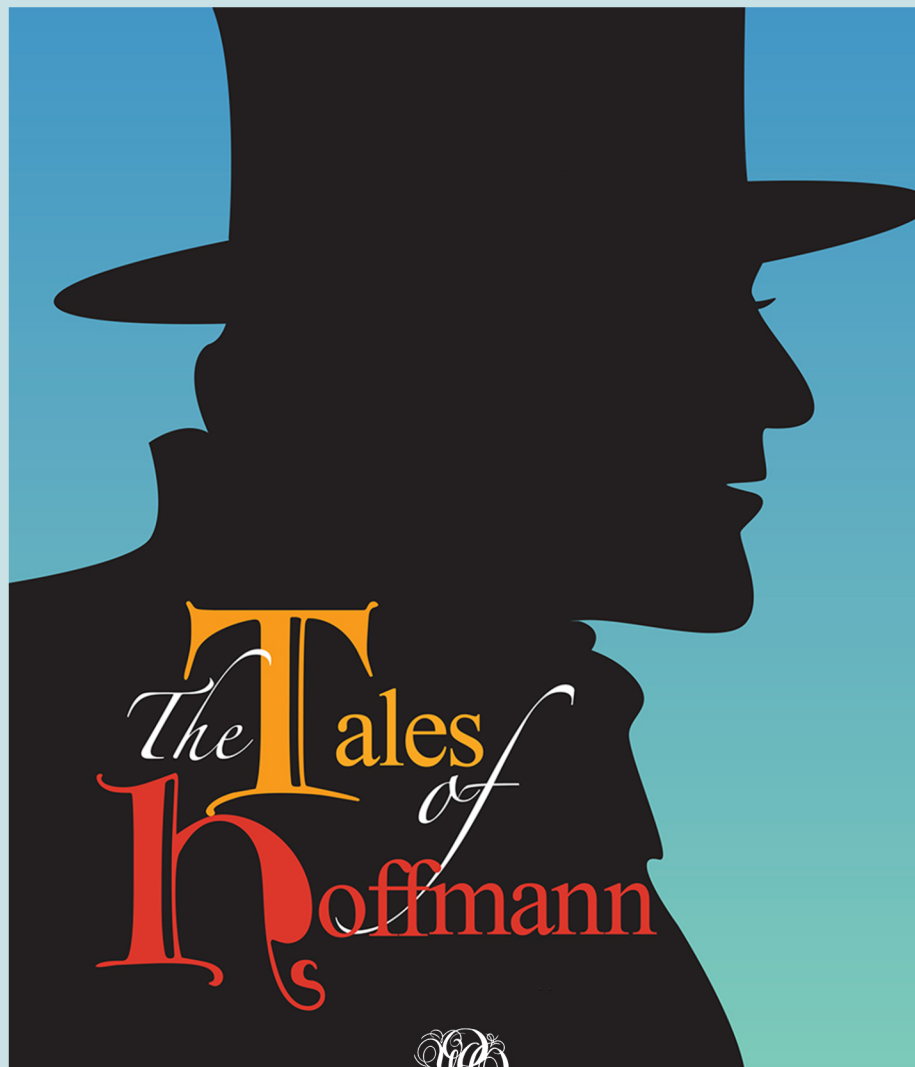


**Young Patronesses of the Opera**

**Opera Funtimes Presents**

**THE TALES OF HOFFMAN  
STUDY GUIDE**



**A children's opera by Jacques Offenbach**



*Young Patronesses of the Opera*

Young Patronesses of the Opera  
Presents  
**The Tales of Hoffmann**  
by Jacques Offenbach



Helping Our Music Students Understand the Opera using  
Reading and Writing Strategies

Presented by:

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Presented at the YPO Teachers' Workshop for Miami-Dade County in 2010 as a  
teachers' resource to go with using YPO's *Opera Funtime* booklets.

