

The Legend of Sleep Hollow

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Legend of Sleepy Hollow Written by Aaron Weir Kelstone For Cleveland Signstage Theatre Tour

Introduction:

Center Stage:

Van Tassel house is present. There is an abundance of food and other items to suggest wealth and abundance. Spilling out from the front of the house onto the outdoor patio is a table with stools surrounding it. Old Baltus Van Tassel is sitting comfortably outside fiddling with his old Dutch pipe trying to get it started.

The music underlying the scene is classical suggesting a timeless mood, supported by wind instruments that suggest the outdoors, butterflies, wind, and nature.

The lighting is late mid-afternoon, a sleepy, drowsy time.

Ichabod Crane appears, all his belongs tied up in a large cotton handkerchief and attached to a walking stick that he is carrying over one shoulder. He is thin, lanky, narrow shouldered, with long dangling arms, sleeves too short for him and clothing baggy and fluttering about his body. He has the look of an educated scarecrow.

Scene 1:

Baltus

Ay, greetings school master. I see it is our week to play host.

Ichabod

Aye it is and I have news galore from the valley to pass on at tonight's supper.

Baltus

News! Whether good or bad it is always welcome around an evening supper.

Ichabod

That it is, that it is. Yet, why so quiet at the moment? Where is everyone?

Baltus

Quiet? Not for long, they all are busy preparing for dinner and afterwards a dance.

Actor 2

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[Dashes by with a musical instrument, goes into the house]

Baltus

Perhaps it is the other way around

Actor 3

[Dashes by with a second musical instrument, goes into the house]

Baltus

Apparently the dancing will come first.

Ichabod

Dancing you say...and is Katrina about?

Katrina

[Dashes in with other girlfriends, primping, gossiping and getting ready]

[Katrina is followed by Bones and his tag-alongs who swirl around her like autumn leaves

[They basically ignore the boys]

][Actor 3 emerges from house]

Bones

Ohhhhh, Katrina

Actor 4

Bones, for her romance is fun

Bones

Yet compared to all the others who cares

[Actor 2 emerges from the house]

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Actor 3

He's right, she's just waiting for another romance to start

Bones

Who cares when it comes to matters of the heart

Actor 2

You better listen to us Bones, that girl will just kiss and run

Bones

It don't matter, I've lost my heart

Katrina

Father, Ichadod....Bye boys.

[Goes into the house]

Ichabod

Well.. a dance can be a fine thing.

Brom Bones

A fine thing you say. Ha! More of a grand event. Something to shake the cobwebs loose in old Tarry Town. That we will do and wake up the dead as well!

Baltus

No doubt you will but be wary of mentioning the dead in the same breath.

Bones

Nary a worry, it's all superstition to me.

Ichabod

Oh I do believe in spirits, they're about no doubt.

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Bones

[Music changes, begins in increase in volume]

Concerning the dance I'll remind you to leave the dancing with Katrina to me, clear enough?

Actor 4

[Circling around Ichadod, stops behind him, goes down on all fours]

[Bones steps forward, Ichabod steps back and tumbles over actor 4]

Bones

[Laughs loudly]

I'd say it's clear enough, stumble bum!

[Music increases to full volume, all tumble out of the house laughing]

[Each person brings something from in the house out with them such as food, etc]

[A 3-5 minute dance begins]

[During the dance Ichabod will try to get food to eat and also try to join the dancing]

[Each time he tries someone will snatch the food away from him]

[He will bungle his efforts to be a part of the dance or be sabotaged by others]

THROW AWAY LINES DURING THE DANCE

Baltus

In the great state of New York

Actor 4

In a timeless place called Tarry Town

Bones

Where the ghost of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow lived.

Ichabod

Where I, Ichabod Crane, tarried for a while

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Katrina

And I, Katrina Van Tassel, was wooed and won

All

Here our story shall begin....

