

# *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*



*by Washington Irving*



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Jazzy Books

1233 Pennsylvania Avenue

San Francisco, CA 94909

[www.Jazzybooks.com](http://www.Jazzybooks.com)

Ordering Information:

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Printed in the United States of America



Dedication

*To fans of short stories everywhere*

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# Chapter One



In the bosom of one of those spacious coves which indent the eastern shore of the Hudson, at that broad expansion of the river denominated by the ancient Dutch navigators the Tappan Zee, and where they always prudently shortened sail and implored the protection of Saint Nicholas, there lies a small market town which is generally known by the name of Tarry Town. This name was given by the good housewives of the adjacent country from the inveterate propensity of their husbands to linger about the village tavern on market days. Not far from this village, perhaps about two miles, there is a little valley among high hills which is one of the quietest places in the whole world. A small brook murmurs through it and, with the occasional whistle of a quail or tapping of a woodpecker, is almost the only sound that ever breaks the uniform tranquillity.

From the listless repose of the place, this sequestered glen has long been known by the name of Sleepy Hollow. Some say that the place was bewitched during the early days of the Dutch settlement; others, that an old Indian chief, the wizard of his tribe, held his powwows there before the country was discovered by Master Hendrick Hudson. Certain it is, the place still continues under the sway of some witching power that holds a spell

over the minds of the descendants of the original settlers. They are given to all kinds of marvelous beliefs, are subject to trances and visions, and frequently hear music and voices in the air. The whole neighborhood abounds with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions.

The dominant spirit that haunts this enchanted region is the apparition of a figure on horseback without a head. It is said to be the ghost of a Hessian trooper, whose head had been carried away by a cannonball in some nameless battle during the Revolutionary War, and who is ever seen by the countryfolk, hurrying along in the gloom of the night as if on the wings of the wind. Historians of those parts allege that the body of the trooper having been buried in the yard of a church at no great distance, the ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head; and that the rushing speed with which he sometimes passes along the Hollow is owing to his being in a hurry to get back to the churchyard before daybreak. The specter is known, at all the country firesides, by the name of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.



## Chapter Two



It is remarkable that this visionary propensity is not confined to native inhabitants of this little retired Dutch valley, but is unconsciously imbibed by everyone who resides there for a time. However wide-awake they may have been before they entered that sleepy region, they are sure, in a little time, to inhale the witching influence of the air and begin to grow imaginative, to dream dreams, and see apparitions.

In this by-place of nature there abode, some thirty years since, a worthy wight of the name of Ichabod Crane, a native of Connecticut, who "tarried" in Sleepy Hollow for the purpose of instructing the children of the vicinity. He was tall and exceedingly 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 head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weathercock perched upon his spindle neck, to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

His schoolhouse was a low building of one large

room, rudely constructed of logs. It stood in a rather lonely but pleasant situation, just at the foot of a woody hill, with a brook running close by, and a formidable birch tree growing at one end of it. From hence the low murmur of his pupils' voices, conning over their lessons, might be heard on a drowsy summer's day, interrupted now and then by the voice of the master in a tone of menace or command; or by the appalling sound of the birch as he urged some wrongheaded Dutch urchin along the flowery path of knowledge. All this he called "doing his duty," and he never inflicted a chastisement without following it by the assurance, so consolatory to the smarting urchin, that "he would remember it, and thank him for it the longest day he had to live.

When school hours were over, Ichabod was even the companion and playmate of the larger boys; and on holiday afternoons would convoy some of the smaller ones home, who happened to have pretty sisters, or good housewives for mothers, noted for the comforts of the cupboard. Indeed it behooved him to keep on good terms with his pupils. The revenue arising from his school would have been scarcely sufficient to furnish him with daily bread, for he was a huge feeder and, though lank, had the dilating powers of an anaconda. To help out his maintenance he was, according to custom in those parts, boarded and lodged at the homes of his pupils a week at a time;

thus going the rounds of the neighborhood, with all his worldly effects tied up in a cotton handkerchief.



