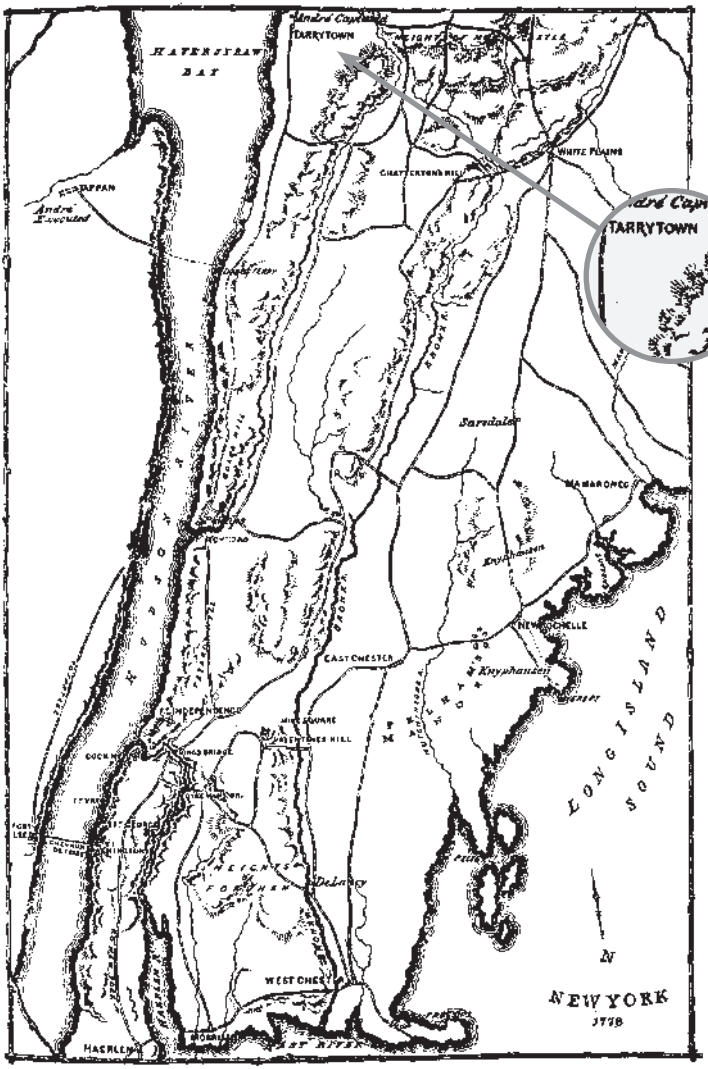


CORE CLASSICS

ABRIDGED FOR YOUNG READERS

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

BY WASHINGTON IRVING



THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY IN 1776

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The Legend of Sleepy Hollow



In one of those coves along the eastern shore of the Hudson, at that broad expanse of the river named by ancient Dutch navigators the Tappan Zee, lies a small rural port known by the name of Tarry Town. This name was given, we are told, by the housewives of the nearby country, from the habit of their husbands to linger about the village tavern on market days.

Not far from this village, about two miles away, is a little valley which is one of the quietest places in the world. A small brook glides through it with just murmur enough to lull one to sleep, and the whistle of a quail or tap of a woodpecker are almost the only sounds that ever break in upon the uniform

tranquillity. There is no retreat from the world and its distractions more promising than this little valley.

From the stillness of the place, and the character of its inhabitants, who are descendants from the original Dutch settlers, this secluded glen has long been known by the name of Sleepy Hollow. A drowsy, dreamy influence seems to fill the very atmosphere. Some say that the place was bewitched during the early days of the settlement. Others say that an old Indian chief, the wizard of his tribe, held his powwows there before the country was discovered by **Henry Hudson**.



HENRY HUDSON
An English explorer hired by the Dutch to find a water route west from Europe to China. He first sailed up the Hudson River in 1609.

The place still continues under the sway of some witching power that holds a spell over the minds of the people. They are given to all kinds of marvelous beliefs, are subject to trances and visions, and frequently see strange sights and hear music and voices. The place abounds with local tales, haunted spots, twilight superstitions and nightmares.

The dominant spirit that haunts this enchanted region is a headless figure on horseback. It is said by some to be the ghost of a **Hessian** trooper whose head had been carried away by a cannonball in a battle during the Revolutionary War, and who



THE SPIRIT THAT HAUNTS THIS REGION IS A HEADLESS FIGURE ON HORSEBACK.

has been seen ever since by the country folk hurrying along in the gloom of night as if on the wings of the wind.

His haunts are not confined to the valley, but extend at times to the adjacent roads, and especially to the vicinity of a local church. Indeed, some local historians claim that the body of the trooper was buried in the churchyard and the ghost rides to the scene of battle every night in quest of his head. The rushing speed with which he sometimes passes along the hollow, like a midnight blast, is owing to his being late and in a hurry to get back to the churchyard before daybreak.



HESSIAN
A German soldier hired by the British during the American Revolution to fight against the colonists.

This legendary superstition has furnished materials for many a wild story in that region of shadows,

and the specter is known, by all the country firesides, by the name of The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

Everyone who resides there for a time is sure to inhale the witching influence of the air and begin to dream and see spirits.

