

THE NUTCRACKER
IN THE LAND OF NUTS
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IN THE LAND OF NUTS
a play by Ronald Tavel

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Characters:

NUTCRACKER	CADILLAC
MACK DONALDS	ERIKA MOUSE
HACK DONALDS	GRAVEL GERTIE DOLL
SEVEN-HEADED MOUSE:	BLUE GRETA GARBO SLIPPER
GLUTTONY	GHOUL
GREED	BANDAGE
SLOTH	HARD HEART of the Seven-Headed Mouse
ENVY	WALL OF CHINA
FIB	ARNOLD BLACK-EGG
PRIDE	BEETLE
DESPAIR	JAGUAR
FRED	VALERIE
MOTHER	(CHRISTMAS TREE)
FATHER	
JANE	
DROSSELMEIER	
ANGEL	
NATHAN	

Suggested doublings:

NUTCRACKER
JANE
DROSSELMEIER
MOTHER, ERIKA MOUSE, BLUE GRETA GARBO SLIPPER
MACK DONALDS, THE BANDAGE, ARNOLD BLACK-EGG
HACK DONALDS, THE HARD HEART
FATHER, GHOUL, THE BEETLE
FRED, THE JAGUAR
THE ANGEL, VALERIE, THE GRAVEL GERTIE DOLL
NATHAN
THE CADILLAC, THE WALL OF CHINA
 THE SEVEN HEADS as voices suit the music
 (THE CHRISTMAS TREE)

A music score has been written for this play by
 Simeon Westbrooke.

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Christmas Eve. The stage is dimly lit. Around a gigantic and strangely decorated Christmas tree is assembled a heap of packaged gifts, among them The Summer Dull Drums, MACK and HACK DONALDS, two toys wearing chefs hats whose rotound stomachs (or spare tires) are formed into drums; and a tall NUTCRACKER, an American soldier.

A scratching noise, the NUTCRACKER sits up.

NUTCRACKER: Listen, listen, did you hear it?
A scratching sound, a little twit:
Pawing, I think, and squeaking,
Clawing and tweaking:-
Where there's such a scratching sound
Mice abound!

MACK & HACK: We heard it, we heard it,
It's all around -
It's a kind of scraping sound,
It's under the floor,
It's in the ground:-
Where there's such a scratching sound
Mice abound!

NUTCRACKER: A Nutcracker am I,
I only personify
A living and loved G.I.:
You see, I'm just a toy
And though I try and try -
On that you can rely -
I'm not a much-loved boy:
A Nutcracker am I.

MACK: Get the fast food!
Bring the junk!
The mice will plunk
Right down upon it!
And bit by bit,
While eating it,
They'll thrash and gasp,

Gargle and rasp -
 And by this device
 We'll do in the mice!

HACK: Bring the sugar and salt,
 Franks, buns, and malt,
 Chewing gum and soda pop:
 Hurry up, skip to it, hop!
 Bacon and lox,
 French fries in the box,
 Pudding and jelly
 To swell up their belly -
 And by this device
 We'll do in the mice!

MACK & HACK: We're Mack and Hack Donalds,
 The Summer Dull Drums --

MACK: I'm Mack, he's Hack --

HACK: I'm Hack, he's Mack --

MACK & HACK: We're Mack and Hack Donalds,
 The Summer Dull Drums,
 And on our big tums
 We mix and prepare
 An edible snare
 For boys or girls,
 Mice, men, or churls
 To eat -
 But it's a cheat!
 So beware! beware!
 We're Mack and Hack Donalds,
 The Summer Dull Drums,
 You'll see how the junk food will swell up their tums!
 And bums!

(A huge and hideous SEVEN-HEADED MOUSE digs its way up through
 the roots of the Christmas tree, causing it to tilt and sway.)

SEVEN-HEADED
 MOUSE: Squeek, squawk, squiggle,
 Look at all those delicious toys,
 Granola girls and whole-wheat boys:
 Let's eat 'em up!
 Squeek, squawk, squiggle,
 Make 'em squirm, make 'em jiggle!
 And eat 'em up!

FIRST HEAD: But they call me Gluttony
 And don't I see
 The kinda food looks good to me:
 Hot dogs, candy, and white whipped creams,
 And ketchup and ices that fill my dreams!
 And there's French fries - they make me drool!

MACK: That's Gluttony - what a fool!

- SECOND HEAD: My name's indiscriminate Greed,
On almost any scrap I'll feed,
Doesn't matter if I've need
Or not, I'll eat, eat, eat:
And greasy food to me's a treat!
- HACK: That bore's insatiable Greed:
To the table he'll stampede:
He never has enough -
And that's too bad, that's tough
On him!
- THIRD HEAD: Me, people call cool-headed Sloth -
Meaning "laziness," by my troth!
I'm too lazy to eat good food
And I'm seldom in a thinking mood.
Besides, although I'm sluggish Sloth,
I don't think junk food'll stunt my growth.
- NUTCRACKER: (feeding the fast food to FIRST HEAD)
Then eat, eat, ess, fress,
Sugar, salt, the whole mess;
Baloney, salami - it's on the house!
Eat, you Seven-Headed Mouse!
Eat, Gluttony - to stay alive!
Seven heads ---
(the FIRST HEAD dies)
only six survive!
- (feeding the SECOND HEAD)
So eat, ess, fress, eat:
Breakfast cereal - it's sweet!
Eat, you Greedy-Head ---
There:-
(the SECOND HEAD dies)
dead, quite dead!
- And drink, drink, drink,
You sleepy Head o' name o' Sloth,
This gets you and your nerves up both:-
It's coffe, tea, and ovaltine,
And cocoa squeezed in-between:-
Drink, drink - it'll give you drive!
Seven heads ---
(the THIRD HEAD dies)
only four are alive!
- FOURTH HEAD: They call me Envy, green-eyed Envy,
Cause I am jealous of every one I see:-
And even though this did them in,
Why should I alone be thin
And not partake of all this food?
That would just make me brood.
I'll eat it.
- NUTCRACKER: Do.
(the FOURTH HEAD dies)

FIFTH HEAD: I am called the Head of Fib,
I lie all life to grave from crib.
And I'd have better lyrics if they'd let me ad lib.

NUTCRACKER: You lie!
You die!
(striking off the FIFTH HEAD with a bayonet)

SIXTH HEAD: (fixing the ribbon on her elaborate neck)
Me, men call the sin of Pride.
These five dead heads I take in stride:
I'm too proud to learn from them,
My lovely neck's a fine strong stem.
I let my beauty be my guide.
What have I to cloak or hide?

NUTCRACKER: Your neck!
She's a dame, but -
Oh - what the heck!
(lopping off the SIXTH HEAD)
See what comes from being proud?
Naught that's fit, save for a shroud!

SEVENTH HEAD: And I, the last, am called Despair.
With six parts dead, how can I care?
Nothing excites or inspires me,
The last live branch on a withered tree...
(looks downcast and dreary and dies)

NUTCRACKER: What a dope -
He gave up hope:
And hence his living head
Just like that fell dead.
As simple as that.
-What an unusual hat!
(tying the SEVENTH HEAD's bonnet over his helmet)

NUTCRACKER &
MACK & HACK: Victory! Victory!
The Seven-Headed Mouse of Sin
Has been done-in
By its own faults:
Ice cream and chocolate malts,
Sweets and franks,
Treats and pranks,
Pride, envy and gluttony
And, most of all, giving up, you see!
Victory! Victory!

NUTCRACKER: Sssssh! Listen, the humans are coming. Back to
our boxes and packages.

HACK: But shouldn't we sweep up the remains of the
mouse-monster first?

NUTCRACKER: Too late!

MACK: But they'll smell a mouse!

HACK: Shut up! Get in!

MACK: (looking worriedly at the Christmas tree) That tree's precariously balanced...

(The TOYS hasten into their respective packages, helping each other to re-fix their ribbons. Enter MOTHER, FATHER, JANE, FRED, and DOCTOR DROSSELMEIER.)

FRED: The presents - at last we can open our Christmas presents! I can't wait!

MOTHER: But you'll have to wait. You know we never open our gifts until after the party.

FRED: But I've waited so long, mother!

FATHER: Fred, you're not even being polite. You stampeded right in here and nearly knocked over your sister.

JANE: And cousin Nat, shouldn't we wait till cousin Nat arrives, first?

FATHER: That's right, Fred, you're in such a hurry that you neglected to wait for Nat. And godfather Drosselmeier's feelings will be hurt for Nat is his nephew.

FRED: (looking at the MOUSE's corpse) What happened to that mouse?

DROSSELMEIER: He ate at a deli and died.

MOTHER: Musicians, let us have music! Come, let us dance.

JANE: Oh, mother, you know I can't dance!

MOTHER: Don't be silly, child, of course you can. Play!

(The BAND plays and MOTHER and FATHER dance. The children sit at the side. DROSSELMEIER amuses himself at the punch bowl.)

JANE: I wonder what Godfather Drosselmeier created for us this Christmas. Fred... don't you wonder what Godfather made for us?

FRED: I know what he made for you.

JANE: What?

FRED: A Gravel Gertie doll.

JANE: Oh, Godfather is going to perform!

DROSSELMEIER: (singing and dancing, tipsy)
 I'm Drossel... -Drosselmeier,
 I'm a magician, not a liar,
 And I'm getting higher and higher
 On this punch --
 Should have had lunch
 Before I started to drink.
 Never think, never think, I never think.

I make unusual puppets and dolls,
 Gangster types and molls,
 Private eyes,
 Russian spies,
 And Geishas with parasols.

ALL: And Geisha girls with parasols!

DROSSELMEIER: Spinning and spinning and spinning about
 Out of control one night,
 I set down to work
 Drunk as a jerk
 And couldn't get one foot right.

ALL: He couldn't get one foot right!

DROSSELMEIER: The Nutcracker's foot,
 Despite what I put
 In the design,
 Seems too benign --
 That thin wooden stick
 Just doesn't have kick
 And may fail when it's put to the test.
 Oops, I'm spinning, I've got to rest.

ALL: Oops, he's spinning, he's got to rest.