## Chapter Three



That this might not be too onerous for his rustic patrons, he assisted the farmers occasionally by helping to make hay, mending the fences, and driving the cows from pasture. He laid aside, too, all the dominant dignity with which he lorded it in the school, and became wonderfully gentle and ingratiating. He found favor in the eyes of the mothers by petting the children, particularly the youngest, and he would sit with a child on one knee, and rock a cradle with his foot for whole hours together.

In addition to his other vocations, he was the singing master of the neighborhood, and picked up many bright shillings by instructing the young folks in psalmody. Thus, by divers little makeshifts, the worthy pedagogue got on tolerably enough and was thought, by all who understood nothing of the labor of headwork, 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 kind of idle, gentlemanlike personage, of vastly superior taste and accomplishments to the rough country swains. How he would figure among the country damsels 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; while the more bashful bumpkins hung sheepishly back, envying his superior elegance and address.

He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, for he had read several books quite through, and was a perfect master of Cotton Mather's 'History of New England Witchcraft'. His appetite for the marvelous was extraordinary. It was often his delight, after his school was dismissed, to stretch himself on the clover bordering the little brook and there con over old Mather's direful tales in the gathering dusk. Then, as he wended his way to the farmhouse where he happened to be quartered, every sound of nature, the boding cry of the tree toad, the dreary hooting of the screech owl, fluttered his excited imagination. His only resource on such occasions was to sing psalm tunes; and the good people of Sleepy Hollow were often filled with awe at hearing his nasal melody floating along the dusky road.

## Chapter Four



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 and spluttering along the hearth, and listen to their marvelous tales of ghosts and goblins, haunted bridges and haunted houses, and particularly of the headless horseman. But if there was a pleasure in all this while snugly cuddling in the chimney corner, it was dearly purchased by the terrors of his subsequent walk homeward. How often did he shrink with curdling awe at some rushing blast, howling among the trees of a snowy night, in the idea that it was the Galloping Hessian of the Hollow!

All these, however, were mere phantoms of the dark. Daylight put mend to all these evils. He would have passed a pleasant life of it if his path had not been crossed by a being that causes more perplexity to mortal man than ghosts, goblins, and the whole race of witches put together, and that was -- a woman.

Among the musical disciples who assembled, one evening in each week, to receive his instructions in psalmody was Katrina Van Tassel, the only child of a substantial Dutch farmer. She was a blooming lass of fresh eighteen, plump as a par-

tridge, ripe and melting and rosy-cheeked as one of her father's peaches, and universally famed, not merely for her beauty, but her vast expectations. She was withal a little of a coquette, as might be perceived in her dress. She wore ornaments of pure yellow gold to set off her charms, and a provokingly short petticoat to display the prettiest foot and ankle in the country round.

Ichabod Crane had a soft and foolish heart toward the sex; and it is not to be wondered at that so tempting a morsel soon found favor in his eyes, more especially after he had visited her in her paternal mansion. Old Baltus Van Tassel was a perfect picture of a thriving, contented, liberal-hearted farmer. He seldom, it is true, sent either his eyes or his thoughts beyond the boundaries of his own farm; but within those everything was snug, happy, and abundant.



## Chapter Five



The Van Tassel stronghold was situated on the banks of the Hudson, in one of those green, sheltered, fertile nooks in which the Dutch farmers are so fond of nestling. 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. Hard by the farmhouse was a vast barn, every window and crevice of which seemed bursting forth with the treasures of the farm. Rows of pigeons were enjoying the sunshine on the roof. Sleek unwieldy porkers were grunting in the repose and abundance of their pens. A stately squadron of snowy geese were riding in an adjoining pond, convoying whole fleets of ducks; regiments of turkeys were gobbling through the farmyard.

The pedagogue's mouth watered as he looked upon this sumptuous promise of luxurious winter fare. In his devouring mind's eye he pictured to himself every roasting pig running about with an apple in his mouth; the pigeons were snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie, and tucked in with a coverlet of crust.

