



**Sample Pages from  
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow**

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# THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

A GHOST STORY ADAPTED BY  
*Lindsay Price*

FROM THE ORIGINAL BY  
*Washington Irving*



*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*

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## Characters

5M/7W+Chorus

Icabod Crane

Brom Bones

Mr. Van Tassel

Peter

Dolf

Anke

Maret

Lena

Britt

Katrina Van Tassel

Mrs. Van Tassel

Mrs. Closson

Four Girls

Chorus of Partygoers, as many as you need

The Headless Horseman (A puppet operated by 2-3 performers)

The 'Four Girls' at the beginning can be played by Anke, Maret, Lena, Britt. Since the opening only uses flashlights, then the girls won't need to change.

If you need more parts, you can give the ghost stories that Mrs. Van Tassel and Mrs. Closson tell to other actors. You can also give the 'Four Girls' lines to other actors.

## Time

The play takes place in the autumn of 1790 in New York State.

## Setting

The majority of scenes take place at the Van Tassel farm and the woods of Sleepy Hollow. You need: A bare stage with the backdrop of barn walls. A variety of chairs or benches for the characters to sit on. Of those, one armchair is needed, and one straight chair which Icabod uses as his horse at the end of the play.

## Costumes

See APPENDIX A for the Headless Horseman Puppet and APPENDIX B for suggestions for period costumes.

## Dances

See APPENDIX C for a list of appropriate folk dances.



*The stage is dark. FOUR GIRLS sit in a semi-circle at the front of the stage. This takes place in the present day.*

*GIRL ONE flicks on her flashlight and holds it under her chin, casting an eerie glow on her face. This is the only light onstage.*

GIRL ONE: Have you ever heard of the hitchhiker who disappeared when the driver pulled up to her house? The driver went to the front door only to be told the girl had died ten years ago that very night.

*GIRL TWO flicks on her flashlight, holding it under her chin.*

GIRL TWO: Have you ever heard of the movie theatre ghost who haunts the second row? If anyone sits in her seat she pinches and pokes and whispers in their ear until they have to move.

*GIRL THREE flicks on her flashlight, holding it under her chin.*

GIRL THREE: Have you ever heard of the Headless Horseman?

*GIRL FOUR flicks on her flashlight.*

GIRL FOUR: No.

*The other GIRLS take their flashlights and shine them in GIRL FOUR's face.*

GIRL ONE, TWO, THREE: No?

GIRL FOUR: No. I've never heard of him.

GIRL ONE: You've never heard of the Headless Horseman?

GIRL TWO: Of his demon horse?

GIRL THREE: Of his midnight rides through Sleepy Hollow?

GIRL FOUR: No.

GIRL ONE: You've never heard of Icabod Crane?

GIRL TWO: How he went missing one night?

GIRL THREE: And was never seen again?

GIRL FOUR: No!

GIRL ONE, TWO, THREE: Oh.

*Pause.*

GIRL FOUR: Well? Aren't you going to tell me? (*she turns her flashlight off*)

*The other three GIRLS put their flashlights back under their chins.*

GIRL ONE: The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. (*she turns her flashlight off*)

GIRL TWO: Beware, beware the Headless Horseman. (*she turns her flashlight off*)

GIRL THREE: Icabod Crane, never seen again. (*she turns her flashlight off*)

*All FOUR GIRLS speak in the darkness.*

ALL FOUR: Icabod Crane. Icabod Crane.

There's no reason, no way to explain,  
One night the Headless Horseman came  
Never seen again, was Icabod Crane.

*The FOUR GIRLS exit. Cheerful fiddle music plays in the darkness. The lights come up on a country dance in full swing at the VAN TASSEL farm. The year is 1790 and the place is Sleepy Hollow. As everyone dances, ICABOD CRANE and MRS. CLOSSON, the woman he's dancing with, make their way downstage.*

MRS. CLOSSON: How are you enjoying our part of the world, Mr. Crane?

ICABOD: Very well, Mrs. Closson. Very well, indeed.