MOTHER: Poor Jane, I'm afraid for her. She's so slow,
 so backward, she can hardly walk without
 tripping and she has no confidence at all.

FATHER: She is simple. Don't fret, dear. The Good
 Lord watches over her.

DROSSELMEIER: She is blessed, mother, Jane is blessed in a
 special way. All simple folk are.

MOTHER: Oh, look, here comes Nat at last!

(NAT enters, gallantly removing his cloak. He bears an
 identical resemblance to the NUTCRACKER. A special aura
 surrounds him. JANE, across the stage, looks at NAT, and
 in that moment she, too, is enveloped in an aura.)

JANE: Hello, Nat. Merry Christmas.

NAT: Merry Christmas, Jane. You look beautiful
 tonight.

(NAT crosses to centerstage and JANE goes to meet him. An ANGEL in the tree sings and they both dance together while everyone watches in astonishment.)

ANGEL: Beautiful night, magical night,
Our suffering's light and all seems right
On a magical night.
Broken dolls walk and wood puppets talk,
The wounded are well,
Dull books sell
And the plain smile as lovely as stars.
Angels sing and nothing mars
A beautiful, magical night.

FRED: Well, now that Nat's finally here, we can open our gifts.

NAT: Hello, Fred.

FRED: Can't stand on ceremony, Nat. Hmm, let's see, here's my present from Godfather Drosselmeier. My name's on it. It's nice and big.

MOTHER: Why, Fred, aren't you going to give Nathan his present first? Where are your manners?

FRED: We got you a white Cadillac, Nat. It's behind the tree. Now can I open my present?

JANE: We got you a white Cadillac, Nat.

NAT: Thank you Fred and Jane.

DROSSELMEIER: Fun with Fred and Jane.

(The white Cadillac is propelled out from behind the tree. FRED opens his package. It is MACK & HACK.)

FRED: What's this? - two fat chefs!

MACK & HACK: Well, we never!

MOTHER: They're counter boys, Fred. They work in a fast food chain.

FRED: What's that supposed to mean?

DROSSELMEIER: Well, you're always hungry, aren't you?

FRED: And what if I am? Just look at their stomachs, looks like they ate up all the food themselves!

MACK & HACK: Well, we never!

JANE: Did somebody say something?

FATHER: Those aren't their stomachs, Fred. They're

drums. You wind them up and they play on those.
You call them skins.

DROSSELMEIER: Here, let me wind them up for you, Fred.
(doing so)

MACK & HACK: (singing and drumming on their stomach-drums)
Hittin' some skin!
Hittin' skin! sockin' skin!
Bangin' on skin!
We ain't fat, we're thin as thin,
These ain't stomachs, these are skin!
Hittin' some skin!

FRED: Ugh!

MOTHER: Oh, Godfather Drosselmeier, they're charming!

FRED: I think they're raucous.

FATHER: They're "with it," Fred, very "with it."

JANE: Mother, ~~my~~ my gift to you's a Sacred Heart;
(See Insert for Page 8.)

DROSSELMEIER: Don't you want to open your gift, Jane?

JANE: May I?

FRED: Oh, boy.

DROSSELMEIER: (undoing the wrapping) Had a little trouble with
the left leg, didn't seem re-inforced enough, but
birch is hard to come by these days, good birch,
and I didn't have quite enough....

FRED: Don't worry, Jane's not likely to notice the
difference.

FATHER: Why, Fred!

FRED: Why? Cause she's simple-minded.

FATHER: That'll be enough. Oh, look, oh my!

MOTHER: Extraordinary!

(The NUTCRACKER is revealed. Everyone is astonished.)

JANE: How handsome he is!

FRED: Bears a striking resemblance to someone we might
know, don't he?

Insert for Page 8.

JANE: Mother, my gift to you's a Sacred Heart;
 And Frieda, here's a Belgian petticoat;
 Godfather, I found in the bargain mart
 This fifties' bug-detector; and I wrote
 Out a Christmas gift-certificate
 For 14 dollars' worth of tropical fish
 For Dad, complete with tank. I think that's it.
 Oh, no! I forgot: if it's not too babyish,
 Here is a big, stuffed orange tabby cat
 For my one and only favorite cousin, Nat!

(MOTHER, FATHER, DROSSELMEIER, and NATHAN receive their gifts
from JANE with surprise and appreciation, (DROSSELMEIER with
surprise) and FRIEDA with something less than appreciation.
Except for the latter, they thank her warmly. The latter
thanks her coldly.)

DROSSELMEIER: Well, Nathan is my favorite nephew. And sometimes I can't think up original ideas. Not after so many years of original ideas, must have suffered a brain-drain....

MOTHER: But he's beautiful!

FRED: Sure is! And all I got is the Summer Dull Drums.

MOTHER: Hush, don't be ungrateful.

NATHAN: I'm embarrassed.

FRED: I'll bet. I'm furious!

JANE: But if those counter boys are drums, what is this lovely soldier?

DROSSELMEIER: Come, I will show you. Anybody have a nut?

FRED: Well, my sister; will she do?

FATHER: I may have to send you upstairs.

NATHAN: Here is a walnut, uncle.

DROSSELMEIER: Good, thank you.

MOTHER: And here's an almond and a hazelnut. And a betelnut.

DROSSELMEIER: These are fine. Now watch:

(DROSSELMEIER manipulates the NUTCRACKER's legs. The NUTCRACKER sings, dances, and cracks the nuts one by one.)

NUTCRACKER: Quickly, let me have a nut:
 Around its husk both legs I shut --
 And crack, crack,
 I give you back
 Its kernel good to eat!
 Now, isn't that a feat?

ALL: Now, isn't that a feat?

FRED: I hope he didn't cheat!

JANE: Oh, I love my Nutcracker! He is so wonderful!
 Oh, thank you, Godfather Drosselmeier, what a wonderful gift! What a beautiful present!

MOTHER: It is a unique creation, perhaps uniquely inspired.

NATHAN: No, I am altogether unworthy to have been its inspiration.

FATHER: Fred might make your modesty his model. That would be the finest present he could give his parents this Christmas.

- FRED: (coming downstage with a demonaic expression, a Devilish aura envelopping him, changing before us and reciting (not singing) evilly:)
Modesty, my foot! That Nutcracker's a freak:
Didn't Drosselmeier say one of his legs is weak?
Well, the heart of a Seven-Headed rat
Is harder than a baseball bat!
- (FRED extracts the heart from the mouse's corpse and brings it to DROSSELMEIER who is drinking again and not looking at things too carefully.)
- FRED: Here, Godfather: I have another nut for the Nutcracker to crack.
- DROSSELMEIER: Well, well, well, we are consumming all the little nasties, aren't we? I'll have to switch to the pickled onions.
(manipulating the NUTCRACKER again)
- NUTCRACKER: Quickly, let me have a nut:
Around its husk both legs I shut --
-Oh, that fiendish little Fred
Gave me something hard and red:
The mouse's heart -- some joke!
Now I fear my leg is broke!!
- ALL: Oh, look, his leg is broke!
Fred played a nasty joke!
- FATHER: Up to bed with you, bad boy, this instant. No more party for you. You have spoiled this night for everyone!
- JANE: No, he hasn't, father. I can mend the Nutcracker's leg. I'll bandage it up.
- MOTHER: I'm afraid that may not be enough, Jane, dear. All of Godfather's creations are very intricate and delicate. A bandage may not do at all.
- DROSSELMEIER: Oh, but do let her try, mother. Her sentiments are correct as they are pure. So who knows what she may do?
- MOTHER: No, Godfather, it is wrong to lead her on and deceive her. The truth is the kindest thing in the end. She, too, must learn to live with what is so, as must we all.
- DROSSELMEIER: But just this night, make an exception. There's time enough for truth tomorrow.
- MOTHER: Only regretful persons think such things. But there's no arguing on Christmas Eve. Then remain a while here, Jane, and administer to your

Nutcracker. But don't be long. We shall ajern to the sitting room to continue the festivities. Be sure to join us there.

JANE: Oh, I shall, mother.

NATHAN: I'll be waiting for you, Jane.

DROSSELMEIER: May I bring along the punch bowl?

(Exit MOTHER, FATHER, FRED, NATHAN and DROSSELMEIER with the bowl of punch. FATHER can be heard reprehending FRED in the hallway. Their shadows play against the walls and ceiling of the hall, somewhat altering the atmosphere, somewhat other-worldly in effect, a bit eery; they are watched by JANE.)

FATHER: You are not to continue onto the sitting room with the others, Fred; you are to go directly to your room.

FRED: Why? Why? Why?

FATHER: Because you don't know how to behave like a human being. Because you don't behave like a human being.

FRED: Why? Why? Why? Why?

FATHER: Because you don't behave like a human being. Because you are not a human being.

JANE: Oh!

FATHER: You are not a human being.

JANE: Oh, dear me. Dear me. Isn't it strange being left all alone with the toys so suddenly..... But I have work to do. Like Clara Barton I must attend to the disabled veterans. Poor, dear Nutcracker: you fought so bravely for your country and now everyone is neglecting you.... pretending you don't exist.
(ripping a ribbon of material from her petticoat)
This bandage will take care of your broken leg, however. And now you must rest so that you will recover quickly.

(JANE places the NUTCRACKER in a swing for two (or a hammock) and swings him to sleep. The voices of the toys all about them join in a gentle lullaby and JANE, herself, falls asleep. DROSSELMEIER is seen in another part of the theatre, fancifully garbed - more like an owl than a magician.)

DROSSELMEIER: O my toys, children of mine:-
Sing! though you be but tin and pine!
Tin and pine! Tin and pine! and in the end

Cast in the trash as dividend!

