

Excerpt terms and conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest you read the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

**Adapted
by
KATHRYN SCHULTZ MILLER**

**From the Story by
WASHINGTON IRVING**



Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty fees are given in our current catalogue and are subject to change without notice. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed anytime it is acted before an audience. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING

P. O. Box 129, Woodstock, Illinois 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication, and reading are reserved. *On all programs this notice should appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

©MCMXCIV by
KATHRYN SCHULTZ MILLER
From the Story by
WASHINGTON IRVING

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW)

Cover design by Susan Carle

ISBN 0-87129-346-3

THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

**A Full Length Play
For Five Men and Four Women**

CHARACTERS

- ICHABOD CRANE** . the lanky pompous schoolteacher from
Connecticut
- KATRINA** a coy and plump young charmer,
the subject of Ichabod's and Brom's adoring affection
- BROM BONES** Ichabod's roaring, roistering rival
- WASHINGTON** also plays Storyteller, Van Tassel,
Sleepy Hollow Boy
- IRVING** also plays Storyteller, Van Ripper,
Headless Horseman, Sleepy Hollow Boy
- PETER** also plays Storyteller, Sleepy Hollow Boy
- EMILY** also plays Storyteller, Lady in Tea Scene
- CHARLOTTE** also plays Storyteller, Lady in Tea Scene
- JUDITH** also plays Storyteller, Lady in Tea Scene

TIME:

Approximately 1795.

PLACE:

Sleepy Hollow, a rustic glen near Tarry Town, New York.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The performers of this play must constantly transform themselves from narrator to character. They must be adept at identifying these changes and indicating them through voice, movement and/or costume. The director must be aware that there needs to be constant, calculated movement to indicate scene changes or moods. Often characters' stage directions will say *exit* or *enter*. This does not necessarily mean that they leave the playing area and are hidden from the audience. They can be in plain sight of the audience working as an ensemble moving set pieces, playing instruments or simply remaining still in a way that benefits the scene. *Enter* may simply indicate that they become actively involved in the action and *exit* may indicate that they drop back from the action. In this way the players or storytellers act as a whole to create a play made up of seamless movement and action. All of this also makes for a "friendly" play between audience and actors. There is a certain joy in seeing actors switch in out of character and I urge director and players to use this as part of the fun of this practical joke being played on Ichabod and always keep a sense of humor.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Dahn Schwartz whose direction of the original production in 1989 contributed much to the development of this script.

A special thanks to Joe Lauderdale whose award-winning production at Laguna Beach Playhouse in 1990 was the first time it was performed with an expanded cast. His skill at adaptation and copious notes were a great help in converting this script from a small touring production to one for the mainstage.

KSM
8/8/91

THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

AT RISE: We hear frightening foreboding music as trees are moved around in seeming chaos onstage. We see the ghoulish faces in the barks and leaves of the trees. When music fades, STORYTELLERS look out from behind trees, then come forward to begin telling their story.

WASHINGTON. In a remote period of American history...

EMILY. ...north of what we know now as New York City...

CHARLOTTE. ...along eastern shores of the Hudson River...

PETER. ...there was a tiny village known as Tarry Town.

JUDITH. And not far from this village...

WASHINGTON. ...perhaps about three miles...

IRVING. ...there is a little valley which is one of the quietest places in the whole world.

EMILY. A small brook glides lazily through...

CHARLOTTE. ...with just enough murmur to lull one to sleep...

JUDITH. ...and the occasional whistle of a quail...

PETER. ...or tapping of a woodpecker...

JUDITH. ...is almost the only sound that ever breaks upon the drowsy...

IRVING and WASHINGTON. ...dreamy...

IRVING. ...atmosphere.

WASHINGTON. This tiny village has long been called by Dutch settlers who live there as...

ALL. ...Sleepy Hollow.

CHARLOTTE. Ahhh, such a peaceful spot...

(Music swells as we see the trees transform from stark, black objects, to a warm, colorful village. When the transformation is complete they hang a rustic sign on one tree and place a bench beneath it. The sign is painted with the words: "Tarry Town Tavern." VAN TASSEL sits with hat down over eyes, back resting on the tree, motionless, chewing on a pipe.)

CHARLOTTE. The men who lived here were called the Sleepy Hollow Boys and were known throughout the land for their tendency to linger around the village tavern on market days.

PETER/SLEEPY HOLLOW BOY. Van Tassel! Why Baltus, you sly old dog! Playin' hooky again, I see. What in the world's becoming of you?

WASHINGTON/VAN TASSEL. The wife says I'm going to the dogs.

SLEEPY HOLLOW BOY. She's right, you know.

VAN TASSEL. I hope so.

