

INTRODUCTORY SC

Cast Size for Scene: 4 or 5

A small group of Sleepy Hollow townsfolk gathered sharing stories. It occurs to one citizen that tonight is the anniversary of Ichabod Crane's fateful night. Upon seeing newcomers to their town, a guide offers to share this tale.

(Present:1801)

PRE-SCENE:

(Singing to the tune of "Ring Around the Rosie," pausing between each verse. Perhaps they are dancing in a ring, just like "Ring Around the Rosie"?)

We hear the Hessian soldier, riding through the forest, silence, silence or we'll all fall down.

We hear the Hessian soldier, riding through the forest, get down, stay still, or we'll all be caught.

We hear the cannonball shooting, heading towards the soldier, fighting, screaming, where's his head?

We hear the Headless Horseman, riding through the forest, vengeful, slashing, your head joins his.

SCENE 1:

A group of Sleepy Hollow townsfolk are scattered, talking amongst themselves. VILLAGER 1 calls everyone to gather around, including the audience.

VILLAGER 1

Alright, alright, settle down now! Gather around, yes all of you. Even you, foreigners!

The townsfolk come forth huddled in a half crescent. Another villager emerges from the shadows after the others.

VILLAGER 1

Now Sleepy Hollow has been around for many many years but today-

VILLAGER 2

Today marks that fateful night... It was exactly 10 years ago today when Ichabod Crane, that outsider from where was it?

VILLAGER 3

Connecticut!

VILLAGER 2

Ah yes Connecticut. But that poor man mysteriously vanished. It was said to be the doing of the Headless Horseman who snatched him up and gone he was. Forever... so they say.

VILLAGER 1

Enough! You'll scare the newcomers away.

*A **townsfolk/GUIDE** stands next to VILLAGER 1 and intervenes.*

GUIDE

Well it is a part of our history isn't it now?
Come along folks, and join me in the account of this frightful night, if you dare to do so.

The townsfolk whisper in curious fright.

VILLAGER 1 shrugs their shoulders and walks towards a smaller group of townsfolk, continuing their plans of playful storytelling that had been disturbed.

VILLAGER 2 watches and slowly makes their way back to the shadows.

The GUIDE leads the audience to the next scene.

TRANSITION (1-2):

GUIDE

Tonight's tale that I share with you, like all good tales deserving of being retold, is about love. Love and betrayal, life and death, the silent tranquility that envelopes the countryside and the terrors of the nighttime that invade it, and

it is about a man named Ichabod Crane. Ichabod was a schoolmaster sent from Connecticut to teach the children of Sleepy Hollow. He did not own a home but resided with the families of the students he taught. He traveled from house to house, residing one week at a time as to not overstay his welcome. Ichabod would pack up all of his belonging into one sack and carry it with him, among his meager possessions were three books- the New England Almanac, The History of Witchcraft by Cotton Mather, and a book on dreams and fortune-telling. He prized himself an expert on the subject of the supernatural, he was enticed by the teachings as much as he was terrified by them, for you see Ichabod was a true believer of the spirit world. His favorite thing to do after a hearty evening meal was to gather around the fire and listen to the local Dutchman spin their tales of hauntings, ghosts, and goblins. Above all others, Ichabod's favorite story was the legend of the headless horseman.

GUIDE

Follow the path this way to learn more about this frightful affair.

THE HESSIAN

Cast Size for Scene: 2 or 3; 1 for the monologue and how many other people you want in the tableau poses

(The Hessian Soldier in his brutal final battle - 1791)

Fellow Soldier/Ghostly Spirit/Fortune Teller...

To properly continue on this journey, we must tell you how it came to be. Nearly 25 years ago, a Hessian soldier rode into what would be his final battle. This soldier was unlike any other Hessian soldier. He was merciless and brutal towards his enemies. His main goal was to kill off anyone who might stop him from being the most vicious in the thick of battle. He was so feared by so many that no one dared to challenge him, however, during one faithful battle, someone did end up getting the best of him. This Hessian soldier was, for many, *thankfully* killed in a brutal, but unnamed battle. His death was neither peaceful nor

humane. He was decapitated by an American Patriot cannonball and the remains of his shattered head spread throughout the battlefield. In a hurry to get away from the frontline, his fellow soldiers - be they loyalists to that loathsome King George or other German Mercenaries - they gathered what remained of his body - just a torso really - without his head - nearby, but not IN the hallowed ground of the Sleepy Hollow Old Dutch Church, which is just up the way a bit. Unfortunately, that was not the last time we have seen the remains of this decapitated soldier. Though he was buried on that heinous day, he has been known to rise up and haunt the town of Sleepy Hollow, furiously seeking his lost head and decapitating anyone else who may get in his way. You may know him today as the Headless Horseman.