- TOYS: Soldier, soldier, put away
The busy, exploding glare
Of war. And take your rest.
On your moist, unquiet breast
Two hundred trembling ginkgo leaves,
White with smoke and seared with shot,
That listened to the march all day,
Have coiled them inward and shied away
And folded themselves up to sleep
Under your holster.
- HACK: Look, Mack, she done gone out.
- MACK: Him, too. Ain't they sweet? sleepin' together
like that.
- CADILLAC: (who is very snooty, an upper-class type toy)
Well, I don't want to say anything, but that
girl is just kidding herself. She's walking down
Dream Street, if you ask me.
- HACK: Why?
- CADILLAC: Well, she's so poor, what else can she do but
dream?
- MACK: What do you mean?
- CADILLAC: What do you mean what do I mean? Where'd you
boys get your smarts? Why, that gal's so poor
that if she liquidated her assets she'd have a
trickle.
- MACK: But why do you say she's dreaming?
- CADILLAC: Cause she imagines that a mere bandage can heal
a wooden nutcracker's leg. Now, a bandage can
heal a mere human's leg, but a mere bandage
cannot heal a wooden toy's leg. You see, toys
are infinitely more complicated ~~than~~ than
humans and it takes a great deal more to cure
us of our ills than it takes to cure a person.
If this were not so, a mere bandage would do us,
but it is not so and so ~~obviously~~, it does not.
- HACK: But what, then, would heal the Nutcracker's
broken leg?
- MACK: Assuming a bandage is of no use?
- CADILLAC: I'm afraid, my dears, that only the true love of
a true queen can do that. Remember, I said a
true queen. By the way - I'm Alexandra:- ride
me!

MACK: Well, a true queen is more easily read than rid.

HACK: Wha?

CADILLAC: Listen, did you two spare-tires hear something peculiar?

MACK: You don't mean that scratching sound?

HACK: You don't mean that pawing and squeaking, do you?

CADILLAC: Think we better take it on the lamb?

MACK: You ain't goin' to Witchita Falls by any chance?

MOTHER MOUSE:(from under the roots of the tree) My poor dead Seven-Headed son! I shall be revenged!

CADILLAC: I think you boys better hop in!

(The very, very gigantic MOTHER MOUSE emerges from the floor-boards under the roots of the Christmas tree. She is very much more terrible to behold than her late offspring; bits of flesh hang from her fingernails and blood is caked at the edges of her mouth and in her whiskers: the remnants of her last repast. She sings as the cowardly toys desert the Nutcracker:)

MOTHER MOUSE: Jump in that Cadillac and flee,
You tubby toys - cowardly!
Ride to Dry Gulch and Calamazoo -
I'd do that if I were you!

(The MOTHER MOUSE comes downstage and takes the corpse of the 7 Headed mouse in her arms.)

MOTHER MOUSE: What? - is no single head left alive? I cradle your corpse as once I did your mewling bald and blind pink infancy. Who did this? Who slew my son?
(addressing the audience and the children in it who, presumably, would say nothing fearing for the Nutcracker's safety)
What is this silence that deafens my ears? Did none of you here see who took the life of my son? Were you then all asleep or in the john? Does not a one of you know the truth:- tell me the truth that I may be avenged. Tell me, tell me, tell me who killed my son that I may kill him! So.... not a sound. To know the truth and not tell it, is not altogether unlike a lie.

DROSSELMEIER: Yet if they tell, they betray him: what a predicament these poor children are in! Life is soooooo ambiguous, isn't it? Ah, come here, Mack, Hack, and you, you silly pretentious Cadillac, and hide behind my shirt sleeves.

NUTCRACKER: I slew thy son and did not say so because I slept, you evil-smelling mouse! But you, you have awakened me from my pleasant rest with all your sobbing and babbling and I would know why you make such a fuss and disturb my well-earned sleep!

MOTHER MOUSE: So, you laughable cripple! you poisoned and beheaded my offspring and now add impudence to your crime!

DROSSELMEIER: Oh, who can save the Nutcracker now?!

NUTCRACKER: I am not afraid of you, wicked mouse of the underworld! Come, Erika Mouse, and do your worst!

(The NUTCRACKER, wielding his bayonet, appears rather small and ridiculous next to the huge MOTHER MOUSE. But he courageously enters into battle with her, limping on a crutch but very nearly immobile. HACK, MACK and CADILLAC, peering out from behind DROSSELMEIER form a kind of commenting CHORUS on the engagement:)

CHORUS: See them fight! see them duel!
Oh, it's awful! oh, it's cruel!
This commentary comes, alack!
From Mack, Hack, and Cadillac!

He is wounded, he can't move!
This is futile, what's it prove?
And the newscasting clique
Is Mack, Hack, and Cadillac!

HACK: She looks a lot like Godzilla
Or some grilla in a thrilla
That I seen one afternoon
On the airplane to Rangoon.

CADILLAC: And he looks like a puny shrimp
With that broken leg and limp!
There jist ain't no contest here --
Pass the vin-ordinaire?

DROSSELMEIER: (doing so) Drown your sorrows, drown your dread:
My Nutcracker's as good as dead!

MACK: Poor G.I. -- he done no wrong.
His name we celebrate in song.

CHORUS: These gifted observations smack
Of Mack, Hack, and Cadillac!

(The MOTHER MOUSE lifts the NUTCRACKER in her paws, looking indeed like a movie prehistoric monster about to munch off her victim's head. But just then DROSSELMEIER gets an idea - the only one that could possibly save the NUTCRACKER.)

DROSSELMEIER: Jane! Jane! Wake up! Your Nutcracker is in terrible trouble!

CADILLAC: Oh, that dreary plain-Jane, what can she do to help? Of what possible good to awaken her?

DROSSELMEIER: Foolish Cadillac, she is a human and therefore somewhat the equivalent of a god among you toys.

CADILLAC: There is nothing foolish about a Cadillac. Only poor people say such things.

MACK & HACK: Jane, Jane, get up, your beloved Nutcracker is in dire need of help!

(DROSSELMEIER, MACK, HACK and CADILLAC sing from their distant safety in the theatre to JANE: Her eyes slowly open.)

D, M, H, & C: Arise, Fair Maiden, heroine:
 The squealing Beast of Berlin
 Is going to bite your boy-friend's head off
 Unless you open your eyes and get off
 Your behind.
 Then look about and find
 Some weapon to whip the mouse with
 Or your dress his blood will be doused with!

NUTCRACKER: (striking at ERIKA MOUSE with his bayonet)
 There - that's for trifling with a marine:-
 Nicks on your knees, toes, and in-between!

MOTHER MOUSE: Idle chatter from a midget -
 I'll chop yer head off and watch you fidget!

JANE: Oh, my wonderful Nutcracker! His broken leg has rendered him helpless against his enemies. I must do something to help him! But what?!

DROSSELMEIER: What every woman does when confronted with a rodent!

JANE: (simple: pained to think) Set down poison or a trap? Oh, please!

DROSSELMEIER: No, to dispatch with the rodent immediately!
 Those measures are taken afterward, poor child!
 Child, dear Jane, look down - at thy feet:....

(JANE casts her gaze downward and a spot follows her eyes: traveling down her dress to her feet: there we notice for the first time (as if appearing quite conveniently now just when it is needed) that she has on one enormous blue slipper -- about two and a half times the size of her other one. It sparkles! A light bulb goes on over her head.)

JANE: If the shoe don't fit, don't wear it!

(JANE removes the great blueslipper and holds it high over her head, aiming it at the MOUSE. But she steps back as she gets ready to throw it and, in doing so, catches the slipper in a crucial, central piece of wiring on the Christmas tree. As she thrusts her arm forward flinging the slipper at the MOUSE, JANE pulls the entire Christmas tree and all its decorations, including the ANGEL, down upon herself. The ANGEL tumbles with an agonizing cry:)

ANGEL: O, all is lost through this, her blu^slipper:
I tumble to earth as at dawn the Big^ADipper!

(The toys all scatter in chaos and most of the lights go off as if broken by the tree's fall. But the MOTHER MOUSE sees her opportunity - and seizes it.)

MOTHER MOUSE: So - you are pinned under the tree, you dreadful offspring of human kind! You who would have bashed out my brains with your Garbo slipper! But the awesome, abstract perfect Idea of Mousehood hath punished thee for thy insolence - and hath given me the only arrangement possible for me to take my revenge upon thee - the true cause of all my sorrow!

JANE: Oh, no, Erika Mouse, don't bite me - don't! How could I be the cause of your sorrow: I never ever saw you before!

MOTHER MOUSE: Indeed, O Feeble-Minded One: for whom then did that dottering Doctor Drosselmeier create the Nutcracker, if not for you? -- that Nutcracker who slew my Seven-Headed son?! Nay, nay, do not try to deny it!

JANE: You can't possibly hold me responsible for what my toys do! I mean, am I my Nutcracker's keeper?

MOTHER MOUSE: An end to chatter and in your side
My razor-sharp teeth I'll slide!!

TOYS: Flee all, flee! All, all flee!
No time to stay and disagree
With what she's done! For she is done
With what she's done and so avenged her son!

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeeeeeeekkkkkk! Heh-heh-heh! Eeeeeeeeeekkkk!
I just had to get a bite to eat!

(The gigantic MOUSE scrambles off down under the uprooted roots, her whiskers dripping with fresh blood. And all the toys drop down into the hole as well with a great fuss and clatter. Only the NUTCRACKER is left limp and supine on the floor, his broken leg twisted up half into the air. DROSSELMEIER hurries over to JANE and, quite breathlessly, begins to pull the Christmas tree and roll it off her. She appears very still now.)

DROSSELMEIER: My child! my Jane! Oh, dear - how awful, how perfectly awful for something like this to happen on Christmas Eve. But then again, it would be perfectly awful any night of the year, wouldn't it? Except that it couldn't happen just any night of the year - could it? Know why? - there ain't no Christmas tree around just any night to fall down on poor Jane. And I ain't so tipsy, making it ever so difficult to extricate the child from ---
Oh, gracious! Why, I -- oh, dear....

(DROSSELMEIER finally frees JANE from under the tree - or what he thought was JANE: for she is so swollen up from the MOUSE's bite that she is virtually unrecognizable. In short, she has been transformed - rather unpleasantly.)

JANE: Godfather Drosselmeier, what is the matter? Why are you staring at me?

DROSSELMEIER: Um, nothing, my child, nothing is wrong.

JANE: Then why are you staring at me?

DROSSELMEIER: Am I?

JANE: Oh, I know I ^{am} slow and simple, but even I can tell that something is wrong! Aren't you going to administer to my bite?

DROSSELMEIER: Your bite?