In this place there lived a worthy fellow from Connecticut by the name of Ichabod Crane, who settled, or "tarried" as he expressed it, in Sleepy Hollow for the purpose of instructing the children of the vicinity. The name of Crane was well suited to him. He was tall and very lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, and feet that might have served for shovels. His whole frame hung together most loosely. His head was small, and flat at the top, with huge ears, large green eyes, and a nose so long that it looked like a weathercock perched on his head to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along on a windy day with his clothes fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for a scarecrow escaped from a cornfield.

His schoolhouse was a low building of one large room, rudely constructed of logs. The windows were partly patched with pages of old copy books. The schoolhouse stood in a rather lonely but pleasant spot, just at the foot of a woody hill, with a brook running close by and a large birch tree growing at one end



ONE MIGHT HAVE MISTAKEN HIM FOR A SCARECROW ESCAPED FROM A CORNFIELD.

BIRCH
A rod made from a birch branch used to strike someone as punishment.

of it. From there the low murmur of his pupils' voices reciting their lessons might be heard on a drowsy summer's day, like the hum of a beehive, interrupted now and then by the authoritative voice of the master, or by the appalling sound of the **birch**, as he urged one of his students along the path of knowledge. He was a conscientious man who believed in the principle of "**spare the rod and spoil the child**." Ichabod Crane's scholars certainly were not spoiled.



SPARE THE ROD AND SPOIL THE CHILD
A saying from the Bible (Book of Proverbs, 13:24) meaning that children need physical punishment in order to develop properly.

He administered justice with good judgement rather than severity, taking the burden off the backs of the weak and laying it on those of the strong. A puny lad who winced at the least flourish of the rod was passed by with indulgence, but justice was satisfied by inflicting a double portion on some tough, wrongheaded urchin who grew stubborn and sullen beneath the birch. All this he called "doing his duty by their parents," and he followed it by the assurance that the smarting urchin "would remember it and thank him for it the longest day he had to live."

When school hours were over, he was the companion and playmate of the larger boys. On holiday afternoons he would

walk some of the smaller ones home, who happened to have pretty sisters or good housewives for mothers, noted for their cooking. Indeed, it behooved him to keep on good terms with his pupils. The income from his school was small, and would have been scarcely sufficient to furnish him with daily bread, for he was a huge feeder. According to country custom, he stayed at the houses of the farmers whose children he instructed. With these he lived a week at a time, thus going the rounds of the neighborhood, with all his worldly effects tied up in a cotton handkerchief.

So all this might not be too much for the purses of rustic patrons, who are apt to consider the costs of schooling a severe burden and schoolmasters as lazy, he made himself both useful and agreeable. He assisted the farmers occasionally in the lighter labors of their farms. He helped make hay, mended the fences, took the horses to water, drove the cows from pasture, and cut wood. He helped mothers by sitting with a child on one knee and rocking a cradle with his foot for hours.

In addition to his other work, he was the singing master, and picked up many bright shillings by instructing the young folks in singing psalms. It was a matter of no little vanity to him on Sundays to take his station in front of the church with a band of chosen singers. His voice sounded far above all the rest of the congregation, and there are peculiar sounds still to be heard in



PECULIAR SOUNDS STILL TO BE HEARD IN THAT CHURCH ARE DESCENDED FROM THE NOSE OF ICHABOD CRANE.

that church which are said to be descended from the nose of Ichabod Crane. Thus, **"by hook or crook"** the worthy scholar got along well enough, and was thought, by those who understood nothing of the demands of teaching, to have a wonderfully easy life of it.

The schoolmaster is generally a man of some importance in the female circle of a rural neighborhood, being considered a gentleman of vastly superior taste and accomplishments to rough country men, and, indeed, inferior in learning only to the parson. His appearance, therefore, is likely to cause a little stir at the tea table of a farmhouse, and the addition of a special dish of cakes or candies, or the parade of a silver teapot.





BY HOOK OR CROOK
By any way possible, whether fair or not.

Ichabod was happy in the smiles of all the country damsels. He moved among them in the churchyard, between services on Sundays–gathering grapes for them from the wild vines that overran the surrounding trees, reciting for their amusement all the epitaphs on the tombstones, or sauntering, with a group of them, along the banks of the



WHAT FEARFUL SHAPES AND SHADOWS LAY IN HIS PATH.

adjacent mill pond, while more bashful fellows hung sheepishly back, envying his superior elegance and way of talking.



COTTON MATHER
was an influential American Puritan clergyman and author who played a leading part in the witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692.

In his wandering life he carried local gossip from house to house, so that his appearance was always greeted with satisfaction. He was also admired by the women as a man of great learning, for he had read several books all the way through, and was a perfect master of **Cotton Mather**'s *History of New England Witchcraft*, in which, by the way, he most firmly believed.

His appetite for ghosts and spirits was extraordinary, and had been increased by his residence in this spellbound region. No tale was too monstrous for him. It was often his delight, after school was dismissed, to stretch himself on the rich bed of clover bordering the little brook by the schoolhouse and there read dreadful tales until the gathering dusk of evening made the printed page a mist before his eyes. Then, as he wended his way by swamp and stream and woodland to the farmhouse where he happened to stay, every sound fluttered his excited imagination: the moan of the **whippoorwill**; the cry of the tree toad; the dreary hooting of the screech owl or

WHIPPOORWILL
A bird heard only at night that is named for the sound it makes.



