

SLEEPY HOLLOW

Being the true Story of one Ichabod Crane
and the Headless Horseman

Based on the story by Washington Irving
Story by Kevin Yagher and Andrew Kevin Walker
Screenplay by Andrew Kevin Walker

shooting
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Scott Rudin
Productions

andrewkevinwalker.com

EXT. CITY STREETS -- NIGHT

Empty cobblestone streets are bordered by stately buildings. A rapidly CLANGING BELL breaks the silence from afar.

INSERT TITLE: **New York City**
 1799

TWO CONSTABLES clamor round a corner, lanterns held high, listening. They disappear down an alleyway.

ELSEWHERE, piers border the Hudson. The BELL is LOUDER here. The two constables arrive, searching, pistols drawn.

CONSTABLE ONE
Where are you?!

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Here... ! Over here!

The constables hurry to the river's edge...
Down an embankment, the MAN, another constable, has his back to us. He's waist deep in dark water, throwing aside his ALARM BELL, struggling to pull something from the murk...

MAN
I need your help with this.

Constable Two and Constable One move forward, wary.

CONSTABLE ONE
Constable Crane? Ichabod Crane... is
that you?

The MAN turns. Meet ICHABOD CRANE, handsome, eyes piercing but nervous and unsettled.

ICHABOD
Yes, it is me. But, not only me...
(returns to lifting)
I found someone here...

Ichabod drags a bloated MALE CORPSE out from the water. He backs away, shaken, looks to the constables...

ICHABOD
Someone quite dead.

INT. CITY WATCHHOUSE/JAIL -- NIGHT

In a dank, cavernous room, the distinguished HIGH CONSTABLE lifts a blanket off the corpse in a wheelbarrow manned by Constable Two. Constable One and Ichabod are near, watching.

HIGH CONSTABLE
Burn it.

CONTINUED

CONSTABLE ONE
 Sorry to have troubled you, sir.

Constable Two wheels the corpse down a RAMP to another room.

ICHABOD
 Just a moment, if I may... it is possible this man was murdered.

HIGH CONSTABLE
 He drowned. Anyone could see.

ICHABOD
 There are surgical ways of telling how he died... by the water in his lungs. I could determine if he were dead before he went into the river.

HIGH CONSTABLE
 He will be burned pursuant to statutes of health.

ICHABOD
 If you will indulge me...

HIGH CONSTABLE
 He will have his peace without molestation, Constable. Goodnight.

Ichabod is about to protest, but stops himself, frustrated. He hurries to follow the two constables and the corpse.

INT. CITY WATCHHOUSE, INCINERATION ROOM -- NIGHT

The corpse is placed in a raging furnace. Flesh sizzles and blackens. Constable One pumps bellows which fan the flames.

Ichabod moves from darkness into the light of the flames, watching with bitter regret as the corpse is consumed.

EXT. CITY WATCHHOUSE -- DAY

The metropolis thrives; horsedrawn vehicles plodding, MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN, MERCHANTS and TRADESMEN everywhere. MEN are held in chains and gibbets in front of the Watchhouse.

INT. CITY WATCHHOUSE, JAIL -- DAY

A CROWD fills half the room. Some hold bizarre contraptions made for punishment; some are drunk and drinking. Ichabod is here, holding books, studying notes. At the front of the crowd, a SPOTTY-FACED MAN addresses CITY OFFICIALS.

SPOTTY MAN
 ... the prisoner stands with his head held inside this cage, suspended...

CONTINUED

Spotty Man shows a spiked, METAL HEAD CAGE on a chain.

SPOTTY MAN

You lock him in, so the villain
cannot move. It is hard penance, I
tell you, and offered at small price
for each I build.

ALDERMEN and MAGISTRATES observe. The High Constable rises,
at the right hand of the haughty BURGOMASTER.

HIGH CONSTABLE

We will take your device under
consideration, Master Baldrick.

BURGOMASTER

Who is next?

HIGH CONSTABLE

(reading list)

Constable... Ichabod Crane.

Ichabod moves forward as city officials MUTTER. He
organizes his notes, nervous, takes off his hat.

ICHABOD

Burgomaster... High Constable and
magistrates. There is a book... um...
(looks at notes)

In the year 1243... a book was
written in China, called the "Hsi
Yuan Lu." It addresses methods of
examining murdered victims, and
although it incorporates useless
passages of magic and mysticism...
it deals with the concept of
procedural study used to solve
seemingly unsolvable crimes...

Pages fall from Ichabod's book. Ichabod bends to retrieve
them while the crowd behind makes belligerent noise.

HIGH CONSTABLE

If you could move directly to the
point of your presentation, we'd
appreciate.

ICHABOD

Yes... yes. The point is... our
system must focus less on severe
tortures for the accused, and now
concentrate on the scientific
detection of crime...

HIGH CONSTABLE

I believe every person here has heard
this discourse a time or two.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

Sir, our night-watch is adequate dealing with fire and some petty violence, but if we were able to ensure justice, innocent men would not rot behind bars while the guilty are free roam our streets.

This causes an uproar of dissent from all sides.

HIGH CONSTABLE

Are we so ineffectual in your opinion?

ICHABOD

Without disrespect... our jails overflow, yet lawlessness and murder are swiftly on the rise.

HIGH CONSTABLE

If jails overflow, it is testimony to our success, not our failure.

Officials grunt and "here-here" in agreement.

ICHABOD

You claim this, though I have seen confessions pried from the lips of the accused, with wicked instruments not unlike those demonstrated today.