[At this point Ichabod will make a huge effort to get into the dance]

[As a result he will cause the entire dance ensemble to collide/collapse into a pile of bodies]

Scene 2:

[All pick themselves up from the tumbled mess]

[Actors 2 and 3 get up and pull Ichabod up and stand him between them]

[Actors 2 and 3 both take one foot and step on Ichabods' feet]

Actor 2

Oh My!

Actor 3

Why Ichabod, what big feet you have!

[Ichabod gets away from them]

Ichabod

What do I care.

[Bones and Actor 4 grab Ichabod by the ears and give him a twirl about]

Actor 4

Oh My!

Bones

Why Ichabod, what big ears you have!

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[Ichabod manages to slip away]

Ichabod

Don't you have anything else better to do?

Actor 2

Hey Ichabod, how did a scarecrow like you get out of the cornfield?

Actor 3

Shouldn't you be back there educating the crows?

Ichabod

I dare say they would be easier to educate than the four of you.

Bones

[Spinning Ichabod around as comments are made]

So Ichabod, speaking of education...how's school these days

Actor 4

Heard the chimney got stopped up and you all were smoked out of class

Ichabod

I would think you would know the details of that better than I.

Bones

Oh, you don't say

Actor 3

How about the ghosts that broke in during the night and turned all the desks over topsy turvey

Ichabod

I'd say something more contrary than ghosts

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Bones

Ah, that could very well be.

Actor 2

And lately it seems Ichabod has avoided Brom's challenge

Ichabod

I am not interested in arm wrestling

Brom

Oh?

Ichabod

Nor am I interested in a horse race between the two of us about the town

Actors 2,3,4

NO?

Bones

So what will you do?

Ichabod

Mind to matters that are at hand and quite proper for a school teacher

Bones

Such as....

Ichabod

Well for example, this week at the Van Tassel's I will do important speech lessons for Katrina. She must learn to speak, I am sure you are aware of the urgency of that.

Bones

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Speak, pa! She does fine with the home signs and gestures. Me and Katrina get on just fine the way it is.

Ichabod

Tsk,tsk,tsk, you forget she lives in a hearing world and she needs to learn how to communicate with us.

Actors 2,3,4

Bones says she gets on just fine the way it is

[All four start to circle Ichabod menacingly]

Katrina

Now, now, now, boys....it is Ichabod's week to stay at our place. One must be a good host. Shall we take a walk to the bridge?

Bones

But Katrina

Katrina

Boys....We'll see you all later. Are you ready Ichabod?

Ichabod

Well, I, I, I, well yes.

[Brom and others are left in a helpless fix]

[Van Tassel house fades, the church/wooden bridge scene appears]

Scene 3

Katrina

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So...is it agreed? I teach you signs and you teach me to speak.

Ichabod

Katrina, I'm so awkward, my hands just won't cooperate.

Katrina

Why can't you be like the others, they sign to me. I don't want to always have to lip read you.

Ichabod

Well, I can try.....

[shudders]

Don't you find this place creepy?

Katrina

No, I like old places

Ichabod

They say that the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow rises out of his grave and gallops through that bridge every month when the moon is full. He keeps looking for his head lost to a cannonball during the great war. They say you can hear the hoof beating on the bridge if you carefully listen.

Katrina

Well, I can't hear them so it doesn't scare me. Actually I find it exciting.

Ichabod

Exciting! Don't you know that the world really turns round, and half the day you are upside down?

Katrina

No!

[Laughs]

Ichabod

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And that when shooting stars streak past at night, if you see one and don't say your prayers, then evil things will come a'haunting your bed

Katrina

Oh, silly wives tales these are!

Ichabod

No, no, I've read wide and far, Cotton Mather is my constant companion and I know these things. You'd best be wary of night and the spirits that wander there.

Katrina

What do you do when you have to travel after dark between the school house and home?

Ichabod

Why, I, I whistle.

Katrina

Whistle? What's that?

