

Excerpt terms and conditions



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

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

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

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

Dramatic Publishing

RIP VAN WINKLE

**from the story
by
Washington Irving**

**dramatized
by
Charlotte B. Chorpensing**



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

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty fees are given in our current catalogue and are subject to change without notice. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed anytime it is acted before an audience. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to: THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, 311 Washington St., Woodstock, Illinois 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR HIS AGENT
THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES.

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

©MCMXXXVIII by
CHARLOTTE B. CHORPENNING
©MCMLIV by
CHARLOTTE B. CHORPENNING
Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(RIP VAN WINKLE)

ISBN 0-87129-050-2

RIP VAN WINKLE

A Play in Three Acts

CHARACTERS

YOUNG RIP
RIP VAN WINKLE
WOUTER GARDINIER
MAYKEN VAN TWILLER
KATRINA VAN SHAICK
RYCHIE VEDDER
JUDITH VAN WINKLE
DAME VAN WINKLE
DERRICK VAN BUMMEL
DAME VAN SHAICK
DOMINIE VAN SHAICK
NICHOLAS VEDDER
DAME VEDDER
DAME VAN BUMMEL
HENRICK HUDSON
HUDSON'S CREW (4 or 5 EXTRAS)
ABIGAIL
NICKY
PETE
BETSY
HANNAH
ELISHA

TIME: 1771 and twenty years later.

PLACE: A small village in the Catskill mountains.

RIP VAN WINKLE was first produced at the Goodman Memorial Theatre, Chicago, in 1938.

ACT 1.

Dominie's parlor, in the village of Falling Waters,
in the Catskill Mountains, September 18, 1771.
Late afternoon.

ACT 2, Scene 1.

High in the Catskills. Night of the same day.

ACT 2, Scene 2.

Same as Scene 1, twenty years later, with evidence of
the lapse of time.
Early morning.

ACT III, Same as Act 1.

George Washington's picture takes the place of
that of King George.
Afternoon of the same day.

ACT ONE

SCENE: *DOMINIE SHAICK's parlor, in the village of Falling Waters, in the Catskill Mountains, September 18, 1771. The room is dominated by a painting of Hendrick Hudson, brought from Holland, with the furnishing, at the time of the settlement. A newer note is a portrait of George III, with the British flag draped over it. A sizable model of the "Half Moon," Hudson's ship, stands on a small stand or mantel. Other furnishings as desired. There is a window, out of which RIP can climb, and two doors, an inner and an outer. The outer door should open in and show a huge brass knocker. A blue and white tiled fireplace would add to the authenticity of the set, and be added interest. The outer door is open.*

AT RISE: *It is late afternoon. RIP is sitting in the middle of the parlor finishing a small copied model of the ship "Half Moon." His hunting gun stands in a corner. He is surrounded by children of about eleven or twelve. JUDITH, his daughter, neat but ragged, half-starved but in no way piteous; KATRINA VAN SHAICK, dainty, rosy, beautifully dressed; MAYKEN VAN TWILLER, an intense, imaginative child, well kept; RYCHIE VEDDER, the rosy little daughter of the prosperous innkeeper; and WOUTER GARDINIER, a sturdy son of well-to-do Dutch folk. At the window, dreamily looking*

out, is *YOUNG RIP*, as ragged and unkempt as his *FATHER*.

YOUNG RIP (*more to himself than to the others*). It's going to storm—The clouds are chasing each other. (*A far-away roll of thunder attracts no one's attention.*)

RIP (*holding up the toy ship*). So, Captain Wouter Gardiner, here is your good ship *Half Moon*, made so fine as Rip can make it. Yah!

WOUTER. Thank you, Rip Van Winkle! (*He carries it to the model, to compare it.*) It's just exactly like the model of the real one!

MAYKEN. Did Hudson's ship really look like that?

KATRINA (*looking at model*). It says so here. Wouter, read it to me.

WOUTER (*reading from plate on the model*). "A true model of the good ship *Half Moon* wherein Master Hendrick Hudson first sailed up the Hudson River, and anchored at the site of the village of Falling Waters, Sept. 18, 1609."

RYCHIE. September 18!

MAYKEN. It's today.

YOUNG RIP. The sumac was turning red, and the golden-rod was out, like now. (*Another low rumble of thunder.*)

WOUTER (*holding up the copy*). It's better than the one Ichabod Vedder's father brought him from New York. And that was made in London.