HIGH CONSTABLE

Stand down, Crane. Stand down...

The crowd JEERS. Ichabod stares down, enduring it.

BURGOMASTER

One moment, if you please...

(stands, waits for QUIET)

Constable Crane... there is a town upstate, two days journey to the north in the Hudson Highlands. It is a place named Sleepy Hollow. Have you heard of it?

ICHABOD

I have not.

BURGOMASTER

An isolated farming community, mostly Dutch. Three persons have been murdered there, all within a fortnight... each found with their head lopped cleanly off. The town's elder-persons have sent dispatches requesting assistance, and now, just this very moment, I have chosen you.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
Chosen me?

BURGOMASTER
These methods you advocate... there
has been no practical application.

ICHABOD
Not for lack of trying.

BURGOMASTER
Just so, granted. So you take your
experimentations to Sleepy Hollow and
capture the murderer who has tainted
the place. Bring him here to face
our good justice. Will you do this?

ICHABOD
(swallowing doubt)
I shall, gladly.

BURGOMASTER
And, do make certain that you meet
with success. Otherwise, perhaps you
should not come back at all.

The Burgomaster smiles a sardonic smile.

INT. ICHABOD'S HOME, 2ND FLOOR - DAY - TITLE SEQUENCE BEGINS

Piles of BOOKS and PAPERS, JARS of CHEMICALS, CHALKBOARDS
covered in scrawl, and ANATOMY CHARTS above a small bed.

ICHABOD (O.S.)
Such a day for such a sad farewell.
But, this is goodbye, my sweet...

AT THE WINDOW, Ichabod holds a bird cage with a red CARDINAL
inside. He opens the cage and the bird flies free...

Ichabod watches it go, sad, then looks down. A COACH halts
in the street below. The forlorn DRIVER looks up.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS -- DAY

ICHABOD'S COACH leaves city limits, forgoing civilization...
following a dirt road to forested wilderness.

EXT. NEW YORK FORESTS -- NIGHT

Coach lanterns light the way as the coach lumbers along,
caressed by tight foliage. A WOLF is HEARD HOWLING.
Ichabod looks out, unnerved, shuts the window's curtain.

EXT. UPSTATE FORESTS DAY

The coach moves through sun dappled forest...

INT. ICHABOD'S COACH -- DAY

Ichabod checks the contents of a LEATHER SATCHEL in his lap. He pauses a moment, studying the palm of his hand.

Ichabod touches strange SCARS on both his palms: evenly dispersed, tiny dots of tissue. Many scars. After a moment, he returns to his looking through his satchel.

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW, THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD -- LATE DAY

Ichabod stands between two massive STONE PILLARS. He's unsure, turning to watch his coach leave him behind.

Ichabod picks up his bags and heads between the pillars, starting up a LONG STRAIGHT ROAD. He does not notice, in tree limbs above: THREE DEAD RAVENS, hung by twine.

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW, TOWN SQUARE -- DUSK

Ichabod walks on, passing a CHURCH and GRAVEYARD. The road ahead is bordered by rows of businesses and two story homes.

Ichabod enters the TOWN SQUARE proper. An ELDERLY WOMAN stands in a doorway, watching Ichabod. Ichabod tips his hat. The woman backs away, shuts her door.

Ichabod continues. He looks up...
a MAN closes the shutters of a second story window.

EXT. VAN TASSEL ESTATE -- DUSK

Silhouetted above the treetops, a BELLTOWER stands tall, like a landlocked mast pole with a crow's nest atop. There's a RIFLEMAN in the basket and a huge BELL.

Ichabod looks up as he trudges along, pondering this. Ahead on a hill: the grand Van Tassel MANOR HOUSE, windows aglow.

Title sequence ends**INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FOYER AND ENTRANCE HALL -- NIGHT**

Ichabod enters, KNOCKING.

ICHABOD
Hello? Hello... ?!

The visages of JACK-O'-LANTERNS are all that greet him. VOICES are HEARD from elsewhere, and quiet MUSIC.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod opens a door, entering a harvest party. MEN and WOMAN eat and drink, talking quietly in groups. Ichabod looks around, daunted, tentatively makes his way...

CONTINUED

Ichabod bumps into a few people, excusing himself. He mops his sweaty brow, finds a pretty servant girl, SARAH, serving.

ICHABOD

Pardon, is Baltus Van Tassel at home?

SARAH

In the parlor, sir, further on.

Ichabod thanks her, continues...

Ahead, CHILDREN, YOUNG MEN and LADIES in a circle taunt a BLINDFOLDED YOUNG WOMAN spun around by the handsome, barrel-chested man, BROM VAN BRUNT. Brom releases the woman. Everyone quiets, avoiding her searching hands.

BLINDFOLDED WOMAN

This is a foolish game.

BROM

Be a sport and stop complaining.

The woman moves to Brom's voice. He backs away, flanked by peers GLENN and THEODORE. Children laugh. Ichabod tries to cross past, but one LITTLE GIRL comes to him, finger to her lips, pulling him by the hand to the game...

LITTLE GIRL

Play along, you must.

ICHABOD

No, no, I...

Ichabod finds himself in the blindfolded woman's grip.

BLINDFOLDED WOMAN

There, I have someone. Am I finished?

LITTLE GIRL

You have to tell who it is.

The woman gently touches Ichabod's face. Ichabod is extremely uncomfortable. Brom watches with displeasure.

ANOTHER WOMAN

At least make a guess.

BLINDFOLDED WOMAN

Is it Brom Bones?

BROM

Certainly not.