MRS. CLOSSON: Do you think you will enjoy teaching our children, Mr. Crane?

ICABOD: Most certainly. Wherever I go, I am extremely fulfilled in my teaching endeavours. And the students are always beholden in their gratitude for what they glean through my inspiration.

MRS. CLOSSON: (*a little confused*) I see.

*They continue to dance. The focus shifts to four young girls at the side of the stage, watching the dancing. MARET points out ICABOD.*

MARET: Have you seen the new schoolteacher?

LENA: (*making a face*) He's rather funny looking.

MARET: I think he looks just fine.

ANKE: I hear he's very strict.

BRITT: I hope he's not too strict.

LENA: (*laughing*) He dances funny. He looks like a scarecrow.

MARET: He's better than the country bumpkins we have around here.  
He's a gentleman.

ANKE: I hear he's very well read. He's read several books, all the way through. (*whispering*) He's read Cotton Mather's *History of New England Witchcraft*.

BRITT: (*with wide eyes*) I didn't know that!

MARET: You see? He'll fit in around here quite well.

*The girls all turn to look at ICABOD as the focus shifts back to ICABOD dancing with MRS. CLOSSON.*

MRS. CLOSSON: You dance very well, Mr. Crane.

ICABOD: Thank you. I believe as a schoolmaster, it is my duty to be fluent in as many community past times as possible. I will be taking up the choir straight away.

MRS. CLOSSON: Will you?

ICABOD: Of course. My singing voice is exemplary. But do not think I am a soft touch, Mrs. Closson.

MRS. CLOSSON: No?

ICABOD: A splendid dancer I may be, and light on my feet most certainly, but I'm a firm believer in the old saying, "Spare the rod, spoil the child." We do not want our children spoilt now do we?

*The song ends. ICABOD bows and MRS. CLOSSON curtsies. Everyone claps and moves into little conversation groups. Music plays quietly in the background. BROM enters boisterously with two friends, PETER and DOLF.*

BROM: (*proud and bold*) Look, I told you! Nothing happens until Brom Bones crosses the threshold.

PETER: Everyone always waits for you to arrive, Brom.



DOLF: They were probably standing like statues. Probably not even moving. Probably not even breathing!

BROM: (*cuffing DOLF on the back of the head*) Idiot.

DOLF: Ow! What?

*The three scamper across the stage. The focus shifts back to the girls.*

BRITT: (*with a sigh*) Brom is so handsome.

MARET: (*with an unimpressed sniff*) He's got the manners of a wounded bear.

ANKE: He's been courting Katrina Van Tassel since the summer.

MARET: She hasn't been seen with anyone else?

LENA: No. I heard Brom scared off every boy in the valley.

ANKE: I heard he said he'd pummel anyone else who courted her.

BRITT: Can you imagine if someone tried to ask her to dance tonight!

LENA: Maybe the schoolteacher will.

BRITT: (*teasing*) Maybe the schoolteacher will ask Maret to dance.

MARET: (*embarrassed*) Hush!

ANKE: Brom won't like it if someone gets in his way.

BRITT: The teacher wouldn't stand a chance.

MARET: How do you know?

LENA: Ooooh, maybe there'll be a fight tonight.

ANKE: Let's get a good seat!

*The girls rush over to the side and sit, watching the action. ICABOD and MR. VAN TASSEL stroll across the front of the stage.*

MR. VAN TASSEL: How are you enjoying our part of the world, Mr. Crane?

ICABOD: Very well indeed, Mr. Van Tassel. I am quite taken care of by all the families in the area. I stay with the Clossons this coming week and then on to the Van Hountons.

MR. VAN TASSEL: Mr. Closson told me you helped mend his fence yesterday afternoon.

ICABOD: Anything I can do to be of assistance. One must be grateful to one's lodgers! And I must thank you for including me this evening. Your home is so... *(he looks around with greedy eyes)* spacious. You're situated in such a... prosperous little nook. *(he clears his throat)* It's quite charming.

*The two walk up to KATRINA and MRS. VAN TASSEL. The women curtsy.*

ICABOD: *(with a bow)* Mrs. Van Tassel. I am having a most splendid evening.

