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Dramatic Publishing

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

Based on the story

by

WASHINGTON IRVING

Adapted for the stage by

MARY and ANDREW ARNAULT



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW)

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The Legend of Sleepy Hollow was first performed October 29, 1999, at Harwich Junior Theatre, Harwich, Massachusetts, Nina Schuessler, artistic director.

CAST

Baltus Van Tassel	CHARLES MCINTYRE
Dame Marta Van Tassel	BRIDGET MARTIN
Katrina Van Tassel	SARAH WATMOUGH
Hans Van Ripper	JOHN STEVENS
Dame Hilda Van Ripper	SUSAN SARD WHITE
Grandmother	KAREN MCPHERSON
Margaret	SUSIE MCINTYRE
Gretchen	LEANNE MCLAUGHLIN
Peter Vedder	RICHARD KOVACS
Brom Bones	RICH ARCHER
Nicholas	MIKE FALLETTI
Christian	KEITH ANDERSON
Diedrich	JOHNNY STEVENS
Rolf	SAM ROME
Beatrice	NADIA SCHUESSLER
Ichabod Crane	NATHANIEL MCINTYRE

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director	NINA SCHUESSLER
Set Design	DAN JOY
Costume Design	ROBIN MCLAUGHLIN
Light Design	JAMES P. BYRNE
Sound Design	ANDREW ARNAULT
Choreographer	LISA CANTO NIKULA
Stage Manager	ANDREA HEALY

THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

A Full-length Play
For 9m., 7w. (includes 7 children)

CHARACTERS

BALTUS VAN TASSEL . . . a wealthy Dutch-American farmer
DAME MARTA VAN TASSEL his wife
KATRINA VAN TASSEL their teen-age daughter
HANS VAN RIPPER a Dutch-American farmer
DAME HILDA VAN RIPPER his wife
GRANDMOTHER her mother
MARGARET the Van Ripper's elder daughter
GRETCHEN the Van Ripper's younger daughter
PETER VEDDER an elderly storekeeper
BROM BONES a young man, suitor of Katrina
NICHOLAS a follower of Brom Bones
CHRISTIAN a follower of Brom Bones
DIEDRICH a schoolboy
ROLF Diedrich's younger brother
BEATRICE a schoolgirl
ICHABOD CRANE an itinerant schoolteacher

THE PLACE: The village of Sleepy Hollow,
Hudson River Valley, upstate New York.

THE TIME: 1790s.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow is written for 16 actors, although the cast can be enlarged by adding townsfolk and women's chorus members. The roles of Diedrich and Rolf may be combined, if necessary. The children's ages span from 6-16 but may be cast according to availability of performers.

We have included specific songs, dances and games, which may be substituted at the director's discretion. The play is strongly enhanced by live musical accompaniment (including an onstage fiddler) and especially by sound and lighting effects.

The play is written for a unit set: very open to allow for cast movement and dances, yet moody and atmospheric, with furniture changes used to indicate location. In the original production, hobby horses were used for the horses, and the head was constructed over the ball used in the Zombie Floating Ball Trick (an apparatus readily available in magic stores). Other methods are certainly possible.

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

SCENE 1

It is morning in the early autumn in the center of the little Hudson River Valley village of Sleepy Hollow. The surrounding woods and fields are alive with their normal sounds—birds, cicadas, cows, a barking dog, etc. Several spooky sounds creep in, including those of a rope chafing against a branch, choking gasps, distant muffled voices, shrieks, mourning cries and a galloping horse. As lights slowly come up, a group of children at play is heard, their voices distant and distorted. A single boy, ROLF, emerges, blindfolded, as the distortion of the children's voices eases and the other sounds fade down. Other children reveal themselves, teasing the first in a game of "Blindman's Buff." BROM BONES enters, glides to the blindfolded ROLF, and pokes and tickles him from just outside his reach. The boy doesn't know who it is. Then BROM sweeps him up and over his head, twirling him around, then holding him upside down. ROLF squeals, frightened at first, but then delighted.

ROLF. Let me down. Help, help! I know it's you, Brom Bones! Wheee!

(Two of Brom's friends, NICHOLAS and CHRISTIAN, aka the "Sleepy Hollow Boys," enter, and join in the fun.)

NICHOLAS. Brom's over here, Christian! Hey, look, let's get 'em!

CHRISTIAN. We've got you now, kids!

(They chase the children.)

BEATRICE. Oh, Brom—I saw you on Sunday with Katrina Van Tassel...

DIEDRICH. All lovey-dovey! Yech!