As the enraptured 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 orchard, burdened with

ruddy fruit, which surrounded the warm tenement of Van Tassel, his heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his imagination expanded with the idea how they might be readily turned into cash, and the money invested in immense tracts of wild land, and shingle palaces in the wilderness. His busy fancy already presented to him the blooming Katrina, with a whole family of children, mounted on the top of a wagon loaded with household trumpery; and he beheld himself bestriding 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 low-sloping roofs, built in the style handed down from the first Dutch settlers, the projecting eaves forming a piazza along the front. From the piazza the wondering Ichabod entered the hall, which formed the center of the mansion. Here, rows of resplendent pewter, ranged on a long dresser, dazzled his eyes. In one corner stood a huge bag of wool ready to be spun; ears of Indian corn and strings of dried apples and peaches hung in gay festoons along the walls; and a door left ajar gave him a peep into the best parlor, where the claw-footed chairs and dark mahogany tables shone like mirrors. Mock oranges and conch shells decorated the mantelpiece; strings of various colored birds' eggs were suspended above

it, and a corner cupboard, knowingly left open, displayed immense treasures of old silver and well-mended china.



## Chapter Six



From the moment Ichabod laid his eyes upon these regions of delight, the peace of his mind was at an end, and his only study was how to win the heart of the peerless daughter of Van Tassel. In this enterprise, however, he had to encounter a host of rustic admirers, who kept a watchful and angry eye upon each other, but were ready to fly out in the common cause against any new competitor. Among these the most formidable was a burly, roaring, roistering blade of the name of Brom Van Brunt, the hero of the country round, which rang with his feats of strength and hardihood. He was broad-shouldered, with short curly black hair, and a bluff but not unpleasant countenance, having a mingled air of fun and arrogance. From his Herculean frame, he had received the nickname of "Brom Bones." He was famed for great skill in horsemanship; he was foremost at all races and cockfights; and, with the ascendancy which bodily strength acquires in rustic life, was the umpire in all disputes. He was always ready for either a fight or a frolic, but had more mischief and good humor than ill will in his composition. He had three or four boon companions who regarded him as their model, and at the head of whom he scoured the country, attending every scene of feud or merriment for miles round. Sometimes his crew would be heard dashing along past the farmhous-

es at midnight, with whoop and halloo, and the old dames would exclaim, "Aye, there goes Brom Bones and his gang!"

This hero had for some time singled out the blooming Katrina for the object of his uncouth gallantries; and though his amorous toyings were something like the gentle caresses of a bear, yet it was whispered that she did not altogether discourage his hopes. Certain it is, his advances were signals for rival candidates to retire; insomuch that, when his horse was seen tied to Van Tassel's paling on a Sunday night, all other suitors passed by in despair.

Such was the formidable rival with whom Ichabod Crane had to contend. Considering all things, a stouter man than he would have shrunk from the competition. Ichabod had, however, a happy mixture of pliability and perseverance in his nature; he was in form and spirit like a supplejack - though he bent, he never broke.

## Chapter Seven



To have taken the field openly against his rival would have been madness.

Ichabod, therefore, made his advances in a quiet and gently insinuating manner. Under cover of his character of singing master, he had made frequent visits at the farmhouse, carrying on his suit with the daughter by the side of the spring under the great elm, while Balt Van Tassel sat smoking his evening pipe at one end of the piazza and his little wife plied her spinning wheel at the other.

I profess not to know how women's hearts are wooed and won. To me they have always been matters of riddle and admiration. But certain it is that from the moment Ichabod Crane made his advances, the interests of Brom Bones declined; his horse was no longer seen tied at the paiings on Sunday nights, and a deadly feud gradually arose between him and the schoolmaster of Sleepy Hollow. Brom would fain have carried matters to open warfare, and Ichabod had overheard a boast by Bones that he would "double the schoolmaster up, and lay him on a shelf of his own schoolhouse"; but Ichabod was too wary to give him an opportunity. Brom had no alternative but to play off boorish practical jokes upon his rival. Bones and his gang of rough riders smoked out Ichabod's singing school by stopping up the chimney; broke into the

schoolhouse at night and turned everything topsy-turvy. But what was still more annoying, Brom took opportunities of turning him to ridicule in presence of his mistress, and had a scoundrel dog whom he taught to whine in the most ludicrous manner, and introduced as a rival of Ichabod's to instruct Katrina in psalmody.