MRS. VAN TASSEL: Have you met my daughter Katrina? *(to KATRINA)* This is Mr. Crane, the new schoolmaster.

KATRINA: Pleased to meet you, Mr. Crane.

ICABOD: I was just telling your father how *(he looks around the room again)* spacious the land is here. And vast. And abundant. I've never seen such a meadow! Whoever wins the heart of your daughter, Mr. Van Tassel, will be very lucky indeed! *(he clears his throat)* For clearly Katrina is such a sweet girl. That's what I meant.

*The music gets louder. ICABOD bows to KATRINA.*

ICABOD: Ms. Van Tassel, may I have the pleasure of this dance?

KATRINA: *(curtsying)* I would be most honoured, sir.

*The stage fills with dancing couples. The girls see KATRINA dancing with ICABOD.*

BRITT: *(elbowing MARET)* Maret, look!

MARET: She IS dancing with the schoolteacher!

ANKE: Maybe she's just being polite.

LENA: *(pointing)* Look at Brom's face!

*BROM, PETER and DOLF also see KATRINA dancing.*

DOLF: Hey Brom, who's that dancing with Katrina?

BROM: What? Who? Who is that pipsqueak?

PETER: It's the new schoolteacher.

BROM: What's she doing dancing with him? I'll pummel him.

*BROM goes to move; PETER and DOLF hold him back.*

PETER: You can't beat up the schoolmaster, Brom!

BROM: Why not?

PETER: You just can't.

BROM: All right. *(he grunts in frustration)* What's his name?

PETER: Icabod Crane.

DOLF: He's awful smart, Brom. The only person smarter in all of Sleepy Hollow is the parson.

BROM: Icabod Crane. We'll see about Icabod Crane.

*The dance ends and everyone bows or curtsies.  
ICABOD and KATRINA stand SL, silently talking.  
BROM glowers at them from SR. The rest gather  
centre in a group pose and speak in unison.*

GROUP: Icabod Crane, Icabod Crane,  
Looks to hold the Van Tassel reigns,  
Forever remove the schoolhouse chains,  
Icabod, Icabod Crane.

ICABOD: Who is that young man in the corner, Ms. Van Tassel? He is staring at us with such a glowering eye.

KATRINA: Oh, that's just Brom Van Brunt. He doesn't think anyone should talk to me. He beats up any boy who tries!

ICABOD: Oh does he? Well I shouldn't want to get in his way, then.

GROUP: Icabod Crane, Icabod Crane,  
Well aware of what he can gain,  
If Katrina's hand he could obtain,  
Icabod, Icabod Crane.  
A plan came to Icabod's mind,  
A way to beat Brom and his kind,  
Words work wonders when combined,  
In Katrina's ear, words intertwined.

KATRINA: He's very good-humoured, though. And he's very skilled with horses. Brom is well-known for having the fastest horse in all the county.

ICABOD: The fastest horse, you say? What a shame.

KATRINA: What do you mean?

ICABOD: Oh, it's only something I heard. I shouldn't trouble you with it, Ms. Van Tassel.

KATRINA: Please call me Katrina.

ICABOD: Only if you call me Icabod.

KATRINA: What did you hear about Brom, Icabod?

ICABOD: (*drawing KATRINA close*) Only that he beats his horse.

KATRINA: (*putting a hand to her face in shock*) No!

ICABOD: That's how he gets it to go so fast.

KATRINA: That's terrible. I never heard that.

ICABOD: It's such an awful thing to do. And he smells very strongly of a stable. A young lady should never be exposed to such boorish odours.

GROUP: The two of them make quite a sight,  
As they talk at the dance that night.  
Brom Bones is ready to pick a fight,  
To hold back takes all his might.

BROM: Are you sure I can't beat up the schoolteacher?

PETER: 'Fraid not.

BROM: There has to be something I can do. He's danced four dances with her tonight!

DOLF: But you don't like to dance. You say it all the time. You say you would rather have hot pokers jabbed into the soles of your feet than have to dance.