RIP. Bye-and-bye we go where the water is still and sail her, yah? (*The CHILDREN clap their hands.*)

WOUTER. Now! Let's go now! (*ALL are up, eager to be off.*)

RIP (*rising enthusiastically*). Yah! (*RIP shrugs his shoulders, casts up his eyes, and shakes his head. A characteristic gesture at thought or sight of his wife.*) What excuse should I offer Dame Van Winkle? I promise her I fix the fence this morning. And so soon as this, comes night tiptoe down the mountain and catch me without one stone lifted yet! Yah—I'm going to have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle if I don't get quick home! (*Picks up a kite which lies at his feet, and begins to work on it.*)

JUDITH (*softly*). Mother'll be coming to look for you, Father.

RIP (*shrugs*). She don't like me when she find me. What makes it she always come to look for me?

JUDITH (*coaxing*). We'd better go right away.

RIP (*patting her hand*). Bye-and-bye, Judy. Bye-and-bye!

JUDITH (*insistent*). Mother'll be worse than ever.

RIP (*hurt*). You wouldn't get cross with me, like your mother, would you, Judy?

JUDITH (*throws her arms around him*). I'll never be cross with you!

RIP (*deeply touched*). I don't know how I got so fine a girl as you. (*Sudden chuckle.*) Don't know how your mother did, neither.

JUDITH. You're forgetting the fence again, Father.

RIP (*a little plaintive, entirely sincere*). I'm going to fix that fence, Judy. Don't you believe me? Of course I'm going to fix that fence. (*Brightening.*) I got a wonderful plan about it. I fix it a whole new way. I show you something fine for a fence. Your mother's going to be nice to me when she see it. She say, "Rip, that's fine!" Yah! Only I got to mend this kite, don't I? Little feller going to break his heart if I don't. Can't stand it for

little fellers to swallow back tears. No, no, no. It's better they should laugh.

DAME VAN WINKLE (*off*). Rip! Rip Van Winkle!

RIP (*on his feet like a shot*). I go now. I got to fix the fence. (*Yelp of a dog, off. DAME VAN WINKLE, off, at the same time.*)

DAME VAN WINKLE (*off*). Wolf! Get out of there!

RIP. Hey! You don't kick my dog—Well anyway, he's run off now.

DAME VAN WINKLE (*still off*). Rip! I know you're there! I see your dog!

RIP (*backing from the front door*). Oh, my! It's better I don't meet her. Since morning she keeps her tongue hot for me. I don't like that kind of talk, what's been waiting so long. No, sir. It makes me feel bad. (*He vanishes through the inner door, but sticks his head back. Earnestly.*) Right away I fix the fence, Judy. You tell her. (*He shuts the door after him.*)

YOUNG RIP. It's better we go, too.

JUDITH. I have to tell her father's fixing the fence.

WOUTER. We mustn't any of us go. We have to stand by Judy. (*YOUNG RIP turns back to the window as the nearest thing to escape. The OTHERS brace themselves.*)

(*DAME VAN WINKLE appears in the open doorway.*)

DAME VAN WINKLE. Does anyone know where Rip Van Wink—(*Seeing JUDITH and YOUNG RIP.*) Where's your father?!

JUDITH. He's gone home, to fix the fence.

DAME VAN WINKLE (*shaking her head grimly*). I just came from there.

JUDITH. He just went.

DAME VAN WINKLE. I didn't meet him.

WOUTER. He went the back way.

DAME VAN WINKLE. It's a pretty time of day to start on the fence! He promised to fix it this morning.

JUDITH. He meant to, Mother.

DAME VAN WINKLE. He always means to! What good does that do me? Does it keep the cows out of the garden? Can we eat the corn and potatoes he *meant* to grow? I'll tell him some things! (*Starts to go.*)

YOUNG RIP. That's why he doesn't want to go home.

DAME VAN WINKLE. Rip, you young chip off the old block, what are you doing here?

YOUNG RIP. Watching the clouds.

DAME VAN WINKLE (*snorts*). Clouds! In Dominic Van Shaick's parlor! Who opened up this room? Who took down those shutters? Who unlocked the front door, and let in all this light on Dame Van Shaick's best things? I know who it was. There's only one in the whole village fool enough to open up a parlor on a week-day! It was your father, that's who it was! His own house goes to rack and ruin, but that's not enough for him! He must break into another man's parlor with a pack of children at his heels. The finest room in the finest house in town. Look at that litter on the floor!! Oh, he thought I wouldn't find him here. He thought he could fritter away his whole day on toys for other people's children while the cows eat up the garden that should keep his own from starving. Ships he makes for you, does he?! And the dasher to my butter churn is broke this week, and the roof leaks all summer, and the fence is down—

JUDITH. He's gone home to fix it now.

DAME VAN WINKLE. Maybe he has and maybe he only meant to. I'll look into that—I'll give him an earful.
(*She rages out the door.*)

KATRINA. Why didn't you tell her Mother said we could come in here?

WOUTER. Why didn't you? It was your place. This is your house.

KATRINA. My mouth was dry. It wouldn't talk.

JUDITH. It's no use to say anything to her, anyway.