TRANSITION (2-3):

THIS SHOULD BE A NEW GUIDE, I THINK

GUIDE brings the audience in, speaking as he does so.
The GUIDE pauses every so often - creating spookiness

GUIDE

Up the way, there is rumoured to be a witch that lives, famous
in her own way...

The witch is famous for being quite wicked. She admired the
Hessian soldier and his killings, perhaps even admiring him
himself...

The witch lives out here due to being outcast by the townsfolk
for her wicked deeds and for agreeing with the merciless Hessian
soldiers' killings.

THE WITCH

Cast Size for Scene: Including transitional people, 3. Scene alone 1

A ghostly spirit - the lover of the Hessian soldier who waited for his return from battle but he never came, so now she spends eternity tied and tormented by this spot, calling out for her beloved. (Present/Past)

They arrive, seeing the witch descend down the little path

WITCH

Oh, lovely...guests...Why have you come this deep in the woods?
And tonight of all nights! He is coming you know, the Hessian
soldier. He was magnificent and horrid, he despised you all
just as much as I do.

GUIDE:

(scared) We are just passing through, I am showing them the
story of Ichabod Crane.

WITCH:

Ack, that fool! Thought he knew everything about witchcraft, I
hope the headless horseman unleashed his wrath upon him.

Guide:

(timid) Is there a way to stop the headless horseman?

Witch:

(wicked laugh) Stop him? I hope he kills you all. You banish
me out into the forest, and now you seek my protection? There
is no protection for you, you are all doomed... (wicked laugh)
Be gone with you!

TRANSITION (3-4):

A woman is slowly passing through carrying flowers.

WITCH

Oh look at that! Another one... Going to visit a brother, a
sister, a lover, or in short, ANOTHER one of the Horsemen's
victims in the Church Graveyard.

(Evil cackle)

Best be on your way now! Follow the woman to the graveyard!

(points to the woman)

THE HORSEMAN WILL RIDE TONIGHT!

The Witch shoos the audience away.

The woman gestures the audience to get their attention.

WOMAN

I'm visiting my brother, I miss him dearly.

The Graveyard

Cast Size for Scene: 2

A graveyard where the Horseman's headless body is rumored to be buried, and where locals believe he rises up from this time each year in pursuit of his stolen head.
(Present)

A GATEKEEPER of the graveyard walks up and down the gravestones. There is a woman standing by one of the gravestones in silence, paying her respects to her loved one who passed.

GATEKEEPER

Do you hear that? It's the spirits calling!

WOMAN

Maybe so.

The GATEKEEPER approaches an audience member.

GATEKEEPER

I'd be careful if I were you... don't wake them up! Or perhaps the headless horseman will hear you and off with your head!

GATEKEEPER

It's true... what they say, about the headless horseman. He continues to haunt Sleepy Hollow in search of his head! He makes his rounds, every year - always around this time.

GATEKEEPER

(to audience)

You ought to hold onto your heads and keep your eyes out for him.

WOMAN

And that poor Ichabod fellow. I don't know what he did to deserve such a gruesome demise. He was just a school teacher you know. To have your head chopped off and in a flash you're gone...

oh it's too much! It's too much (she looks about at the graveyard), and yet it has happened to so many.

GATEKEEPER

We don't know for sure, Ichabod lost his noggin. He was always a craven fellow and for all we know he could have just up and left this town for good.

WOMAN

Well I suppose. I guess we'll never truly know what happened that night... (looks directly to the audience) and it is, after all, the unknown that is most chilling in these times. (clears her throat and wanders back away from the audience)

TRANSITION (4-5):

GATEKEEPER

(gestures to spot 5)

Ichabod Crane - that odd, lanky fellow! I swear, you put him and a scarecrow side-by-side, you'd have a hard time knowing the difference between the two. That said, whether it was his intelligence or, rather the airs of sophistication, he did fancy himself quite the lady's man. And it was just over yonder on that hill over there where I last saw him - Talking to Katrina, doing all he could to woo her.