ICHABOD

Excuse me, Miss... I am sorry...

(takes her hands)

They have a laugh at your expense.

CONTINUED

The woman takes the blindfold off to reveal a stunning beauty: KATRINA VAN TASSEL. She smiles. Ichabod tries to compose himself, stricken by the sight of her.

KATRINA
Forgive me, I didn't know.

ICHABOD
I... um, I am looking for Baltus Van Tassel.

KATRINA
Though we've met in a fashion, I should introduce myself properly. I am his daughter, Katrina Van Tassel.

BROM
And who are you, friend? We have not heard your name yet.

ICHABOD
Unless your name is Baltus, friend, you should not worry over mine.

Brom grabs Ichabod's collar, pissed. Ichabod's baffled.

BROM
You need some manners.

KATRINA
Brom!

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
What is this, then... ?

BALTUS VAN TASSEL arrives, a stern, working-class aristocrat. LADY VAN TASSEL stands behind, a mix of home-spun wife and well-kept lady. Brom releases Ichabod.

BALTUS
Explain this foolishness, Katrina.

KATRINA
It was only a game, father.

Children hide behind Katrina. Ichabod's relieved to have a proper focal point. Others from the party gather.

ICHABOD
Sir... I have been sent from the city with a letter of introduction. I am told you offer me room and board.

Ichabod produces papers. Baltus reads, furrowing his brow. Baltus nods, exiting with Ichabod. Others huddle to gossip, except Katrina, who goes to the DOORWAY to watch Ichabod and Baltus walk down the hall.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, PARLOR -- NIGHT

DOCTOR LANCASTER, 50, dour and always sweaty, takes a seat, joining Baltus and THREE OTHER TOWN ELDERS. Sarah brings a pipe cradle, Lady Van Tassel brings food. Ichabod stands.

BALTUS

We've begun a difficult harvest. Not enough hands for the work. That will be all, ladies.

LADY VAN TASSEL

Call if you require anything more.

Lady Van Tassel looks back, curious, as she shuts the door.

BALTUS

We are joined by Doctor Thomas Lancaster, Constable. And to his left are Clergyman Steenwyck and our able magistrate, Samuel Philipse, both keeping order in their own ways.

PHILIPSE is youngest, eyes bloodshot, mug in hand.
CLERGYMAN STEENWYCK wears a constant look of disapproval.

BALTUS

I myself am in charge of financial matters and the regulation of currency in our commonweal. And, lastly, this fine fellow is James Hardenbrook, our Notary.

HARDENBROOK is oldest, ancient, with one eye pale and blind.

ICHABOD

An honor, gentlemen. In time I will need every detail of the three murderings you've had. For now, all I ask is if you have any theory as to who the killer might be?

DOCTOR LANCASTER

Excuse me... ?

ICHABOD

I say, is there any one person suspect in these acts?

DOCTOR LANCASTER

I was afraid of this.

Angst amongst the elders. Philipse shoots a look to Baltus.

PHILIPSE

Constable... are you aware...
(more)

CONTINUED

PHILIPSE (CONT.)

To be perfectly honest, you are not what we expected. We sent for the militia.

ICHABOD

The militia?

FATHER STEENWYCK

How much have your superiors bothered to tell you, hmm?

ICHABOD

All I know is three are slain on their farms, their heads found severed from their bodies...

FATHER STEENWYCK

The heads were not found severed. The heads were not found at all.

Withered Hardenbrook leans forward, his voice cragged.

HARDENBROOK

Taken. Taken by the Headless Horseman. Taken back to hell.

ICHABOD

Pardon me, I... ?

BALTUS

You have not been well informed of our troubles, sir. If you would...

Baltus gestures for Ichabod to sit. Baltus lights his pipe.

BALTUS

The Horseman was a Hessian mercenary, sent to our shores by German princes to keep Americans under the thumb of England. Unlike his compatriots who came as muscle in trade for currency, the Horseman came willingly. He came for love of carnage...

FLASHBACK -- AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD -- DAY

The HESSIAN HORSEMAN rides his black steed into a gory, close-quarters clash, his cloaked uniform adorned with edged weapons. He cuts down Americans left and right.

BALTUS (V.O.)

He rode a giant, black steed, named Daredevil. He was infamous for taking his horse hard into battle... chopping off heads at full gallop.

CONTINUED

The Horseman dismounts, hoists a battle axe. With sword and axe, he annihilates. Blood gushes. Bones crack.

BALTUS (V.O.)
To look upon him made your blood run
cold, since he had filed down his
teeth to rapiers... to add to the
ferocity of his appearance...

The Horseman lets out a war cry. Jagged teeth. Grotesque.

FLASHBACK -- FOREST BATTLEFIELD -- DAY

Winter. CANNONS can be HEARD BOOMING from afar. Daredevil lies dead in red snow. The Horseman is kneeled over Daredevil's body, head bowed, grasping his fallen steed...

BALTUS (V.O.)
This butcher would not finally meet
his end till the winter of '79...

The Horseman rises, eyes filled with rage, looks to see...

SIX rag-tag REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIERS give chase, firing rifles. The Horseman flees, bullets throwing snow behind.

BALTUS (V.O.)
New York City was held by the British
and Washington occupied West Point.
It was between those two places, not
far from here in our Western Woods...

DEEPER IN THE FOREST

The Horseman glances back, bounding through, drawing his sword, when suddenly he halts...

He's happened upon TWO YOUNG GIRLS gathering firewood. The girls stand frozen at the sight of him for a long, silent moment, till one girl drops the firewood and runs.