Ichabod

Whistling? Well everybody knows how to whistle, like this....

Katrina

[mimics without success]

Icahbod

No, no, you need to hold your lips a certain way, and blow through

Katrina

[Laughs at the comical contortions Ichabod goes through trying to show her how to whistle]

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Well, whistling may be beyond me but I could dance wildly enough to scare spirits away if I had to.

Ichabod

You could, I am not sure it would work, I'd need to consult my books to see.

Katrina

Enough of books and spirits, what about the quilt frolic? Will you be coming?

Ichabod

Quilt frolic?

Katrina

It's a time of merry making and dance. Everyone in the valley will be there.

Ichabod

Well, I will need to find a horse for that day, as I cannot close the school and be to the dance in time without one.

Katrina

Do come, I shall enjoy having all of you, especially you....

Ichabod

I suppose..... I could be less strict for one afternoon and let the children go early.... Yes, I will be there...

Katrina

Good! Let's walk along the brook, shall we???

Scene 5

[Church and Bridge fade, return to Van Tassel house, Baltus is outside enjoying his pipe]

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Actor 4

Hello there, have you heard the news?

Baltus

Of what my lad

Actor 4

Ichabod has borrowed a horse for the evening from old Hans Van Ripper.

Baltus

He has?

Actor 4

Yes, Gunpowder is the horse's name.

Baltus

Sounds like Ichabod is getting more daring.

Actor 4

Daring! It's clear you've never seen Gunpowder. He's an old broken down plough-horse, that's outlived its usefulness for everything except for being plain mean.

Baltus

You don't say.

Actor 4

I do say and to boot the horse is skinny, its mane is tangled with burrs, one eye is gone but the other had the gleam of the devil in it.

Baltus

He must have been a fine horse in his day to get a name like Gunpowder

Actor 4

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Maybe so, but don't expect a punctual arrival from Mr. Ichabod.

Baltus

Well, the way they are going at it we won't be dancing until the light of the harvest moon.

Actor 4

That may be true indeed!

Scene 6:

[Hustle and bustle begins of setting up the outdoor area for the dance]

[Stage right an light appears highlighting Ichabod preening and getting ready for the dance]

[We then see Ichabod get on Gunpowder, and enjoy a miniature journey from there to the house]

[Ichabod's arrival will be timed with the completion of setting up the house for the dance]

[There will be a moment to take in the scene and then Ichabod will join in the dance]

[Music will begin, and the dancing will start and last for 3-5 minutes]

This dance will be one of competition between Bones and Ichabod being very free spirited]

[Ichabod will be the star of the dance to the brooding dismay of Brom Bones]

[At the completion of the dance, he will join a group telling tales]

[Three tall tales will be told at this point, one by actor 2, one by actor 3]

Bones

[Does third story]

Aye, those are fine tales but nothing to the likes of mine

Ichabod

Oh, you have something to share with us?

Bones

I do so move aside.

[Knocks Ichabod off his stool]

You all speak of the Headless Horseman as if he was a fine horseman. Well I know for a personal fact he is not!

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Katrina

How do you know this?

Bones

Well one fine night when the moon was in its full glory

ALL

Yes.....

Bones

I was returning from the next village and was overtaken by the very Headless Horseman you all speak of.

Katrina

You've saw the Headless Horseman with your very own eyes?

Bones

That I have, he offered to race me for a bowl of punch. I knew my horse, Daredevil, is the fastest horse in these parts so I took him up on the challenge.

Ichabod

You raced against the Headless Horseman, what happened?

Bones

We raced through the hollow at full gallop headed for the church bridge. Daredevil making good time, yet I could feel the hard fiery breath of goblin horse and ghost just behind me as we approached the bridge.

Katrina

Did you win?

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Bones

I would have, but just before the bridge the Headless Horseman bolted and vanished in a flash of fire.

Ichabod

Would have? Burst in a flame of fire. A likely story considering the source.