JANE: Yes, Godfather, my bite! I was bitten. You know that, you saw it happen, you told me to throw my slipper at the big mouse and I tried and got bitten for my pains. A mouse that was angry with me for a doll that you, as well, created.

DROSSELMEIER: This doll has brought you some small measure of joy, has it not?

JANE: Why, yes, I think so. He is very lovely.

DROSSELMEIER: Then stop trying to make ^{out} that I am the cause of all the problems in the world.

JANE: But it would appear that you are.

DROSSELMEIER: Yes, it appears that I am. But am not I also the author of whatever brings you joy as well?

JANE: Well, the world is very complicated.

DROSSELMEIER: Just so long as you recognize that, little girl.

JANE: I do. But now what?

DROSSELMEIER: Well, now we have to set about finding a way to restore your former beauty. No question but that we can't leave you looking like this.

JANE: (fighting back tears) Oh, I knew it, I knew it, I've changed, haven't I? I'm hideous, hideous! That bite has run a poison through my veins!

DROSSELMEIER: Now, now, nothing that can't be reversed. This isn't irrevocable like Greek tragedy or something, you know. I've just got to think.

JANE: What have you got to think about? Aren't you a doctor - don't you know what will cure me?

DROSSELMEIER: Now don't suffer a personality change as well. You were always a passive and compliant sweet little thing - and I prefer you stay that way while work things out.

JANE: Grrrrrrrrrrrrr..... Grrrrrrrrrrrrr..... Oh, dear, I'm afraid I've taken on the mouse's temperament through its saliva. I'm rabid.

DROSSELMEIER: (looking at her ears) No, you're still a girl. A girl with a swollen head, that's all.

JANE: Very funny.

DROSSELMEIER: And I do know what will cure you.

JANE: What?

DROSSELMEIER: Well, it's nothing I could lay my mits on right away, understand. In fact, it's something rather hard to come by. In fact, I have no idea where in creation to start looking for it.

JANE: What is it?

DROSSELMEIER: Valerian root.

JANE: What?

DROSSELMEIER: I mean, Valerian, the kernel of the Valerian nut, a single bite of it would restore thy natural good looks in a second. Oh, I'm certain, it does so many things, cures so many ills, it's a kind of panacea, Valerian, it is. But I haven't the foggiest about where to find it.

JANE: (on the verge of tears again) Oh, then what good is it to know what will cure me - when no one knows how to come by it. Why, it could be anywhere, this Valerian nut - in the Matto Grasso or Bhutan!

NUTCRACKER: I know where the Valerian nut is to be found!

DROSSELMEIER: Do you?

NUTCRACKER: Surely!

JANE: Then will you take me to it?

NUTCRACKER: That would be my greatest pride and pleasure!
For you saved me, dear Jane, from certain death
at the teeth of the dreadful mouse and suffered,
in place of me, the brunt of her ill will. But
this land where the sacred Valerian is, is not
easy to get to: it will take a bit of traveling
and some perseverance, I warrant you that much.

JANE: Oh, I'll go anywhere, anywhere,
And I'll also persevere!

DROSSELMEIER: And I had better go along as chaperon.

NUTCRACKER: Then look up there: see that steam pipe and all
the steam that's coming out of it now? and see
that hole in the floorboards around the pipe? -
well, we've got to scamper down it! Let's go!

J, D, & N: Don't mean to leave you in the lurch,
But down we go to search and search
For the yellow and blue Valerian nut
Whose use the Senate would like to rebut
Because it's better than Mother Church
For curing ills. And that's clear-cut!
So -- strut! strut! strut! strut!
Then down to find the Valerian nut!

(They scramble into the hole and shimmy down the pipe. Steam
pours out from it as from Hell. Finally they come to the
bottom, tumbling over each other, and sit up dazed somewhere
in the Underworld. They rub their sore limbs. Presently,
MACK and HACK drive by in the CADILLAC as if on a Sunday drive.)

CADILLAC: (sexy) Hi, G.I.!

NUTCRACKER: Where are we?

M, H, & C: You're in the hole! You're in the hole!
When you lack the self-control
To drive straight or take a stroll,
But trip instead and tumble down
A piping hot pipe or pole
Heated by some kind of troll,
You're in for lots of rigmarole:-
Perhaps a Mouse of bad renown,
Some shmahta-rag or hand-me-down,
A mink stoll, a curtainpole,
A chicken down or prince's crown
Or bag of kittens marked, "Please drown."
But on the whole,
You're in the hole!

NUTCRACKER: Very edifying.

CADILLAC: Don't get smart. I norm'ly don't stop for hitchhikers.

HACK: Just what is it that you three want?

JANE: Please, good sirs and madame, don't get angry with us: but we are looking for the Valerian nut.

MACK: What for?

DROSSELMEIER: So we may cure what ails poor Jane.

CADILLAC: Nothing, I fear, can cure what ails plain-Jane. She's just plain plain, you see. It's a matter of genes, you got it or you don't, and she, I fear, don't got it.
(just then, seeing JANE in a clear light; startled)
She jist got it. Bad.

NUTCRACKER: Would either of you two short-order cooks know where the Valerian nut is?

CADILLAC: Why, G.I., don't you?

NUTCRACKER: Well, yes, I thought I did. I mean, of course, I do - know where the Valerian nut is. It's in the Land of Nuts.

MACK & HACK: But of course, where else would it be?!

NUTCRACKER: Where else, indeed. But that's just the problem! You see, I thought I knew where the Land of the Nuts was - I mean, it was right under the hole in the floorboards around the pipe. I saw it here yesterday!

CADILLAC: Well, it was here right up until yesterday - but then Erika Mouse and her Seven-Headed Son took over and since that moment nothing's been the same in the Underworld.

HACK: Tell you what: why don't you ask the Gravel Gertie doll where the Land of the Nuts is now? She's a kind of matriarchal type - they knows just about everything, she'd know where.

NUTCRACKER: But where is she?

CADILLAC: She's where she always is, hard by her hovel. I just passed her on my way down to The Roots. Hop in, I'll take you there.
(to MACK & HACK)
O.K., boys, this is where you two get off.

MACK & HACK: Well, we never! Where does she get off to tel---

CADILLAC: Get off! Get off!
 (MACK & HACK do so)
 And you three get in.
 (JANE, NUTCRACKER & DROSSELMEIER do so)
 And off we go! So long, suckers!
 (she drives off, heavy on the accelerator)

MACK & HACK: (stranded, looking kind of dopey together)
 What a crusty, thankless dame
 To dump us here and feel no shame!
 People say: "Put out or get out,"
 But never just scoff:
 "Get off! Get off!"

(The lights go out on MACK & HACK and come up on the GRAVEL GERTIE DOLL who is dancing with her broom in front of her abode. She has huge protuberant eyes and floor-length, soft grey hair. An ugly duplicate of the well-known original.)

GERTIE DOLL: I need a man so bad I'm mad:
 Boy, am I homely, boy, am I sad;
 Only a mother could look around and see
 Something to love here passionately:
 Remember me?
 I hid in a cave cause I wasn't too brave,
 But mostly I grovel
 By my old hovel:
 Remember me?
 I ain't from a movie, I ain't from a novel:
 Remember me?
 My hair is floor-length and grey,
 My voice is like Dennis O'Day,
 I go back quite a way:
 Remember me?
 I ain't from folklore, I ain't from TV:
 Remember me?
 I'm a friend of Dick Tracy's:
 You buy me in Macy's:
 Remember me?

(The CADILLAC rounds a bend and pulls up screeching in front of GERTIE. JANE claps her hands with glee.)

JANE: Half an angel and half a loon,
 You first appeared in a famed cartoon;
 A mixture of honey and vitriol ---
 You're the Gravel Gertie Doll!

GERTIE DOLL: Right you are, sweetie, on the first try! Eeeeeee!
 (spotting DROSSELMEIER)
 Eeeeeee! Howdy, handsome; trick or treat?

DROSSELMEIER: A trick is a treat. At my age.

GERTIE DOLL: Not always. What can I do for you three travelers?

CADILLAC: Love your broom. Does it go non-stop to Tampa and St. Pete?

GERTIE DOLL: Aaaaah, why don't you go sit it out in the lobby!

JANE: Oh, Gertie, we're looking for the Land of Nuts.

GERTIE DOLL: (quickly) Yeah, but that means edible nuts, you wretch!

DROSSELMEIER: Now, Gertie, don't be so self-conscious and insecure. You seem to suffer from a very weak self-image. I'm sure none of us here thinks so little of you as you do of yourself.

CADILLAC: Yeah, listen to Dr. Esselen, he does more than just blow weed up at Big Sur.

NUTCRACKER: Indeed, the good doctor here is the leading spokesman for ~~our stoned~~ but unhigh generation.

JANE: So can you tell us, Gravel Gertie dear, where the Land of Nuts is ~~presently~~ located?

GERTIE: The Land of Nuts has been re-located. Erika Mouse and her Seven-Headed son absconded with it.

CADILLAC: We know all that - we want to know where.

GERTIE: Do ya? Well, why come to me?

DROSSELMEIER: Cause you're a kind of matriarchal type, Gertie, and so is Erika Mouse. Matriarchal types tend to understand each other and hang out together.

NUTCRACKER: Therefore, it was natural for us to assume that you must know her and that she might very well have confided to you the new location of the Land of Nuts.

GERTIE: Yeah, well, naah. Yis assumed all wrong. I'm too ugly to have friends. So nobody confides in me. I don't know nothin'.

DROSSELMEIER: And from this instance here at hand ought we all extract a pertinent lesson:- that abismal ignorance is often a by-product of one's lack of self-respect!

NUTCRACKER: For when you think little of yourself, how can others think more of you and be your friend and tell you things?

GERTIE: But I'll tell ya what, gorgeous:- why dontcha ask the ^{Blue} Greta Garbo Slipper where old Erika Mouse is now?

NUTCRACKER: Why her?

Big
AD

GERTIE: Cause the Slipper had the last contact with Erika Mouse - heh! heh! - hit her right in the head, if I ain't mistaken!

NUTCRACKER: And just where might we locate the Big Blue Greta Garbo Slipper?

GERTIE: Oh, ya might "locate" her at The Roots Cafe - She's there most any time o' night and day: Since she give up fun 'n flicks She hides out there 'n stares at tricks.

