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Jan Marcin Szancer (1902-1973), a Polish illustrator, created this image depicting Marie and *The Nutcracker* visiting "The Land of Sweets."

As the wooden Nutcracker resumes his ability to speak, he visits Marie. Asking her to travel with him, to see wonderful things, Nutcracker assures Marie that she will be safe.

Is Marie dreaming about a different world—or—is she really visiting such a place? And ... is this the chapter of the story which later inspired Pyotr Tchaikovsky to compose his ballet score?

Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet—performed here by the Mariinsky Theater, in St. Petersburg, Russia, where the ballet was performed for the first time—is online via EuroArts. Tchaikovsky did not live long-enough to see how popular his work would become.

*Marie found herself standing in a sweet-scented field. Sparks danced upwards, like glittering diamonds.*

*"This is Candy Meadow," said Nutcracker, "but we'll go through that entrance over there."*

*Now Marie saw a wonderful gateway made of sugared almonds and raisins. There was a gallery running along the top of it that seemed to be made of barley sugar. Six monkeys, in little red jackets, sat there - playing brass instruments.*

*Marie swept through the gate in a dream, only vaguely noticing that they were walking along a checkered marble pavement. Soon she realized it was made out of different-colored sweets.*

*After a while, they found themselves in a glimmering forest. Gold and silver fruits hung from the trees and ribbons and bows were draped around the branches. A gentle breeze was blowing, making the leaves tinkle and rustle like beautiful music.*

*"This is Christmas Wood," said Nutcracker.*

*"How lovely," sighed Marie. "I wish I could stay here a little while."*

*With that, Nutcracker clapped his hands three times. From the trees ran graceful shepherds and shepherdesses, hunters and huntresses, so white that they seemed to be made out of sugar. They brought a beautiful golden chair with a white satin cushion and invited Marie to take a seat.*

*The shepherds and shepherdesses danced a pretty ballet for Marie, as the hunters and huntresses played their horns. Then they all took a bow and vanished again ... into the trees.*

*"I'm sorry it wasn't very good," said Nutcracker, "but these people are from the Clocktown Ballet Troupe, and they can only dance the same thing over and over again. Come on, Marie, we'd better be moving along."*

*Soon they found themselves by a fragrant stream called Orange Brook which Nutcracker explained wasn't nearly as beautiful as the great Lemonade River, which tumbles and foams into Almond Milk Sea. Indeed, a little later, Marie saw a swollen yellow river that went roaring and rushing along in a most refreshing way.*

*Nearby, was a dark gold stream, called Honeybrook. Boys and girls sat fishing there, and in the distance was a village called Sugarwell with houses that looked like gingerbread plastered with lemon peel and almonds.*

*"All the inhabitants of Sugarwell are very good-looking," explained Nutcracker, "but they're also bad-tempered because they always have a toothache. You can imagine why I suggest that we don't go there."*

*Now they came to a town where thousands of people had gathered in the market place to unload carts - carts that were piled high with packages of sticky, colored paper and slabs of chocolate.*

*"This is Bonbontown," explained Nutcracker. Those carts are from Ribbonland. The King of Chocolate sent paper to fortify this town against attacks by the Fly-Admiral. The chocolate is a gift."*

*Then they came to a wonderful, rose-scented lake where swans, all silvery white and wearing golden collars, glided back and forth. They were singing beautifully, while twinkling fish darted up and down through the rippling, rose-tinted water in time to the music.*

*"Oh!" cried Marie happily. "This must be the lake Godpapa promised me once, and I am the girl who plays with the swans!"*

*Nutcracker laughed at this. "I don't think my uncle could ever make such a beautiful thing! Come on, let's cross Lake Rosa."*

*He clapped his hands and a boat came drifting towards them covered in precious stones and pulled by two golden-scaled dolphins. Twelve boys, with headdresses made of hummingbird's feathers, jumped out and carried the pair on board.*

*The nimble dolphins spouted jets of glittering crystal into the air. This annoyed the boys, who all opened umbrellas and started to stamp their feet. But Marie didn't know this because she was gazing into the rosy waters, where she had just seen a pretty little girl's face smiling up at her.*

*"Look," she gasped. "It's Princess Pirlipat!"*

*Nutcracker shook his head and, with amusement in his voice, replied: "No, dear Miss Stahlbaum, that isn't Princess Pirlipat. It's only your own lovely face smiling back at you from the water."*

*Marie pulled back immediately, feeling very embarrassed.*

*They had reached the far shore now, and the boys carried them into a gorgeous, sweetly perfumed grove, almost more wonderful than Christmas Wood.*

*"This is Comfit Grove," said Nutcracker proudly, "and over there lies the great metropolis of Sweetmeat City."*

*Oh! It was a fantastically wonderful sight! In front of Marie stretched a magnificent city with colored walls and towers spiraling, twisting, curling and curving in all kinds of wondrous shapes.*

*Instead of roofs, the houses wore intertwining crowns and the towers were carved with delicate leaves. The gate seemed to be made of sugared fruits and macaroons, and a little squad of silver soldiers presented arms as the group entered.*

*A man in a brocade jacket ran up to them, crying: "Welcome home, dear Prince! Welcome home to Sweetmeat City!"*

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Land-of-Sweets>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Land-of-Sweets>