(*RIP peeks in from the kitchen.*)

RIP. Is she gone?

JUDITH. Father!—I told her you'd gone home to fix the fence.

RIP. I meant to, Judy, but in the kitchen was all the women working hard at Dame Van Shaick's quilting bee. I had to be friendly with those women, didn't I? Your mother is so kind to us, Katrina, she lets us come in the parlor and look at the model of Hendrick's ship while I whittled ours. I had to help her with her party after that, didn't I, Judy?

WOUTER (*disillusioned*). Do you know how to quilt, like women?

RIP. Hey, what you think! I'm fishin' and huntin'. I run errands for the women, and chop wood for 'em, and fix fences for 'em—(*CHILDREN giggle.*) Well, anyway—I want they should feel happy like we do in here, so I tell 'em a story. (*Chuckles.*) They all got the shivers on it.

CHILDREN (*running to him*). Story! Tell it to us!

RIP. No, no, no, I tell you that one too many times already. It was only the one about old Hendrick there,

(*Indicates the picture.*) and the crew that sailed his ship for him.

MAYKEN. You mean how they come back every twenty years and play ninepins in the mountains?

RIP (*looking up at picture*). Yah! I think you want to keep an eye on your river, old feller, and see how we behave ourselves in your mountains.

WOUTER (*contemptuous*). Did the women believe that story?

RIP. It made their eyes stick out.

MAYKEN. Rip, do you believe it?

RIP. Believe what?

MAYKEN. That Hudson comes back every twenty years?

RIP. It's a nice story! I like it when they play ninepins, and the rolling of their balls makes thunder far away. And when old Hendrick lights his pipe it makes lightning. Yah! That's very nice.

MAYKEN. But do you think it's true?

RIP. How should I know if I do or not?

MAYKEN. But you must know whether you believe it.

RIP. I believe it when I tell it.

MAYKEN. But if it's really true, it doesn't make any difference whether you are telling it or not.

RIP. Yah! Yah! I could be believing it and it might not be so. And I could be not believing it, and it might be so. (*Chuckles.*) It's like coming down the mountain in a fog. You might think you was somewhere and all the time you was somewhere else.

MAYKEN (*looking at picture*). He looks straight at me. I don't believe he can come back. It's too long ago.

YOUNG RIP (*still at window*). The clouds look like a ship. (*The other CHILDREN run to look out the window. RIP sits looking front, nodding at his fancies as*

the thunder rolls. A slow twinkling smile spreads over HUDSON's face, without any movement of large muscles. The picture is really an actor behind the frame.)

MAYKEN. Rip—

RIP (*startled at her tone*). Yah?

MAYKEN. The picture laughed at me. (*The smile fades.*)

RIP. Yah? Playing tricks on old Rip again, eh? Maybe I don't look this time.

MAYKEN. It isn't now, but it did. (*RIP looks at picture and finds it laughing at him too. The eyes are looking into his with quizzical intentness. RIP moves and the eyes follow him. He scratches his head and moves back again. The eyes still follow.*)

RIP. Hey!

DAME VAN WINKLE (*off*). Don't try to get away from me, Nicholas Vedder!

RIP. My fence! Oh my!

DAME VAN WINKLE (*off*). You needn't hide behind that newspaper, Derrick Van Bummel. You can hear me just the same.

RIP. I go through the window, yah? It's better I don't go through the kitchen once more.

JUDITH. She'll see you, Father. Go through the kitchen.

RIP. I'm fixing it right away. Judy, you tell her. (*He ducks out of sight as the clamor outside grows.*)

(NICHOLAS VEDDER appears in the doorway puffing, pipe in mouth; DERRICK follows, waving his newspaper, and DAME VAN WINKLE crowds after both of them. NICHOLAS knocks violently, nodding furiously at DAME VAN WINKLE as he does so, and puffing out clouds of smoke.)

DERRICK. It is the Dominie and his good wife we come to see, not you. (*NICHOLAS approves this with violent nods, a puff of smoke on each, as DAME VAN WINKLE talks. [Appropriate "business" here can be substituted for real smoking.]*)

DAME VAN WINKLE. It won't matter if you call the Dominie. It won't matter if you call his wife and all the women at her quilting bee. You shall go back with me and unlock your inn. I want to know where Rip Van Winkle is, and if you won't tell me, I'll look for myself. I know you let him in where I couldn't see him when you heard me call.

DERRICK. We have informed you that your spouse has not been with his companions at the tavern this entire day.

DAME VAN WINKLE. I don't want to be informed. I want the truth! I want to know where Rip Van Winkle went, and I will know!

(*DOMINIE and DAME VAN SHAICK enter hastily.*)

DAME VAN SHAICK. Is it you knocking so loudly, Nicholas Vedder? What brought you away from your inn? (*NICHOLAS indicates DAME VAN WINKLE with his thumb and a great puff on his pipe.*)

DERRICK. We seek peace and quiet.