KATRINA VAN TASSEL WAS A BLOOMING LASS OF EIGHTEEN.

the sudden rustling of birds in a thicket, frightened from their roost. The fireflies, too, which sparkled most vividly in the darkest places, now and then startled him. If, by chance, a huge beetle came blundering in flight against him, he was ready to give up the ghost, with the idea that he was struck with a witch's token. His only resource on such occasions, either to drown thought, or drive away evil spirits, was to sing psalm tunes. The good people of Sleepy Hollow, as they sat by their doors in the evening, were often filled with awe at hearing his nasal melody floating from the distant hill or along the dusky road.

Another of his sources of fearful pleasure was to pass long winter evenings with the old Dutch wives as they sat spinning by the fire with a row of apples roasting along the hearth, and listening to their marvelous tales of ghosts and goblins and particularly of the headless horseman. Ichabod would delight them with his stories of witchcraft, and would frighten them with speculations about comets and shooting stars, and with the alarming fact that the world turns round and that half the time they were topsy-turvy!

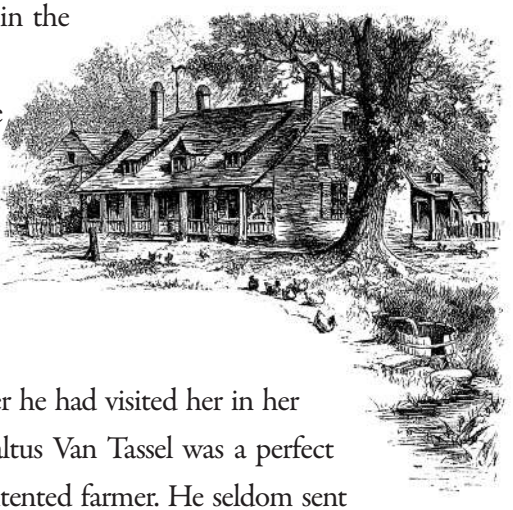
But if there was a pleasure in all this, while cuddling in the glow of a crackling wood fire, and where, of course, no specter dared to show its face, it was dearly paid for by the terrors of his walk home. What fearful shapes and shadows lay in his path,

amidst the dim and ghastly glare of a snowy night! How often he was frightened by some shrub covered with snow, like a sheeted specter in his very path! How often did he shrink at the sound of his own steps, and dread to look over his shoulder, lest he should behold something tramping close behind him!

All these, however, were mere terrors of the night, and though he had seen many specters in his time, and more than once in his lonely walks had been set upon by Satan in different shapes, daylight put an end to all these evils. He would have passed a pleasant life of it, despite the Devil and all his works, if his path had not been crossed by a being that perplexes mortal man more than ghosts, goblins, and the whole race of witches put together, and that was–woman.

Among those who assembled each week to receive his instructions in singing was Katrina Van Tassel, the daughter and only child of a prosperous Dutch farmer. She was a blooming lass of eighteen, plump as a partridge, rosy-cheeked as one of her father's peaches, and universally known, not merely for her beauty, but her vast inheritance. She was a flirt, as might be perceived even in her dress, which was a mixture of ancient and modern fashions well suited to set off her charms. She wore jewelry of pure gold, which her great-great-grandmother had

brought over from Holland, and a short petticoat to display the prettiest foot and ankle in the country round.



Ichabod Crane had a soft and foolish heart toward women, and it is not to be wondered at that so tempting a morsel found favor in his eyes, especially after he had visited her in her father's mansion. Old Baltus Van Tassel was a perfect picture of a thriving, contented farmer. He seldom sent either his eyes or his thoughts beyond the boundaries of his own farm, but within those everything was snug, happy, and well conditioned. He was satisfied with his wealth, but not proud of it, and prided himself upon the hearty abundance, rather than the style in which he lived. His stronghold was situated on the banks of the Hudson in one of those green, fertile nooks in which Dutch farmers often nestled. A great elm tree spread its broad branches over it, at the foot of which bubbled up a spring of the softest and sweetest water. By the farmhouse was a vast barn that might have served for a church. Every window and crevice seemed bursting forth with the treasures of the farm. Swallows



HE PICTURED TO HIMSELF EVERY ROASTING PIG
WITH AN APPLE IN ITS MOUTH.

and martins skimmed twittering about the eaves, and rows of pigeons enjoyed the sunshine on the roof. A stately squadron of snowy geese rode in an adjoining pond, regiments of turkeys gobbled through the farmyard, and guinea fowls fretted about with peevish cries. Before the barn door strutted the gallant cock, flapping his burnished wings and crowing in pride and gladness.

The schoolmaster's mouth watered as he looked upon this promise of luxurious winter fare. He pictured to himself every roasting pig running about with an apple in his mouth; the pigeons snugly put to bed in a pie and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese swimming in their own gravy, and the ducks paired cozily in dishes, like snug married couples, with a decent amount of onion sauce; each turkey he imagined daintily tied up, with a necklace of savory sausages.