JANE: Oh, thank you, Gravel Gertie!

GERTIE: Forget it, honey. Ya need all the help ya kin git. So I guess I'll see yis three later. (indicating the CADILLAC) And as fer you, partner, I'll take you in right now! Eeeeeeeee.

CADILLAC: I beg your pardon, you most certainly will not. I find you very ugly.

GERTIE: You may find me ugly, but ya'll be stayin' here to keep me company, sweetie, nevertheless. Ya see, you got four flats.

CADILLAC: What?!

GERTIE: Ya blew 'em on my front yard - didn't think they call me Gravel Gertie fer nothin', did ya? Heh! he! heh! Eeeeeeeee.

(GERTIE grabs the CADILLAC and starts voraciously hugging and kissing it. Lights out on the GRAVEL GERTIE compound and up on The Roots Cafe. This a cafe whose decor consists of the roots of the Christmas tree, reaching, twining, and twisting down under the floorboards. The BLUE GRETA GARBO SLIPPER is seated at a cafe table, smoking a holder-held cigarette, sipping a "viskey", her aged legs crossed. She has huge droopy lids. Her voice is husky and accented. She is a shoe.)

BLUE SLIPPER: The days creep, the years fly -
 Oh me! oh my!
 And I am bored, I am blue:
 Aren't you?
 But I want to be alone,
 Everything I need I own:
 Cable TV, a telephone,
 HiKarate and Brut cologne.
 I want to be alone.

I'm the Big Blue Greta Garbo Slipper
 Cause I'm blue, very blue, not chipper.
 And they said I had big feet -
 The biggest on the shooting lot or street,
 But vhat matter? - every man I want to, I meet.
 And I want to be alone.

I vas once very famous, I vas once very known,
 But to me it vas a burden and a big millstone,
 So now I'm a stone on which the moss has grown
 And I vant to be alone.

(DROSSELMEIER enters and the SLIPPER stands up and, sans raison, they launch into an old-time, old-folks song and dance routine:)

BLUE SLIPPER: The days creep, the years fly -
 Oh me, oh my!
 But I never say die
 So I'm dancin',
 Look I'm dancin'!

DROSSELMEIER: So you're dancin'?
 Look, I'm valkin',
 Vhatcha talkin' -
 I'm still valkin'!
 Vhatcher dancin'?
 Vell, I'm valkin',
 Yeah, I'm valkin' -
 Dhat's good enough fer me!
 (spoken)
 -Denks God, I'm still valkin'!

SLIPPER & D: Yeah, ve're dancin', ve're valkin'!
 Ve're romancin' and sveet talkin'!
 Qvit yer squawkin', qvit yer gawkin':
 In the moonlight ve're both valkin'! (repeat stanza)

BLUE SLIPPER: (laughing, exhausted) Vell, vell, vell, how are
 you Drossey? Drossey, old boy!?

DROSSELMEIER: Can't complain, Greta, can't complain. And your
 self - your famous old self?

BLUE SLIPPER: Blue, blue, Drossey, blue as ever. So alone, but
 what can I do? People bore me so!

DROSSELMEIER: And what brings you to this little known and very
 secretive cafe in the back streets of New York's
 forbidding Barrio?

BLUE SLIPPER: Vell, since I gave up flicks I felt the need to
 return to my roots!
 (screaming at her own vitticism)
 And speaking of which, these roots betoken that
 there needs be some great Christmas tree above
 ground, yes, of which dhese are the roots?

DROSSELMEIER: Indeed, indeed, and so there is, Greta, a very
 great and beautiful Christmas tree.

BLUE SLIPPER: (with an actress' envy and curiosity, leaning in:)
 And so tell me, Drossey, who is playing the
 great big beautiful Christmas tree?

DROSSELMEIER: Well, I don't know, but obviously some actor who wants to branch out.
(they both scream at DROSSEY's vitticism)

BLUE SLIPPER: So sit down, Drossey, and haf a viskey on me and tell old Greta vhat brings you to this secretive cafe in the back streets of the Newyoricans' New Yorico barrio? -Vaiteer, two viskies!

(The waiter, an absolute GHOUL, appears as out of thin air and peers down at the senior citizens. It intones:-)

GHOUL: Vill dhey be straight up, Madam?

BLUE SLIPPER: No! dhey'll be straight down!
(screaming, etc.)

GHOUL: (bending over, as if to confide in Madam's ear)
But, Madam, dhis article can down a qvart of Old Granddad in a qvart of an hour.

BLUE SLIPPER: Ghoul! Dhis article is Old Granddad! Now, do as I tell you and russle up dhem viskies! You vas sayin', Drossey - oh, Drossey, vhat times ve used to have!

DROSSELMEIER: Well, Greta, I've actually come on a mission t---

BLUE SLIPPER: Oh, look, Drossey, it's a full moon tonight, a full moon!
(moaning and swooning as in her most cliched flicks)

DROSSELMEIER: Greta, I've come to ask if you know the whereabouts of ---

BLUE SLIPPER: How can I know anybody's vhereabouts when nobody knows my vhereabouts? People bore me, you know I'm too good for them!

DROSSELMEIER: But this is urgent - you must think! I'll show you why, you'll see what I mean - it's an emergency. Jane - Jane, will you come in?

(JANE enters accompanied by the NUTCRACKER whose leg is still bandaged. JANE's condition is somewhat more advanced now.)

BLUE SLIPPER: Oh! Dear! Didn't I see you in a Maria Ouspenskaya movie?

JANE: Oh, I don't think so. I don't even know who she is. In fact, it couldn't be: I'm not an actress.

BLUE SLIPPER: You don't have to tell me! Ghoul! bring a small candle here.

GHOUL: (re-entering with a candle and 2 whiskies) Vill Madam have her viskies au fondue?

BLUE SLIPPER: (light^{ing} the small candle) No, Madam will not. It's just that it's better to light one small candle than curse the --- EEEEEEEEEEEEEKKKKK!!!! The curse of the Weremouse!

(The BIG BLUE GRETA GARBO SLIPPER flees the cafe, screaming. JANE is horrified, DROSSELMEIER and the NUTCRACKER more nervous than ever. The GHOUL takes on a new interest in life.)

JANE: OH! I knew it! Weremouse! I'm a weremouse!

GHOUL: And the moon will be full tonight, Missy. What a fun you can have if you play your bite right.

NUTCRACKER: Oh, the Garbo Slipper fled - now we'll never find out where Erika Mouse and the Valerian nut are!

DROSSELMEIER: (heating the two whiskies with the fondue candle) Doesn't matter:- her vanity prevents her from knowing or seeing anyone outside of herself anyway.

JANE: You mean, unlike Gravel Gertie, Greta thinks too highly of herself?

DROSSELMEIER: (downing both whiskies) That's right. So she wouldn't know who Erika is even if she bunked into her -- which she did, bunked right into her head, right, Jane? -What aim!

JANE: Grrrrrrrrrrrrrrr.... Grørrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr.....

NUTCRACKER: Oh, I'm discouraged. Truly discouraged.

GHOUL: Why don't you just lay down and die?

DROSSELMEIER: (hiccup) And I, too, am discouraged. If I had only created your leg properly, reinforced it the way I know it should be reinforced, none of this would have happened - for then, with your true strength, you should have done in Erika long ago. But, instead, because of my unprofessional attitude, we are all at that monster mouse's mercy.

GHOUL: Would you like me to lay you out alongside the vooden one?

DROSSELMEIER: Oh, once I thought I knew how to make puppets, everyone said I could make them well and I believed it. Now, I don't think I can do anything, anything at all, and don't want to.

GHOUL: I play a pretty spooky organ: let me gif you a key, Drossey, and you can sing. (sitting at the cafe's organ and striking a dreary note; then, accompanying DROSSELMEIER)

DROSSELMEIER: Ah! there's the dreary note!
 It makes the Ghoul grin and gloat.
 Ain't it awesome and remote?
 Oh, I know that note by rote!

GHOUL: It makes me grin and gloat,
 Grin and gloat!

DROSSELMEIER: That note's the clarion called despair
 And sob of hearts beyond repair:
 It's when your coat is worn threadbare
 And the party's out of wine and Gruyère.

GHOUL: The note makes me grin and gloat,
 Grin and gloat.

DROSSELMEIER: When I hear that tragic key
 Everything melts down in me
 And I drip away to be
 With the souls lost at sea.
 And the bums on the bow-er-ee.

GHOUL: It makes me grin and gloat.

NUTCRACKER: Oh, I can't go on a moment longer! What's the
 use of even trying. We're a total loss. And
 what's the use of wearing this bandage all around
 the Underworld? That's the biggest joke of all!
 What do I need this big, silly thing for? It
 won't do a bit of good - it can't help heal me!
 It's a bloody piece of uselessness! It mocks my
 misery!

(The NUTCRACKER unwinds the bandage from his leg and throws
 it away in anger and despair. (Buoyed by invisible wires) the
 bandage twists and floats across the stage; then, after traveling
 about, it picks up speed, twirls about with blinding velocity
 and (with a grand gesture of stage sleight o' hand) turns into
 a large BANDAGE DOLL which can sing and dance. So it does so.)

BANDAGE: Bandage up, come on, get smart:
 Give yourself a second start!
 Just because you hurt a little,
 Doesn't mean your brain is brittle!
 So take your aching, broken heart
 And bandage it - for that's true art!

And never give up!
 Never say die!
 Don't be fed-up
 Cause you always can try
 Again once you apprehend
 That you can bandage up and mend.

(All the rest jumping up and forming a wild chorus line,
 kicking and dancing as in a punk-disco)
 GHOUL: (speaking) Just listen to that petticoat.

ALL: A Night at The Roots!
Get tight at The Roots!
Put on your jeans and high-heel boots:
Stomp out a rhythm, stomp out a beat,
Get off your fanny and use your feet!

BANDAGE: Now I'll tell you an anecdote:
They tore me off a petticoat,
Cause I was useless under skirts,
So, now I'm good for where it hurts.

ALL: A Night at The Roots!
Its management's in cahoots
With nurse's aids who seek recruits
To start a dance craze and a fad
So they can bandage blistered feet like mad!

