

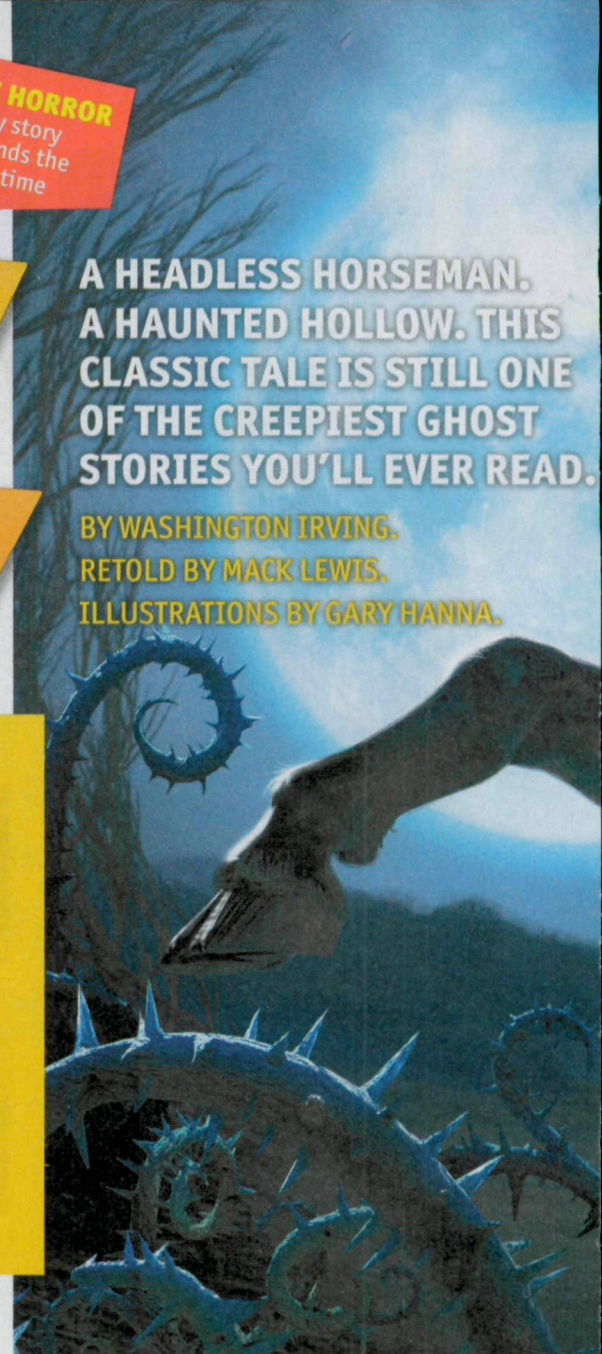
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

CLASSIC HORROR

A scary story that stands the test of time

A HEADLESS HORSEMAN. A HAUNTED HOLLOW. THIS CLASSIC TALE IS STILL ONE OF THE CREEPIEST GHOST STORIES YOU'LL EVER READ.

BY WASHINGTON IRVING.
RETOLD BY MACK LEWIS.
ILLUSTRATIONS BY GARY HANNA.



CHARACTERS

***DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER:**

Our storyteller

***STAGE DIRECTORS 1 & 2:**

Narrators of the characters' actions

OLD WOMEN 1 & 2

***ICHABOD CRANE:** The superstitious schoolmaster

KATRINA VAN TASSEL:

The village beauty

***BROM BONES:**

The village brute

BALTUS VAN TASSEL:

Katrina's father

VAN AX

VAN RIPPER

VANDERBLOOD

BROUWER

**indicates large speaking role*



CHECK IT OUT

AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR:

Secret Clues

Authors often put clues in their stories so readers can predict what might happen later on. This technique is called "foreshadowing."

Can you find two examples of foreshadowing? HINT: Look closely at Knickerbocker's lines.