BROM: (*cuffing DOLF on the back of the head*) Idiot.

DOLF: Ow! What?

BROM: I'm putting a stop to this.

PETER: No pummelling!

*BROM strides across the front of the stage toward  
KATRINA and ICABOD.*

GROUP: Icabod Crane, Icabod Crane,  
Brom Bones tries to act restrained,

His face scrunched up in a mask of pain,  
Hatred growing for Icabod Crane.

BROM: Evening, Ms. Katrina.

KATRINA: Good evening, Brom.

BROM: (*with a bow*) May I have the pleasure of escorting you home from the dance?

ICABOD: Actually, I will have the favour of Ms. Van Tassel's arm tonight.

KATRINA: Perhaps another time.

BROM: What about a horse ride then? Tomorrow afternoon.

ICABOD: I was going to ask you, Ms. Van Tassel, you are in the choir, are you not?

KATRINA: Yes of course.

ICABOD: Then please let me offer you a free private singing lesson. I can tell just by looking at you that you have a most pleasant voice. Tomorrow afternoon? If you have nothing else planned.

KATRINA: I would be delighted.

ICABOD: (*holding out his arm*) Shall we go?

*KATRINA and ICABOD exit. BROM growls in fury and storms back across the stage.*

PETER: What happened, Brom?

BROM: I'll get that little pipsqueak. If it's the last thing I do, I'll get him!

*BROM storms off. PETER and DOLF follow behind.*

GROUP: Icabod Crane, Icabod Crane,  
Beware, beware of Brom Bones' strain.  
Be careful who you treat with disdain,  
Icabod, Icabod Crane.

*Dance music plays. Everyone on stage breaks into pairs to dance. The girls gather in a corner downstage.*

ANKE: Have you heard, have you heard?

BRITT: What?

ANKE: Katrina Van Tassel is being escorted by the schoolteacher tonight!

MARET: Again?

*ICABOD enters with KATRINA on his arm. The two of them join into the dance.*

ANKE: Look!

LENA: This will be the third dance this fall.

ANKE: I hear he's been spending a lot of time out at the Van Tassel farm.

MARET: He's just giving Katrina singing lessons, that's all.

BRITT: I don't know...

LENA: Do you think he's courting Katrina?

MARET: No!

ANKE: I hear Brom Bones horse is never seen at her fence anymore.

BRITT: I'd much rather be courted by Brom Bones.

MARET: There's Brom now.

*BROM enters with PETER and DOLF. BROM scowls at ICABOD and KATRINA and hunkers down in a chair at the back.*

BROM: (*muttering to PETER and DOLF*) Five minutes. Five minutes alone is all I need with him. Then we could settle this like men.

PETER: We're doing pretty good, though. We've stopped up the chimney at the school house.

DOLF: And turned the room topsy-turvy in the middle of the night.

PETER: Everyone knows it should be you courting Katrina instead of him.

BROM: Five minutes is all I need to fold him in two and stick him on a shelf. Look at him!

ANKE: (*referring to BROM*) Look at him.

BROM: He looks so smug.

BRITT: He doesn't look very happy.

MARET: It serves him right. Act like an animal and you don't get the girl. So there. *(she sighs and looks at ICABOD)* He's so smart.

BRITT: I wonder what he thinks about?

MARET: Only smart things I'm sure.

*The music stops and everyone freezes in place. The lights change. ICABOD steps forward. This is what he's thinking about.*

ICABOD: Land, land, land, land, land! Oh the day gets closer and closer when all this land will be mine! Certainly there is a firm possibility that one day I will be lord of all this! This scene of unimaginable luxury and splendour! Look at the table! Donuts, crullers, sweet cake, short cake, ginger cake, honey cake, apple pie, peach pie, pumpkin pie, sliced ham, smoked beef, roasted chicken. This is a feast for a king. And I could be that king! *(he claps his hands with glee)* This is the third dance I've been to with Katrina this fall; I'm with her every second day with lessons. Surely Brom Bones is nothing now but a smudge on the landscape. The landscape that will soon be mine!

