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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Nutcracker and the Mouse King

It was Christmas Eve and Maria and her brother Frederic were playing together in their playroom. They weren't allowed downstairs as their parents were preparing a big Christmas feast and party. They were looking forward for their godfather Dr. Drosselmeyer to arrive. Drosselmeyer was a peculiar man with a great gift. He could make and repair all kinds of machines, he especially loved clocks. Maria heard the doorbell ring. "Oh Frederic! He is here! I wonder what he brought for us this time." Once he brought a little doll with moving eyes, another time he brought a box with a dancer inside.

The children ran downstairs and saw a beautiful fir tree decorated with all kinds of delicious chocolates, the table was filled with turkey, bread, potatoes and cakes. And there were lights and decorations all around the house. And they saw presents under the tree. Maria instantly took a liking to a beautiful, painted wooden doll. He looked a bit like a soldier. He had beautiful, shiny black shoes, blue trousers and a red coat with gold buttons. He looked brave and kind. "Dr. Drosselmeyer, what is that doll?" she asked. "That is a Nutcracker, my dear. And since you like him so much, he

will be in your care tonight.' Maria was delighted and brought the Nutcracker to the table and together with her father they cracked some nuts. Frederic became jealous and ripped the Nutcracker from her hands and started cracking nuts with it. But he was rough and the jaw of the Nutcracker came loose.



'No Frederic!' Maria cried and quickly took the Nutcracker from him. She gently wrapped a ribbon from her hair around his jaw and held him tight.

She went into their playroom and nudged Fred's soldiers aside. Maria put the Nutcracker in the bed of her beloved doll Clara. "Clara, take good care of this wounded soldier while I sleep.' Suddenly the clock in the playroom started making strange noises. It started winding round and round and round and round. Maria got scared. She started to hear the trampling of hundreds of little feet in the walls and chimney. She heard high pitched squeaking all around her. Hundreds of mice appeared before her! They were led by one, big, scary looking mouse, the Mouse King. Maria fell back from fear and knocked over her dollhouse. She hurt her arm badly in the fall and grabbed it crying.

All became silent. Maria was scared and confused. Then she heard a noise behind her. The Nutcracker had gotten out of bed and said: 'My brave soldiers, dolls, stuffed animals, dragons, horses and other toys here. Will you fight this mice army with me?' 'Yes we will!' yelled the toys. 'My dear, you are wounded, how will you fight?' said Clara the doll. 'We will do it together!' answered the Nutcracker. The drummer beat his drum and they started marching. The Nutcracker spoke inspirational words and lined everybody up.

The mice started to fire. Maria was lost in the dust and smoke. The Nutcracker's army fought bravely, but the mice got closer and closer. More toys started falling down left and right. And finally the Nutcracker was the last one standing, surrounded by mice. The Mouse King ordered his soldiers to grab him. 'No! Not my sweet Nutcracker!' screamed Maria who saw this all unfold and threw her shoe as hard as she could towards the Mouse King. Then she felt a sharp pain in her arm and she fainted.

Maria woke up from a long, deep sleep. Next to her bed she saw her mother and doctor. 'Oh mother! Are the mice gone? Where is the Nutcracker?' Maria cried. 'You foolish child,' said her mother. 'You gave us such a scare! You played with your new toys until late in the night instead of going to bed. A mouse must have scared you and you fell into your doll house, breaking your arm. I found you at midnight, unconscious on the floor surrounded by broken toys.' 'No mother, there was a battle between the mice army and the Nutcracker and

the toys! They took him!' 'Maria, your Nutcracker is safe in your playroom. Now rest.' said her mother. And so for the next few days, Maria lay in bed thinking about what had happened.

Nobody believed the girl when she tried to explain what had happened. So she stopped trying. Then one night she heard squeaking again and saw the Mouse King right next to her bed. "Give me your Christmas chocolates or I will bite the Nutcracker!" the Mouse King said. Maria was terrified, but she knew nobody would believe her so the next evening she put all her chocolates on a plate near her bed in hopes of saving her Nutcracker.



The Mouse King ate it all, but came back again that night. "Give me your Christmas cookies or I will eat your Nutcracker!" he said. And he came back every night. Maria was sad and talked to her Nutcracker. 'Oh

Nutcracker, I want to save you, but I don't have much left to give the Mouse King.' Suddenly she felt the Nutcracker become warm and started moving in her hands. She put him on the table and he said: 'My dear friend, you have helped me so much already. Get me a

sword and I will fight the Mouse King.' So she took one of Frederic's toy swords and gave it to the Nutcracker. That night Maria lay awake anxiously. And indeed she heard squeaking again. Terrified she would see the Mouse King again she closed her eyes. But then she heard a knocking on her door and the voice of the Nutcracker said: 'My dear friend, I have conquered the Mouse King!'. Maria opened the door and there stood the Nutcracker with a bloody sword and the crown of the Mouse King on his arm.

'I want to thank you for helping me, Maria.' said the Nutcracker. 'Let me take you to my country and show you all the people you have helped.' Maria was excited and followed the Nutcracker. They went into the playroom and the Nutcracker opened the clock. It started winding round and round and round. And before Maria knew what was going on she saw glitters, sparkles and bright lights all around her. 'Welcome to Candy Meadow,' said the Nutcracker, 'but we will continue further to the capital.' Maria looked around in amazement. It smelled like sweets and candies. There were chocolates growing on trees, the flowers had beautiful ribbons as leaves. The river was made from lemonade. 'Wow, thank you so much for bringing me here! It's magical!' exclaimed Maria. People were coming up to them and thanking her for helping them. Then she tripped and started falling.

Maria woke up and saw her mother standing next to her. 'You have been sleeping for a long time, Maria.' 'Oh mother!' said Maria. 'The nutcracker took me to the

most amazing place!' 'Maria, don't start again.' 'I can prove it, look here is the crown of the Mouse King!' and she showed the little crown. Again nobody believed her. She went into the playroom and grabbed the Nutcracker.

'Oh my dear Nutcracker, if you were real I would love you no matter what.' Maria said to him. Suddenly there was a loud knock on the door. Dr. Drosselmeyer's nephew had arrived. He walked straight up to Maria and whispered in her ear. 'You broke my spell by telling me you love me. I will come back when you are older and marry you.' And a few years later he whisked her away, they got married and they lived happily ever after in the Candy Kingdom.