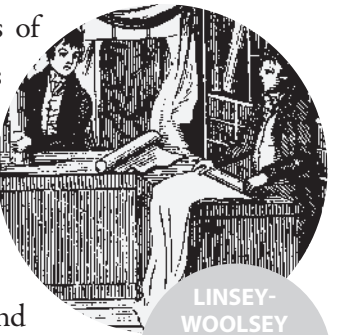
As Ichabod fancied all this, and as he rolled his great green eyes over the fat meadowlands, the rich fields of wheat, rye buckwheat, and Indian corn, and the surrounding orchards full of ruddy fruit, his heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these fields, and he imagined how they might be readily turned into cash and the money invested in vast tracts of land and palaces in the wilderness. His busy imagination already presented to him the blooming Katrina with a whole family of children, mounted on the top of a wagon loaded with household

goods, with pots and kettles dangling beneath, and he pictured himself on a pacing mare, with a colt at her heels, setting out for Kentucky, Tennessee, or the Lord knows where!

When he entered the house, the conquest of his heart was complete. It was one of those spacious farmhouses, with high ridged but lowly sloping roofs, built in the style handed down from the first Dutch settlers. The low, projecting eaves formed a porch along the front, which could be closed up in bad weather. From this porch Ichabod entered the hall, where rows of shining **pewter**, ranged on a long dresser, dazzled his eyes. In one corner stood a huge bag of wool ready to be spun; in another a quantity of **linsey-woolsey** just from the loom; ears of Indian corn and strings of dried apples and peaches hung along the walls. A door left ajar gave him a peep into the best parlor, where the clawfooted chairs and dark mahogany tables shone like mirrors. Mock oranges and conch shells decorated the mantlepiece, strings of various colored birds' eggs were suspended above it,



PEWTER
A silver-colored alloy made by combining tin with other metals. In colonial times, it was used to make plates, cups, bowls, platters and utensils.



LINSEY-WOOLSEY
A sturdy fabric of wool and linen or cotton.

and a corner cupboard displayed immense treasures of old silver and china.

From the moment Ichabod laid his eyes upon these things his peace of mind was at an end. His only thought was how to gain the affections of the daughter of Van Tassel. In this enterprise, however, he had more real difficulties than generally fell to a knight of old, who seldom had anything but giants, sorcerers, fiery dragons, and other easily conquered adversaries to contend with. Ichabod had to win his way to the heart of a country coquette, with her maze of whims, which were forever presenting new difficulties; and he had to face a host of rustic admirers who kept a watchful and angry eye upon each other, ready to fly in common cause against any new competitor.

Among these the most formidable was a burly, dashing fellow named Brom Van Brunt, a local hero known for his feats of strength. He was broad shouldered, with short curly black hair, a large, but not unpleasant countenance, and an air of fun and arrogance. From his size and great strength he had received the nickname of Brom Bones. He was famed for great skill in horsemanship, was foremost at all races and cockfights, and was the umpire of all disputes. He was always ready for either a fight or a frolic, but had more mischief than ill-will in him. With all his roughness, there was a strong dash of good humor underneath. He had three or four companions who regarded him as

their model, and with them he scoured the country, attending every scene of feud or merriment for miles round. Sometimes his crew would be heard dashing along past the farm-houses at midnight with whoops like a troop of **Cossacks**, and the old dames, startled out of their sleep, would listen for a moment till the hurry-scurry had clattered by, and then exclaim, "Aye, there goes Brom Bones and his gang!" The neighbors looked upon him with a mixture of awe, admiration, and good will, and when any madcap prank or rustic brawl occurred in the vicinity, they shook their heads and bet Brom Bones was at the bottom of it.



COSSACKS
People of southern Russia who gained fame as daring cavalrymen.

This hero had for some time singled out the blooming Katrina for the object of his gallantries, and it was whispered that she did not altogether discourage his hopes. His advances were signals for rival candidates to retire; they felt no inclination to cross a lion in his affections. When Brom's horse was seen tied to Van Tassel's fence on a Sunday night, all other suitors passed by in despair.

Such was the rival with whom Ichabod Crane had to contend. A stouter man than he would have shrunk from the competition, and a wiser man would have despaired. He had, however, a happy mixture of flexibility and perseverance in his nature. He was in form and spirit a supple fellow–yielding, but tough. Though he bent, he never broke, and though he bowed beneath the slightest pressure, the moment it was away he was erect again and carried his head as high as ever.

To have taken the field openly against his rival would have been madness. Ichabod, therefore, made his advances in a quiet manner. As singing master, he made frequent visits at the farmhouse. He had nothing to fear from the interference of parents, which is so often a stumbling block in the path of lovers. Balt Van Tassel was an easy, indulgent soul. He loved his daughter better even than his pipe, and like a reasonable man, and an excellent father, let her have her way in everything. His wife, too, had enough to do to attend to her housekeeping and manage her poultry, for, as she wisely observed, ducks and geese are foolish things, and must be looked after, but girls can take care of themselves. Thus while the busy dame bustled about the house, or worked at her spinning wheel at one end of the porch, honest Balt would sit smoking his evening pipe at the other. In the meantime, Ichabod would carry on his courtship with the

daughter under the great elm, or sauntering along in the twilight, that hour so favorable to the lover's eloquence.

It is a mystery to me how women's hearts are wooed and won. Some seem to have but one vulnerable point, while others may be captured in a thousand different ways. It is a great triumph to gain the former, but a still greater triumph to keep possession of the latter. He who wins a thousand common hearts is therefore entitled to some renown, but he who keeps sway over the heart of a coquette is indeed a hero. Indeed, this was not the case with Brom Bones. From the moment Ichabod Crane made his advances, the interests of Brom Bones declined; his horse was no longer seen tied at the fence palings on Sunday nights, and a deadly feud gradually arose between him and the schoolmaster of Sleepy Hollow.