*This is a teacher's guide with suggested classroom discussions and activities using the Opera  
Funtime booklets created by Young Patronesses of the Opera (YPO). Opera Funtimes can be  
found on their website at: [www.ypo-miami.org/opera-funtime](http://www.ypo-miami.org/opera-funtime). More study guides and  
booklets are available on their website.*

*You can also contact YPO to purchase printed versions ([www.ypo-miami.org/contact](http://www.ypo-miami.org/contact))*

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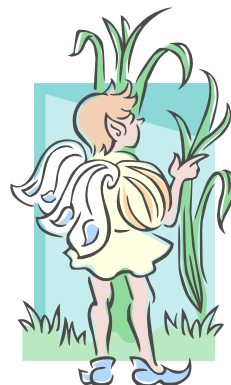
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What is a tale?

According to: <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-tall-tale.htm>

A tall tale is a story about a larger-than-life character, either fictional or based on a real person who has exaggerated adventures and performs exaggerated feats of daring, strength, courage, and/or intelligence. It is typical of the tall tale that everything in it is the subject of **hyperbole**, and in this characteristic, it bears relation to the “fish story” or “whopper,” in which a fisherman’s exploits are exaggerated for dramatic or humorous effect.



## What is a muse?

According to: <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-muse.htm>

Many **artists**, writers, poets and musicians have said that their creative **work** has been inspired by an individual whom they refer to as their muse. A muse is someone who has such an influence on another that he or she becomes the focus and inspiration for that person's creative work. The term has historically been used by men to describe the women that they have been in love with and made the subject of their work.

## Synopsis                      suitable for.....Grades 6 - 8

### Les Contes d'Hoffmann

**Composer:** Jacques Offenbach

#### *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*

Libretto by Jules Barbier, based on the play by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré (based on stories by E.T.A. Hoffmann)

World premiere: Paris, Opéra Comique, February 10, 1881

### **Prologue**

The poet Hoffmann is in love with Stella, the star singer of the opera. Lindorf, a rich counselor, also loves her and has intercepted a note she has written to Hoffmann. Lindorf is confident he will win her for himself ("Dans les rôles d'amoureux langoureux"). Entering with a group of students, Hoffmann sings a ballad about a disfigured dwarf named Kleinzach ("Il était une fois à la cour d'Eisenach"). During the song, his mind wanders to recollections of a beautiful woman. When Hoffmann recognizes Lindorf as his rival, the two men trade insults. Hoffmann's Muse, who has assumed the guise of his friend Nicklausse, interrupts, but the encounter leaves the poet with a sense of impending disaster. He begins to tell the stories of his three past loves...

### **Act I**

The eccentric inventor Spalanzani has created a mechanical doll named Olympia. Hoffmann, who thinks she is Spalanzani's daughter, has fallen in love with her. Spalanzani's former partner Coppélius sells Hoffmann a pair of magic glasses through which he alone perceives Olympia as human (Trio: "Je me nomme Coppélius"). When Coppélius demands his share of the profits the two inventors expect to make from the doll, Spalanzani gives him a worthless check.

Guests arrive and Olympia captivates the crowd with the performance of a dazzling aria (“Les oiseaux dans la charmille”), which is interrupted several times in order for the doll’s mechanism to be recharged. Oblivious to this while watching her through his glasses, Hoffmann is enchanted. He declares his love and the two dance. Olympia whirls faster and faster as her mechanism spins out of control. Hoffmann falls and breaks his glasses. Coppélius, having discovered that the check was worthless, returns in a fury. He grabs Olympia and tears her apart as the guests mock Hoffmann for falling in love with a machine.

## **Act II**

Antonia sings a plaintive love song filled with memories of her dead mother, a famous singer (“Elle a fui, la tourterelle”). Her father, Crespel, has taken her away in the hopes of ending her affair with Hoffmann and begs her to give up singing: she has inherited her mother’s weak heart, and the effort will endanger her life. Hoffmann arrives and Antonia joins him in singing until she nearly faints (Duet: “C’est une chanson d’amour”). Crespel returns, alarmed by the arrival of the charlatan Dr. Miracle, who treated Crespel’s wife the day she died. The doctor claims he can cure Antonia but Crespel accuses him of killing his wife and forces him out. Hoffmann, overhearing their conversation, asks Antonia to give up singing and she reluctantly agrees. The moment he has left Miracle reappears, urging Antonia to sing. He conjures up the voice of her mother and claims she wants her daughter to relive the glory of her own fame. Antonia can’t resist. Her singing, accompanied by Miracle frantically playing the violin, becomes more and more feverish until she collapses. Miracle coldly pronounces her dead.

