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THE ERL-KING

Who rides thro' the night so dark, so wild?
 The father rides with his darling child.
 The lad he holdeth close in his arm,
 He guards him safely, he keeps him warm.

"My son, why hids't thou thy face, as in fear?
 Oh! father, see, the Erl-king is here!
 The Erl-King calls me with crown and shroud!"
 "My son, 'tis but a passing cloud!"

"My lovely boy, oh! come with me
 From morn till eve, I'll play with thee;
 I'll give thee jewels and wealth untold
 Thou shalt walk in robes of shining gold"

"Oh father, my father, and dost thou not hear?
 The Erl-King whispering low in my ear?"
 "Nay rest thee, prithee rest thee, my child,
 'Tis but the night-winds melody wild."

"Oh darling boy, prithee come with me!
 And my daughters fair they shall wait on thee,
 All their midnight revels they gaily shall keep
 And tenderly rock thee and sing thee to sleep."

"Oh! father, my father, and seest thou not there
 The Erl-King's daughters with shining hair?"

"My son, my son, nay, be not afraid!
 It is but the willow, waves in the glade."

"I love thee, child, I love thee, I'll show no
 remorse

If thou ~~but~~ resist me, I'll sieze thee by force!"

"Oh! father, my father, now he grips my arm,
 Erl-King has wrought me a deadly harm!"

The father shudders; he spurs thro' the wild;
 Still fondly clasping his terrified child.
 He reach'd his home in doubt and dread,
 Upon his bosom the boy lay dead.