The second girl remains, holding the Horseman's gaze. A SOUND of a SNAPPING BRANCH makes the Horseman turn.

Soldiers move forward from the forest behind, spreading out.

The second girl flees. The Horseman hefts his sword, turning as soldiers surround. One soldier aims his rifle...

The Horseman reaches over his shoulder, grasps a sheathed knife and THROWS --

THOCK! The rifleman jerks back, knife in his eye socket.

A second soldier aims and FIRES...
Blood explodes from the Horseman's arm. His sword drops.

CONTINUED

The Horseman readies an AXE in his good hand. The Revolutionaries move in with swords. They battle, STEEL AGAINST STEEL. The Horseman fends off blows...

Soldier Three stabs his blade deep into the Horseman's side. The Horseman roars, bringing his axe DOWN... BREAKS the sword at the hilt. An UPWARDS stroke sends Soldier Three backwards in a fountain of blood.

The Horseman staggers, trying to pull the blade from his ribs. The remaining soldiers close in...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, PARLOR -- NIGHT

Ichabod is enthralled. Pipe smoke wafts from Baltus' mouth.

BALTUS

They cut off his head with his own sword. To this day, the Western Woods is a no-man's land...

FLASHBACK -- FOREST CLEARING, HORSEMAN'S GRAVE -- DAY

The Horseman's headless corpse lies in a shallow grave.

BALTUS (V.O.)

... for what was planted in the ground that day was a seed of evil.

The HORSEMAN'S HEAD is dropped into the grave. The remains are covered with a piece of rough BURLAP. Dirt is thrown in.

FLASHBACK -- FOREST CLEARING -- LATER DAY

One of the four surviving soldiers stabs the HORSEMAN'S SWORD deep in the ground as a marker. The grave is done.

The soldiers walk away from the grave. They have buried the Horseman in a treeless clearing.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, PARLOR -- NIGHT

BALTUS

It is a legend told for twenty years.

PHILIPSE

Only recently has the Headless Hessian been seen prowling, in search of a head to suit his shoulders.

Ichabod sits back, shakes off the reverie of the tale.

ICHABOD

Are you... saying it is he? Is that what you believe?

CONTINUED

HARDENBROOK

When a goblin leaps from the nether world, others follow! Poltergeists of the air, water and earth follow to cheer his desecrations!

Baltus puts a calming hand on senile Hardenbrook's shoulder.

DOCTOR LANCASTER

No one knows why he chose to now to claw his way out from his grave.

FATHER STEENWYCK

It is very clear why. Citizens here have long tried to hide sins behind closed doors. Their failed faith has called forth one of Satan's own.

ICHABOD

Who has seen this Horseman?

BALTUS

Many have.

ICHABOD

Where, and when? Name one person who has seen him with their own eyes.

(long wait, no reply)

Have any of you seen him?

Again, no reply from the elders. Ichabod stands.

ICHABOD

Gentlemen... while I will do everything I can to find your assassin, I will look for a man of flesh and blood. Not some goblin-demon from hell.

EXT. BELLTOWER FIELD -- NIGHT

The Belltower is covered in defensive spikes. A man climbs down a rope ladder. Below, many ARMED MEN gather. Everyone's grim. Philipse moves to the center, on horseback.

PHILIPSE

Gather and quiet! The hour has come to choose.

A BOX is handed up. Ichabod and Baltus arrive on foot at the back of the mob. Ichabod looks...

Men light TORCH POSTS in a line along the nearby forest edge.

PHILIPSE

As magistrate, it is my unfortunate task. May the Lord watch over him...

CONTINUED

Philipse draws a folded paper from the box, reads it.

PHILIPSE

"Jonathan Masbath." Are you here?

JONATHAN (O.S.)

I am. I take my responsibility.

The crowd parts as JONATHAN MASBATH, a dirt-poor farmer moves forward. His son, YOUNG MASBATH, 10, grips his arm.

YOUNG MASBATH

No, father.

JONATHAN

It is a lottery, son. It as easily might have been one of them.

YOUNG MASBATH

Then, I go with you.

JONATHAN

No. You obey my wishes.

(looks to crowd)

Brom. Look after him?

Brom steps up, nods. Jonathan kisses his son's cheek, then heads to the rope ladder. Men pat Jonathan on the back.

Brom coaxes Young Masbath away. At the back of the crowd, Ichabod looks to Young Masbath as he and Brom pass.

ICHABOD

You worry for naught, little man.

(looks up, to himself)

It is problems here on the ground you people need begin to worry about.

Jonathan climbs the ladder, very high above.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod makes notations in a LEDGER BOOK.

KATRINA (v.o.)

You will dream.

Katrina enters, sits on the bed. Ichabod is nervous.

KATRINA

It is something in the air so that dreams come to everyone. An Indian prophet held powwows here before the land was taken, and spells cast then still linger to this day.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

Do you often make a habit of sitting
on strange men's beds?

Katrina regards him with her incredible eyes.

KATRINA

You are terribly old-fashioned,
aren't you?

ICHABOD

(facing his ledger)
Feel free to form your own opinion.

KATRINA

I had intended to apologize for the
behavior of my friend Brom Van Brunt,
but it seems I've made matters worse.
(getting up)
I'll leave you to your work.

ICHABOD

Excuse me... I should apologize. I,
um... I.. have no great love of...

KATRINA

Other people?

ICHABOD

Small talk.

KATRINA

I will try to keep the conversation
elevated.

Ichabod rises to offer his chair to Katrina, backing away.
Seeing it is the only one, he awkwardly remains standing,
effected by Katrina's presence. Katrina sits.