ROLF. Kissy-kissy! *(He makes kissing noises.)*

CHILDREN *(chanting)*. Brom loves Katrina! Brom loves Katrina!

(NICHOLAS is sweet on MARGARET, the oldest of the Blindman's Buff players, and when he grabs her, he doesn't let go—and that's just fine with her. The others jump on BROM and collapse in a heap.)

CHRISTIAN. Look out! Here comes old man Ripper!

(HANS VAN RIPPER walks in briskly.)

VAN RIPPER. Children! Children, up on your feet, now!
And you, young Nicholas—release my daughter, you rascal!

MARGARET. Papa!

NICHOLAS. Sorry, Mynheer Van Ripper.

(The children and CHRISTIAN disentangle themselves, leaving BROM still on the ground.)

VAN RIPPER. Abraham Van Brunt, I should have known you'd be at the bottom of this! When will you ever—

BROM *(good-naturedly, while lolling on the grass)*. Good morrow, Mynheer. Just keepin' the kids entertained till the new schoolmaster arrives. Heard he didn't show yesterday.

VAN RIPPER. Children ain't supposed to be entertained. And I'm sure you got something more useful to do with your time. Let me attend to the new schoolmaster.

BROM. Awww, we was jest funnin'.

VAN RIPPER. Humph! Idle hands are the devil's workshop!

BROM *(teasingly)*. We could wait with you, keep you company.

CHRISTIAN. Sure thing!

NICHOLAS. We could stay with you!

VAN RIPPER. Brom Bones, you run along, now. And take your gang with you. You got too big to be playin' children's games.

BROM *(good-naturedly wrapping an arm around VAN RIPPER)*. Sure, Mynheer, an' we'll go now.

VAN RIPPER *(shrugging off his arm)*. I don't need no riff-raff hangin' off me, blockin' the sun.

BROM. Mebbe we'd best check in on you later.

VAN RIPPER. You best check in on your chores, young man. Be off, be off, now.

BROM. Come on, boys, we've got business.

(NICHOLAS lingers with MARGARET.)

VAN RIPPER. Margaret!

MARGARET (*embarrassed*). Oh, Papa!

BROM (*to NICHOLAS*). Don't you be entertainin' them idle hands, you rascal! (*BROM winks at VAN RIPPER, then takes his leave.*) Children... Mynheer.

VAN RIPPER. Humph!

(BROM saunters off with NICHOLAS and CHRISTIAN. The children move on to a new game. PETER VEDDER enters, setting up his country store [perhaps a stove and several benches] in a downstage corner. VAN RIPPER crosses to him.)

PETER VEDDER. Back again today, eh, Hans?

VAN RIPPER. That's right. He's supposed to start this morning, so he'd better come.

PETER VEDDER. I see you've got the young'uns ready. Would you like a mug of hot cider?

VAN RIPPER. Thank ye, Peter. Children! Let me know if you see him coming down the road! (*VAN RIPPER goes into the store.*) Nip in the air, today. This'll warm my bones.

(The three VAN TASSELS enter. The parents go into the store, while KATRINA is surrounded outside by the children.)

VAN RIPPER. Hallo, Van Tassel, Dame, Miss Katrina.

PETER VEDDER. Hallo, Van Tassels...

VAN TASSEL. Hallo, hallo! Happy day! What's all this running around?

DAME VAN TASSEL. I thought this was the first day of school.

PETER VEDDER. Come on in, and warm yourselves up with a mug of cider.

VAN RIPPER. Schoolteacher ain't showed up yet. Wasted the whole day yesterday lookin' out for 'im.

PETER VEDDER (*handing out mugs*). Sit yourselves down, here you go.

CHILDREN (*outside*). Katrina! You missed him! You're too late. He's been here and gone already!

KATRINA. Who? The schoolmaster?

CHILDREN. No! Brom Bones!

KATRINA. Oh, him. What makes you think I came to see him?

GRETCHEN. You put a new ribbon in your hair.

KATRINA. That don't mean nothin'.

CHILDREN (*chant*). Katrina loves Brom! Katrina loves Brom!

KATRINA. I do not.

MARGARET. Hush, children. You mustn't tease your elders.

KATRINA. You're just little kids. You shouldn't talk about things you know nothin' about.

GRETCHEN. Well, I know something Brom said about you.

KATRINA. What did he say?

GRETCHEN. I ain't supposed to talk about it. I'm just a little kid. (*She whispers into BEATRICE, DIEDRICH and ROLF's ears.*)

KATRINA. You're a little weasel!