Bones

Doubt my word eh? Well tonight when you ride that measly horse of yours, we'll see how long it takes the Headless Horseman to catch up with you.

Ichabod

I'm sure Gunpowder and I will be just fine.

Actor 4

I tell you ghost stories are bad enough but the Headless Horseman, that will give you a shudder

Actor 3

That's right he'll raise the hairs on the back of your head for sure

Actor 2

Just wait till you see him, holding the pumpkin he carries for a head

Bones

I've heard it told he's anxious to make a trade of heads and yours might just fit the bill.

Ichabod

Such nonsense!

Actor 4

He don't care what size your head is, no siree.

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Actor 3

He's just looking for one to chop off to replace his missing one

Actor 2

Ain't no way to reason with him that's for sure

Ichabod

All your talk doesn't scare me a bit

Bones

You better pray so...I'm off for some punch and fresh air meself.

[Exits]

Actors 2,3,4

[Surrounding and harassing Ichabod]
[Acting out a chase with horse hoof action]

Clop, clop,clop,clop you better watch out he's looking for a head to trade with ya'

Ichabod

What makes you think your heads are any safer?

Actor 4

Ah, bull....Come on guys, let's go find some more interesting things to do...

[All exit]

Ichabod

[To self]

Good riddance, now I will wait for my chance with Katrina.

[Others break off in pairs or by themselves to prepare for departure]
[Ichabod sees Katrina go off stage left]

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[He follows and finds Katrina with Bones, they are doing small talk and obviously enjoying each other's company]

[Ichabod is crestfallen]

[He prepares to leave on Gunpowder for home]

Scene 7

[Van Tassel house disappears]

[The Swamp scene with a large withered tree appears]

[Special sound effects will be built into this portion of the play]

[Ichabod will cross a small creek or stream, sound effects can be used to establish this]

[Ichabod begins to whistle a tune]

[The sound of hoofs beating on wooden planks is heard]

Ichabod

Who, who's there?

[Ichabod urges Gunpowder to go faster]

[A shadow effect emerges of the Headless Horseman]

[Ichabod sees the shadowy image and the chase begins]

[Comic elements related to Ichabod and the riding of the horse are incorporated here]

[The church and bridge are pulled into the scene.]

Ichabod crosses and we hear the thundering sound of hoofs on wooden planks]

[An image of a large pumpkin is seen, thrown in an arc across the sky]

[We sense the thud of a pumpkin]

[Gunpowder appears rider less and is discovered by actor 4 and taken to the Van Tassel's]

Scene 8

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Actor 3

[Brings in a broken pumpkin]

Looks like the Headless Horseman found Ichabod

Actor 2

No one has seen or heard from him since the night of the dance, but that does not mean he isn't around somewhere.

Baltus

[Emerging from the house]

The ceremony begins soon, come, come join us all.

Actor 4

Wouldn't miss it.

Bones

[Emerges from the house with Katrina, sees broken pumpkin]

[Laughs loudly]

Actor 2

Know anything about this pumpkin Bones?

Bones

Me?

Actor 3

Yes, could you have been out that night as well racing with the Headless Horseman

Bones

I very well may have lads

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Actor 4

And thus can shed some light on how the story ends

Bones

I doubt I can give a suitable ending to Ichabod Crane

Katrina

But did you or have you seen him?

Bones

I cannot say if I have seen him but I can say perhaps that we have all seen the last of him!

[Laughs heartily]

[Music begins]_

[All dance a merry wedding/celebration dance]

THROW AWAY LINES DURING THE FINAL DANCE

Baltus

Life has its advantages for all

Bones

If we can all take a joke when we find it

Katrina

And he who races with goblins and headless ghosts

Actor 4

will most likely have a rough riding

Actor 3

As to ghosts I am not sure

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Actor 2

and all of us have our doubts of Ichabod's demise

All

Yet that is how the story of Sleep Hollow shall end.

[The dance continues to fade out]