KATRINA

Are you this nervous around all
women, or is it me?

ICHABOD

Perhaps it is because your suitor's
hands were recently very nearly
wrapped around my throat.

KATRINA

My suitor?

ICHABOD

The massive fellow... Brom. For
someone you call "friend," he
misplaces a good portion of jealousy.

CONTINUED

KATRINA

He has proposed to me twice.

ICHABOD

Which may explain his temperament.
To have asked twice means the answer
was "no" at least once.

KATRINA

Brom is a fine man. I will end up
with him in everyone's opinion,
except my own.

(discards this with a smile)
You must tell me about your New York
City. I've read a great deal. Is it
true there is a museum of art?

ICHABOD

I do not know.

KATRINA

Then, what of music hall and theater?

ICHABOD

I have never been.

KATRINA

It must be an extraordinary place,
all the same.

ICHABOD

It is that. First, you tell me about
the galloping ghoul blamed for your
town's misfortune.

KATRINA

Not all think it is the Horseman...

EXT. BELLTOWER FIELD INTERCUT -- NIGHT

IN THE BELLTOWER, Jonathan, rifle in hand, reacts as a HORSE
is HEARD SHRIEKING. He looks below...

The HORSE tied at the base of the tower is spooked, rearing.

KATRINA (V.O.)

Many say witches steal out from the
haunted Western Woods to take skulls
for their cauldrons...

A COMMOTION is HEARD, ground rumbling. Jonathan cocks his
rifle and moves to look down...

The torches burn bright along the forest line. SEVERAL DEER
stampede out... sprinting past the tower, across the field.

CONTINUED

KATRINA (V.O.)
Some claim a madman stalks at the
midnight hour, killing for sport...

Jonathan watches the forest. A horrible, SILENT stillness
has fallen. Then, Jonathan's eyes widen...

A thick FOG creeps from the woods.

KATRINA (V.O.)
Or that a person in this very town
kneels before Lucifer... offering
death as tribute...

As fog overtakes each torch, mist snakes up, snuffing each
flame... one by one by one, all along the forest edge...

Above, Jonathan sights the rifle along the trees.

JONATHAN
Come out, devil... come...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- INTERCUT NIGHT

KATRINA
And still others believe none of it.

ICHABOD
Do you believe in the Horseman? Are
you so superstitious?

Katrina stands, walks around the room.

KATRINA
I believe, but to call a person
superstitious is to imply they fear
magic. Not all magic is black.

ICHABOD
There is no such thing as magic.

KATRINA
Really? What is your rebuttal to
those romantics who see proof of
magic in a rose at full bloom, or
even in a teardrop?

ICHABOD
Ridiculous notions offer no better
understanding of plants and bodily
secretions.

KATRINA
Must one understand a flower to
appreciate it?

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

I say yes, absolutely. Without knowing its incredible complexity as an organic mechanism, you cannot fully appreciate it.

KATRINA

Study a rose by piece; it's petals, thorns, it's stamen and stem... what part holds its beauty?

ICHABOD

Its truth. There you will find the most profound beauty. The beauty I live for each day -- that anything which is true is knowable, and nothing is true till it is known.

KATRINA

Funny how in explaining what a strict realist you are, the more you sound like a poet.

ICHABOD

I do not mean to.

KATRINA

That is what makes it so charming.

Ichabod doesn't know what to say. The DISTANT TOLL of a BELL is HEARD. Katrina looks up, fearful. The BELL TOLLS...

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW, OVERVIEW -- NIGHT

...TOLLS mournfully over farms and forests...

EXT. TOWN SQUARE -- NIGHT

...TOLLS across the deserted square. Windows go dark.

INT. DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

...TOLLS mournfully. Doctor Lancaster and his WIFE sit up in their beds, listening, their faces masks of dread.

EXT. BROM'S HOME -- NIGHT

...TOLLS, as Young Masbath bursts out the door of Brom's home, running. But, Brom is fast on Masbath's heels... grabs Young Masbath and holds him as he struggles.

YOUNG MASBATH

Let me go, please... !

BROM

I'm sorry, boy... I'm sorry...

CONTINUED

Brom hugs Young Masbath tight against him, heartbroken.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE -- NIGHT

...TOLLS. Ichabod runs out onto the lawn, halts to listen. Katrina and Baltus come out to the porch. Lady Van Tassel follows, worried.

BALTUS
Constable, where are you going... !?

...TOLLS... TOLLS... then, SILENCE. Ichabod chases away.

BALTUS
Madness.

LADY VAN TASSEL
What is he doing?

BALTUS
You think I know, woman? Get yourselves inside, both of you, please. Bolt the doors and windows.

Baltus ushers Katrina and Lady Van Tassel in, looks back out as he's shutting the front door...

BALTUS
Madness!

EXT. BELLTOWER FIELD -- NIGHT

Ichabod charges across the rocky field. He slows, awed by the sight that greets him ahead...

The Belltower is down, its mast splintered. The horse gone.

Ichabod slowly moves forward, barely believing...
The crow's nest lies smashed. No sign of Jonathan.

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW FOREST -- NIGHT

Jonathan flees through the forest, glances back, terrified. THUNDEROUS HOOFBEATS are HEARD from behind.

Jonathan runs, trips, falls, scrambles up...

DEEP IN THE FOREST, we GLIMPSE the source of the HOOFBEATS: a HUGE FORM on a HUGE BLACK HORSE, already gone.

Jonathan pushes through thorny bushes. Jagged branches bloody his hands and cheeks...