The Courtship

Cast Size for scene : 2, 3 with transition into scene 6

Sleepy Hollow Scene 5 - Ichabod and Katrina's Courtship (Past)

ICHABOD

Repeat after me.
(Ichabod sings a note)

KATRINA

(Sings note back to him, but badly)

ICHABOD

Needs some work, but you're coming along.

KATRINA

We have been at this for a quarter of an hour and nothing has changed. Perhaps it is time to give it a rest. I sound like a witch.

ICHABOD

Perhaps there is a bit of witch in you, Katrina.

KATRINA

(Katrina is visibly offended.)

Why do you say that?

ICHABOD

Because you have bewitched me.

(Ichabod pauses.)

Not necessarily with your singing, but instead with your beauty.

KATRINA

My rosy cheeks and my father's farm are sure to have bewitched any suitor that comes my way. I *am* an only child, after all, so to whomever I am wed will inherit my father's farm. The green. luscious, *profitable* farm.

ICHABOD

Though it *is* hard to tear my gaze from the ducks, geese, and turkey's of your yard, it is you who has me thoroughly transfixed.

KATRINA

(Katrina fans herself.)

Your words make up for your questionable choir expertise.

ICHABOD

(Wistfully, as if in a daze.)

Oh, how I adore you, Katrina.

KATRINA

(Katrina smiles.)

Oh, how I know.

(Katrina pauses, before handing Ichabod a piece of paper from
her pocket/that she was carrying)

Here's an invitation to my father's quilting party this evening.
It'd be a joy if you can make it.

(Brom (or other male OR PERSON) enters.)

BROM/MALE OR PERSON

Ichabod, the school children would like to present a song to
you.

ICHABOD

I am quite busy at the moment, please tell them to wait.

BROM/MALE OR PERSON

Perhaps I shall show these guests to the children instead.
Follow me, please.

(Brom/other male/person leads the guests into scene six)

ICHABOD

Yes, please do so! As I must be off to get prepared for
tonight's festivities. (To the audience) Tonight I plan to put
my best foot forward and make Katrina my love!

The Song:

Cast Size: 4, Male/Brom/Person and 3 children

*Children outside of their school singing an ominous song warning of the Hessian soldiers annual
ride - present*

(Male/Brom/Person enters, guiding the audience to the children.)

MALE/BROM/PERSON

Here we have Ichabod Crane's school children singing a warning of the Hessian soldiers annual ride.

CHILD 1

Did you hear about what Mr. Crane has been up to?

CHILD 3

You mean Katrina Van Tassel?

(All three children "oooo" in a way that indicates this is very scandalous, while covering their mouths with their hands.)

CHILD 2

No, she means visiting the old wicked witch in the woods! I've seen it myself while I was out chasing my hoop!

(A fourth Child approaches, but is quickly shot down by the three children.)

CHILD 3

It's amazing he's survived this long with his interest in the supernatural!

(All three of the children gasp, raising a hand to their mouths)

CHILD 2

Perhaps he will soon meet his demise, by either the witch or the Headless Horseman himself!

(All three children audibly shiver/cringe/act scared with a noise)

CHILD 1

(She glances up, as if just noticing the audience.)

Oh, look! Visitors! Shall we show them our song we wrote?

CHILD 3

I believe we shall.

CHILDREN

(Singing to the tune of "Ring Around the Rosie," pausing between each verse. Perhaps they are dancing in a ring, just like "Ring Around the Rosie"?)

We hear the cannonball shooting, heading towards the soldier,
fighting, screaming, where's his head?

We hear the Hessian soldier, riding through the forest, get
down, stay still, or we'll all be dead.

We hear the Hessian soldier, riding through the forest, silence,
quiet or we'll all be his.

The Party

Cast Size for Scene: 7 (includes brom, katrina + her father, ichabod, and the messenger)

The quilting party where Ichabod is set to profess his love for Katrina, but it appears she has fallen for Brom, and crushed, he dashes out into the night. (Past)

BALTUS VAN TASSEL

Sang to Master of the House from LES MISERABLES

Welcome, dear friends, stay six feet away,
But we are glad you've joined us today.

LADY VAN TASSEL

Our little fest, will bring such joy,
Once this is done, follow that li'l boy (reference Jacob).

BOTH

Our wealth and love, how we have thrived,
End of the year, let's hope we've survived.

They laugh first hysterically, then less so, then awkwardly, and then become aware, and then put on a happy face for their guests...