*The music plays again. Everyone continues dancing. ICABOD steps back into his dance with KATRINA.*

MARET: I bet if we could see into Mr. Crane's mind, we'd be amazed at all the smart things he's thinking about this very second!

*The music ends. Everyone bows and claps.*

ICABOD: *(to KATRINA)* Shall we dance again my dear?

KATRINA: Oh, perhaps later on.

ICABOD: I will be right here, waiting ever so patiently! Ah ha ha!

*MR. VAN TASSEL comes forward and addresses the group.*

MR. VAN TASSEL: And now my friends, before we partake in another dance, shall we gather round for a tale or two? A ghost tale or two?

*The group is abuzz. Everyone wants to hear some stories. They take their places around the main chair, which MR. VAN TASSEL has brought to the centre.*

MR. VAN TASSEL: And of course, our resident *History of New England Witchcraft* expert should sit in the chair of honour right by the fire.

*He holds the chair out for ICABOD, who demurs and sits.*

ICABOD: Mynheer Van Tassel, I'm honoured, so terribly honoured.

MARET: Do you know many ghost stories, Mr. Crane?

ICABOD: Indeed I do. I have many a tale up my sleeve. I am also well aware that this area is a veritable bonanza of anecdotes, allegories and accounts of a spectral nature.

BRITT: Don't you ever get frightened? Telling stories by the fire is one thing when everyone's around, but when I'm alone, a tree branch waving in the wind makes me think there are ghosts and goblins at every turn.

ANKE: Ooooh it sends shivers down my spine!

MARET: Do ghost stories scare you Mr. Crane?

ICABOD: Ah, ah, well...

*The entire group turns toward the audience and recites in unison.*

GROUP: Icabod Crane, Icabod Crane,  
Thoughts racing 'round his brain,  
Does he admit fear of the ghostly plane?  
Do you Icabod Crane?

*The entire group turns back to stare at ICABOD.*

ICABOD: Well... you see... ah,

*The group turns toward the audience and recites in unison.*

GROUP: Riding home late at night,  
Every shadow brings a fright,  
Every shape a phantom sight,  
He closes up his eyes so tight!

*The group turns back to stare at ICABOD.*

ICABOD: The truth of it is... ah...



*The group turns toward the audience and recites in unison.*

GROUP: The howling wind, a rising dread,  
All confidence has swiftly fled,  
His stomach's sore, his heart is lead,  
Who's that standing up ahead?

*The group turns back to stare at ICABOD.*

ICABOD: Why no, my dear. Ha, ha, ha. Of course ghost stories don't frighten me. And why should they? They are only stories, after all. Isn't that right? Only stories. I welcome them! No tale is too gross or monstrous for my appetite. They're nothing to be scared of. Nothing at all.

*During the above BROM, PETER and DOLF stand at the far side of the group. BROM now moves slightly away. The rest of the group talk silently amongst themselves; they don't hear BROM's discussion.*

BROM: Oh ho!

PETER: What?

BROM: Oh ho!

PETER: What?

BROM: Oh ho ho!

DOLF: What are you oh ho-ing for?

BROM: (*cuffing DOLF on the back of the head*) Idiot!

DOLF: Ow! What?

BROM: Didn't you hear what the schoolteacher just said?

PETER: He said he's not afraid of ghost stories.

BROM: Those may have been the words he said, but –

DOLF: Isn't that what you asked us? (*seeing BROM's hand*) Don't hit me! I'll do it. (*he hits himself on the back of the head*) Ow!

BROM: That's what he said, but that's not what he meant. I think he's scared of ghost stories. I think when it's dark out and the lights from the nearest house are gone and he's following the path through the dense thicket, he's really, really, really scared.

PETER: So what are you going to do?

*BROM gestures to the two and they move off to the corner to confer. The focus moves back to the main group.*

MR. VAN TASSEL: Who will be the first? Who has a story to tell of haunted fields, haunted books, haunted bridges, haunted houses, haunted streams –

MRS. CLOSSON: How about haunted trees? Major Andre's tree.