He bursts from the brier patch and TUMBLES to a TRAIL.

CONTINUED

IN THE FOREST BEHIND: the hooves of the black horse rip underbrush. HOOFBEATS DEAFENING. A spur digs into the snorting steed's already bleeding flank.

The pursuer's gloved hand draws a SWORD, blade RINGING.

ON THE TRAIL, Jonathan runs onwards. The shrill WHISTLE of a SWORD SWING is HEARD as the pursuer BLURS PAST...

Jonathan is still running when his head lolls back, at an impossible angle... his head tumbles off his shoulders...

Jonathan's headless body hits the dirt.

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW FARMLAND -- MORNING

Baltus and a large, DULLARDLY MAN ride. Behind, Ichabod rides alongside Magistrate Philipse. Ichabod is far from adept at riding his old nag, Gunpowder.

ICHABOD

The Van Garretts died first; father
and son, survived by a wife and two
infants. The Widow Windsor was next.

PHILIPSE

And now Jonathan Masbath.

ICHABOD

Why would he flee this direction,
with so much open ground to cross
before he reached cover?

PHILIPSE

He would not have gone into the
Western Woods. No sane man would.

Philipse drinks from a whiskey flask, sees Ichabod watching and offers some. Ichabod declines.

PHILIPSE

Van Ripper there...

Ahead, the dullard, VAN RIPPER, sloppily spits tobacco.

PHILIPSE

... found the body this morning. You
do believe now, don't you?

ICHABOD

Believe?

PHILIPSE

What mere man could have downed the
Belltower?

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

There are rational explanations to be found, Philipse. Because one thing appears improbable does not mean you embrace the fantastical.

PHILIPSE

You need less big words and more common sense.

Philipse fingers an IRON KEY talisman he wears on a cord.

ICHABOD

What is that you wear?

PHILIPSE

My talisman. It protects against the Horseman if I show a brave face. But, I cannot run. If I run in fear, it is worthless.

ICHABOD

So much for common sense.

EXT. SLEEPY HOLLOW FORESTS, FURTHER ON -- MORNING

Brom and Baltus stand at a HORSE'S CORPSE amongst jagged boulders. The flesh has been stripped, guts exposed. Philipse and Ichabod arrive. Ichabod dismounts clumsily.

BROM

(to Ichabod, amused)
Chose the finest stallion from Baltus' stable, did you?

ICHABOD

It suits me fine.

BROM

You are perfect for each other.

Brom mounts his own HORSE, a black beauty, rides ahead.

ICHABOD

Was this Jonathan's?

BALTUS

Yes. She panicked across here and broke two legs.

ICHABOD

Who took the meat?

PHILIPSE

Must have been the Redman.
(more)

CONTINUED

PHILIPSE (CONT.)

(to Ichabod)

A Lenape Indian lives in the Western Woods. He is the last of his kind.

ICHABOD

These woods of yours sound a bit crowded, what with all the witches, ghosts and Indians living there.

Ichabod approaches the dead horse, put off by the stench. Flies swarm. Ichabod digs in his SATCHEL for a thin IRON TOOL... uses it to pry off one HORSESHOE.

INT. FOREST, MASBATH MURDER SITE -- MORNING

Doctor Lancaster stands with Brom, Theodore and Glenn, who wear RIFLES. A COFFIN on a cart is covered by a blanket. Ichabod is crouched, staring at the ground before him.

ICHABOD

Why did you move the body, Doctor?

DOCTOR LANCASTER

To place it inside its coffin.

Ichabod nods, annoyed. He rises and takes a few steps. Van Ripper, Baltus and Philipse, nipping at his flask, watch.

Ichabod finds a huge, deep HOOFPRIINT. He tries to place the horseshoe he took off the dead horse into this print, but the hoofprint is much larger.

Ichabod kneels, pulls his satchel off his shoulder, takes out a BOWL, BOTTLE of WATER and a BAG of POWDER.

The others watch, finding this bizarre, as Ichabod begins mixing the water and powder, making plaster.

BROM

What is that potion?

ICHABOD

You are the blacksmith, Brom. Ever shod a horse with a hoof this large?

Ichabod fills the print with runny plaster.

BROM

Never. A shoe that size I would have remembered.

Ichabod shoulds his satchel, walks all around, studies the ground, follows hoofprints, kicks away leaves...

ICHABOD

The stride is gigantic...

CONTINUED

Ichabod stops, turns, following back the way he came...

ICHABOD

The attacker rode Masbath down...
turned his horse... came back...

(stops walking)

Came back to claim the head. Van
Ripper, can you show where the body
lay?

VAN RIPPER

I can show exactly.

Van Ripper dismounts, wiping tobacco drool.

VAN RIPPER

Here, in front of this oak. Horrible.

ICHABOD

Describe where the open wound fell.

Van Ripper points. Ichabod opens his satchel, takes out a
BOTTLE of GREEN POWDER. He uncorks the bottle, sprinkles a
thin layer of powder on the dirt, waiting.

A reaction causes the powder to bubble a little.

ICHABOD

There was not much blood.

VAN RIPPER

I didn't see none.

Ichabod's puzzled. He walks to the coffin cart, rolling up
his sleeves. Everyone comes to watch, but keeps distance.
Ichabod removes the blanket...

Reveals Jonathan's headless corpse. Philipse can't look.
Ichabod swallows, queasy, trying not to let it show. He
takes out a handkerchief, covers his nose and mouth.