EMILY. A drowsy, dreamy influence seemed to hang over Sleepy Hollow and pervade the very atmosphere. (*MEN lean together, SLEEPY HOLLOW BOY imitating VAN TASSEL, with his hat low and a pipe.*)

SLEEPY (*after a long pause*). So how's the wife?

VAN TASSEL. Cookin'.

SLEEPY. How's your cattle?

VAN TASSEL. Eatin'.

SLEEPY. How's your hens?

VAN TASSEL. Layin'.

SLEEPY. How's your apples?

VAN TASSEL. Fallin'.

SLEEPY. How's your cider?

VAN TASSEL. Brewin'.

SLEEPY (*with lift of hat*). How's that fine young daughter of yours, Katrina?

VAN TASSEL. The Lord only knows.

JUDITH. Sleepy Hollow was a peaceful spot where time seemed to stand still. The listless inhabitants of the place did things the old fashioned way.

CHARLOTTE. They didn't like to see things change. (*They exit.*)

SLEEPY. Hear tell there's a new schoolmaster come to town. From Connecticut.

VAN TASSEL (*looking out of hat*). Humph. Connecticut.

SLEEPY. I hear he's a peculiar kind of fella.

VAN TASSEL. Humph.

SLEEPY. Readin' and writin', writin' and readin'. Never did know of any good come of it.

VAN TASSEL (*agreeable*). Humph.

SLEEPY. Schoolmaster...ha! What an easy life. Head work instead of back work. Bet he doesn't even know what hard work is. Not like us, eh? Not like us. Baltus...Baltus... (*VAN TASSEL is asleep and replies with a snore. SLEEPY looks around, confiscates VAN TASSEL's hat and pipe, exits. MUSIC CUE #2.*)

EMILY (*to audience*). The place had a bewitching power which caused all those who came to the region to become dreamy eyed and see strange sights!

(*IRVING joins narration.*)

IRVING. Some say that the place was bewitched by a High German Doctor.

JUDITH. Others, that an old Indian Chief, the prophet or wizard of his tribe, held his pow-wows there.

WASHINGTON (*breaking in*). I hear tell of a ghost on horse-back...(*He looks at her.*)...without a head. He is often seen in these parts hurrying along in the gloom of the night.

PETER. As if on the wings of the wind!

IRVING. In nightly quest for his head. And the specter is known at all the campfires as the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

(There is loud frightening music and a crack of thunder. ALL run to take cover behind trees. They peer cautiously from behind the trees and "see" HIM. Moving their heads together from left to right of the stage, they watch in frightened awe as HE passes from sight. Again there is a crack of thunder, a maniacal laugh. A period of calm, then the school bell changes the scene.)

CHARLOTTE. The new schoolmaster's name was Ichabod Crane.

(Enter ICHABOD. Begin Ichabod theme music.)

WASHINGTON (*hands ICHABOD a jacket*). He was tall, but exceedingly lank.

PETER. With narrow shoulders.

EMILY. Long arms and legs. (*ICHABOD turns to see himself in the "mirror."*)

CHARLOTTE. Hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves.

IRVING. Feet that might have served as shovels. (*ICHABOD shines his shoes with great difficulty, since his feet are so long and far away from his hands.*)

PETER. His head was small and flat on top...(*Hands him a hat.*)...with huge ears...

WASHINGTON. Large, green, glassy eyes.

JUDITH. And a long snipe nose that looked like a weather-vane perched upon his spindle neck, to tell which way the wind blew. *(They blow toward him as he cocks his head from side to side, admiring himself. He seems to be unknowingly moved by the wind.)*

PETER. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day...

EMILY. With his clothes bagging and fluttering about him... *(She turns him almost as if dancing the minuet while he takes great pride in his appointments. They turn him out with a little push—send him on his way.)*

JUDITH. You might have mistook him for a scarecrow who escaped from a cornfield. *(ICHABOD moves on his way with a book in hand, whistling absent-mindedly to himself. Ichabod theme music fades.)*

CHARLOTTE. It was one drowsy autumn afternoon when Ichabod Crane blew into town. *(ICHABOD keeps his head in a book and is manipulated by STORYTELLERS.)*

JUDITH. He passed the baker.

EMILY *(presenting a large tray of food to ICHABOD)*. Fresh pecan pie! *(ICHABOD lifts his hat, but not his eyes.)*

ICHABOD. Good day.

PETER. He passed the grocer.

CHARLOTTE *(holds up her bounty)*. Fresh peaches and Indian corn.

ICHABOD *(again lifts his hat)*. Good day.

IRVING. The butcher...

PETER. Savory sausages and juicy bacon!