SCENE 1

SLEEPY HOLLOW

KNICKERBOCKER: I was never one for ghost stories, not 'til I happened upon a little village called Sleepy Hollow. Had I not seen it for myself, I would have dismissed it as a bit of superstition, but this . . . I shudder to think of it!

STAGE DIRECTOR 1: A lanky fellow

enters, reading a book. As he walks, he absentmindedly whistles "Yankee Doodle."

KNICKERBOCKER: My name is Diedrich Knickerbocker. The year was 1790, and as I wandered the drowsy shadows of the Hollow, I encountered a man named Ichabod Crane.

OLD WOMAN 1: Look there. Here



Washington Irving got his idea for the Headless Horseman (above) from an old German folktale.

comes the new schoolmaster.

OLD WOMAN 2: Good afternoon, Schoolmaster.

ICHABOD (*startled*): Why, good afternoon, ladies.

KNICKERBOCKER: He was very tall, with long arms and hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves. His small head had enormous ears and a long nose.

OLD WOMAN 1: Will you be attending the Van Tassels' party tonight?

ICHABOD: That I will. I merely need to retrieve my horse for the ride home.

OLD WOMAN 2: Well, you enjoy yourself, Schoolmaster. But be wary. There's mischief in the air.

STAGE DIRECTOR 2: Ichabod bows, then returns to his reading and whistling.

KNICKERBOCKER: Wary indeed! It's said the Hollow is bewitched. The people are given to all kinds of marvelous superstitions . . . including the Legend of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

SCENE 2

THE VAN TASSELS' ESTATE

KNICKERBOCKER: Ichabod



rode a broken-down plow horse. This horse was all skin and bones, and his tail was knotted with burrs. Still, he must have had some spark in his day, for he went by the name Gunpowder.

STAGE DIRECTOR 1: Ichabod dismounts in front of a huge estate.

KNICKERBOCKER: It was nearly evening when Ichabod arrived at the Van Tassels'. Katrina Van Tassel was as rosy-cheeked as one of her father's peaches. From the moment Ichabod laid eyes upon her, his only thought was how to gain her affections.

KATRINA: Good evening, Master Crane. Welcome to our home.

ICHABOD (*clearing his throat*): Why, thank you, Miss Katrina.

KNICKERBOCKER: But Ichabod wasn't the only one interested in Katrina. Another was a burly, roaring hero of the countryside known as Brom Bones. Whenever a prank or brawl flustered the town, the simple folk of Sleepy Hollow always shook their heads and guessed Brom Bones was at the bottom of it.