Brom, who had a degree of chivalry in his nature, would have carried matters to open warfare, but Ichabod had overheard a boast of Bones that he would "double the schoolmaster up and lay him on a shelf," and he was too wary to give him an opportunity. This left Brom no alternative but to play crude practical jokes upon his rival. Ichabod became the object of whimsical persecution to Bones and his gang of rough riders. They smoked out his singing school by stopping up the chimney. They broke into the schoolhouse at night and turned everything topsy-turvy, so that the poor schoolmaster began to think all the witches in

the country held their meetings there. But what was still more annoying, Brom took all opportunities of ridiculing him in the presence of the blooming Katrina.

One fine autumn afternoon, Ichabod, in a pensive mood, sat on the lofty stool from where he watched over his realm. The birch rod was on three nails behind the stool, a constant terror to evil doers. On the desk before him were prohibited articles he had found in possession of idle urchins, such as half-munched apples, popguns, whirligigs and fly cages. Apparently there had been some act of justice recently inflicted, for his scholars were all busily intent upon their books, or slyly whispering behind them with one eye kept upon the master. A kind of buzzing stillness reigned throughout the schoolroom. It was suddenly interrupted by a man mounted on a wild colt who came to the door with an invitation for Ichabod to attend a merry making that evening at **Mynheer** Van Tassel's.

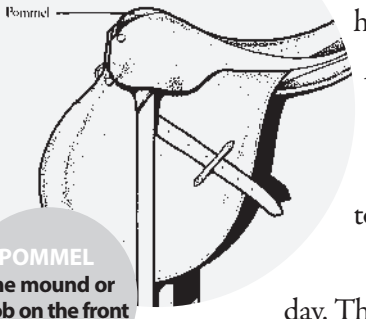
MYNHEER
Dutch for "Mister".

The school was turned loose an hour before the usual time, and the children burst forth yelping in joy at their early release.

The gallant Ichabod spent at least a half hour brushing his suit of rusty black and arranging his locks by a bit of broken looking-glass that hung in the schoolhouse. He borrowed a horse from the farmer with whom he was staying, a Dutchman of the

name of Hans Van Ripper, and thus mounted, issued forth like a knight in quest of adventures. In the true spirit of romantic story there should be some account of the hero and his steed. The animal he rode was a broken-down plow horse. He was gaunt and shaggy, with a thin neck and a head like a hammer. His rusty mane and tail were tangled and knotted with burrs. One eye had lost its pupil and was glaring and spectral, but the other had the gleam of a genuine devil in it. He must have had fire in him in his day, judging by the name he bore: Gunpowder.

Ichabod was a suitable figure for such a steed. He rode with short stirrups, which brought his knees nearly up to the **pommel** of the saddle, and his sharp elbows stuck out like grasshoppers'. He carried his whip in his hand like a scepter, and as his horse jogged on, his arms flapped like a pair of wings. A small wool hat rested on the top of Ichabod's nose, and the skirts of his black coat fluttered out almost to the horse's tail.



POMMEL
The mound or knob on the front of a saddle.

It was, as I said, a fine autumn day. The sky was clear and serene. The forests had put on their sober brown and yellow, and some trees had been nipped by frost into brilliant orange, purple,

and scarlet. Files of wild ducks made their appearance high in the air. As Ichabod jogged slowly on his way, his eye was open to every sign of abundance. He saw vast stores of apples, some hanging heavily on the trees, some gathered into baskets and barrels for the market, others heaped up in piles for the cider press. Further on there were great fields of Indian corn, holding out the promise of cakes and cornmeal pudding, and yellow pumpkins lying beneath the golden ears, turning up their round bellies to the sun and giving prospects of luxurious pies. As he passed the fragrant buckwheat fields, he breathed the odor of the beehive, and he thought of dainty slapjacks, well buttered and garnished with honey or syrup by the delicate dimpled hand of Katrina Van Tassel.

Thus feeding his mind with many sweet thoughts, he journeyed along a range of hills overlooking the mighty Hudson. The wide Tappan Zee lay motionless and glassy. Here and there a gentle wave prolonged the blue shadows of the distant mountain.

Toward evening Ichabod arrived at the castle of Heer Van Tassel, crowded with leather-faced farmers in homespun coats and breeches, blue stockings, and huge shoes with magnificent pewter buckles. Their little wives wore close-crimped caps, longwaisted gowns, and homespun petticoats with

scissors and pincushions and gay calico pockets hanging on the outside. Brom Bones, however, was the hero of the scene, having come to the gathering on his favorite steed, Daredevil, a creature, like himself, full of mischief, which no one else could manage.

As Ichabod entered the parlor of Van Tassel's mansion, his gaze fell on the ample charms of a Dutch country tea table. There were doughnuts, sweet cakes and short cakes, ginger cakes and honey cakes. And there were apple pies and peach pies and pumpkin pies; slices of ham and smoked beef; and delectable dishes of preserved plums, and peaches, and pears; not to mention broiled shad and roasted chickens, and bowls of milk and cream, with the teapot sending up its clouds of vapor from the center of it all. Ichabod Crane did justice to every dainty.

He was a kind and thankful creature, whose spirits rose with eating as some men's do with drink. He could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he ate, and chuckling with the possibility that he might one day be lord of this luxury. Then, he thought, how soon he'd turn his back upon the old schoolhouse, snap his fingers in the face of Hans Van Ripper and every other stingy patron, and kick any schoolteacher out of doors that should dare to call him comrade!