BANDAGE: Try again, try again
Like Balboa at Darien:
If he could find the Pacific Ocean,
Then what the heck's all the commotion
About your rather simple task?
Looking for Erika? Well, then, just ask!

(The BANDAGE suddenly moves aside and, in doing so, reveals the Seven-Headed Mouse's HARD HEART seated at a cafe table; it looks very impatient and annoyed and growls at the waiter:)

HARD HEART: Ghoul! Let's have some service around here!

GHOUL: Yavol, certainly, Herr Hard Heart. What vill it be?

NUTCRACKER: Why, look, look there, that's the Seven-Headed Mouse's Hard Heart!

HARD HEART: The usual!

GHOUL: One hard cider coming up!

HARD HEART: On the rocks!

GHOUL: But of course rocks, hard rocks.

JANE: Isn't that Hard Heart the remnants of the son of Erika Mouse?

DROSSELMEIER: Precisely. And are you thinking what I'm thinking?

NUTCRACKER: That if anyone would know where Erika Mouse is, the remnants of her son would!

DROSSELMEIER: Precisely.

NUTCRACKER: Oh, but of what possible use to ask it? A Hard Heart would never tell us anything we want to know. That's why it's a hard heart.

- BANDAGE: Well, you never do learn anything, my boy, do you? For what reason could a Hard Heart possibly exist except to be finally softened?
- NUTCRACKER: Softened? But how would one go about softening a Hard Heart?
- BANDAGE: Well, now, that is for you to go about discovering, is it not? How else will you ever learn what living with others is all about unless you go about it? And unless you discover what living with others entails, you can never become a real person: but will remain, instead, a wooden nutcracker forever. Now I suggest you start by asking it what ails it.
- NUTCRACKER: That's not easy for me, seeing as how I'm what really ails it more or less. I mean, it's a mere remnant of its former whole on account of me, wouldn't you say, Mr. Bandage?
- JANE: I'll help you, poor Nutcracker, you needn't get embarrassed so long as I can spare you that. Mr. Hard Heart, tell me, pray, what ails thee?
- HARD HEART: Get lost, hussy.
- JANE: I'll bet you have a lovely deep bass or baritone voice! I know it just by your manly demeanor. Perhaps it can give wings to your troubles.
- GHOUL: (reentering with the order) There's some hard stuff on the house for the entertainment. And an even harder bed of concrete for those who kill the business around here -- with their sour pussies, for instance... Could be a Mickey Finn in that cider right now, you never know....
- HARD HEART: (running^a finger around inside its collar, feeling the pressure; giving in:)
 A Hard Heart never dies,
 It just fades away
 To some secretive old cafe
 In the skid row streets of town
 Where every one is feeling down
 And there it feels at home,
 A heart of steel and chrome:
 A heart of iron, rock, steel and chrome.
- JANE: And why do you feel so down, Mr. Hard Hat, I mean, Mr. Hard Heart?
- HARD HEART: Cause there is little left of me,
 Of what I used to be.
- JANE: There is very little left of what I used to be.
 I was once a meek and mild-mannered little girl,

now I'm a weed of evil in the guise of a weremouse and your dam did that I fear. And there is very little left of Doctor Drosselmeier and what he used to be: a creator, a man of ingeniousness and medicine, a specialist, oh, yes, not a family doctor, a specialist. Now he's a rummy. And a hack. And there is very little left of what the Nutcracker used to be: for not being able to crack nuts any more, he is slated for the woodpile, I fear, and from there a quick toss into the fireplace, a thing that warms our chilled extremities for but a moment, no more, and then 'tis but a cinder, an ash or two.

HARD HEART: (beginning to soften) It's a hard world. But I don't see what I can do about it.

JANE: Ah! but there is everything that you can do about it. For your mother, the great big monster mouse, who is the perfect reflection of the pure, Abstract Idea of Mousehood, has absconded with the Land of Nuts and along with it, all the nuts that lived there.

HARD HEART: So? I should think the Underworld is better off with a few less nuts.

JANE: Not so, Mr. Hard Heart. For among those nuts was the Valerian nut - a mere taste of which would restore me to my former self. And if he should see this happen, my Godfather, Doctor Drosselmeier, would doubtless be restored to his own former self: a man with confidence in his talents and creations. And this once so, he could then easily fix up the Nutcracker, reshaping his ill-formed leg so that it is well again and can crack nuts. Would not you like to see all these things come about? -See the world set at rights again?

HARD HEART: What would you have me do?

JANE: Bring us to your mother and the Land of Nuts, for she is your mother and you must know where she is. And we will do the rest.

HARD HEART: What's in it for me?

DROSSELMEIER: The pure, unmitigated pleasure of doing good and bringing pleasure to others. I guarantee you, there's nothing like it in all the world!

(The HARD HEART ^{stands} and leads everyone at The Roots Cafe in a circular dance which gets faster and faster until, like a spinning propeller, they seem to blur and become invisible, dragging the Cafe and its whole world into invisibility with them. Strob lights and strange music dizzy the theatre.)

HARD HEART: I'm a Hard-hearted Son of a Breck,
 But I'm through now with all that dreck:
 For I give up my commy bent,
 Yes, I really do relent -
 For I've seen the end and I repent
 Of ever wanting a leftist totalitarian state
 Where your brains, soul, art and talent you must
 abnegate --
 And from the rapidly encroaching New Dark Ages
 I'll turn back a couple of history's pages
 And restore you three
 To a land that's free!

So spin and like a propeller turn!
 And melt, Dark Ages, down and burn!
 Twirl and whirl
 With this little girl,
 All of you -- the whole cafe!
 And we'll redeem those led astray
 For the young, the strong, the brave and the free,
 The artists and lovers of Democracy!

(When they stop spinning, the Cafe and its crowd have disappeared,
 and JANE, NUTCRACKER, DROSSELMEIER and HARD HEART find themselves
 in a new place:- The Land of Nuts. Seated on a throne, laughing
 demonically and cracking her whip, is a sanguinary ERIKA MOUSE.
 She presides over a huddled mass of NUTS, all of whom are
 chained together and are of an identical innocuous color and
 shape. There are nearly a dozen of them and they cringe
 together in front of a flat on which is painted hundreds of
 these same shaped and colored NUTS going back to infinity -
 so that the realized NUTS appear to be continuous with the
 painted ones. They whimper pathetically.)

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeeeeeee! Heh! Heh! Heh! Heh! Fools! Scoundrels!
 -Wastrels! I know why ye have come! Ye seek
 the sacred Valerian Nut! - well, ye seek in vain,
 in vain! - for look, here chained together are
 all the nuts in Nutland and I have put a curse
 on them, on every one of them so that they all
 look alike! They are identical! And you, O
 Nutcracker, cripple that you are, and so not
 able to crack them open and get at their kernels,
 cannot now or ever tell which is the Valerian!
 But now, since you have come into my land and
 under my power, I shall turn the three of you as
 well into nuts - nuts looking and being no
 different from these identically looking commy-
 enslaved nuts!
 (suddenly noticing DROSSELMEIER for the first time)
 Hmmmmmmmm, who's the senior citizen?

JANE: He is my godfather, Doctor Drosselmeier.

MOTHER MOUSE: Oh, yeah? Well, then, in that case, I think you
 useless fools may have an alternative at that.
 Tell you what:- I will point out which nut is

the Valerian and let you two take it with you with all safe conduct that I shall provide back to the realm of humans, if he remains in Nutland.

NUTCRACKER: Oh, no, never! We are not going to leave without him.

MOTHER MOUSE: You are not going to leave at all! For exactly at the stroke of Midnight, when I come into possession of and may articulate my full demonic powers, I shall bite you three in the head and turn you all into the nameless nuts you so obviously already are! And now, get out of my way, you're blocking my view of the full moon!

NUTCRACKER: Oh, but had I the use of my poor lame left leg, and were it as difficult as locating a needle in a haystack or a Snowman in the Himal'yas, yet I would to it and crack open each and every nut, though there be a thousand of them and a thousand times a thousand of them, until I found that Valerian and gave thee, my beloved mistress, to eat of it and be cured! But, alas, I have not the use of my leg and so cannot save thee, Jane!

JANE: Dear Nutcracker, wonderful Nutcracker, how I know now that you would if you could....
(smiling and kissing the NUTCRACKER)
Some people get to a subway station
Just as the train is pulling in,
And some just as it's pulling out.
To some all life is a long vacation
For they enter the world a mandarin;
To others it's an endless drought.
Do I ever ask myself why?
No, not I.

Some shoppers fancy whatever is new,
Their eyes only brighten at a thing's debut;
But others look for beaded clutches,
And lizard purses and old things such as
Deco compacts and cigarette cases,
Cloth gimcracks with harlequin faces,
Genuine blueblack fountain pens
And porcelain hounds tacked to Parisiennes.
Did you ever ask yourself why?
Not I.

Some only seek a lover dight
In present force and future might;
But I love thee for what thou art
And love thee now as at the start
When thou hadst all thy powers great,
Which now are chipped away by fate,
For then I saw the Good in thee --
And wounds of war and changing wind
Can never lessen that for me:

For that alone is disciplined
 Against the tax of destiny.
 Do I ever ask myself why?
 No, not I.

NUTCRACKER: Look, look! My leg!

DROSSELMEIER:What is it?

NUTCRACKER: It moves, it flexes! It juts out at will, it
 pulls back at will! It kicks up! it stomps down!
 It's fixed -- fixed!

JANE: Oh, Godfather, it's a miracle!

DROSSELMEIER:No, no miracle -- unless love be a miracle. Why,
 yes, yes, love is a miracle: for it is your love
 for the Nutcracker that has set right again his
 splintered limb!

NUTCRACKER: Do you indeed love me, Jane?

JANE: Yes, dear Nutcracker, I do.

NUTCRACKER: And then is it indeed her love for me, Doctor
 Drosselmeier, that has fixed my leg? For if 'tis
 that, why then, but Jane must be true royalty!

DROSSELMEIER:Why do you say that?

NUTCRACKER: Why? Everyone in Toyland says it:- that only the
 true love of a true queen could heal my damaged
 leg because it was damaged by hate. A true hate.
 A hate such as only can exist between siblings.