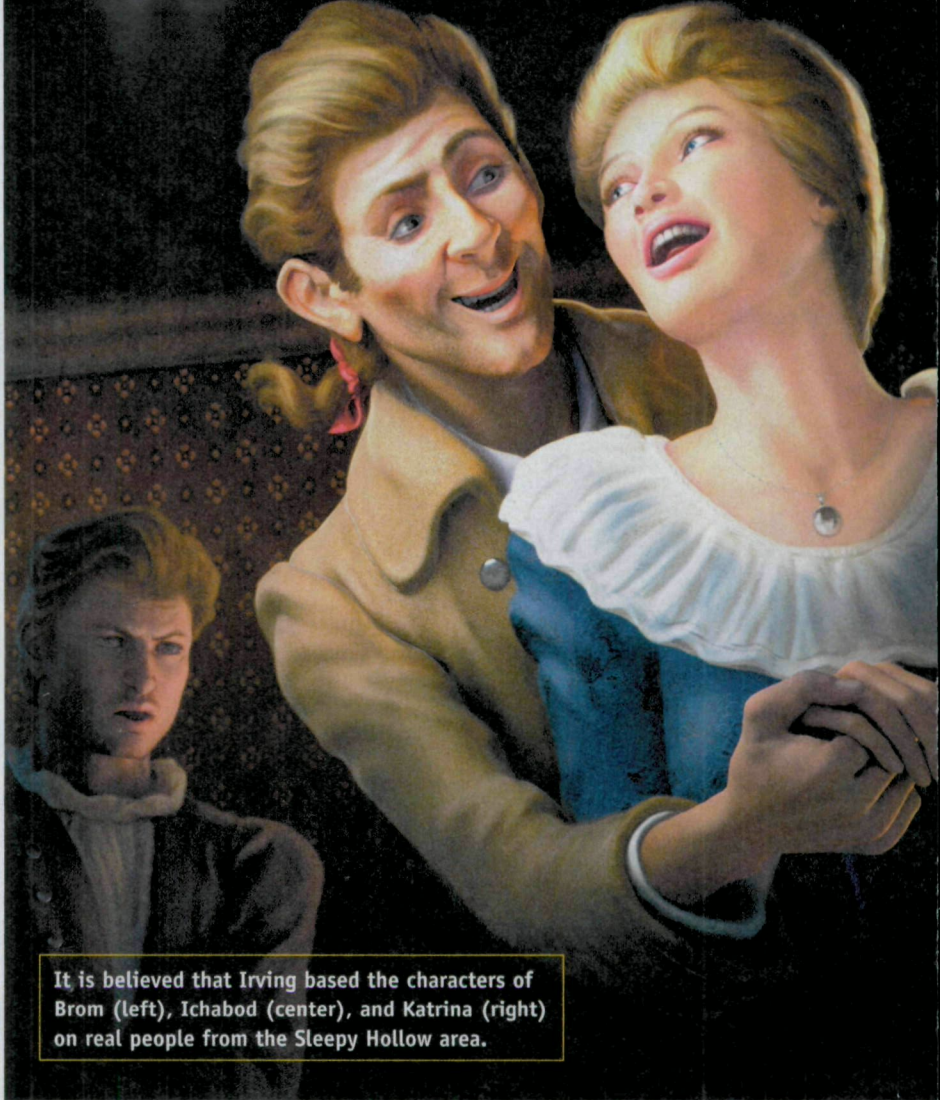
STAGE DIRECTOR 2: Brom Bones enters, strutting and puffing out his chest.

BROM (*loudly*): Here I am, Katrina! Let's go take a ride on my horse, Daredevil!

KATRINA (*giggling*): Don't be silly. Put Daredevil in the barn and come in the house. And don't act like such a brute!

BROM: Say, is that the schoolmaster's horse? What's he doing here? Come to give you singin' lessons?

KATRINA: The schoolmaster is an honored guest. What fun it is to have



It is believed that Irving based the characters of Brom (left), Ichabod (center), and Katrina (right) on real people from the Sleepy Hollow area.

such a gentleman in our midst.

BROM: I don't know what you see in him. He's got dinner plates where his ears should be and shovels for feet.

KATRINA: You're just jealous.

BROM: Of him? Why, he looks like a scarecrow that has escaped the cornfield!

KNICKERBOCKER: Poor Ichabod. He would have had a pleasant life, if only his path and young Katrina's had never crossed.

SCENE 3

THE PARTY

STAGE DIRECTOR 1: The guests gather in the great parlor.

BALTUS: Welcome! Welcome to the party, everyone! Let the music and dancing begin!

ICHABOD: Dear Katrina, may I have this dance?

STAGE DIRECTOR 2: Katrina glances slyly at Brom.

KATRINA: Why certainly, Master Crane.

KNICKERBOCKER: Ichabod prided himself on his dancing. Not a limb of his loosely hung body was still. And as he went clattering about the room with the beautiful Katrina, he was unaware that Brom Bones sat brooding in one corner.

BROM: I don't like this one bit.

STAGE DIRECTOR 1: The dance ends. Ichabod bows to Katrina, then makes his way toward a group of older guests. They are sitting by the fire, telling chilling tales of ghosts and goblins.

VAN AX: Many a ghost haunts the Hollow. There's the old Dutchman who walks the docks, shouting for a musket and a sword.

VAN RIPPER: And there's the woman in white who haunts the dark glen at Raven Rock. To hear her shriek on a winter night before a storm is a bad omen.

OLD WOMAN 1: In these parts, Mr. Crane, you must take care to live a decent life. Those who don't do so run the risk of being carried away in the dead of night!