## **Act III**

The Venetian courtesan Giulietta joins Nicklausse in a barcarole (Duet: “Belle nuit, ô nuit d’amour”). A party is in progress, and Hoffmann mockingly praises the pleasures of the flesh (“Amis, l’amour tendre et rêveur”). When Giulietta introduces him to her current lover, Schlémil, Nicklausse warns the poet against the courtesan’s charms. Hoffmann denies any interest in her. Having overheard them, the sinister Dapertutto produces a large diamond with which he will bribe Giulietta to steal Hoffmann’s reflection for him—just as she already has stolen Schlémil’s shadow (“Scintille, diamant”). As Hoffmann is about to depart, Giulietta seduces him into confessing his love for her (Duet: “O Dieu! de quelle ivresse”). Schlémil returns and accuses Giulietta of having left him for Hoffmann, who realizes with horror that he has lost his reflection (Ensemble: “Hélas! mon cœur s’égare encore!”). Schlémil challenges Hoffmann to a duel and is killed.

Hoffmann takes the key to Giulietta's boudoir from his dead rival but finds the room empty. Returning, he sees her leaving the palace in the arms of the dwarf Pitichinaccio.

### **Epilogue**

Having finished his tales, all Hoffmann wants is to forget. Nicklausse declares that each story describes a different aspect of one woman: Stella. Arriving in the tavern after her performance, the singer finds Hoffmann drunk and leaves with Lindorf. Nicklausse resumes her appearance as the Muse and encourages the poet to find consolation in his creative genius.

Synopsis.....for grades 9-12                      from the **The Santa Fe Opera**

[www.santafeopera.org/tickets/production.aspx?performanceNumber=3959#a6](http://www.santafeopera.org/tickets/production.aspx?performanceNumber=3959#a6)

Composed by Jacques Offenbach

Sung in French

Edition by Michael Kaye and Jean-Christophe Keck.

\*The opera takes place in a tavern in Nuremburg. Hoffmann is accompanied by his friend Nicklausse, who sometimes appears to him in the guise of his Muse.

### **Prologue**

The Muse announces that she wishes for the poet Hoffmann to reject his sensual loves and belong solely to her. Councilor Lindorf has discovered that the opera singer Stella is planning a post-performance rendezvous with Hoffmann. Lindorf is also enamored of Stella and is determined to keep the assignation himself. During the intermission of *Don Giovanni* at the adjacent theater, the crowd implores Hoffmann to entertain them with a song and he obliges with "The Ballad of Kleinzach." Hoffmann identifies Lindorf as the man who is always interfering in his love affairs, then agrees to tell the story of his three great loves.

### **Act I Olympia**

Olympia—a mechanical doll who could sing with extraordinary skill—was the creation of the inventor Spalanzani and Coppelius, his former business partner. Coppelius sells Hoffmann a pair of spectacles which convince the wearer that Olympia is in love with him. At a dinner party, Olympia sings spectacularly but

her mechanism keeps winding down, forcing Spalanzani to keep turning the key in her back to recharge her. Much enamored with Olympia, Hoffmann dances with her until she spins out of control, causing Hoffmann's glasses to break. Coppelius, who has been cheated by Spalanzani out of his share of the profits from the invention of Olympia, arrives in a fury and destroys the doll.

## **Act II Antonia**

Antonia is a young singer, whose mother, also a singer, died of consumption. Crespel, her father, has shut her away, begging her to abandon her love for Hoffmann and to give up singing, which he believes killed her mother. Hoffmann arrives and sings a passionate duet with Antonia, who nearly collapses. Crespel returns and Hoffmann is forced to hide. The charlatan Dr. Miracle, whom Crespel believes helped kill Antonia's mother, arrives and claims he can cure Antonia. Crespel forces him out and departs, which leaves Hoffmann alone with Antonia. He implores her to give up singing and she reluctantly agrees. Hoffmann then leaves and Dr. Miracle returns. The doctor conjures up the voice of Antonia's dead mother, which implores the girl to sing with her. Urged on by Dr. Miracle's demonic violin playing, mother and daughter sing together until Antonia faints. Crespel and Hoffmann return and discover Antonia near death; Hoffmann calls out for a doctor and Dr. Miracle reappears, pronouncing the girl dead.

