

The Revenge of Ichabod Crane

By L. Don Swartz

*Inspired by the short story
"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"
by Washington Irving*

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my wise and wonderful mother, Jean E. Swartz, for giving me all the advice I'd ever need, including: "Go upstairs and write something. You're driving us all crazy!" I love you and I miss you.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

"The Revenge of Ichabod Crane" was first produced at the Ghosltight Theatre in North Tonawanda, New York on October 1, 2009. The production was directed by L. Don Swartz and featured the following cast:

Ichabod Crane (Mark Woomer); Brom Bones (Daniel Arrasjid); Katrina Van Tassel (Jaime Faulhaber), Mama Van Tassel (Debby Koszelak Swartz); Papa Van Tassel (Don Swartz); Widow Van Ripper (Joann V.Mis); Gretchen (Carolyn Woomer); Hans (Paul McGinnis); Agent Ritter (Drew Krause); Jan Van Ripper (DJ Swartz), Lily (Rosemary Swartz), Nicholas (Gabe Neumann), Frederick (Tom Fronczak); Otto (Daniel Passcell); Judith (Caitlin Neumann) and Michael (Michael Swartz).

STORY OF THE PLAY

Whatever happened to Ichabod Crane? Everyone knows from the classic short story, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," that he disappeared on his way home from a Halloween party. The Headless Horseman threw a pumpkin at him and Ichabod was never seen again. But what ever became of pale, lean and lanky school teacher? He's either really angry at the way he was treated or he's dead. Or, because this is Sleepy Hollow, he may be both.

This Agatha Christie-like adaptation is set in the present. The first act is a faithful retelling of the story by Washington Irving with a contemporary Ichabod living in secluded Sleepy Hollow that has not changed in three hundred years. Still considered an outsider, Ichabod is in competition with Brom Bones, the town rowdy, for the hand of Katrina Van Tassel.

The second act is exactly one year later at the engagement party of Brom and Katrina. Just as the festivities begin there is a knock on the door. It is an FBI agent investigating the murder of Ichabod Crane. Ichabod's body was found in an unmarked grave in the old churchyard by the bridge. Complications ensue when his body disappears, but even more complications ensue when the Sleepy Hollow villagers start disappearing...one by one.

The twists and surprises within the story are enhanced with plenty of eerie effects from masked characters to haunted whistling, and from fleeting shadows to sudden blackouts.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 4 w, 6 children)

MAMA VAN TASSEL
PAPA VAN TASSEL
WIDOW VAN RIPPER
KATRINA VAN TASSEL
GRETCHEN
HANS
ICHABOD CRANE
BROM BONES
AGENT RITTER
AGENT WILLIS (voice only)
The children:
LILY, IDA, JUDITH
NICHOLAS, FREDERICK, JAN

SETTING

The living room in the Van Tassel's farm house in Sleepy Hollow, New York. It is a spacious room that has been decorated for a Halloween party. There are two staircases that lead to a second floor balcony. There are two doors on the balcony that lead to the bedrooms. Under the stairs, SR is an arch way that leads to rooms at the back of the house. Under the stairs SL is a passage way to the kitchen. There are two wooden chairs near each staircase. There is a large window on the second floor and the branches of a large skeletal tree can be seen brushing up against the glass. On the main floor SR there is a huge fireplace on a raised stone base. A fire crackles within it. USC there is a Dutch door leading out onto a covered porch. There are windows on each side of the door. SL there is a raised platform that contains a large table up against the wall with a long bench in front of it. The table is full of apples, doughnuts and other party treats.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: MAMA VAN TASSEL is picking up a ball of yarn that has been unraveled all over the living room. PAPA VAN TASSEL quietly enters and tries to sneak up the stairs.)

MAMA: There you are, Papa.

PAPA: You scared me!

MAMA: The cat got into my yarn again.

PAPA: Ja.

MAMA: I told you to do something about that.

PAPA: I had a long talk with the cat. I told him to stay out of your sewing basket.

MAMA: And?

PAPA: And? He said I can't understand you because I am a cat.

MAMA: I don't like cats in the house.

PAPA: Talk to your daughter.

MAMA: I am talking to you.

PAPA: You're always talking...

MAMA: What did you say?

PAPA: Nothing.

MAMA: It's dark already. Did you chop enough wood for the bonfire? The people will be here soon.

PAPA: Ja, ja, I chopped enough wood for the bonfire.

MAMA: Did you sweep the barn floor?

PAPA: I swept the barn floor. We are having the dance. When we are having the dance, I sweep the barn floor.

MAMA: Go out and sweep it again. I don't want anyone to say Mama Van Tassel does not sweep her barn floor.

PAPA: Ja, ja, ja.

MAMA: Have you been drinking?

PAPA: Not yet!

MAMA: I don't want you drunk tonight.

(PAPA exits, mumbling.)

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MAMA: *(Cont'd.)* I hear you mumbling!

(MAMA continues rolling up the ball of yarn. WIDOW VAN RIPPER enters from the kitchen.)

WIDOW: I'm here.

MAMA: You're late.

WIDOW: It couldn't be helped.

MAMA: Did you find that thing you were searching for?

WIDOW: Yes. He had it hidden in his room.

MAMA: Where is it?

WIDOW: Right here with me. *(Pulls a laptop out of a bag she keeps on her shoulder.)*

MAMA: How much does he know?

WIDOW: I haven't read it yet.

MAMA: How come?

WIDOW: I don't know how.

MAMA: Are you ready for tonight?

WIDOW: I think so. *(A deck of cards falls from her bag and scatters on the floor.)* Don't move! Don't touch any of the cards! *(Gets on her hands and knees and studies the cards.)* This is not good. This is not good.

MAMA: What is not so good?

WIDOW: Before this night is over four people will have their hearts broken.

MAMA: Broken hearts mend.

WIDOW: One will die.

MAMA: Die of a broken heart?

WIDOW: No. Something far worse. It is not clear.

MAMA: Is it the outsider?

WIDOW: It might be. Either way, the longer he stays here, the longer he puts Sleepy Hollow in jeopardy.

MAMA: What are you going to do?

WIDOW: *(Gathers her cards.)* Whatever I have to do to keep us safe. We did not ask the modern world to interfere with our ways. Come, we have work to do.

End of Freeview

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