

My Nutcracker Story

A Pre-Visit Story for Mid-Columbia Ballet's
Sensory-Friendly Performance



The Auditorium

I am going to Richland High School Auditorium to see *The Nutcracker* ballet. Richland High School Auditorium is a theatre.

A ballet tells a story through dancing.



Lobby

There is a ticket desk in the lobby of the theatre. This is where my family will check in for the performance.

We will walk into the lobby and meet the ushers. The ushers are helpers in the theatre. The ushers help my family and me to our seats. If I need help, I can ask an usher. If I need to take a break, the ushers can help my family and me.



Theatre

When it's almost time for the performance to begin, a person on stage will welcome my family and me.

When I am watching a show in the theatre, I am part of the audience. The audience claps for parts they like and when a dancer finishes a dance. The clapping only lasts a short time.

When the show is about to begin the lights in the theatre dim a little bit. It will not be dark in the theatre, there will still be some lights on.

There is a big curtain at the front of the stage. The curtain opens when the performance starts. The curtain closes when the performance ends. The curtain also opens and closes a few times during the show.



Costumes

Dancers wear costumes to show their character in the story. Wearing a costume is like playing dress up.

Even if the character doesn't look like a person, it is a dancer in a costume.

The Rat King and the big Nutcracker both wear big masks covering their faces. Mother Ginger is a big puppet.



Music and Noise

I will hear music during the ballet. The music helps tell the story. Sometimes the music is faster. Sometimes the music is slower. Sometimes the music is softer, and sometimes the music is louder. If the music is too loud, I can cover my ears.

Sometimes the music might make strange sounds like clicking, whistles, or cymbals. This only lasts a short time.



Scenery

Scenery is the background and walls on the stage. Scenery shows where the story is happening.

The Nutcracker story happens in a house, a snowy forest, and a palace.

The scenery sometimes moves.



Lights

Stage lights help tell the story. Sometimes it is bright on stage. Sometimes it is dark on stage.

The dark parts only last a short time.



Special Effects

Sometimes there is fog on stage.

Sometimes there is snow on stage.

Sometimes there is a small burst of fire and smoke.

The flashes don't make noise. The fog, snow, and flashes are special effects for the show.



Magic

A person may do magic tricks by making a person appear by surprise.

This is pretend magic for the show.



Dancers

Dancers tell the story using their bodies and movement. They don't talk to tell the story.

Sometimes there are lots of dancers on stage. Sometimes there are just a few.

Dancers move on and off stage. When the dancers go off stage, they go behind the stage. They may come back on the stage.



The Story

The Nutcracker begins with a Christmas party at Clara's house. Everyone dances and plays games. Sometimes the children are naughty.

Clara's godfather Drosselmeyer comes to the party. Drosselmeyer does magic tricks. Drosselmeyer gives Clara a nutcracker doll as a present. Clara's brother Fritz chases Clara. The nutcracker doll falls, but is okay.



The Story

Later at night, Clara goes into her living room to see her nutcracker doll. Drosselmeyer comes and does more magic tricks. There is a battle. The Rat King leads an army of rats and mice. The big Nutcracker leads an army of soldiers.

The guns and cannons don't make any noise. If I don't like the Rat King, rats, or the battle, I can cover my eyes.



The Story

Clara wins the battle and goes to a snowy forest. Clara dances with characters dressed like snowflakes.



Intermission

There is an intermission. Intermission means a short break. The theatre lights come up.

The dancers get ready for next part of the show. The scenery is set for the next part. I won't see the dancers and scenery get ready. This happens behind the curtain.

Intermission only lasts a short time. The dancing starts again soon.



The Story

Clara goes to a palace. Angels and fairies dance for her.

Characters from around the world bring her treats and dance for her: Spanish Hot Chocolate, German Marzipan, Arabian Coffee, Chinese Tea, English Toffee, Russian Peppermint, and French Bon Bons with Mother Ginger.



The Story

It is time for Clara to leave the palace.
Drosselmeyer brings Clara the nutcracker
doll and Clara goes home.



The End of the Show

The dancers bow. My family and I can clap.
The clapping will last only short time.
Then the curtain will close and the lights
will go up.

It is time for the audience to leave the
theatre. I will leave the theatre with my
family.