## **Act III Giulietta**

The Venetian courtesan Giulietta introduces Hoffmann to her current lover, Schlemil. The poet is unaware that Giulietta is in league with Dapertutto, who utilizes her to seduce wealthy young men who eventually lose their souls as well as their money to her. Nicklausse warns Hoffmann about the dangers Giulietta represents, but he is already falling under her spell. Dapertutto offers Giulietta a large diamond if she will steal Hoffmann's reflection. Hoffmann kills Schlemil in a duel, and takes the key to Giulietta's boudoir from his neck. She urges him to flee, but he declares his passion for her. After a rapturous duet, she asks for a remembrance—his reflection—and he agrees. A crowd arrives and Hoffmann is arrested for Schlemil's murder. He breaks away from the guards and attempts to

stab Giulietta. Dapertutto blinds Hoffmann, who accidentally stabs Pitichinaccio instead.

### **Epilogue**

Exhausted and drunk, Hoffmann has finished the tale of his three loves. The Muse returns and encourages Hoffmann to pour his energy into poetry. Stella arrives after the performance, surrounded by admirers and looking for Hoffmann, but he barely recognizes her. The poet announces that he is no longer interested in pursuing her, Nicklausse steers her towards Lindorf, and the two depart together.



## Roles

Role	Voice type	Premiere cast, 10 February 1881 Conductor: <u>Jules Danbé</u> )	Complete with 'Giulietta Act', 7 December 1881 Conductor: <u>Joseph Hellmesberger, Jr.</u> <sup>[4]</sup>
Hoffmann, <i>a poet</i>	<u>tenor</u>	<u>Jean-Alexandre Talazac</u>	
Olympia, <i>a mechanical doll</i>	<u>soprano</u>	<u>Adèle Isaac</u>	
Antonia, <i>a young girl</i>	soprano	Adèle Isaac	
Giulietta, <i>a courtesan</i>	soprano		
Stella, <i>a singer</i>	soprano	Adèle Isaac	
Lindorf, Coppélius, Miracle	<u>bass-baritone</u>	<u>Émile-Alexandre Taskin</u>	
Dapertutto	bass-baritone		
Andrès, Cochenille, Frantz	tenor	<u>Pierre Grivot</u>	
Pitichinaccio	tenor		
Crespel, <i>Antonia's father</i>	<u>bass</u>	<u>Hippolyte Belhomme</u>	
Hermann, <i>a student</i>	bass	Teste	
Wolfram, <i>a student</i>	bass	Piccaluga	
Wilhem, <i>a student</i>	bass	Collin	
Luther	bass	Troy	
Nathanaël, <i>a student</i>	tenor	Chennevières	
Nicklausse	<u>mezzo-soprano</u>	<u>Marguerite Ugalde</u>	
The muse	mezzo-soprano	Mole-Truffier	
Peter Schlémil, <i>in love with Giulietta</i>	bass		
Spalanzani, <i>an inventor</i>	tenor	E. Gourdon	
Voice of the mother of Antonia	soprano	Dupuis	
<i>Students, Guests</i>			

## Story Pyramid

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

### Key

1. Name the main character
2. Two words describing the main character
3. Three words describing setting
4. Four words stating the problem
5. Five words describing one event
6. Six words describing second event
7. Seven words describing third event
8. Eight words stating solution

## The Bare-Bones Story Map

Use the following chart to tell about the story.

Somebody	Wanted	But	So
Character:  Setting:	Goal:	Problem:	Solution:

**Summary:** Use the information from the chart to write a summary of the story.

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# Story Map

**Directions:** Complete the story map below.

**Title of Story:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Characters:**

\_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_

**Setting:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Problem:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Solution:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

# Reciprocal Teaching

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Story Title

Predict: \_\_\_\_\_

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Clarify: \_\_\_\_\_

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Visualize: \_\_\_\_\_

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Teacher-Like Questions: \_\_\_\_\_

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Summarize: \_\_\_\_\_

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# KWL Chart

K What we <u>know</u>	W What we <u>want</u> to find out	L What we <u>learned</u>

Other Resources:

[www.classicsforkids.com](http://www.classicsforkids.com)

[www.musictheory.net](http://www.musictheory.net)