

LEVELED BOOK • P

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

Retold by Torran Anderson • Illustrated by Mike LaRiccia

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Sleepy Hollow was the quietest place in the world. Besides being **haunted**, nothing much happened there—until the night of the Van Tassel party.

Skinny, old Ichabod Crane marched into the party with his head held high, resembling a scarecrow dressed in fancy clothes. He was at the party for one reason—Katrina Van Tassel.



The **stunning** Katrina stood out at the party like a red rose on a snowy day. She chatted with Brom Bones, who was as massive as a bull and as mean as a bear. He enjoyed riding around on his horse, Daredevil, and causing **mischief**. Brom Bones also liked Katrina.

Ichabod **mustered** his resolve and went straight up to them.

“Excuse me, Katrina,” Ichabod said.
“Would you care to dance?”

Brom Bones's face turned as red as a boiled lobster.

"I'd love to dance," Katrina said as she grasped Ichabod's hand.

Ichabod and Katrina twirled around the dance floor as if there were no tomorrow. Ichabod imagined he could dance his way right into Katrina's heart. Stranger things have happened. It's not that she didn't like him. She liked him fine, but a beautiful girl must weigh her options.

The longer they danced, the angrier Brom Bones became.



When the band took a break, Ichabod and Katrina stopped for a drink at the punch bowl. There towered Brom Bones, sharing ghost stories with a group of friends.

“I’ll tell you the scariest ghost story of all,” boasted Brom Bones. He stared directly at Ichabod. “Have you ever heard of the Headless Horseman?”

“No,” Ichabod muttered and gulped.

Brom Bones began to whisper, and the group leaned in closer.

“Every night at midnight, he rides through town on his horse, looking for his missing head,” Brom said. “I’ve seen him with my very own eyes. I was riding along late at night when this fellow came trotting up. I asked him if he wanted a race. He didn’t say a word because—he didn’t have a head!”



“So I took off on Daredevil,” Brom **bellowed**, “and he came tearing up behind me. I raced him right up to the church bridge. Once his horse set foot on the bridge, he disappeared in a flash of fire.”



The audience stood in tense silence.

“If you ever see the Headless Horseman,” Brom Bones said, “head to the other side of the church bridge. Otherwise, you’re done for. Of course, if you’re as fast as me, you have nothing to worry about.”

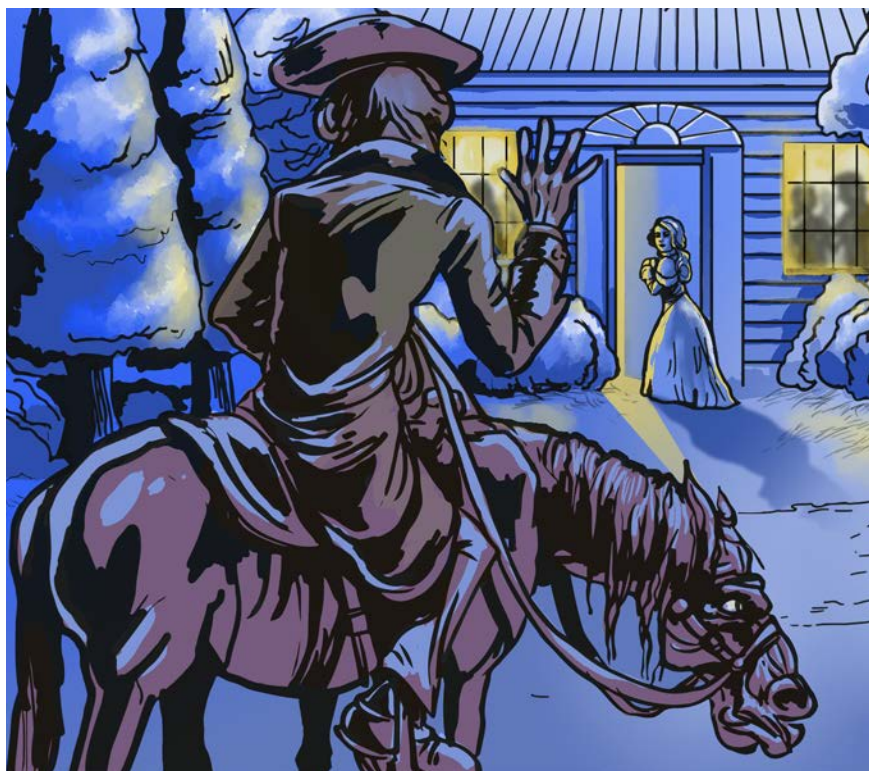


“That was really brave,” Katrina **fawned**. Her eyes shined like jewels in candlelight as she gazed up at the massive Brom Bones.

