

LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW (excerpt)

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MAN 3: Along about midnight, the folks gathered around the fire, telling tales of ghosts and strange sights.

(ICHABOD inches toward the edge of what he plays as a crowd)

MAN 2: Many gruesome tales were told about.....*(becomes BROM)* the ghost of Major Andre who haunts Sleepy Hollow.

ICHABOD: Major Andre?

BROM: Yeah, Major Andre, the English spy who was hanged from a tree in the hollow. They say that on windy nights, you can hear him crying for vengeance against the colonials.

KATRINA: My favorite is the Woman in White. They say she was on her way to elope with her true love when her carriage broke a wheel on a snowy winter's night in Sleepy Hollow. She walked and walked, trying to reach town, but the snow got so deep that she couldn't go any further, and she finally fell into a snowbank, never to awake again. And now, any night when the moon is full, you can hear her calling for her true love – or any other man who happens through her glen.

ICHABOD: My, that's a perfectly dreadful little story. What could possibly be worse than that?

BROM: Well, did I ever tell you about the Headless Horseman?

ICHABOD: Yes.....*(warily)* you've mentioned him....

BROM: But did I ever tell you that I saw him once? *(Ichabod stares at him in disbelief)* Yes..one night, as I was coming home from a long day working on the Van Skelling farm, I wasn't paying attention to where I was going, and my horse Traveler took the wrong turn at the Glen Road. Before I knew it, I was in the heart of Sleepy Hollow, which is the last place a man wants to be after dark.

Well...I was so far along, that I figured it wouldn't pay to go back, so I hoped for the best, and went on my way. *(spooky music starts)*

As I rode along, I started noticing that the trees were swaying, even though the wind was calm. And then...leaves started blowing up in the air around my horse's face – and bursting into flame! *(sound of horse whinnying - Ichabod starts at the sound)*

And then...from far behind me...I heard the sound of horse's hooves....*(sound of hooves)*. I turned back...and coming on the road toward me was none other than the Headless Horseman!

He was huge....at least 7 foot tall even *without* his head. He rode a horse that was pitch black and covered with sweat....I could see his horse's yellow eyes staring at me as they chased us. And in the Horseman's hands I saw (*picks up a pumpkin*) a pumpkin...with an evil grin on its face and a sickening green light coming from inside. You see...that was the best head he could find – and he was looking to replace it with another!

I gave old Traveler a kick and we started galloping toward the Church Bridge as fast as we could! But the Horseman kept gaining on me. I screamed at Traveler to giddyup boy, and his feet were barely touching the ground we were going so fast! But still that Horseman was getting closer. I could feel his horse's breath on my backsides as we raced along....getting closer every second.....I looked back, and saw that the pumpkin was starting to grin at me....and its mouth was moving!.....its pumpkin mouth was moving to say “tonight...you're mine!” And, raised high above his shoulders, I saw that the Horseman had a huge...long.. sharp... sword in his hand!

I knew that if I didn't do something that I was a goner.....so I shouted back to him “C'mon you old demon.....race me to the other side of bridge if you can!” And that pumpkin started laughing! And his horse started running even faster! Pretty soon...he was right next to me.....and I looked over...and could see the stump where his head used to be!

And just then I saw that we were almost at the bridge....I wondered if he'd take me up on my challenge to get to the other side....Closer now....almost there....and now we hit the bridge, both of us, our horses pounding the boards as fast as they could go.....and the Horseman raised up his sword...ready to have at me....when we HIT the other side, and all of a sudden...in a flash of fire, he disappeared!

See, I knew that there was no way he wouldn't take me up on my challenge of a race – and I knew that he had no power on the other side of the bridge!

I stopped Traveler and went back toward the bridge. The bridge floor was still hot where his horse's hooves had pounded the boards, and I could smell the sweaty, oaty breath of his demon horse, but the Headless Horseman was no where to be found.

ICHABOD: Oh.....um....exactly how long ago was this?

BROM: It was on Halloween night,,one year ago. One year ago...tonight!

ICHABOD: Oh..you don't suppose that perhaps he's found another suitable head since last year?

BROM: Oh, I doubt it. After all...he must be very particular about which head he'd want. If you're gonna take another man's head, I think you'd want to make sure that it was a good head..one with a pretty good brain. A head with lots of book learnin'. Like yours, for example!