(KATRINA and MARGARET chase the three kids. DAME HILDA VAN RIPPER enters, carrying a lunch basket for her children.)

DAME VAN RIPPER. Yoo-hoo! Margaret! Gretchen! Why aren't you in school?

(The two girls run to her.)

MARGARET. Schoolteacher ain't here, Mama.

GRETCHEN. He didn't come yet, Mama.

DAME VAN RIPPER. Still not arrived? Guess your papa's not too happy about that. I brought your lunch. Don't forget it next time. Good morning, Katrina. You certainly look pretty today. Brom must be nearby.

DAME VAN TASSEL *(stepping outside)*. Why, Hilda!

DAME VAN RIPPER. Hallo, Marta. Just bringing the children's lunch.

VAN TASSEL *(settling himself on a bench)*. You wasn't waiting up all night for the schoolmaster, was you, Hans?

VAN RIPPER. No, no, went home and came back this morning. Couldn't sleep, though... *(Under his breath, while rubbing his stomach.)* Hilda's casserole, don't'cha know. She's a wonderful woman, but she ain't no cook.

(The men nod knowingly, as the two women come inside.)

PETER VEDDER. Well, I was up last night, too. Brom Bones and his Sleepy Hollow Boys was out again, makin' such a ruckus I couldn't sleep.

DAME VAN TASSEL. They was down our way, too.

VAN RIPPER. I just don't know what's gonna become of that boy.

DAME VAN RIPPER. Who, Brom? He'll be fine. All he needs is a firm hand.

PETER VEDDER. Whippersnapper!

VAN TASSEL. Let the boy be young for a bit... Reminds me of myself a few years ago. I used to saddle up for a midnight dash, too.

DAME VAN TASSEL (*hand on his shoulder*). And all you needed was a firm hand, dear.

PETER VEDDER. What these boys need is a good war to straighten them up. Discipline, respect... Why, back in '78—

VAN RIPPER. Yes, yes, Peter, we know all about "Back in '78."

(GRANDMOTHER arrives, carrying the VAN RIPPER's baby, along with her cane and ear trumpet. She stops, looks around at the children playing on the green, and listens through her trumpet for any evidence of supervision. Then she uses the trumpet as a megaphone.)

GRANDMOTHER. What's going on here? Why are all you children running around? Where's this new schoolmaster?

(The other adults join her outside the store.)

DAME VAN RIPPER. Mother, Mother, we're all just waiting for him.

GRANDMOTHER. Well, where is he?

DAME VAN RIPPER. He hasn't arrived yet.

GRANDMOTHER. Didn't get scared off already, did he?

DAME VAN RIPPER. No, no, no.

GRANDMOTHER. Like the last one ...

DAME VAN RIPPER. No!

GRANDMOTHER. Good. I want to look at 'im, measure 'im up for our choirmaster. Here's your baby. *(She hands the baby to DAME VAN RIPPER.)*

PETER VEDDER. I thought maybe you came to see me, dearie. You know I treasure the sweetness of your voice, the warmth of your ... Ouch!

(GRANDMOTHER jabs him with her cane. The SLEEPY HOLLOW BOYS run in.)

SLEEPY HOLLOW BOYS. He's coming! He's coming!

(They all peer up the road in anticipation.)

TOWNSFOLK. Look at him! He's impressive. He's mysterious. Mighty tall, he is. He walks like a king! *(Etc.)*

DAME VAN TASSEL. What's his name?

DAME VAN RIPPER. Ichabod Crane.

TOWNSFOLK *(each passes the information on)*. Ichabod Crane ... Ichabod Crane. *(Etc.)*

(A caped figure with a large-brimmed hat and a veil slowly, imposingly strides into their midst. He gazes about him and nods to each of the villagers in turn. They don't know how to respond—to nod, bow, curtsy, what? He walks up to KATRINA, reaches out to touch her, then suddenly yanks her hair. She yelps, he pulls the ribbon

from her hair and throws off his hat with a laugh. It's BROM.)

BROM. I fooled you, Trini-girl!

KATRINA. Brom Bones!

(He takes off running, with KATRINA and the children in pursuit. NICHOLAS and CHRISTIAN run interference as the pack passes in and out of view. The adults make half-hearted attempts to stop him. All are involved in the uproar: some are laughing, others yelling to him to behave, etc. High-spirited confusion.)

DAME VAN TASSEL. Good heavens!

GRANDMOTHER. Lookit that teacher run!

VAN RIPPER. Blast you, Brom Bones, you git back here!

PETER VEDDER. Rapscaillon!

GRANDMOTHER. Boy, he must be scared!