BALTUS VAN TASSEL

Thank you all for joining my lovely wife, my daughter and me today for our autumn harvest festival! Yes, the weather is turning chillier, I must admit, but inside our hearth and heart it is warm and toasty.

LADY VAN TASSEL

Oh look, dear, since you're talking "warm and toasty," it looks like the flames of love are igniting between Katrina and Brom Van Brunt.

BROM VAN BRUNT

Oh, Katrina... your eyes... your eyes are so blue. Why, they're bluer than the ocean. They are so blue that, I swear, I must be Christopher Columbus, you know why?

KATRINA VAN TASSEL

Oh, Brom... I shutter to ask, but I can't resist: why?

BROM VAN BRUNT

Why, Katrina... It's because you've got me lost at sea.

KATRINA VAN TASSEL

Oh, Brom... You must be ... drinking way too much. Look, that being said, I want you to know, the school master, Mr. Ichabod Crane, will be visiting tonight and should be here any moment - he's a curious fellow, but is still very much a gentleman - and he seems to have taken a little bit of a liking to me. (*Brom starts to puff up a little bit, she stops him*) I know, I know... but I must ask you to be on your absolute BEST behavior.

BROM VAN BRUNT

I shall do my very best.

KATRINA VAN TASSEL

Speak of the devil...(ICHABOD enters) Here he is now (turning quickly to BROM with a scolding tone followed by a playful chuckle) - BEST behavior.

(BROM INDICATES A PROMISE TO HER)

Welcome, School Master! We're so pleased you've joined us,
tonight.

ICHABOD CRANE

Oh, Katrina, I assure you, my sweet, that the pleasure is
ENTIRELY mine.

KATRINA VAN TASSEL

(*AWKWARD*)

School master, this is Brom Van Brunt. Brom, this is School
Master Crane.

BROM VAN BRUNT

Ah, yes... School Master Crane. I've heard of you. Your exactly as
I imagined you would be. Watch for the cracks in the
floorboards, we wouldn't want to risk you slipping through.

KATRINA VAN TASSEL

(*SCOLDING*)

BROM!

BROM VAN BRUNT

Oh, Katrina, the school master surely knows I jest. Welcome to
Sleepy Hollow, Ichabod. Katrina and I, the two of us, WE...
TOGETHER... are so happy to have you in OUR little town.

ICHABOD CRANE

Ah, yes.. I see... well, thank you for the... Kindness. (Clears his
throat.) I... just thought I would stop in momentarily and extend
some niceties to the community that has treated me so well.
(*BEAT - Looks around. Awkward.*) Thanks for having me everyone...
and it would appear I have done just that, and now I shall be
leaving. I look forward to continuing our lessons, Katrina.
(*Trying not to cry*) Ta-ta! (He exits in a flurry. From beyond
the door, we hear an over the top, sobbing wail.)

KATRINA VAN TASSEL

BROM! You didn't have to be so cruel.

BROM VAN BRUNT

What?! That was nothing!

KATRINA VAN TASSEL

I hope Ichabod is okay.

BROM VAN BRUNT

He'll be fine... he has his books and his witchcraft and what not. Let's just resume our festivities.

KATRINA VAN TASSEL

What if he's in danger Brom? Surely we could go and see if he's alright.

BROM VAN TASSEL

Nonsense, he's a man is he not?

(laughs)

...Well maybe not, crying and causing a scene.

BALTUS VAN TASSEL

Well, you know that it's the end of a party when a grown man leaves sobbing.

LADY VAN TASSEL

Right you are my love. It was fun for the time being, we'll host another gathering soon.

(to audience)

Thank you all so much for joining this evening!

The Disturbed Grave

Cast size for scene: 1 person

Sleepy Hollow Scene 8 - Lost in the woods, we find ourselves back in the graveyard from the fourth vignette, but now the ground is disturbed - the horseman's grave is open.

MALE/FEMALE OR OTHERWISE A PERSON

Quick, everyone follow me! (Indicating his slingshot) Let's go play a little trick on the school master. Hurry along! / Now,

wait a second... Where did he go? He was just... how did we end up here? I believe you were already here tonight, before... Oh no, we must have got turned around in the woods. This is rumored to be the grave site of the Hessian soldier, but... The ground has been disturbed and ... (gulp)... You were warned upon entry into our small town of Sleepy Hollow of the story of the Hessian soldier, yet you still ventured here. I implore you, you must hurry out while you still can - tonight the headless horseman rides! Move along, or he'll get you, too! That way, cross the bridge and you'll be free from here.