*There is a murmur of agreement amongst the group.*

BRITT: *(with a sigh)* Poor Major Andre.

LENA: Poor! He was in cahoots with Benedict Arnold!

MRS. CLOSSON: Creak, creak, rope on wood,  
Right there is where Major Andre stood.  
Creak, creak, rope on bark,  
Thought he'd be able to escape in the dark.  
Creak, creak, rope on skin,  
Major Andre's gone hanging.  
Major Andre swinging from the tree,  
Get too close, and you might see.

In 1780 to hide from his foes,  
He dressed in an American soldier's clothes.  
Back to the British side he crept,  
But a trio of militia did intercept.

Major Andre swinging from the tree,  
Get too close, and you might see.

They searched his boots, rucksack, coat.  
And found letters Benedict Arnold wrote.  
Andre was tried and determined a spy,  
His punishment meant he had to die.

Major Andre swinging from the tree,  
Get too close, and you might see.

If you go by and the stars are bright,  
The air is crisp and the moon is right,  
A swinging shadow darkens the ground,  
And listen for the creaking sound.

Major Andre swinging from the tree,  
Get too close, and you might see.

*Everyone shivers.*

MARET: Have you ever seen his shadow?

ANKE: No. Have you?

MARET: I'll never go by that tree alone.

MR. VAN TASSEL: Who has a story of funeral trains, or mourning cries  
and wailing sighs?

MRS. VAN TASSEL: What of the woman in white?

*There is a murmur of agreement among the group.*

LENA: Now there's someone who's a 'poor' dear!

MRS. VAN TASSEL: On a frosty winter night

You can hear the woman in white.

She howls through the hollow

The trees shiver in her sorrow.

A young woman out alone.

Caught so very far from home.

From the storm she could not hide.

There was no shelter, so she died.

Her life could not be saved.

The winter snow her frozen grave.

And when found, that girl so lost,

Was covered head to toe in frost.

If you're looking for a chill,

Down in the Hollow behind the hill,

If you listen, the wind so bleak,

You will hear her pleading shriek.

*Everyone shivers. The girls hold each other and murmur.*

LENA: Ooooooooooh.

ANKE: Shivers right down my spine!

MR. VAN TASSEL: We can't tell Hollow stories without the most  
famous of them all.

THE FOUR GIRLS: The Headless Horseman!

*There is a murmur of consent among the group. The girls stand.*

MARET: In the Hollow, by the oak trees and the grape vines.

BRIT: Never stop at midnight.

ANKE & LENA: Never!

MARET: And if you find yourself there when the clock strikes twelve.

BRIT: Never look behind you.

ANKE & LENA: Never!

ANKE: Never look behind if you hear the horse's hoof.

LENA: Or feel hot breath on your neck.

ANKE: Or hear the snort of the goblin steed.

ALL FOUR: This is the ride of the Headless Horseman.

BRITT: He lost his head to a cannonball. And they buried the body  
without it.

MARET: Headless.

LENA: And night after night after night.

BRITT: The Headless Horseman rides the Hollow.

LENA: Night after night after night.

MARET: He searches the battleground for his lost head.

LENA: Night after night after night.

ANKE: Every night he rides.

BRITT: Rides.

MARET: Rides!

ANKE: From the graveyard to the battle and back again.

BRITT: Fast and furious on his demon steed.

MARET: Before he must return to the churchyard.

BRITT: To sink through the ground at the break of dawn.

LENA: He's seven foot high with a flaming black cape.

MARET: With a demon's laugh.

ANKE: With dead demon eyes.

BRITT: The Horseman doesn't stir but gathers in the gloom.

LENA: Like some gigantic monster ready to spring on its prey.

MARET: Beware, beware the Headless Horseman.

*The girls giggle and sit. BROM steps forward.*

BROM: I have a story to tell.

*The group turns in surprise as BROM moves centre stage.*

BROM: I have tangled with the Headless Horseman recently. Shall I tell of my adventure?

*There is a murmur of consent from the crowd. Everyone moves to give BROM room. BROM poses.*

BROM: I tangled with the Horseman.