Old Baltus Van Tassel moved about among his guests with a face full with good humor, round and jolly as the harvest



NOT A LIMB, NOT A FIBER ABOUT HIM WAS IDLE.

moon. His hospitable attentions were brief, being confined to a shake of the hand, a slap on the shoulder, a loud laugh, and a pressing invitation to "fall to, and help themselves."

And now the sound of the music from the hall summoned everyone to the dance. The musician scraped away on two or three strings of his fiddle, accompanying every movement of the bow with a motion of the head, bowing almost to

the ground and stamping with his foot whenever a fresh couple started.

Ichabod prided himself upon his dancing as much as upon his vocal powers. Not a limb, not a fiber about him was idle, and to have seen his loosely hung frame in full motion and clattering about the room, you would have thought Saint Vitus himself, that blessed patron of dance, was moving before you in person. How could Ichabod be otherwise than joyous? The lady of his heart was his partner in the dance and smiling graciously in reply to all his amorous oglings, while Brom Bones, sorely smitten with love and jealousy, sat brooding by himself in one corner.

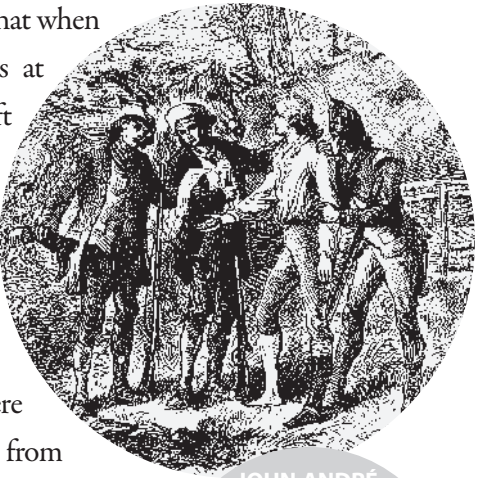


THE WAR
The American Revolution, 1776-1782

When the dance was at an end, Ichabod was attracted to a group of folks, who, with old Van Tassel, sat smoking at one end of the porch, gossiping over former times and telling long stories about **the war**.

This neighborhood was one of those highly favored places which abound with chronicle and great men. The British and American line had run near it during the war. It had, therefore, been the scene of raiding and just sufficient time had elapsed to enable each storyteller to dress up his tale with a little fiction and make himself the hero of every exploit.

But these were nothing compared to the tales of ghosts that followed. Local tales and superstitions thrive best in these sheltered, long settled retreats. In most villages, the ghosts have scarce had time to finish their first nap and turn themselves in their graves before their surviving friends have travelled away from the neighborhood, so that when the ghosts walk the rounds at night, they have no friends left to call upon.



JOHN ANDRÉ
A dashing British spy, linked with the American traitor Benedict Arnold, who was captured and hung by George Washington near Tarrytown, New York, in 1780.

The immediate cause of the supernatural stories in these parts was doubtless owing to the vicinity of Sleepy Hollow. There was in the very air that blew from that haunted region an atmosphere of dreams and fancies that infected all the land. Several of the Sleepy Hollow people were present at Van Tassel's, and, as usual, were doling out their wild legends. Many dismal tales were told about the wailings heard about the tree where **Major André** was taken. Mention was made of the woman in white that haunted the dark glen at Raven Rock. She perished there in the snow, and was often heard to

shriek on winter nights before a storm. But most of the stories turned upon the favorite specter of Sleepy Hollow, the headless horseman, who had been heard several times of late, patroling the country. It was said he tethered his horse nightly among the graves near the church.

This church seems to have been a favorite haunt of troubled spirits. It stands on a knoll, surrounded by locust trees and lofty elms, from among which its whitewashed walls shine forth like Christian purity. On one side of the church extends a wide woody dell, along which raves a large brook among broken rocks and trunks of fallen trees. Over a deep, black part of the stream, not far from the church, lay a wooden bridge. The road that led to it, and the bridge itself, were thickly shaded by overhanging trees, which cast a gloom even in the daytime and caused a fearful darkness at night.

Such was one of the favorite haunts of the headless horseman, and the place where he was most frequently encountered. The tale was told of how old Brouwer, a disbeliever in ghosts, met the horseman returning from Sleepy Hollow, was forced to get up behind him, and how they galloped over hill and swamp until they reached the bridge, when the horseman suddenly turned into a skeleton, threw old Brouwer into the brook, and sprang away over the treetops with a clap of thunder.

This story was immediately matched by Brom Bones, who said that on returning one night from a neighboring village, he had been overtaken by this midnight trooper. He had offered to race with him for a bowl of punch, and should have won too, for Daredevil beat the goblin horse, but just as they came to the church bridge the Hessian vanished in a flash of fire.

All these tales, told in that drowsy undertone with which men talk in the dark, sank deep in the mind of Ichabod. He repaid them in kind with stories of his own from Cotton Mather and fearful sights which he had seen in his nightly walks about Sleepy Hollow.