In this way matters went on for some time. On a fine autumnal afternoon, Ichabod, in pensive mood, sat enthroned on the lofty stool whence he usually watched all the concerns of his little schoolroom. His scholars were all busily intent upon their books, or slyly whispering behind them with one eye kept upon the master; and a kind of buzzing stillness reigned. It was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a Negro, mounted on the back of a ragged colt. He came clattering up to the school door with an invitation to Ichabod to attend a merrymaking to be held that evening at Mynheer Van Tassel's.



## Chapter Eight



It was now bustle and hubbub in the lately quiet schoolroom. The scholars were hurried through their lessons, without stopping at trifles; those who were tardy had a smart application now and then in the rear to quicken their speed, and the whole school was turned loose an hour before the usual time.

The gallant Ichabod now spent at least an extra half hour at his toilet, brushing and furbishing up his only suit, of rusty black. That he might make his appearance in the true style of a cavalier, he borrowed a horse from the farmer with whom he was staying. The animal was a broken-down plow horse that had outlived almost everything but his viciousness. He was gaunt and shaggy, with a ewe 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 his day he must have had fire and mettle, if we may judge from the name he bore of 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; his sharp elbows stuck out like grasshoppers'; he carried his whip perpendicularly in his hand, like

a scepter, and, as his horse jogged on, the motion of his arms was not unlike the flapping of a pair of wings. A small wool hat rested nearly on the top of his nose, and the skirts of his black coat fluttered out almost to the horse's tail.

Around him nature wore that rich and golden livery which we always associate with the idea of abundance. As he jogged slowly on his way, his eye ranged with delight over the treasures of jolly autumn. On all sides he beheld vast stores of apples gathered into baskets and barrels for the market, others heaped up in rich piles for the cider press. Farther on he beheld great fields of Indian corn, and the yellow pumpkins lying beneath them, turning up their fair round bellies to the sun. He passed the fragrant buckwheat fields, and as he beheld them, soft anticipations stole over his mind of dainty slapjacks, well buttered and garnished with honey by the delicate little dimpled hand of Katrina Van Tassel. It was toward evening that Ichabod arrived at the castle of the Eleer Van Tassel, which he found thronged with the pride and flower of the adjacent country. Old farmers, a spare leathern-faced race, in homespun coats and breeches, blue stockings, huge shoes, and magnificent pewter buckles. Their brisk withered little dames, in close crimped caps, longwaisted short gowns, homespun petticoats, and gay calico pockets hanging on the outside. Buxom lasses, almost as antiquated in dress as their mothers, excepting

where a straw hat, a fine ribbon, or perhaps a white frock gave symptoms of city innovation. The sons, in short square-skirted coats with rows of stupendous brass buttons, and their hair generally queued with an eelskin in the fashion of the times, eelskins being esteemed as a potent nourisher and strengthener of the hair. 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 mettle and mischief, and which no one but himself could manage.



## Chapter Nine



Ichabod was a kind and thankful creature, whose spirits rose with eating as some men's do with drink. He could not help rolling his large eyes round him on the ample charms of a genuine Dutch country tea table in the sumptuous time of autumn. Such heaped-up platters of cakes and crullers of various kinds, known only to experienced Dutch housewives! And then there were apple pies and peach pies and pumpkin pies, besides slices of ham and smoked beef; and, moreover, delectable dishes of preserved plums, and peaches, and pears, and quinces, not to mention broiled shad and roasted chickens; together with bowls of milk and cream, with the motherly teapot sending up its clouds of vapor from the midst. Ichabod chuckled with the possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of almost unimaginable luxury and splendor. Then, he thought, how soon he'd turn his back upon the old schoolhouse and snap his fingers in the face of every niggardly patron!

