



# The Devil's Elixir

*E. T. A. Hoffmann*

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## **The Devil's Elixir** E. T. A. Hoffmann

This early work by E. T. A. Hoffmann was originally published in 1824. Born in Königsberg, East Prussia in 1776, Hoffmann's family were all jurists, and during his youth he was initially encouraged to pursue a career in law. However, in his late teens Hoffman became increasingly interested in literature and philosophy, and spent much of his time reading German classicists and attending lectures by, amongst others, Immanuel Kant. Hoffman went on to produce a great range of both literary and musical works. Probably Hoffman's most well-known story, produced in 1816, is 'The Nutcracker and the Mouse King', due to the fact that – some seventy-six years later - it inspired Tchaikovsky's ballet The Nutcracker. In the same vein, his story 'The Sandman' provided both the inspiration for Léo Delibes's ballet Coppélia, and the basis for a highly influential essay by Sigmund Freud, called 'The Uncanny'. (Indeed, Freud referred to Hoffman as the "unrivalled master of the uncanny in literature.") Many of the earliest books, particularly those dating back to the 1900's and before, are now extremely scarce and increasingly expensive. We are republishing these classic works in affordable, high quality, modern editions.

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