ICHABOD *(again with hat)*. Good day. *(Continues, then stops, looks up.)* Pecan pie? *(ICHABOD sniffs about, enraptured by the thought of food.)*

JUDITH. Soon he was spied by the Sleepy Hollow Boys, lazing the day away at the Tarry Town Tavern.

ICHABOD. Indian corn?

EMILY. There was one boy in particular that took a special interest in Ichabod Crane.

ICHABOD (*licking his lips*). Savory sausages?

CHARLOTTE. He was one Abraham Van Brunt...

EMILY. ...hero of the country round...

CHARLOTTE. ...nicknamed and universally known as...

ALL. ...Brom Bones...

(BROM enters. Begin Brom theme music.)

CHARLOTTE. He was a burly, roaring, roistering blade.
(BROM walks around ICHABOD, looking him up and down as he is being described. ICHABOD is foolishly unsure of himself.)

EMILY. He was broad-shouldered and double jointed with short curly black hair.

JUDITH. He had a mingled air of fun and arrogance.

BROM (*to ICHABOD*). Boo! (*ICHABOD jumps, frightened. BROM laughs. Brom's theme music fades. PETER, IRVING, WASHINGTON become SLEEPY HOLLOW BOYS and crowd around BROM.*) So he's the new Schoolmaster.
(BROM sits on bench talking to the BOYS.)

CHARLOTTE. Brom was always ready for a fight or a frolic.

BROM (*to BOYS*). They grow some strange folks in Connecticut. Must be something in the water.

JUDITH. He had 3 or 4 boon companions who always stood by for a squall. (*Exits.*)

BROM. What do you make of him, boys? (*BOYS laugh.*)

ICHABOD (*lifts hat*). Good day, sir.

BROM (*turns to BOYS, then back, lifts hat and bows with a flourish*). Good day yourself...sir.

ICHABOD. I...I...seem to have lost my way to the school house. Now I thought it was just down this way and to the right and I suppose I was so involved in my book...(*Looks dreamily behind him.*) And then there were those sa-sages...

BROM. A book worm, huh? (*Grabs book from his hands. BOYS and BROM play a frantic game of keep away, with ICHABOD hopelessly trying to retrieve his book. BROM suddenly stops the game, his hand on ICHABOD's head, holding him back. ICHABOD continues grabbing for the book. BROM reads:*) The His-tor-ree of...The His-tor-ree of...(*He abruptly lets go of ICHABOD, sending him sprawling. To WASHINGTON.*) What's this word?

WASHINGTON (*whispering*). Witchcraft.

BROM. Witch-craft. (*Looks up and smiles.*) Witchcraft, huh? *The History of Witchcraft in New England*, by Cotton Mather. Scared of ghosts, huh?

ICHABOD. Well, I think one should do one's part to...(*Swallows, looks around.*)...drive away evil spirits.

BROM. Evil spirits? Hear that, boys? The Schoolmaster here believes in evil spirits.

PETER (*taunting*). You mean likes witches and ghosts?

BROM. Spooks and goblins?

WASHINGTON. Devils and demons?

ICHABOD (*looking around*). Y-yes. Yes. Of course. Doesn't everyone?

BROM. Well, you came to the wrong place. Sleepy Hollow's been haunted for years! Isn't that the truth, boys? (*BOYS slowly circle ICHABOD.*)

IRVING. Why, there's haunted houses...

WASHINGTON. And haunted fields...

PETER. Haunted brooks...

BROM (*right at ICHABOD*). Haunted bridges.

ICHABOD. Bridges?

BROM. Like the church bridge.

ICHABOD. The ch-ch-church bridge?

BROM. The one you have to cross to get to the schoolhouse.

(BOYS point.)

ICHABOD *(looks)*. Oh. Oh. The ch-ch-church bridge. Of course. Haunted, you say. Well, surely it's safe to cross in the daylight. *(Swallows.)* Well, I'll just be on my way. Uh, my book, please.

BROM. It's a pleasure...sir. *(Bows again with a flourish, holds out book for ICHABOD. When ICHABOD reaches for it BROM plops it onto ICHABOD's head.)*

ICHABOD. Thank...thank you. I'm in your debt.

BROM. Don't think of it, school teach! *(As ICHABOD starts to walk away he is tripped by BROM. BROM and BOYS laugh.)*

ICHABOD *(turning back)*. Uhm...

BROM. Yes?

ICHABOD. You're quite sure there is no other way?

BROM. The church bridge.

ICHABOD. The church bridge.

BROM. The only way. *(He exits, laughing.)*

ICHABOD *(repeating)*. The only way? Oh...well...I'm sure it's fine. It's broad daylight. Ha!

(As ICHABOD starts to walk away he is interrupted by EMILY, entering as a vendor.)

EMILY. Candied hams and smoked beef!