And now the sound of the music from the hall summoned to the dance. The musician was an old gray-headed Negro, who had been the itinerant orchestra of the neighborhood for more than half a century. His instrument was as old and battered as himself. He accompanied 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 were to start.

Ichabod prided himself upon his dancing as much as upon his vocal powers. Not a limb, not a fiber about him was idle as his loosely hung frame in full motion went clattering about the room. How could the flogger of urchins be otherwise than animated and 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.

When the dance was at an end, Ichabod was attracted to a knot of the sager folks, who, with old Van Tassel, sat smoking at one end of the piazza, gossiping over former times, and drawing out long stories about ghosts and apparitions, mourning cries and wailings, seen and heard in the neighborhood. Some mention was made of the woman in white, who haunted the dark glen at Raven Rock, and was often heard to shriek on winter nights before a storm, having perished there in the snow. The chief part of the stories, however, turned upon the favorite specter of Sleepy Hollow, the Headless Horseman, who had been heard several times of late near the bridge that crossed the brook in the woody dell next to the church; and, it was said, tethered his horse nightly among the graves

in the churchyard.





## Chapter Ten



The tale was told of old Brouwer, a most heretical disbeliever in ghosts, how he met the horseman returning from his foray into Sleepy Hollow, and was obliged to get up behind him; how they galloped over hill and swamp until they reached the church bridge. There 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 matched by Brom Bones, who made light of the Galloping Hessian as an arrant jockey. He affirmed that, on returning one night from a neighboring village, he had been overtaken by this midnight trooper; that he had offered to race with him for a bowl of punch, and should have won it, too; but just as they came to the church bridge, the Hessian bolted, and vanished in a flash of fire.

The revel now gradually broke up. The old farmers gathered together their families in their wagons, and were heard for some time rattling along over the distant hills. Some of the damsels mounted behind their favorite swains, and their lighthearted laughter, mingling with the clatter of hoofs, echoed along the silent woodlands. Ichabod only lingered behind, according to the custom of

country lovers, to have a tete-a-tete with the heir-ess, fully convinced that he was now on the high-road to success. Something, however, I fear me, must have gone wrong, for he sallied forth, after no very great interval, with an air quite desolate and chopfallen. Oh, these women! these women! Was Katrina's encouragement of the poor pedagogue all a mere trick to secure her conquest of his rival! Let it suffice to say, Ichabod stole forth with the air of one who had been sacking a henroost, rather than a fair lady's heart. Without looking to the right or left, he went straight to the stable, and with several hearty cuffs and kicks, roused his steed most uncourteously.

It was the very witching time of night that Ichabod, heavyhearted and crestfallen, pursued his travel homeward. Far below, the Tappan Zee spread its dusky waters. In the dead hush of midnight he could hear the faint barking of a watchdog from the opposite shore. 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.

# Chapter Eleven



All the stories of ghosts and goblins that he had heard earlier now came crowding upon his recollection. He would, moreover, soon be approaching the very place where many of the scenes of the ghost stories had been laid.

Just ahead, where a small brook crossed the road, a few rough logs lying side by side served for a bridge. A group of oaks and chestnuts, matted thick with wild grapevines, threw a cavernous gloom over it. Ichabod gave Gunpowder half a score of kicks in his starveling ribs, and attempted to dash briskly across the bridge; but instead of starting forward, the perverse old animal only plunged to the opposite side of the road into a thicket of brambles. He came to a stand just by the bridge, with a suddenness that nearly sent his rider sprawling over his head. Just at this moment, in the dark shadow on the margin of the brook, Ichabod beheld something huge, misshapen, black, and towering. It stirred not, but seemed gathered up in the gloom, like some gigantic monster ready to spring upon the traveler.