KNICKERBOCKER: All these tales, told in those drowsy whispers with which people talk in the dark, sank deep in the mind of Ichabod and, in turn, caught the attention of Brom.

VANDERBLOOD: But, my friend, nothing that we've told you rivals the Headless Horseman.

ICHABOD: The Headless Horseman?

OLD WOMAN 2: Yes, dear man. He is said to be the ghost of a soldier, whose head was carried away by a cannonball during the Revolutionary War. His ghost is often seen hurrying along in the darkness.

VAN AX: With the Horseman about, one doesn't dare to be caught upon the roadway during the witching hour.

VANDERBLOOD: His body is buried in the churchyard, and every night the ghost rides forth . . . in search of his head.

VAN RIPPER: He can't rest until he finds it. He rides at such a speed—like a midnight blast, it is—because he's in a hurry to get back to the churchyard before the light of day.

VANDERBLOOD: He's been seen several times of late, patrolling the hills. I myself have seen his horse tethered among the graves in the churchyard.

BROUWER: I didn't believe in the Horseman until one night last year. I met him on the road near the Old Tree. I suspect he was returning from his search, but I didn't know who he was. I called to him: "Show me your face, good man." He didn't answer, and when he turned, there was nothing there—just the stump of a neck. Before I could react, he grabbed me by the shoulder and forced me to get up behind him.

STAGE DIRECTOR 2: The room is silent. The old man takes a bite out of his apple and chews it slowly.

ICHABOD: Wh-what happened next?

BROUWER: How we galloped! Over bush and brake, over hill and swamp . . . Then we reached the bridge. That's when the Horseman suddenly turned into a skeleton, threw me into the brook, and sprang away over the treetops with a clap of thunder!

ICHABOD: Oh my!

BROUWER: Oh my, indeed. I will never forget it!

BROM: I'm not afraid of the Horseman. Aye, I too have seen him. I was returning one night from a neighboring village when he overtook me. Rather than give in to his terror, I offered to race him for a

bowl of punch. That's right, a bowl of punch! And I would have won it too, but just as we came to the old church bridge, the Horseman vanished in a flash of fire.

KNICKERBOCKER: Aye, it was true. The old church bridge was surrounded by overhanging trees, which cast a gloom even in the daytime. It was the place the Headless Horseman was most frequently encountered, but it was also the place he could not pass.

BROM: If ever the Horseman comes after you, head for the bridge. If you can but reach that bridge, you are safe.

STAGE DIRECTOR 1: One by one, the guests depart, but hoping for a moment alone with Katrina, Ichabod is the last to leave.

SCENE 4

THE RIDE HOME

KNICKERBOCKER: It was midnight when Ichabod finally departed, and all those stories of ghosts and goblins now came crowding upon his thoughts.

STAGE DIRECTOR 2: Ichabod trots along, flinching at every sound and shape.