ICHABOD. Hams...oh! Very nice!

(PETER enters as vendor.)

PETER. Pumpkins and pears! (*EMILY and PETER hold trays of food under ICHABOD's nose as he walks by. They twirl him around, leading him by the nose.*)

(*OTHERS enter with tempting trays.*)

ICHABOD (*trying to resist*). Pumpkins...

CHARLOTTE. Sweetcakes and shortcakes.

PETER. Ginger cakes and honey cakes, and the whole family of cakes!

ICHABOD. Oh, well, I suppose just one. (*He gives PETER a coin and devours many cakes. Then licks each finger as he goes along his merry way.*)

CHARLOTTE. And so, fortified by the restoring powers of sweetcake, Ichabod found the courage to cross the bridge to the little log schoolhouse. (*MUSIC CUE #3. STORY-TELLERS move trees threateningly towards ICHABOD. They use various instruments to frighten him. Using their arms, they become the covered bridge.*)

ICHABOD (*stops short*). The church b-b-bridge.

WASHINGTON (*making eerie whispering sounds that are like words*). The bridge!

EMILY. The bridge!

IRVING. The bridge!

ICHABOD (*gathering courage*). Ha! This is an ordinary covered bridge. Not a thing to be afraid of. And it's broad daylight! Ha Ha! (*He gathers courage and moves forward.*)

PETER (*also making the sounds of a bird or insect*). Ich-a-bod...

EMILY. Ich-a-bod...

JUDITH. Ich-a-bod... (*She coaxes him in. ICHABOD sticks only his head in and then quickly pulls it out.*)

ICHABOD. But it's dark in there!

PETER. *Ich-a-bod...Ich-a-bod...*

ICHABOD. Oh, dear, I'll be late.

CHARLOTTE. *Ich-a-bod...*

WASHINGTON. *The bridge!*

EMILY. *The bridge! (ICHABOD enters the bridge. Again the eerie sounds frighten him out.)*

ICHABOD (*singing, trying to be brave*). On Jordan's rugged banks I stand, And cast a wishful eye, (*The sounds begin to build furiously.*)

EMILY. *Ich-a-bod! Ich-a-bod!*

ICHABOD. To Canaan's fair and happy land...

PETER. *The bridge! The bridge!*

ICHABOD (*running, shrieking out the line*). Where my possessions lie! (*He runs through the bridge, stops utterly out of breath. All sound stops. STORYTELLERS break character to change scene. ICHABOD freezes.*)

IRVING. It was believed in that bewitched and haunted glen...

EMILY. ...that once one passed through the covered bridge...

JUDITH. ...all frightening voices and strange visions would disappear! (*They exit.*)

CHARLOTTE. In this, the people of Sleepy Hollow and now Ichabod firmly and potently believed. (*Exits.*)

ICHABOD. See? Just an ordinary covered bridge. I don't know what those boys were talking about. (*ICHABOD peers into the bridge, snaps his fingers at the darkness, pulls himself together and marches merrily on his way. We hear the sound of the school bell. ICHABOD exits, calling.*) Come now, children! Come quickly!

(*JUDITH and PETER enter as schoolchildren; "PETER" and "JUDITH." PETER hooks a blackboard on the front*

of a tree. It says in white chalk, "Spare the rod and spoil the child.")

PETER (*in character of child*). The schoolhouse was Ichabod's little empire in which he held absolute sway.

JUDITH (*as child*). He was the lord and master.

(We are now in ICHABOD's classroom. ICHABOD enters with authority, brandishing a birch rod. He gestures to the children to sit, which they do. ICHABOD turns upstage to face the blackboard.)

PETER (*quickly, to JUDITH*). You're ugly, your mother's ugly, your father's ugly, your dog's ugly, your...

ICHABOD (*turning*). SILENCE! Now, for our first recitation of the day...Judith. You will stand. (*JUDITH does.*) What does the honorable, venerable Reverend Cotton Mather so solemnly teach us on the subject of raising our voice to heaven in song?

JUDITH (*unsure*). It is wonderfully fitted to brighten the mind. (*Sits.*)

ICHABOD (*gazing out the window with indifferent authority*). And?

JUDITH (*stands*). And warm the heart. (*Sits.*)

ICHABOD. And?

JUDITH (*stands, very uncertain*). And?

ICHABOD. AND?

JUDITH (*terror struck*). I do not know, sir.

ICHABOD (*shakes head*). Tsk, ts, ts. (*He motions for her to sit.*) We have a little bit of homework to do, do we not, young lady? Peter? (*PETER is absent-mindedly gazing off in the distance. ICHABOD cracks the side of the bench with the birch rod. PETER jumps.*) And? (*PETER stands.*)