The party gradually broke up. The old farmers gathered their families in their wagons and were heard for some time rattling along the hollow roads and over the distant hills. Lighthearted laughter, mingling with the clatter of hoofs, echoed along the silent woodlands, sounding fainter and fainter until they gradually died away. Ichabod lingered behind, according to the custom of country lovers, to have a **têtê-à-têtê** with Katrina, fully convinced that he was now on the high road to success. Something, however, must have gone wrong, for he soon came out, quite desolate. Was the girl's encouragement of him a mere



TÊTÊ-À-TÊTÊ
A French expression meaning to have a private conversation; literally, to be head to head.

sham to win her conquest of his rival? Heaven only knows! Without looking to the right or left to notice the scene of rural wealth on which he had so often gloated, he went straight to the stable and roused his steed.

It was the very witching time of night that Ichabod, heavy hearted, traveled homewards, along the sides of the lofty hills which rise above Tarry Town, which he had passed so cheerily in the afternoon. The hour was as dismal as he was. Far below him the Tappan Zee spread its waters, with here and there the tall mast of a sailing ship riding quietly at anchor. In the dead hush of midnight, he could even hear the barking of the watch dog from the opposite shore of the Hudson. Now and then, too, the long-drawn crowing of a cock, accidentally awakened, would sound far, far off from some farmhouse among the hills.

All the stories of ghosts and goblins that he had heard in the afternoon now came crowding upon his recollection. The night grew darker and darker. The stars seemed to sink deeper in the sky, and driving clouds occasionally hid them from his sight. He had never felt so lonely and dismal. He was, moreover, approaching the very scene of many ghost stories. In the center of the road stood an enormous tulip tree, which towered like a giant above all the other trees of

the neighborhood. Its limbs were gnarled and fantastic, large enough to form trunks for ordinary trees, twisting down almost to the earth and rising again into the air. The tree was connected to the tragic story of Major André, who had been taken prisoner nearby. It was now known as Major André's tree, and people regarded it with superstition.

As Ichabod approached this fearful tree, he began to whistle. He thought his whistle was answered, but it was only a blast sweeping sharply through the dry branches. As he approached a little nearer, he thought he saw something white hanging in the midst of the tree. He paused and ceased whistling, but on looking more closely, he perceived that it was a place where the tree had been scathed by lightning, and the white wood laid bare. Suddenly he heard a groan–his teeth chattered, and his knees hit against the saddle; it was but the rubbing of one huge bough upon another as they swayed about in the breeze. He passed the tree in safety, but new perils lay before him.

About two hundred yards from the tree, a small brook crossed the road and ran into a marsh and thickly wooded glen known as Wiley's Swamp. A few rough logs, laid side by side, served for a bridge over this stream. On that side of the road where the brook entered the wood, a group of oaks and chest-



INSTEAD OF STARTING FORWARD,
THE ANIMAL RAN BROADSIDE AGAINST A FENCE.

nuts, matted thick with wild grape vines, threw a cavernous gloom over it. To pass this bridge was the severest trial.

As he approached the stream, his heart began to thump. He summoned up all his courage, gave his horse half **a score** of kicks, and attempted to dash across the bridge. But instead of starting forward, the animal ran broadside against the fence. Ichabod, whose fears increased with the delay, jerked the reins on the other side and kicked with the opposite foot. It was all in vain. His steed started, but only to plunge to the opposite side of the road into a thicket of brambles and bushes. The schoolmaster now used both whip and heel on old Gunpowder, who dashed forward, snuffling and snorting, but came to a stand just by the bridge with a suddenness that nearly sent his rider sprawling over his head. Just at this moment a splash by the side of the bridge caught Ichabod's ear. In the dark shadow of the grove, on the margin of the brook, he saw something huge, misshapen, black and towering. It seemed gathered up in the gloom, like some gigantic monster ready to spring upon the traveller.

A SCORE Twenty.

Ichabod's hair rose upon his head with terror. What was to be done? It was too late to turn and fly. And besides, what chance was there of escaping a ghost or goblin, if such it was, which could ride upon the wings of the wind?



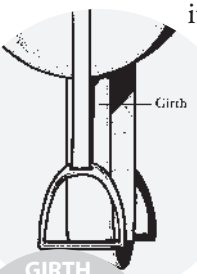
ICHABOD'S GARMENTS FLUTTERED
AS HE STRETCHED HIS LANK BODY OVER HIS HORSE'S HEAD.

Summoning up a show of courage, he demanded in a stammer, "Who are you?" He received no reply. He repeated his demand in a more agitated voice. Still there was no answer. Once more he beat the sides of Gunpowder, and shutting his eyes, began singing a psalm with fervor. Just then the shadowy object put itself in motion, and with a scramble and a bound, stood at once in the middle of the road. Though the night was dark, the form of the unknown might now be made out. He

appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions mounted on a powerful black horse. He kept on one side of the road, jogging along on the blind side of old Gunpowder, who had now got over his fright.

Ichabod, who had no use for this midnight companion, now quickened his steed in hopes of leaving him behind. The stranger, however, quickened his horse to an equal pace. When Ichabod pulled up and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind, the other did the same. Ichabod's heart began to sink within him. He tried to sing the psalm, but his parched tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. There was something in the moody and dogged silence of this companion that was appalling. It was soon fearfully accounted for. On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow traveller in relief against the sky, Ichabod was horror struck on perceiving that he was headless! But his horror was increased on observing that the head, which should have rested on his shoulders, was carried before him on the pommel of the saddle! His terror rose to desperation. He rained a shower of kicks and blows upon Gunpowder, hoping to give his companion the slip–but the specter started full jump with him. Away they dashed, through thick and thin, stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound. Ichabod's garments fluttered in the air as he stretched his long lank body over his horse's head in eager flight.