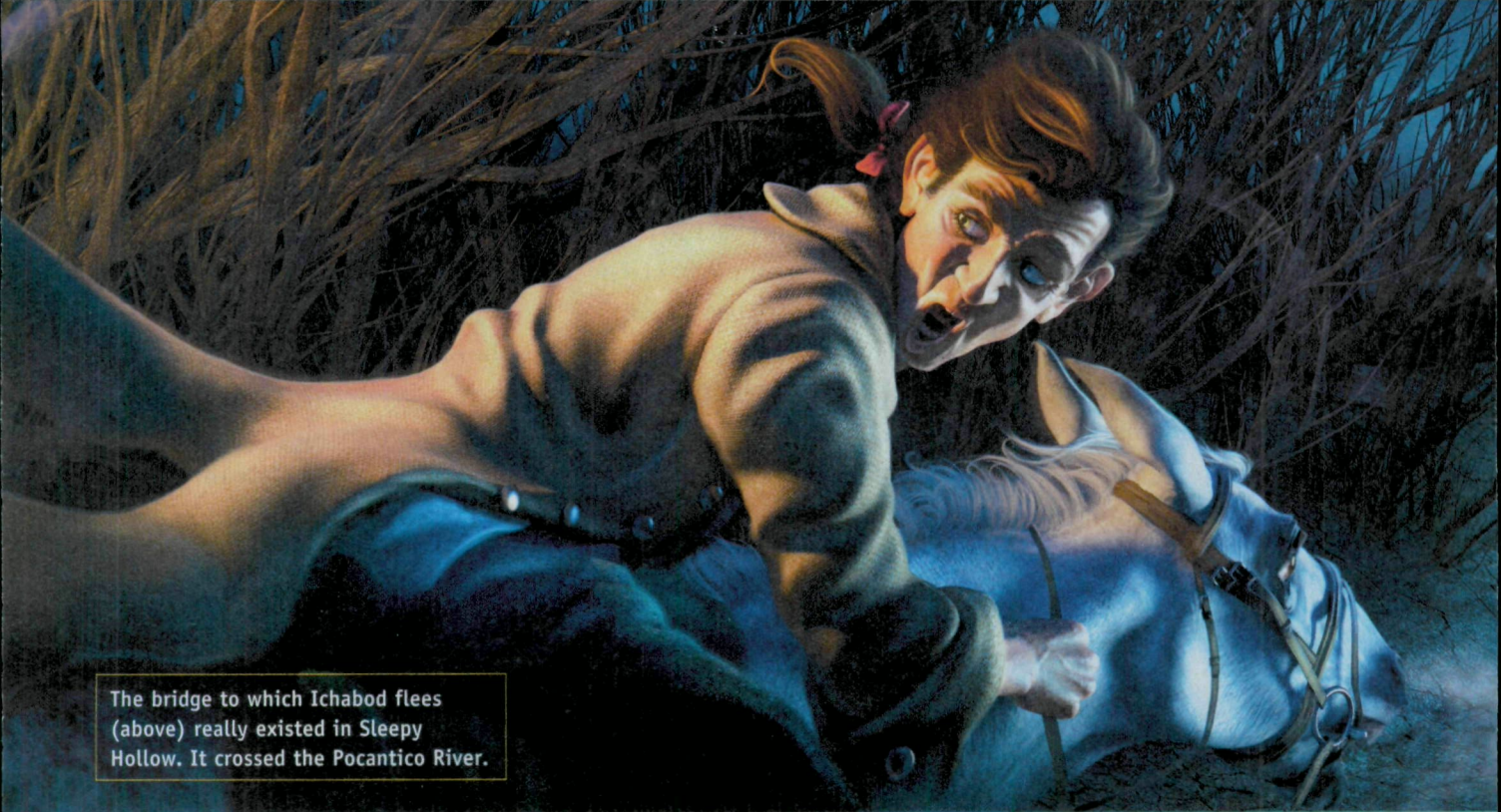
KNICKERBOCKER: He remembered all too clearly the warnings of the townspeople.

VAN AX: One doesn't dare to be caught upon the roadway during the witching hour.

KNICKERBOCKER: The wind's howl became the woman in white.

VAN RIPPER: To hear her shriek on a winter night before a storm is a bad omen.





The bridge to which Ichabod flees (above) really existed in Sleepy Hollow. It crossed the Pocantico River.

KNICKERBOCKER: A bullfrog croaking became the ghost of the Old Dutchman.

OLD WOMAN 1: Take care to live a decent life. Those who don't do so risk being carried away in the dead of night.

STAGE DIRECTOR 1: Ichabod clutches tightly at Gunpowder's reins. To calm his nerves, he begins to whistle.

KNICKERBOCKER: His normally cheerful version of "Yankee Doodle" sounded like a funeral hymn. It was then that he saw it: In the shadows on the edge of the road, something huge and misshapen towered above them.

VANDERBLOOD (from offstage): Every night, the ghost rides forth in search of his head.

ICHABOD (gulping): What's to be done, Gunpowder?