DAME VAN RIPPER. No, Mother—

DAME VAN TASSEL. Katrina! Don't hike up your skirts!

GRANDMOTHER. I never! Chasin' off a teacher like that!

DAME VAN RIPPER. That's not the real teacher. It's

Brom Bones playing a trick, Mother!

GRANDMOTHER. What? He ain't a real teacher?

VAN RIPPER. What are we going to do with that boy?

VAN TASSEL. Got to admit, he had me going.

(KATRINA slips and falls. BROM dangles the ribbon over her.)

BROM. Oh, Trini ...

KATRINA (*laughing and tugging on his shirt*). I'll get you for this, Brom!

DAME VAN TASSEL. Katrina! Pull down your skirts!

GRANDMOTHER (*chuckling under her breath*). She sure likes showin' off them ankles.

PETER VEDDER. You're a scamp, Brom Bones! A real loose fish!

(A long arm snakes over BROM's shoulder and snatches away the ribbon. The villagers fall silent. The real ICHABOD CRANE has arrived. He carries his meager possessions tied up in a cloth, on a stick, along with several books tied together with a strap. He sanctimoniously returns the ribbon to KATRINA.)

ICHABOD. Your ribbon, Mademoiselle?

KATRINA. Oh, yes...

ICHABOD. Allow me to offer you my arm, fair woman.

KATRINA. Golly!

ICHABOD. It is my honor and privilege to rescue you from the infliction of this childish annoyance. (*He gallantly doffs his hat and helps her up.*)

KATRINA (*uncertainly*). Thank you, kind sir.

VAN RIPPER. You'd be Master Ichabod Crane, I presume.

ICHABOD. That I am, friend. (*He gently prods BROM.*)

Do please move aside, rude boy.

BROM. B-Boy?

ICHABOD (*to VAN RIPPER*). Tell me, Mynheer, have I reached the fair village of Sleepy Hollow?

VAN RIPPER. Yes, you have. I am Hans Van Ripper, and it was me what sent the letter that summoned you. I expected you yesterday.

ICHABOD. It was a hard trip: three days coach from Connecticut, so I "tarried" yesterday in your Tarrytown on the river. (*He laughs at his own joke.*) But now, as they say, God smiles on His new day, and I am arrived in Sleepy Hollow, ready to begin instruction!

VAN RIPPER. Well, good, because the schoolhouse is waiting for you. Your contract began this morning. You come with me, now.

(*As ICHABOD and VAN RIPPER move toward the schoolhouse, the townsfolk withdraw in a swirl of sotto voce comment, removing the stove, while leaving the benches to be used in the schoolhouse.*)

TOWNSFOLK. He certainly is strange.

Where did he come from?

Connecticut.

His feet are big as shovels!

Huge ears, too.

He's got the nose of a weathercock.

Or a snipe. (*Etc.*)

KATRINA. He has wonderful manners.

CHRISTIAN (*snickering*). He sure do curtsy nice.

PETER VEDDER. He struts like a peacock.

TOWNSFOLK. He's skinny as a stick.

He's a walking famine.

A scarecrow escaped from a cornfield.

He's odd, for sure.

KATRINA. He moves elegant-like.

NICHOLAS. He certainly do put on airs.

DAME VAN RIPPER. He has proper manners.

KATRINA. He makes a girl feel growed-up.

(BROM glowers.)

MARGARET. He's a breath of fresh air.

BROM. I feel an ill wind.

(The children have set up the benches and chairs that form the schoolhouse. They begin to play "London Bridge": Everyone sings the familiar tune [see Appendix A], while two children stand on benches and form an arch with their hands. The others pass underneath. At the end of each stanza the hands of the archbridge fall and take someone as prisoner. The prisoner chooses "sides," i.e., he/she joins one of the bridge kids for the tug of war coming up. The children curtail their boisterousness whenever VAN RIPPER is in the room.)

VAN RIPPER. Here we are. You may hold your choir practices here in the schoolhouse as well, and you can sleep on the bench.

ICHABOD. You made mention in your letter that we'd discuss my additional fee for directing the choir.

VAN RIPPER. No extry fee is possible right now. Perhaps next year.

ICHABOD. And there was to be a real bed... *(No reply.)*
Where shall I eat?

GRETCHEN. Papa, he can sup with us tonight.

VAN RIPPER *(awkwardly)*. My family will be pleased to have you eat with us this fortnight.

MARGARET. I will show you the way, Master Crane.

ICHABOD. I thank you kindly, Miss—

MARGARET. My name is Margaret, sir. This is my sister Gretchen.