The hair of the affrighted schoolteacher rose upon his head, but, summoning up a show of courage, he demanded in stammering accents, "Who are you!" He received no reply. He repeat-

ed his demand in a still more agitated voice. Still there was no answer. Once more he cudgeled the sides of the inflexible Gunpowder and, shutting his eyes, broke forth with involuntary fervor into a psalm tune. Just then the shadowy object of alarm put itself in motion and, with a scramble and a bound, stood at once in the middle of the road. He appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions, and mounted on a black horse of powerful frame. He kept aloof on one side of the road, jogging along on the blind side of old Gunpowder, who had now got over his waywardness.

Ichabod quickened his steed, in hopes of leaving this midnight companion behind. The stranger, however, quickened his horse to an equal pace. Ichabod pulled up, and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind - the other did the same. His heart began to sink within him. There was something in the stranger's moody silence that was appalling. It was soon fearfully accounted for. On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow traveler in relief against the sky, gigantic in height, and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horrorstruck on perceiving that he was headless! But his horror was still more increased on observing that the stranger's head was carried before him on the pommel of the saddle.

## Chapter Twelve



Ichabod's 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 then they dashed, stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound. Ichabod's flimsy garments fluttered in the air, as he stretched his long lank body away over his horse's head in the eagerness of his flight.

They had now reached that stretch of the road which descends to Sleepy Hollow, shaded by trees for about a quarter of a mile, where it crosses the famous church bridge just before the green knoll on which stands the church.

Gunpowder, who seemed possessed with a demon, plunged headlong downhill. As yet his panic had given his unskillful rider an apparent advantage in the chase; but just as he had got halfway through the hollow, the girths of the saddle gave way, and Ichabod felt it slipping from under him. He had just time to save himself by clasping old Gunpowder round the neck when the saddle fell to the earth. He had much ado to maintain his seat, sometimes slipping on one side, sometimes on another, and sometimes jolted on the high ridge of his horse's backbone, with a violence that he

feared would cleave him asunder.

An opening in the trees now cheered him with the hopes that the church bridge was at hand. He saw the whitewashed 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 but 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 convulsive kick in the ribs, and old Gunpowder sprang upon the bridge; he thundered over the resounding planks; he gained the opposite side; and now Ichabod cast a look behind to see if his pursuer should vanish, according to rule, in a flash of fire and brimstone. Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod endeavored to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a tremendous crash - he was tumbled headlong into the dust, and Gunpowder, the black steed, and the goblin rider passed by like a whirlwind.

## Chapter Thirteen



The next morning old Gunpowder was found without his saddle, and with the bridle under his feet, soberly 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. An inquiry was set on foot, and after diligent investigation they came upon the saddle trampled in the dirt. The tracks of horses' hoofs deeply dented in the road were traced to the bridge, beyond which, on the bank of a broad part of the 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 to be discovered.

The mysterious event caused much speculation at the church on the following Sunday. Knots of gazers were collected in the churchyard, at the bridge, and at the spot where the hat and pumpkin had been found. 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 his head anymore about him. It is true, an old farmer who had been down to New York on a visit several years after brought home the intelligence

that Ichabod Crane was still alive; that he had only changed his quarters to a distant part of the country, had kept school and studied law at the same time, had turned politician, and finally had been made a justice of the Ten Pound Court. Brom Bones too, who shortly after his rival's disappearance conducted the blooming Katrina to the altar, was observed to look exceedingly knowing whenever the story of Ichabod was related, and 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. The bridge became more than ever an object of superstitious awe, and that may be the reason why the road has been altered of late years, so as to approach the church by the border of the millpond. The schoolhouse, being deserted, soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the the ghost of the unfortunate teacher; and the plowboy, loitering homeward of a still summer evening, has often fancied Ichabod's voice at a distance, chanting a melancholy psalm tune among the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow.







“But the sleepy region’s ghostly lore and grisly legends are used for more than mere fireside entertainment. Will we ever know the truth of the shattered pumpkin by the bridge? Each one must fill in the fate of the ambitious pedagogue as seems best, for Washington Irving leaves it to the reader to decide...”

Amazon Review