KNICKERBOCKER: Every hair upon

Ichabod's head stood on end.

ICHABOD: Wh-who-who . . . are you? I-I-I say there, wh-who are y-y-you?

KNICKERBOCKER: The shadowy creature put itself in motion and stood at once in the middle of the road.

ICHABOD: I s-s-say, sir, wh-wh-what is it you w-w-want with me?

KNICKERBOCKER: When there came no reply, Ichabod rained a shower of kicks upon Gunpowder. The stranger whirled his horse to give chase.

ICHABOD: R-r-run, Gunpowder!

KNICKERBOCKER (voice growing in intensity): As poor Ichabod glanced over his shoulder, he was horror-struck, for the man behind him was headless, and the head, which should have rested on his shoulders, was hanging from the pommel of the saddle in the form of a fiery jack-o'-lantern!

ICHABOD: Fly, Gunpowder, fly!

KNICKERBOCKER: Away they dashed, stones flying and sparks flashing. Ichabod's flimsy garments fluttered in the air as he stretched his long, lank body over his horse's head, and suddenly, he remembered what Brom Bones had said.

BROM (from offstage): If you can but reach that bridge, you are safe.

KNICKERBOCKER: Thundering forward, he heard the black steed close behind him.

ICHABOD: There it is, Gunpowder. The old church bridge!

KNICKERBOCKER: He cracked his whip wildly in the air, spurring his steed onward.

ICHABOD: Hyaw, hyaw! Come on, Gunpowder!

KNICKERBOCKER (most intensely): Gunpowder's hooves pounded upon the planks of the bridge. Ichabod cast a look behind,



Meet the Author WASHINGTON IRVING



American writer Washington Irving was born in 1783. He is most famous for his short stories "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle," both published in 1819. We recently traveled to Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Tarrytown, New York, to chat with Irving's ghost.

Scope: How did you come up with the idea for "Sleepy Hollow"?

WI: I got the basic idea from an old German folktale, and Sleepy Hollow seemed like the perfect setting. It's a real place, you know, about 20 miles from New York City. Its high school sports teams are called the Horsemen.

Scope: What's this I've heard about you and New York's basketball team, the Knicks?

WI: My first book was a satire about New York history. I wrote it under the pen name Diedrich Knickerbocker. As time went by, people started using the word "Knickerbocker" to mean "New Yorker." "Knicks" is short for Knickerbocker.

Scope: Would you mind telling us about your death and how things have been since then?

WI: I'm afraid my death is a rather dull story. I was at home, I had a heart attack, and that was that. Since then things have been good. I like to hover over people as they read my work. I see all the movies and TV shows based on "Sleepy Hollow." There have been at least a dozen! My favorite was a movie starring Johnny Depp.



expecting the goblin to vanish in a clap of thunder . . . but, instead, he saw it rise up and hurl its head . . . at him!

ICHABOD: Ahhhhhhhhhhh!

EPILOGUE

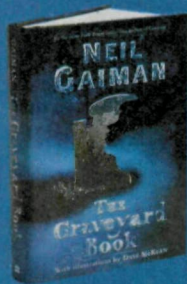
KNICKERBOCKER (*calmly now*):

The next morning, Ichabod's old horse wandered home, but Ichabod himself did not return. A search led to the bridge. Along the bank of the brook, where the water ran dark and deep, Ichabod's hat was found, and close beside it, a shattered pumpkin. The brook was searched, but the body of the schoolmaster was nowhere to be found, leaving the good people to shake their heads and conclude that Ichabod Crane had been carried off . . . by the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow. ●

CONTEST

What Happened to Ichabod?

The ending of this story is disturbing. Is the Headless Horseman a real ghoul, or just someone playing dress-up?



Did Ichabod Crane run away, or did something much, much worse happen to him? Write a paragraph explaining what you think happened. Send it to **SCOPE SLEEPY HOLLOW CONTEST** by December 1, 2010. Ten winners will receive a copy of Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*. See page 2 for details.

Copyright of Scholastic Scope is the property of Scholastic Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.