Saw him on a clear black night.

I say he's no fierce rider.

And his horse is rather light.

But I believe in the Headless Horseman.

The things they say are true.

If you hear his ghoulish laughter,

It will be the end of you.

Old Brouwer did not believe in ghosts,

And scoffed at spectral power.

Old Brouwer went riding through the dell,

It was the midnight hour.

And up ahead from shadows dense,

The apparition rose.

Old Brouwer heard the chilling laugh,

Or so the story goes.

And I believe in the Headless Horseman.

The things they say are true.

If you feel his ghoulish grip,

It will be the end of you.

One dark night I did ride,

From the village going home.

It was the midnight hour,

Through the hollow I did roam.

And up upon my left hand side,

The Horseman overtook.

I offered a race to the demon shade,

First one to reach the brook.

I sped off on my trusty ride,  
 Far from the devil's hold.  
 Through the hollow we thundered on,  
 Through the night air cold.

For I believe in the Headless Horseman.  
 The things they say are true.  
 If you lose a race with him,  
 It will be the end of you.

And there, ahead! I see the bridge,  
 That means the end is near.  
 If I make it before the Horseman,  
 He must concede and disappear.

I make it first! I turn to see,  
 A wall of fire so high.  
 A clap of thunder, a shriek, a howl,  
 The Horseman vanishes to the sky.

So do not scoff at Horseman tales,  
 Especially when out of doors.  
 It won't be a laughing matter if,  
 The next head he wears is yours.

For I believe in the Headless Horseman.  
 The things they say are true.  
 If you can't stay, out of his way,  
 It will be the end of you.

*Everyone shivers and starts chattering at once with each other about the tale. MR. VAN TASSEL stands up.*

MR. VAN TASSEL: My friends, my friends, the hour grows thin. It is time for us to disperse.

*BROM casually moves over to the side and stands jauntily, leaning on a wall with PETER and DOLF. Everyone continues chattering as they say goodnight to each other. The girls speak to ICABOD before they exit.*

MARET: Did that scare you, Mr. Crane?

ICABOD: (*jumping*) What!?! Oh, of course not!

LENA: It scared me.

ICABOD: They were all wonderful stories. Next time, I'll have to tell you a few hair-raising tales from my home town in Connecticut. Have you heard about the ghost who leaves wet handprints on the rocks for sailors?

BRITT: (*with wide eyes*) No.

ICABOD: Next time, then. Next time. (*he sees KATRINA about to leave*) Excuse me, girls.

*ICABOD runs over to KATRINA. The two of them converse at the side.*

ICABOD: Ah Katrina, running away so soon?

KATRINA: I live here.

ICABOD: Ah ha, ah ha, right you are. Certainly you are not 'running away' anywhere. I just supposed that the house is so expansive, there are so many places to go. A lot of places to hide if you wanted to!

KATRINA: I suppose. Good night, Mr. Crane.

ICABOD: Shall I see you tomorrow for another singing lesson? I can come here to the farm. It's no trouble at all. I enjoy it here (*he sighs*) ever so much. Same time, then?

KATRINA: Oh, I don't think so.

ICABOD: What?

KATRINA: I don't think I'm interested in singing anymore. Thank you anyway.

ICABOD: What?

KATRINA: You've been most kind to me. I've had so many enjoyable lessons with you. But I'm going to take up quilting.

ICABOD: What?

KATRINA: I'm sure I'll see you at the next dance. Farewell!

*KATRINA exits and ICABOD sputters.*

ICABOD: What, what, what? But she – and I – and what about – and the land – just like that she – ? Just like that? Ooooh!

*ICABOD stamps his foot in frustration. BROM watches from the side.*

BROM: Something the matter, Mr. Crane?

ICABOD: What? Oh, no indeed, Brom. Everything is just fine. Excuse me, I must see to my horse.

*ICABOD storms off. BROM waves after him.*

BROM: Farewell, schoolteacher. Have a nice ride home!