MOTHER MOUSE:And a hate that was fostered by another true
 queen, a great queen, namely myself - the Queen
 of Nutland, the Queen of the Night! But enough
 of this palaver, you bleeding-hearts, prepare to
 make your peace with whatever it is you worship,
 for it is nearly Midnight! Eeeeeeeeeeeeeee!!!!

NUTCRACKER: No, Fiend! Monster! Maniac! This ain't your
 night! For I am healed, and now that I am healed
 I shall crack open the nuts and find the Valerian
 and cure Jane of her weremousehood.

MOTHER MOUSE:Her who-what-where? -her where-who-what?

DROSSELMEIER:Rules are rules, old woman, and you know as well
 as we that so long as we are able to crack the
 nuts, and able because we have strength by dint of
 love, then for so long we are not under your
 power to be changed by you into nuts! For hate
 knows when it has no force in the face of love!

MOTHER MOUSE:Oh yeah? Well, rules may be rules, but I haven't

told you all of them:- which are, to wit, that you have only three tries at cracking open nuts and finding the Valerian - and if you fail in three, then it's my turn, and you'll be three nuts!

HARD HEART: Now wait a minute, Mother: that's not fair!

MOTHER MOUSE: Neither is life! -Kennedy said that, remember?

HARD HEART: But you didn't say that before.

MOTHER MOUSE: (hard) Well, I'm sayin' it now!

HARD HEART: But why, then, just three tries?

MOTHER MOUSE: Because there are three of them.

HARD HEART: Oh, yeah? Well, how about seven tries - because I had seven heads.

MOTHER MOUSE: Four!

HARD HEART: Six!

MOTHER MOUSE: Five! - And that's as high as I go -- five's a compromise, a good enough compromise. -You traitor! My own son. I'd say you were off your head for taking their side, but you're off all seven of your heads, so forget it. And now, no more palaver: start your five tries at once, Nutcracker, and pick shrewdly - for you bargain for the freedom, health, and eternal identity of yourself and your friends in these tries. Now, crack away like Krakatao!

NUTCRACKER: How can I pick shrewdly when every nut in Nutland looks alike? -Oh, well, there's no where to start except at the beginning: so, let's see, I'll just select the very ~~first~~ nut here. It'd be like her to place the one we want right in front of our nose: --because most people don't see what's right in front of their noses.
(he selects the foremost NUT, which is about 2 x 2 ft, rolls it centerstage and straddles it)
I straddle you, Nut,
And I'll paddle you, Nut,
If you don't split
As soon as I hit
My thigh with my fist.
-Get the gist?
(he strains and socks his thigh, once, twice)
Now don't be a bad jack,
Crack, Nut, crack, crack!
-There we go!

(The shell of the NUT splits in two and falls away. The kernel,

which is a beautifully mounted small piece of the GREAT WALL OF CHINA (very recognizably so, but with two dancing shoes visible underneath it), sings and dances, encouraging the audience to guess who it is:)

WALL OF CHINA: Lots of culture, Confucius and Lao-Tzu,
 Laundry tickets, "Yellow Menace," and Mao, too:
 Chop-chop! -say, can you guess
 What kind of nut I am? -No? -Yes?
 I'm very long and I surround
 One-eighth the earth around and round:
 Six hundred million folks are in a rut
 Because I walled them in. What kind of nut
 Am I? Can you guess?
 No? Yes?

Well, everybody used to call
 Me the very high "Great Wall
 Of China."

In ancient times no wall was fine-a --
 In height higher nor in length more supreme --
 Since I was built with an ingenious scheme,
 Cause I'm still standing and still in the pink:-
 Oh, yes, I'm still a perfect rink
 Around the present Red regime
 Which I sort of ream.
 Yet some say I'm no wall
 At all,
 But just a bummer,
 And the Chink
 You see in Shakespeare's "Mid-Summer
 Night's Dream!"

HARD HEART: Oh, I know what kind of nut that is, don't you?

JANE: No, what?

HARD HEART: A Walnut!

JANE: A Walnut! Oh, dear, that will never do!

WALL OF CHINA: Nevertheless, my child, that's exactly what I am!

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeeeeee! Fabulous! Joy in the morning! That's one strike out, Nutcracker! one out for you! I'm so happy I could bust a bloodvessel anticipatin' your failure!

NUTCRACKER: You mean, you'd crack your own nuts to spite your face.

MOTHER MOUSE: You know, I find you as cheeky as a comic strip and twice as dumb. Now get on with the nutcracking - you have four chances left.

NUTCRACKER: (selecting a second NUT from the center of the mass of them) Let me see:- here's one that

looks ~~as~~ as good as any other. I'll try it.
(rolling the second NUT out and proceeding as
he explains:)

I place you, Nut, beside one leg --
And lift my other one this high --
Then snap it -- for my second try --
Down to crack you like an egg!

(The SECOND NUT's shell cracks open and out pops its kernel,
ARNOLD BLACK-EGG, a professional weight-lifter with a really
unbelievable chest expansion and an inferiority complex --
and a cute face and an Austrian accent. Everyone stares in
dismay. ARNOLD gets into some classic poses.)

JANE: What is that?

ARNOLD: Arnold Black-Egg is my name,
I can get 'most any dame
I want to date me
If I've a mind to it.
Unt don't debate me
Unless you're blind to it --
Mine built, I mean - mine fabulous frame --
Cause it's mine fortune unt mine fame!

Now I ain't vhat you call defensive --
"Just let live unt let the mens live,"
I always say -- unt since I always say;
"Veight-lifting is yavel here to stay"
-Zo alzo, big muscles, zere here to stay."

Mit barbells unt veights
I get gorgeous dates,
Cause zey make tip-top shape
In mine calve unt huge nape --
See dhese pecs --
I vill break your necks
If you laugh at me --
Let me alone -- just let me be! --
Zo now -- if you vant da best,
Just ogle dhis chest ---

DROSSELMEIER: A Chestnut -- that's a Chestnut!

HARD HEART: Well, I didn't think it was a Bicepsnut or an
abdominal one.

JANE: A Chestnut? I thought it was a Hazelnut. Aren't
its eyes hazel?

NUTCRACKER: Oh, dear.

JANE: Can you believe how many kernels, clothes, and
folks around here have a Northern European accent?

DROSSELMEIER: Cause this is based on a Northern European classic:
nicht war, dumpkoff?!

look

MOTHER MOUSE: Yeah, but how they take liberties with them classics around here. I hardly recognize myself.

JANE: Me neither. I can hardly recognize myself. And I'm getting very worried - cause don't I get worse when the full moon is out - I mean, being a weremouse?

DROSSELMEIER: Uh-huh.

JANE: Then it won't be long now, Godfather. The moon is half risen and I'm wizened with long nails and down!

DROSSELMEIER: Maybe you should wait in the lobby.

JANE: Grrrrrrrrr.....

MOTHER MOUSE: All right, Crackerjack, make your third move. And you there, the Chestnut kernel, thank you. Thank you very much indeed...

CHESTNUT: You velcome. I zee you after, ja?

JANE: Please, Mr. Nutcracker, choose the Valerian this time. I'm getting desperate. Grrrrrrr....

NUTCRACKER: I'm doing my very best, Jane, but all this pressure isn't helping me one bit you know. How can one make wise choices with a double deadline?

JANE: Grrrrrrrrrr.....

NUTCRACKER: O.K., O.K. Hmmmm, this nut seems to be bouncing around a bit here - like it's trying to say something - if to me, what then but that it is the Valerian?!

(getting a hold on the "bouncing" NUT and steadying it so that he can work on it)

Now just hold still, you bouncy Nut

--Still, I say, until I split you:

Then whate'er's inside you shut

Will be free -- so let me hit you!

(The NUTCRACKER smacks the NUT about with his legs and it cracks in two. Out comes a huge auburn BEETLE with a Ringo Starr hair-do. It carries a guitar and is singing, "I Want to Hold Your Hand." Most jump with the joy of recognition, as if this were all just a guessing game: but JANE is beside herself.)

JANE: Oh, no, that's not the Valerian! No way, bluejay.

MOTHER MOUSE: Oh, shoot! that one is easy. It's a Betel Nut.

HARD HEART: Almost too easy -- I should have thought it was a Cashew -- since it made so much cash!!

(screaming at its own vitticism)

BEEBLE: Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! that Betel Nut is good to chew -
Now maybe not for me and not for you:
But folks down Southeast Asia way,
Them Thais and Campucheans say
The Betel Nut is good to chew!
Chew! Chew! you won't be blue!

Just wrap a climbing pepper leaf
Around the nut in a Betel Palm
That's growing right out on the reef,
Then add some burnt-up choral lime,
Give the thing a little time
And poof! you've got the Asian chew:
The Betel cures the Asian flu -
The Betel Nut! - you won't be blue
No more -- you won't be blue
No more -- you won't be blue
No more --

MOTHER MOUSE: Shut that damn Beetle up! - I can't stand concert
music - give me disco or give me death!

JANE: Asian flu? I don't have the Asian flu - that's
not what ails me! Oh, Nutcracker, what are you doing?

MOTHER MOUSE: He's doing everything to play right into my hands!
Three strikes against you, wise-guy! I said, get
rid of that Beetle - Arnold, box its ears - if
you can find them under all that hair!

JANE: All that hair! Gulp! You see, Godfather,
everyone is noticing! Oh, hurry, hurry!

DROSSELMEIER: Patience, my child, patience. The Nutcracker
still has two tries.

MOTHER MOUSE: And then he dies! - Or becomes the very nuts he
cracks, which is much the same thing.
(to HARD HEART)
I don't know why they complain about the Aryan
influence around here. Seems to me there's more
talk about matters Asiatic than anything else.

HARD HEART: Too true, too blue, and too bad.

JANE: Grrrrrrrrr.....

HARD HEART: Ooops - did I say something wrong?

MOTHER MOUSE: Try number four, Nutcracker! The moon's three-
fourths into the sky - hop to it!

JANE: She's just so sure of herself.

NUTCRACKER: Tell me.