Ichabod takes odd spectacles from his satchel, wire-framed
with many lenses; MAGNIFICATION SPECTACLES. He fumbles
putting them on, examines the gross neck wound.

ICHABOD

How is it possible... ?

DOCTOR LANCASTER

What is all this walking around and
strange behavior?

Ichabod takes an INSTRUMENT from his satchel, a delicate
SCISSOR MECHANISM TOOL that tapers off to tiny jaws. He
uses it, hand shaking, to pick at the flesh.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

No bleeding, doctor... the spine sliced smooth as butter. This should have bled buckets. Yet, no black flesh or blistering...

BROM

Explain what you say.

Ichabod straightens, eyes huge in the spectacles.

ICHABOD

Whatever weapon was used... it somehow burnt the wound shut before it could even begin to bleed.

EXT. THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD -- DAY

A sad funeral procession... Clergyman Steenwyck leads, Bible in hand. Jonathan's coffin is at center. Young Masbath walks beside the coffin.

Men with guns accompany; Brom, Theodore and Glenn amongst them. People steal glances at Ichabod, who walks with the Van Tassels, beside Katrina.

Katrina walks beside Baltus, holding Baltus' hand.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, DINING/VARIOUS ROOMS -- DAY

In the DINING ROOM, Ichabod eats by himself. A few other people still sup, including Van Ripper, his warty WIFE and two kids. Van Ripper guzzles ale, laughs at something his wife said. Sarah and Lady Van Tassel collect plates. Ichabod has finished, nodding to Lady Van Tassel.

ICHABOD

Thank you, madam.

Lady Van Tassel just nods and smiles, taking his plate. Ichabod gets up to leave. We FOLLOW...

IN the HALL and FOYER, funeral-goers socialize. In the SITTING ROOM, men smoke. Ichabod notices... In one corner, Brom seems to argue with Katrina. Katrina looks towards Ichabod.

Ichabod turns away, acts like he didn't notice.

YOUNG MASBATH (O.S.)

Excuse me, sir...

Ichabod finds Young Masbath looking up at him.

YOUNG MASBATH

I deserve to help... to help you get revenge on the Horseman.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
Young Masbath...

YOUNG MASBATH
You need a second to tend to your things. Let me.

ICHABOD
Son, I am very sorry for your loss. It is a tragedy. But... I cannot be the one to look after you.

Young Masbath is angry, trying to hold back tears.

YOUNG MASBATH
My father... my father was the best man that ever was. I don't ask for another. Let me help you.

ICHABOD
I cannot accept your offer.

Young Masbath walks away. Ichabod watches him go.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FRONT PORCH -- DAY

Ichabod comes out. KILLIAN, a dashing rustic man, carries his son, THOMAS, 5, and chats and drinks with Baltus, Doctor Lancaster and several other FARMERS.

ICHABOD
Your gathering does honor to the deceased.

BALTUS
May I have a moment... ?

Baltus leads Ichabod aside, takes a deep swig of ale.

BALTUS
We are farmers. Every penny we earn comes from what we send down the Hudson.

ICHABOD
Yes.

BALTUS
With each death, more workers flee for their lives. There is a danger our crops will rot, which could mean financial ruin for everyone. Especially for me.

ICHABOD
I understand the urgency.

CONTINUED

BALTUS
I pray you do.

Killian puts his young son down and tousles his hair.

KILLIAN
Run to your mother. Kiss her once
for you and twice for me.
(watches his son leave)
Master Crane, sir...
(shakes hands)
Name's Ben Killian. If ever you want
aid in your labors, call my name.

ICHABOD
Much appreciated.

BALTUS
Gentlemen, if you will excuse the
doctor and I... we have business to
discuss.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
Oh, yes... of course.

Ichabod and Killian nod. Doctor Lancaster makes sure to
open the door for Baltus, then follows Baltus inside.

ICHABOD
(to Killian)
Can you tell me... ? What will
become of Young Masbath?

KILLIAN
Van Ripper and his wife agreed to
take him. They have children, and a
good home and good land.

Ichabod nods. He turns to look THROUGH THE WINDOW...
In the DINING ROOM, Van Ripper rises, drunken, looking ill.
His wife questions his health, and he suddenly vomits.

Ichabod notes this with a deep sigh.

EXT. VAN TASSEL ORCHARD -- EARLY EVENING

Ocher dusk. Ichabod rides to Young Masbath, who is seated
on the ground, brooding. Masbath does not look up.

ICHABOD
Find a place in the servants'
residence. Wake me before dawn. I
hope you have a strong constitution.

Ichabod rides. Young Masbath runs to follow.

EXT. CHURCH YARD AND CEMETERY -- DAWN

Steenwyck is on horseback, looking down at Ichabod, furious.

FATHER STEENWYCK
It is sacrilege!

ICHABOD
I cannot proceed without examining
the previous victims.

Steenwyck looks to MEN with shovels. Killian's there.
Philipse, hung-over, stands beside Young Masbath.

FATHER STEENWYCK
Magistrate Philipse, you are the word
of law here... you can stop this.

Philipse just shrugs with a helpless expression.

FATHER STEENWYCK
I will not allow this desecration.
I will not!

ICHABOD
Protest to my superiors if you like.

FATHER STEENWYCK
Your superiors are two days away!

ICHABOD
Then, you should have left two days
ago, because I have men hired to help
me today.

Ichabod motions. Killian leads the men into the graveyard.
Steenwyck watches, enraged. He kicks his horse and rides.