Ichabod took one look at Katrina and grunted, “Great imaginary story.” He grabbed Katrina’s hand and quickly pulled her toward the dance floor.

They danced to a few more songs,
but Brom Bone's story was stuck in
Ichabod's head.

Just before midnight, Ichabod said
farewell to Katrina and promised to visit
her soon. Then, he climbed on his sad,
old plow horse, which was almost as
skinny as Ichabod himself, and set off
home.





The wind whistled through the branches. An owl **shrieked**. The Headless Horseman filled Ichabod's mind. He attempted to sing to keep himself brave, but his voice caught in his throat. Then, he heard another sound coming up behind him . . . a horse.

The horse and rider trotted up next to Ichabod, but it was too dark to see them.

“Good evening,” Ichabod said.

The rider said nothing.

Up ahead, Ichabod could make out the church bridge. He started to ride a little faster. The rider matched his pace.

“This is strange fog we’re having,” Ichabod said, trying to make conversation.

Again, the rider said nothing.

The moon slid out from behind a cloud. Ichabod looked over at the rider and froze. The rider had no head!

In his hand, the rider held a huge pumpkin that seemed to glow in the moonlight. He raised it high above where his head should have been as it burst into flames.



Ichabod screamed and kicked the sides of his horse. The horse barely sped up. The safety of the church bridge waited up ahead.

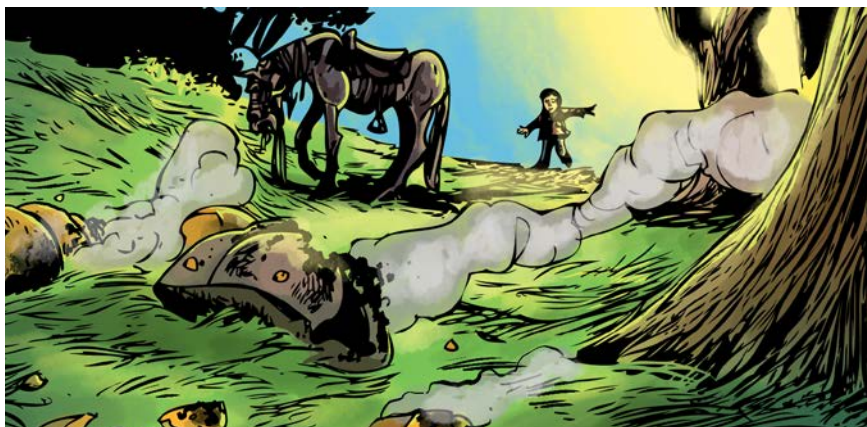
“Faster!” Ichabod yelled to his old plow horse. “Almost there.”

The rider was close, but then Ichabod heard his horses’ hooves stomp on the wooden bridge. He sighed with relief. “I made it!” Ichabod screamed.

He heard the rider’s horse behind him. He turned to look from the safety of the bridge. A flash of flames rushed toward him, and all went dark.



The next morning, a schoolboy discovered Ichabod's horse grazing in a field by the church. On the ground next to the old bridge, he found Ichabod's hat and a **scorched** pumpkin. Ichabod himself had disappeared.



Not long after Ichabod **vanished** from Sleepy Hollow, Brom Bones married Katrina. When folks told the story about Ichabod Crane, Brom Bones would always smile. Some said Brom Bones drove Ichabod away. Others—those who knew about such things—swore the Headless Horseman had taken him on that dark night.

Glossary

bellowed (<i>v.</i>)	spoke or shouted in a loud, deep voice (p. 8)
fawned (<i>v.</i>)	tried to gain the approval, attention, or affection of another by giving praise, flattery, or special attention (p. 9)
haunted (<i>adj.</i>)	occupied or visited by ghosts (p. 3)
mischief (<i>n.</i>)	behavior that is troublesome or annoying (p. 4)
mustered (<i>v.</i>)	summoned; brought forth (p. 4)
scorched (<i>adj.</i>)	having a burned surface (p. 15)
shrieked (<i>v.</i>)	made a loud, high-pitched sound (p. 11)
stunning (<i>adj.</i>)	extremely beautiful, impressive, or excellent (p. 4)
vanished (<i>v.</i>)	suddenly disappeared or moved out of view (p. 15)

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