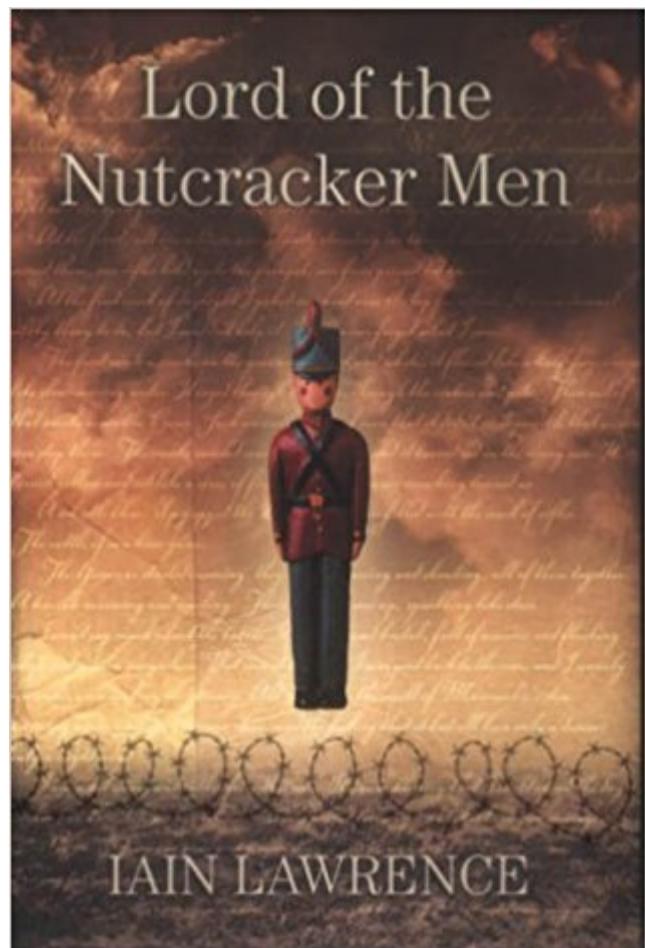


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# Lord Of The Nutcracker Men



## Synopsis

A young boy gradually comes to understand the difference between his toy soldiers and the bloodshed of the First World War in this poignant story. Ten-year-old Johnny loves the army of nutcracker soldiers his toymaker father whittles for him. Johnny eagerly plays at war, demolishing imaginary foes. But in 1914, war with Germany looms, and all too soon Johnny's father is swept up in the war to end all wars as he proudly enlists to fight at the front in France. Johnny believes his father will be back in a few months, in time to celebrate Christmas with him and his mum. But the war is nothing like any soldier or person at home expected. It is brutal and horrific. The letters that arrive from Johnny's dad reveal the ugly realities of combat - and the soldiers he carves and encloses begin to bear its scars. Still, Johnny adds these soldiers to his armies of Huns, Tommies, and Frenchmen, engaging them in furious battle out in the muddy garden. His war games bind him to the father he longs to see again. But when these games seem to foretell his dad's real battles, Johnny thinks he possesses godlike powers over his wooden men. He fears he controls his father's fate, the lives of all the soldiers in no-man's-land, and the outcome of the war itself. In this haunting and poignant tale, Iain Lawrence explores the irrationality of war and its effect on lives that are all too fragile.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

War idealistic, brutal, awe inspiring, numbing, jingoistic and ultimately heartbreaking is the central theme of this thoughtful and thought-provoking novel. The Great War has begun, and Johnny watches his kindly toymaker father turn against the German shopkeepers and neighbors in the family's London community. Soon after his father joins the army and travels to France to fight,

Johnny is sent to live with his curmudgeonly Auntie Ivy in a small town on the south coast of England. Most chapters begin with a letter from Johnny's father, and from these the boy (and readers) derive an increasingly complex and horrifying vision of life in the trenches. Accompanying each letter, and providing vivid illustration of the events described in the missive, is a wooden soldier carved by Johnny's father, which the boy adds to the ranks of his toy army. As the weeks go by, Johnny entertains himself by staging vast battles with this army, until in a series of scenes that unflinchingly convey a child's conflicting feelings of omnipotence and vulnerability he grows to fear that his play is somehow magically affecting his father's life at the front and, indeed, the entire war. His father's account of the Christmas Truce of 1914 and Johnny's own role in reuniting a grieving family with a shell-shocked soldier are among the events that bring the novel to its solemn, yet quietly hopeful, close. Both its timing and its message are eerily resonant. Ages 10-up. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

Grade 5-8-This novel by Iain Lawrence (Delacorte, 2001) is set in England during World War I. When Johnny's father, a toymaker, joins the British army and is sent to the front, Johnny must go to his Aunty Ivy's house to be "safe." He takes with him the wonderful "nutcracker men" that his father has carved. Johnny believes that the battles these toy soldiers fight affect the course of the war. As the war progresses, his father sends him more carved soldiers from the front with letters that become increasing explicit about the horrors that he faces. His carvings also reflect these horrors, until Johnny's dad realizes that his son is too young for such "truths" and begins to describe billiards games and movies. Then it is the voice of the ghost Murdock, a strange figure in a tattered uniform, who tells Johnny war truths. This is really a story of conversations, so the recording enhances the plot development and characterization. Narrator Steven Crossley does a masterful job of capturing 10-year-old Johnny's innocence about the war and about life, as well as the vast emotional range of the adults in his world. Crossley's narration quickens the pace of the story by capturing the essence of each of the main characters. This recording adds immediacy to a poignant and powerful novel. Edith Ching, St. Albans School, Washington, DC Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

With *Lord of the Nutcracker Men* Iain Lawrence provides readers with an engaging story that focuses on how war, through the experiences of Johnny Briggs's and his family, affects its participants and those left behind. In addition, lovers of historical fiction will find that Lawrence's work accurately reflects the time period in which he sets the novel. Using letters from the front,

though fictional, Lawrence cogently blends Johnny's experiences with those of his mother's and father's efforts to, in their own way, contribute to the war effort providing readers with a panoramic view the conflict. Lord of the Nutcracker Men, I think, represents a worthwhile read for those who enjoy history, fiction, or a combination of the two.

great and quick delivery

My 10 year old is a great reader but we struggle to find books that he finds interesting. This is a great book that teaches about WWI, has a great story and which held his attention throughout!

I felt this book was well written and told a good story about a family being directly impacted by war. It is told somewhat by Johnny but also through his Aunt Ivy. The symbolism that is used in the carved figures by his father is great. The author describes some the conditions of trench warfare to give some ideas. Overall it will keep your attention and wanting to learn more about the that event WWI.

I have loved this book for a long time. It is one of those tales that really sticks with you for a long time.

Suspension ..... I love the intensity of the book . It was not as Boring as it was in the beginning of the book.

We also needed this book in our granddaughter's class for her to pass this year, and it will help her.

Good one

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