

Jerome screamed, and knew Barsac had spoken the truth. The monsters he had created with his mind were going to kill him in revenge for Barsac's death. And there was no escape.

Their squealing filled the corridor and their bodies blocked it completely. They swarmed around Doctor Jerome like ravening rats, but they were not rats. Jerome knew that if he should see them he would go mad. And if he did not see them they would crawl up his body and sink their horrible little mouths in his throat, stroke his face with their ghastly fingers.

Jerome wheeled and charged down the corridor again. The nightmare ranks broke for a moment and he sped down the black corridor of the haunted castle with the beasts of Barsac at his heels. He was playing tag with death in a nighted lair, and death ran behind him on purposeful paws. Death squealed and chattered, and Jerome fled.

He had to get out before they reached him, touched him, took him. He had to.

Gasping in agony he reached the corridor's end, knowing that the horde was keeping pace. He turned again, ran forward. He never gave a thought to the stairs.

And then, as the squealing rose and echoed in his ears, Doctor Jerome tumbled down the castle staircase and landed with a sickening little crunch that he never heard. His head lolled grotesquely on the broken stem of a neck. He lay next to the body of Sebastian Barsac, and like Barsac, he was quite dead.

It was casual irony that chose this moment for the castle lights to flicker on again.

They revealed nothing but the two bodies lying at the foot of the stairs: Mad Barsac lay dead, and so did mad Jerome.

On the landing above, the twenty escaped guinea pigs blinked down with stupid, uncomprehending eyes.

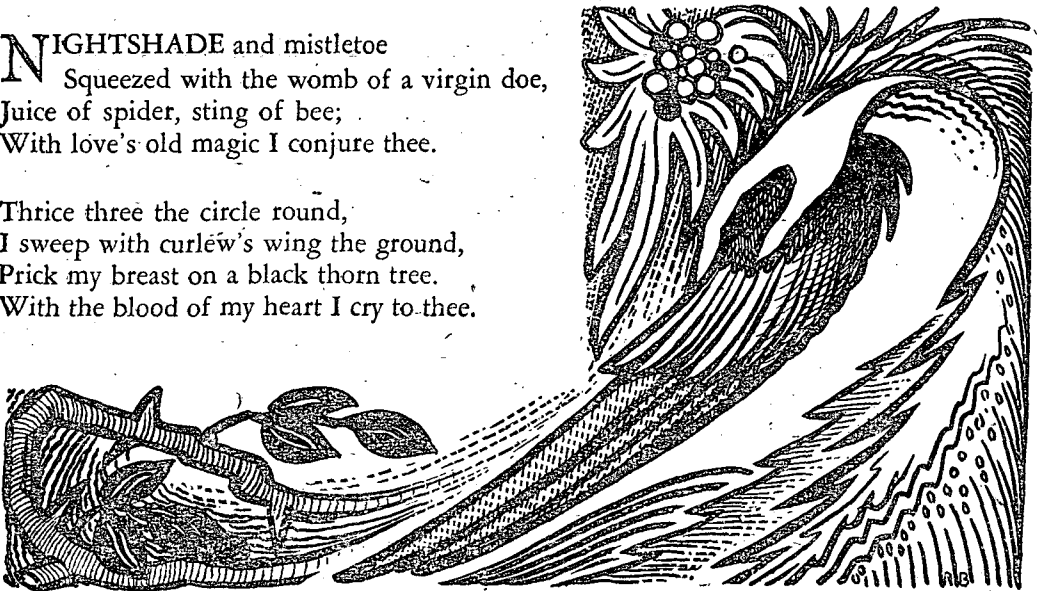
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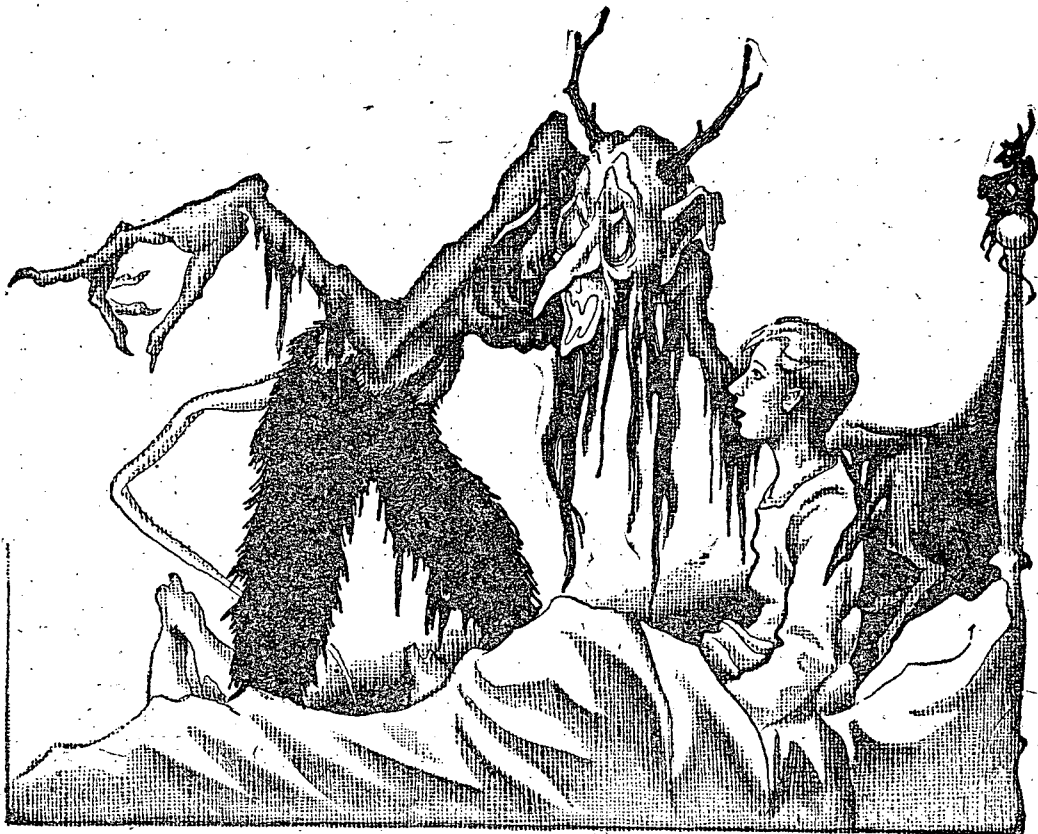
## A Charm

By PAGE COOPER

NIGHTSHADE and mistletoe  
Squeezed with the womb of a virgin doe,  
Juice of spider, sting of bee;  
With love's old magic I conjure thee.

Thrice three the circle round,  
I sweep with curléw's wing the ground,  
Prick my breast on a black thorn tree.  
With the blood of my heart I cry to thee.





# Guard in the Dark

By **ALLISON V. HARDING**

**P**ROUDLY little Ronald Frost showed the new tutor his row on row of shiny lead soldiers . . . soldiers in the painted khaki of the army, in the navy dark blue, and in the blue with red trimming of the marines. Some were standing, some were marching, some lying on their stomachs, guns pointed forward.

"Look at my machine gunners," said the

twelve-year-old boy to Jeffry Wilburts as he pointed to another part of the shelf whereon lay squad after squad of tiny toy figures, each with a machine gun—sub-machine guns and light and heavy ones.

Jeffry nodded interestedly and took some of the pieces off the shelf to look at them more closely.

"Be very careful!" the little boy cautioned

Heading by **BORIS DOLGOV**

*The tin soldiers were not just playthings—they were pawns  
in a ruleless war of horror*