*BROM, PETER and DOLF follow ICABOD off. The group moves forward, forming a semi-circle. MR. VAN TASSEL brings a smaller chair into the middle of the semi-circle and places its back toward the audience – this is going to be ICABOD's horse.*

GROUP: Do you believe in ghosts?

We do.

Icabod Crane does, too.

In the black dark night,

Where every bump,

Every critch, scritch,

And every thump,

Could be nothing,

A trick of the mind.

Or it could be something,

Something not so kind.

*ICABOD storms on, muttering to himself. He does not look at or acknowledge the group at all. He gets on the chair backwards, and mimes holding the reins of a horse. He also bounces lightly up and down to mimic the motion.*

*The lights dim. Spotlight on ICABOD.*

GROUP: Away from the light Icabod rides,  
Away from the dance with his wounded pride.

Alone on the path, a man and his horse,

Alone on the path, he should change his course!

*ICABOD stops and looks around as if he heard something.*

ICABOD: Hello? Hello? Anyone out there?

*A trio of voices echo out from the group.*

VOICE: Out there...

VOICE: Out there...



VOICE: Out there...

*ICABOD listens and looks around. He shakes his head.*

ICABOD: Rubbish. I travel through here all the time. There's nothing out of the ordinary out there.

*ICABOD continues riding his horse.*

GROUP: By a fire there's nothing to fear.

But there's little warmth out here.

Icabod Crane, Icabod Crane

Hold tight to your reigns...

*The group now moves away and scatters about the stage. They create tree shapes to suggest a gloomy wood. The group makes quiet forest noises: whispers, rustling of leaves, creaking.*

*ICABOD bounces up and down as if riding. He looks sharply behind him. The group becomes silent.*

*ICABOD turns forward and continues bouncing up and down as if riding. The group resumes the noises.*

*ICABOD looks sharply behind him the other way. The group becomes silent. ICABOD turns forward and continues bouncing up and down as if riding.*

ICABOD: There is Major Andre's tree. It looks much different at midnight. Nonsense. It is the same as it is at high noon. (*he sits up a little straighter*) I will sing as I pass by.

*He nervously starts to sing as he looks left and right.*

ICABOD: Sweet is the Budding Spring of Love

Next, blooming hopes all fears remove,

And when possess'd of beauty's charms,

*Suddenly he stops singing and points upward.*

ICABOD: Is that a ghost in the tree? (*he heaves a sigh of relief*) No. Just a place where the bark has come loose. Silly Icabod.

*He continues singing.*

ICABOD: And when possess'd of beauty's charms,

Fruition, like the Summer, warms,

But pleasures, oft repeated, cloy,

To Autumn wanes the fleeting joy,

*A groan is heard. ICABOD stops singing and looks toward the noise.*

ICABOD: Is that a spectre's groan? (*he heaves a sigh of relief*) No. Two branches rubbing together as they sway in the breeze. There. The tree has past and nothing happened.

*ICABOD smiles. The group continues making forest noises.*

ICABOD: Everything is going to be fine. This is just a forest. Those are just trees. The noises are just normal forest noises. There are no ghosts, no goblins and especially no Headless –

*At that exact moment, the group becomes silent. ICABOD stops.*

ICABOD: That's odd. It's gotten quiet. Really quiet. I'm sure it doesn't mean anything.

*A low laugh is heard.*

ICABOD: I'm sure animals laugh all the time in the Hollow. It's a very happy Hollow.

*As the group whispers, a figure rises at the back of the stage (see APPENDIX A). The figure is very tall, dressed head to toe in black and holds a lighted pumpkin in its hand.*

GROUP: (*whispering*) But I believe in the Headless Horseman.  
The things they say are true.  
If you hear his ghoulish laughter,  
It will be the end of you.

ICABOD: Is someone there?

GROUP: And I believe in the Headless Horseman.  
The things they say are true.  
If you feel his ghoulish grip,  
It will be the end of you.

ICABOD: I'm going to turn around and nothing will be there. I'm going to turn around and nothing will be there. I'm going to turn around and nothing will be there. One, two, three!

*ICABOD turns around and sees...*

ICABOD: THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN!



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