DOMINIE. Come in, Nicholas; come in, Derrick Van Bummel; good day to you, Dame Van Winkle.

DAME VAN SHAICK. Come out to the kitchen. Our quilting is done. We're just setting out tea.

DAME VAN WINKLE. Oh, no! they don't go out to the kitchen till they tell me where is Rip!

(DAME VAN BUMMEL and DAME VEDDER come in to see what the ruction is about.)

NICHOLAS (*terrific outburst*). I don't know!

RYCHIE. Listen to my grandpa!

DAME VAN WINKLE. That'll be enough out of you, Rychie Vedder.

RYCHIE. You be careful or I'll get my big brother after you.

DAME VAN WINKLE. Be quiet, you saucy chit! (*Turning to NICHOLAS.*) You know, and you will tell. Rip was here when I came. He said he meant to fix the fence. He isn't at the fence. He isn't in the house. He hasn't gone to the mountains, because his fishing pole is home. He left it in the way and I stumbled on it. (*Pointing.*) And there's his gun! Where does he spend his time when he isn't fishing or hunting or playing with the children like a fool? Where do all you men go? You, Dominie Van Shaick? You, Derrick Van Bummel? To idle away your time on a bench in the sun, you lazy louts! You get to your inn! You're the pest of this village—

DAME VEDDER. Hold your tongue, Dame. It would be a sorry day for Rip if my husband took his inn away. A man has to have some place to go to get away from the likes of you. It's a heartening thing for a henpecked soul to sit in the sun and be jolly with the men.

DAME VAN WINKLE. He's jolly, yah! But what of his fences? What of his garden? What of the food for his table? What of his wife and children? Yah! Just you let me catch him sitting in the sun once again. I'll hearten him—I'll—(*NICHOLAS puffs smoke into her face and she chokes.*)

DAME VAN BUMMEL. It's your own fault if Rip neglects his garden and his house. Try giving him a kind word.

DAME VAN SHAICK. He's a simple, good-natured fellow. He never refuses to help a friend even in the roughest toil. He'll run an errand any time. He's more obliging than my husband, if the truth were told.

DOMINIE (*good-natured*). Shoosh—shoosh—

DAME VEDDER. He's always doing odd jobs for us. He's the foremost man in all the country round at the frolics for husking corn—and building fences, too.

DAME VAN WINKLE. Ya-a-h! He's ready to tend to everybody's business but his own.

DAME VAN SHAICK. You should have seen how merry he was, and full of his stories out in the kitchen just now.

DAME VAN WINKLE. Just now!

DAME VAN SHAICK. Just now! It's hardly ten minutes since he left.

DAME VEDDER. You see? You do my Nicholas wrong. Yah!

DAME VAN WINKLE (*turns on JUDITH with slowly gathering wrath*). Yah!! Judith!

JUDITH (*trembling*). Yes, ma'am?

DAME VAN WINKLE. Did your father lie to you?

JUDITH. No-o-o.

DAME VAN WINKLE. Then it was you! You lied to me!

JUDITH. No—

DAME VAN WINKLE. Didn't you tell me your father had gone to fix the fence?

JUDITH. Yes.

DAME VAN WINKLE. And he was in the kitchen all the time.

JUDITH. Yes.

DAME VAN WINKLE. You lied to me. You took that loafer's part against me! Haven't you any spirit? You go in rags, you haven't a decent roof over your head, you are half starved; all because your father wastes his time making toys, and going to frolics, and sitting in the sun. And you take his part. You lie to me—

WOUTER. No, she didn't. It was true.

KATRINA. He—he—told her he was going.

DAME VAN WINKLE. Hold your tongue, you pert little dressed-up saucebox! Don't put on airs with me.

DOMINIE. Gently, gently. Our Katrina isn't used to hearing talk of that kind.

DAME VAN WINKLE. She'll hear what I choose to say, Dominie. Her ears are no better than anybody's else. She needn't go telling me about my Judith. I know my girl. She's a bad ungrateful child. I work my fingers off for her, and she takes her father's part against me. You tried to keep him from me, you bad, wicked creature, you. You lied to me about him!

(RIP sticks his head in through window.)

DAME VAN WINKLE *(to JUDITH)*. You come home. I'll settle with you.

RIP. Hey! Don't say that sort of thing. Judy don't do like that! *(DAME VAN WINKLE gets him by the hair. There is a general outcry.)*

DAME VAN WINKLE. Oh, so!!

RIP. What you doing, Mother?—Don't do such a thing, my dear. Don't you hear the people? They think you don't act kind. Let go, my dear.

DAME VAN WINKLE. I won't.