They reached the road which turns off to Sleepy Hollow, but Gunpowder, who seemed possessed with a demon, instead of keeping on made an opposite turn and plunged headlong downhill to the left. This road leads through a sandy hollow shaded by trees for about a quarter of a mile, where it crosses the famous bridge, and just beyond swells the green knoll on which stands the whitewashed church.



GIRTH
The strap that goes around the body of a horse to hold a saddle on.

As yet the panic of the steed had given his unskillful rider an advantage in the chase, but just as he had got half way through the hollow, the **girth** of the saddle gave way. Ichabod tried to hold it on, but in vain. He had just time to save himself by clasping old Gunpowder round the neck, when the saddle fell to the earth, and he heard it trampled under foot by his pursuer.

For a moment the terror of Hans Van Ripper's anger passed across his mind, for it was his Sunday saddle. But this was no time for petty fears: the goblin was catching up, and he had to hang on. Slipping on one side, then the other, he was sometimes jolted on the high ridge of his horse's backbone with a violence that he feared would split him in two.



HE SAW THE GOBLIN IN THE VERY ACT OF HURLING HIS HEAD.

Ichabod saw the walls of the church dimly glaring under the trees beyond. He recollected the place where Brom Bones's ghostly competitor had disappeared. "If I can reach that bridge," thought Ichabod, "I am safe." Just then he heard the black steed panting and blowing close behind him. He even fancied that he felt his hot breath. Another kick in the ribs, and old Gunpowder sprung upon the bridge. He thundered over the planks, gained the opposite side, and now Ichabod cast a look behind to see if his pursuer would vanish, according to rule, in a flash of fire. Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod tried to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a tremendous crash. He tumbled headlong into the dust, and Gunpowder, the black steed, and the goblin rider passed by like a whirlwind.

The next morning the old horse was found without his saddle, quietly cropping the grass at his master's gate. Ichabod did not make his appearance at breakfast. Dinner hour came, but no Ichabod. The boys assembled at the schoolhouse and strolled idly about the banks of the brook, but no schoolmaster. Hans Van Ripper now began to feel uneasy about the fate of poor Ichabod and his saddle. In a diligent search on foot, they came upon his traces. On the road leading to the church, they found the saddle trampled in the dirt. The tracks of horses' hoofs

deeply dented the road, evidently at furious speed. They were traced to the bridge, beyond which, on the bank of a brook, was found the hat of the unfortunate Ichabod, and close beside it a shattered pumpkin.

The brook was searched, but the body of the schoolmaster was not discovered. Hans Van Ripper, as executor of his estate, examined the bundle which contained all his worldly goods. They consisted of two shirts, a pair or two of stockings, corduroy clothes, a rusty razor, a dog-eared book of psalm tunes, and a broken **pitch pipe**. As to the books and furniture of the schoolhouse, they belonged to the community, excepting Cotton Mather's *History of Witchcraft*, and a book of dreams and fortune telling in which was a sheet of paper much scribbled with several attempts to make verses in honor of the heiress of Van Tassel.

PITCH PIPE
A small, whistle-like pipe that is used to set the tone level when singing or tuning an instrument.

The books and poetic scrawl were thrown in the fire by Hans Van Ripper, who from that time forward determined to send his children no more to school, observing that he never knew any good to come of reading and writing. Whatever money the schoolmaster possessed, and he had received his quarter's pay but a day or two before, he must have had with him at the time of his disappearance.

The mysterious event caused much speculation at church on the following Sunday. Knots of gossips collected in the church yard, at the bridge, and at the spot where the hat and pumpkin had been found. The stories of Brouwer, of Bones, and others were called to mind. And when they had diligently considered them all, and compared them with the present case, they shook their heads and came to the conclusion that Ichabod had been carried off by the galloping Hessian. As he was a bachelor, and in nobody's debt, nobody troubled anymore about him. The school was moved to a different part of the hollow, and another scholar came to teach.

An old farmer who had been down to New York on a visit several years later brought home news that Ichabod Crane was still alive; that he had left the neighborhood partly through fear of the goblin and Hans Van Ripper, and partly in humiliation at having been suddenly dismissed by Katrina; that he had moved to a distant part of the country; had kept school and studied law at the same time; had been admitted to the bar, turned politician, written for newspapers, and finally had been made a Justice of the Court.

Shortly after his rival's disappearance, Brom Bones conducted the blooming Katrina in triumph to the altar. Whenever the story of Ichabod was told, he always burst into a hearty laugh

at the mention of the pumpkin, which led some to suspect that he knew more about the matter than he chose to tell.

The old country wives, however, who are the best judges of these matters, maintain to this day that Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means, and it is a favorite story often told round the evening fire. The bridge became more than ever an object of superstition, and that may be the reason why the road has since been altered to approach the church by the border of the millpond. The deserted schoolhouse soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the unfortunate teacher. And the plowboy, walking home on a still summer evening, has often imagined Ichabod's voice at a distance, chanting a melancholy psalm tune in the peace and quiet of Sleepy Hollow.



HIS SENSES WERE OVERPOWERED AND HE FELL INTO A DEEP SLEEP