stage today is different in detail from the original story, the basic plot remains the same; The story of a young German girl who dreams of a Nutcracker Prince and a fierce battle against a Mouse King with seven heads.

When Marius Petipa had the idea to choreograph the story into a ballet, it was actually based on a revision by Alexander Dumas, a well known French author. His version reflects more of what we have come to love as the Nutcracker Ballet.

The Party Scene

It is Christmas Eve at the Stahlbaum house -- A large and grand house with the most beautiful tree imaginable. The Stahlbaums are hosting their annual Christmas party, welcoming the arrival of their family and friends. The children, Clara and Fritz, are dancing and playing as they welcome their friends too.

The party grows festive with music and dance as godfather Drosselmeyer arrives. He is a skilled clock and toy maker and always full of surprises. Drosselmeyer draws everyone's attention as he presents two life-size dolls. They are the delight of the party, each taking a turn to dance.

The children begin to open gifts when Drosselmeyer presents his to Clara and Fritz. Although his gift to Fritz is quite nice, he gives Clara a beautiful Nutcracker that becomes the hit of the party. Fritz becomes jealous and, having a bit more spunk than a boy should have, grabs the nutcracker from Clara and promptly breaks it. Clara is heartbroken looking on as Drosselmeyer quickly repairs the Nutcracker with a handkerchief he magically draws from the air.

As the evening grows late, the guests depart and the Stahlbaum family retires for the evening. Clara, worried about her beloved Nutcracker, sneaks back to the tree to check on him, falling asleep with him in her arms.

The Fight Scene