JANE: O.K., I will. How about that one?
(pointing to a NUT which is set aside from the others as if to escape notice)

NUTCRACKER: Oh, yes, hiding out, are you? I'll bet dollars to donuts this is the one.
(getting the NUT in scissor-hold)
I'll be gentle, I'll be true:
One good clamp should open you!

(The NUT cracks, and out steps an amorous JAGUAR: it moves immediately into a frantic routine:)

JAGUAR: Nyoka the Carioca girl
Ain't no Latin con:
She's the luscious, milky pearl
Of the Amazon!

Nyoka does the frantic dance
Of Bahia fame:
If the studs who see her, prance -
They are not to blame.

Nyoka the Carioca girl
Men love from afar:
Cause she loves to pet and curl
With a jaguar!

Nyoka in the noisy night
Hears a tropic beat:
When the bucks begin to fight
She is on her feet:

Nyoka leaves them all behind
Who'd her suitors be --
So her suitors I remind
She belongs to me!

(Everyone on stage grabs a piranha fan-mask and, holding them before their faces, join in with the JAGUAR as a busy CHORUS:)

CHORUS: Piranha! Piranha!
Just put
A bleeding foot
In the Amazon and a hundred of 'em are on ya!

Piranha! Piranha!
Will eat
A scrap of meat
Whether it's on a long horn cattle's hide or your
feet!

Piranha! Piranha!
Clean out
A big hog stout
In a couple seconds and they can do the same to
you in there about!

ALL: Nyoka! Nyoka!
 It sure ain't the polka!
 It's not a fox-trot or a waltz:
 Nothin' Yankee, nothin' false!
 A Carioca! It's the Carioca!

JANE: Oh, that love-sick jaguar is a Brazil Nut!

DROSSELMEIER: Yes, it's a Brazil Nut: I didn't think so frenetic-
ally self-confident a routine would betoken the
 Valerian.

JANE: But, Godfather, don't you see:- that leaves us
 with but a single try left. And look: the moon
 has nearly ascended to her throne in the sky!

DROSSELMEIER: Then let me pick the last nut to be cracked. We
 can't take any further chances with my inventions.
 (he pushes aside the crowd of identical NUTS until
 he reveals a very tiny ONE hidden in the dead
 center of them. He starts back with delight:)
 Ah! I believe I've struck gold!

NUTCRACKER: What? That measly shrimp?!

DROSSELMEIER: Big things come in small packages, my boy. No,
 no, step back, let me do it - stuff like this has
 got to be handled with kid gloves, not hard pantaloons.

NUTCRACKER: They're just standard army fatigues, a little loud
 on the camouflage, maybe, but ---

DROSSELMEIER: (prying apart the tiny shell) There - it's easier
 than opening a beached muscle. Ah-ha! Success!

JANE: What? - that?

DROSSELMEIER: Yes, my dear. That.

JANE: But that looks like a pea-nut to me: why, it's
 no bigger'n a pea in a pod!

DROSSELMEIER: Just so. And I've lost my specs, so tell me,
 Jane, what color is it? Yellow or blue?

JANE: (approaching dubiously, peering down, bending over)
 Blue.

DROSSELMEIER: Just so. Good. Maximum strength.

MOTHER MOUSE: Foiled, foiled! You fiends!

HARD HEART: Oh, mother, take off your glasses and join the fun.

JANE: Eeeek! The moon! Let me to it!

(The stage is suddenly hit with the full blast of white moonlight.)

JANE becomes quite animalistic as she reaches voraciously for the VALERIAN NUT.)

VALERIE: Hello, Jane. How are you?

JANE: Skip the small talk, sister - will I need ketchup?

VALERIE: Junk food is never necessary. My name is Valerie.

JANE: Big deal.

VALERIE: Valerie the Valerian.

JANE: That's quite a mouthful for such a small mouthful. Well, down the hatch!

VALERIE: Aren't you going to take me with water? I go down better that way.

JANE: There's enough rabid saliva in my mouth to make up ten glasses of water!

DROSSELMEIER: Wait, Jane, do you think you should?

JANE: Wait for what? -- the full moon's out, you old bag!

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeeeeee! My evil proceeds without my participation. Such is the role of momism in history.

DROSSELMEIER: But, Jane, I mean, at your age - why, you're so young, do you think it's wise to start in with things like this at your age?

JANE: Now, don't you start in! Let me have it!

DROSSELMEIER: No, no, I can't. In all good conscience, I can't!

MOTHER MOUSE: He talks of conscience now!

JANE: I'm warning you, Godfather, I'm rabid, I'm a weremouse - I won't take no for an answer!

DROSSELMEIER: Then let me pay the full price for my sins, for my creations, my unpredictable offspring!

JANE: You WILL, Drossey, YOU WILL!!!
(she bites deeply into DROSSELMEIER's back)

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeeeeee! Savage jungle fury! All new thrills!

HARD HEART: Chaos, sheer chaos.

NUTCRACKER: What in the wonderworld of toys is going on?

JANE: The Valerian Nut, where is it? Lost, lost like a contact lens in a bearskin rug!

(DROSSELMEIER has fallen face down on the floor under the blow of JANE's weremouse bite. JANE is scrambling around (with her back to the audience) looking for the Valerian nut. When old DROSSELMEIER rises, helped to his feet by MOTHER MOUSE, he has been transformed into a weremouse himself (of course), a big one, about the size of MOTHER MOUSE.)

MOTHER MOUSE: Eeeeekkk! A weremouse! A hideous weremouse! Drossey's a were--- well, not so bad at that, are you, big boy? Not so bad at all....

DROSSELMEIER: And you, neither, - if you'd just remove your glasses.
(taking off MOTHER MOUSE's specs)
There, now, isn't that better?

MOTHER MOUSE: Much. And you look much better yourself. More like your real self, I should think....

DROSSELMEIER: Then shall we make sweet music together - I mean, you sweet old senior citizen, you think that's still possible?

MOTHER MOUSE: Quite possible. And I've got a pocketfull of half fares and drastic discount tickets - up at my place, that is.

DROSSELMEIER: My thoughts, exactly.

HARD HEART: Oh, look, look at Jane!

(Everyone turns to look at JANE who has risen to her feet.)

WALL OF CHINA: Why, she's completely changed!

ARNOLD: Hey, zey, she's not bad.

JAGUAR: Beautiful woman, very beautiful wooman!

BEEBLE: Cool, man, dig it!

NUTCRACKER: Jane, you are lovely. A true queen of beauty.

DROSSELMEIER: And a true queen. For I have given my all to manage that - my very humanity. But that's what you wanted, Jane, isn't it?

JANE: Oh, yes, to be a true queen! And so I am. In all the splendor and beauty which such entails. But, dear, good Godfather, was it necessary for you to be transformed into a... a.... just for me to become what in my heart I know I always was?

DROSSELMEIER: I'm afraid so, my child. I'm afraid so. For are you so very sure that this is what you truly were all along, completely were, even just in your heart?

JANE: I believe so.

DROSSELMEIER: Well, well, who can say?

NUTCRACKER: Not I, I'm sure. I'm quite beyond figuring these things out.

DROSSELMEIER: And so, too, am I, Mr. Nutcracker. Quite old and beyond knowing more than you'll ever know. -Come, Mother Mouse, we have our nest to build.

MOTHER MOUSE: But what of the remnants of my son, the Hard Heart of the Seven-Headed Mouse?

DROSSELMEIER: That Hard Heart can go and rest quietly in Heaven now for it has become quite soft, you see. So stop worrying about your son.

HARD HEART: That'll be the day.

MOTHER MOUSE: Thank you, John Wayne.

JANE: So ^{that} leaves just you and I, Mr. Nutcracker - to get married at last and live happily ever after!

NUTCRACKER: But I'm afraid that can never be, Jane - never, despite your true self, your beauty and queenhood: for I am a wooden toy, not a human - not a boy!

JANE: Oh, no, no, not after all I went through -- Godfather, where are you? Where are you going? Didn't you say that the love of a true queen could turn ---

DROSSELMEIER: (disappearing into the dark) No, Jane, true love can heal, it cannot bring the dead to life or the inanimate to humanity....

JANE: But, Godfather.....

MOTHER MOUSE: (softly, disappearing into the dark) Foolish child, girl-children are no less foolish than sons, are they?.... bye, Ja.....

(JANE falls in a swoon as the entire crowd of MICE and NUTS along with their fantasy-land fade away in a whirl. When a spot finds her on the floor of the bare stage, she is there alone beside the immobile, inanimate body of her wooden NUTCRACKER.)

JANE: Oh, lovely Nutcracker, brave G.I.,
What have you and what have I?
You no life and I no friend,
You no breath at all in the end
And I no love though we did try
So hard - didn't we? I cry. I cry.

So this is how things end at last,

Nothing wet is water-fast.
 Colors fade
 Though dried in the shade
 And the present is much like the past.
 Why should I lie?
 I cry. I cry.

Dear Nutcracker, sweet Nutcracker, toy,
 I had wished you were a boy.
 Foolish, so foolish, wasn't I?
 Why should I lie?
 I cry. I cry.

(NATHAN rises up from beside the immobile body of the NUTCRACKER, BEING HIS IDENTICAL IMAGE, except alive, and dressed in G.I. fatgues, camouflage, etc. He takes JANE's hand and lifts her.)

JANE: Why, it's Nut, I mean, Nat.

NATHAN: Yes, Jane. You look beautiful.

JANE: You look....

NATHAN: A little like some gift someone gave you? My uncle has seen me wear these Vietnam fatigues many times. And long before he fashioned that Nutcracker for you. You must have as well. These are hardly new, you know.

JANE: It's so hard to remember sometimes, isn't it? I mean where and when you saw things.

NATHAN: But you do remember and that's what counts. Things want to be remembered. And so do people. That's why they make things, to tell you never to forget. This Nutcracker says for my uncle never to forget....

JANE: I shan't, I promise, Nat.

NATHAN: Will you dance with me?

(They dance.)

JANE: A morning must come when people are gone,
 But all my toys stay forever on
 By that same need that made them live:
 To teach their mistress what it meant to give.
 To your maker, Goodbye,
 For you, my toys, never lie,
 Oh, my toys, how you never can die.

END.

11/28/79