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CLASSIC COLLECTION

THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW



WASHINGTON IRVING

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QED Publishing

Ichabod Crane

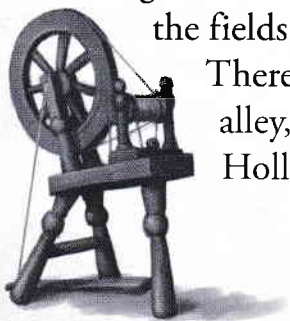
Sleepy Hollow was not the sort of place you'd want to live if you liked adventure. It was a small, quiet village, nestled among rolling hills, with only a few shops, a church and a graveyard. There was a school too, run by a teacher who originally came from the American state of Connecticut. His name was Ichabod Crane.

Mr Crane was very tall, and very thin. His arms and legs looked like broomsticks. He had a small round head, flat at the top, with glassy green eyes, a pointy nose and ears that flapped when he got excited. Walking across the fields to school every morning, he looked a bit like a scarecrow escaped from his perch.

Not that the people in Sleepy Hollow minded their schoolmaster looking like a scarecrow. Ichabod Crane was very good at telling stories and reading out poems and could keep folk entertained for hours with his jokes and singing. The farmer's wives often sat together spinning yarn and always invited him to join them, tempting him with roast apples. He would tell them about his travels – long, complicated tales about famous people and places.

In return, the farmer's wives would tell him ghost stories. Everyone in Sleepy Hollow believed in ghosts and ghouls, and many claimed to have seen strange lights in the fields or heard mysterious noises under bridges.

There was a gruesome story to tell about every dark alley, misty field and shadowy corner in Sleepy Hollow, and Ichabod wanted to hear them all.



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The Legend

One evening after Ichabod had finished reading the spinning ladies a poem, one of them turned to him. “Mr Crane, have you heard tell of our headless horseman?” she asked in a low, dramatic voice. “He is easily our most famous ghost. Indeed, he is the legend of Sleepy Hollow.”

“I have heard of him in passing,” replied Ichabod, “but I do not know the story.”

“He is said to be the ghost of a young German soldier,” said another lady. “He was brought over from Europe to fight against us in the War of Independence. Alas, the poor fellow’s head was blown off by a cannonball and he was buried in our churchyard without it. It is said he rides out to the battlefield every night in search of his head, but he never finds it.”

“That is indeed a sad story,” said Ichabod. “I think I should write a poem about it, or an essay.”

“And do you believe in ghosts and ghouls yourself, Mr Crane?” asked one of the other ladies, as Ichabod tucked heartily into another roast apple.

“I have travelled far and wide and I have learned that there is a lot more to creation than what we see with our eyes and what we hear with our ears,” confessed the schoolmaster. “Yes, I believe there is an unseen world; things around us that we cannot always see. It’s a world that is very close to us although we are not aware of it.”



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