EXT. CHURCH YARD AND CEMETERY -- LATER MORNING (TIME CUT)

A PSALM is READ by STEENWYCK O.S. while a COFFIN is exhumed.
Ichabod guides the lifting. The coffin is put near the
headstone "**WINDSOR.**" Ichabod looks...

At the church, a CROWD around Steenwyck joins in the PRAYER.

Across the cemetery, TWO COFFINS, one small, one large, are
pried open. "**VAN GARRETT, 1799.**" Killian leads the effort
with Young Masbath's aid...

The lids come off... revealing the HEADLESS BODIES of a MAN
and a little BOY. Young Masbath backs away.

At the "**WINDSOR**" coffin, Ichabod opens the lid. WE DO NOT
SEE inside, but when Ichabod does, he is greatly troubled.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
Why was I not told of this?

No answer from the men. Killian arrives, nods solemnly.

KILLIAN
The Widow Windsor.

ICHABOD
Is that all you say? Look at her.

KILLIAN
It's not something people speak of
openly. She did not remarry.

Ichabod kneels. Now, WE SEE: the belly of the headless
corpse is bulbous. The widow was far along in a pregnancy.

INT. DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, MEDICAL ROOM -- MORNING

Ichabod uses SCISSORS on the Widow Windsor's blouse...
revealing an inch-long WOUND on the moldering belly.

ICHABOD
A sword wound... to the stomach.

Ichabod gulps water to ease his upset, writes in his ledger.
Lancaster watches, mopping his brow. Young Masbath's seated.

ICHABOD
What is the common thread between the
victims? Why were they chosen?

YOUNG MASBATH
I don't know.

ICHABOD
If some person pretends the Horseman
legend, as I suppose, we must find
the reason.

(looking at headless widow)
One stroke took the head. The wound
the same. Cauterized, by what means
I do not know, perhaps chemical.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
You are welcome to my work area, but
I beg you, return her to her grave.

Ichabod takes a rolled VELVET CLOTH from his satchel,
unrolls it... it holds SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, some
particularly strange; RIB-SPREADERS and CURVED CLAMPS.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
What manner of instruments are those?

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
Some of my own design.

Ichabod picks up a KNIFE. He looks to the corpse a long moment. He looks at Young Masbath.

ICHABOD
Step outside. And, if you do not
mind, doctor, my concentration
suffers when I am observed.

Ichabod watches Young Masbath and Lancaster go. He puts the knife down, returns to his satchel and pulls out a BOOK.

He flips through PICTURES of HUMAN ANATOMY. Holding the book open in one hand, Ichabod picks up the knife in the other, taking a deep uncertain breath.

EXT. CHURCH YARD, CEMETERY -- EARLY EVENING

Ichabod and OTHER MEN restore graves. Ichabod looks to the church... where Clergyman Steenwyck stands in candlelight.

FATHER STEENWYCK
The devil sent you, Ichabod Crane.
Your sins will never be forgiven.

Steenwyck closes the creaky doors, slamming them shut.

EXT. LONG STRAIGHT ROAD, COVERED BRIDGE -- LATER NIGHT

Pale moonlight. Ichabod rides Gunpowder across the COVERED BRIDGE. They are an ungainly pair.

Following the road, Ichabod is lost in thought. The CLOPPING of HOOFBEATS is HEARD on the bridge behind.

Ichabod turns to look. HOOFBEATS STOP. No one can be seen in the dark mouth of the bridge. CRICKETS CHIRP.

ICHABOD
Hello... ?

Ichabod faces forward, continuing to the forest. He hums a tune to himself, tone deaf. After a moment, a HORSE is HEARD SNORTING. HOOFBEATS RESUME. Ichabod stops Gunpowder.

There is SOMEONE back there, on horseback, coming out from the darkness of the bridge, slowly...

ICHABOD
Who are you?

The FIGURE comes into moonlight, on a BLACK HORSE, smoke seeming to rise from him; a dark FIGURE, cloaked -- headless.

Ichabod panics, kicking Gunpowder to flee.

CONTINUED

The figure takes off to follow.

Ichabod whips Gunpowder's reins, gasping, moving faster.
The figure behind also picks up speed.

Gunpowder carries Ichabod into the forest.
The headless figure is right behind, cloak flowing...

The HEADLESS FIGURE is HEARD letting out a hellish CRY of
rage. Ichabod glances fearfully over his shoulder...

A HORRIBLE FACE with flaming eyes and mouth rushes forward...

It SMASHES into Ichabod -- sends him sprawling to the ground
in an explosion of red hot ash and cinders...

Ichabod rolls, shaken... looking behind. The trail is
empty. HOOFBEATS are HEARD. SEVERAL HORSES.

Ichabod stands. He looks down at the remnants of a BROKEN
JACK-O'-LANTERN and smoldering ball of paper on the trail.

ELSEWHERE IN THE FOREST

The FIGURE rides to halt, throws off a cloak and "headless"
disguise; it's Brom. Glenn and Theodore ride up, laughing.

Brom also laughs, but when he looks back, the smile leaves
his face. He takes grim satisfaction in what he's done.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod sleeps, dreaming...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- FOREST -- DAY

A young BOY, 10, with his back to us, picking flowers. A
FEMALE VOICE is HEARD CALLING FAINTLY, getting LOUDER...

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Ichabod! Ichabod... !

The boy, YOUNG ICHABOD, turns, smiling. He runs. We FOLLOW
him, through the forest, to a clearing behind a small HOME.
MOTHER waits. Lovely woman... opening her arms to hug...

Ichabod gives his mother the flowers. She kisses him.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Dark. Young Ichabod, in bed, has one eye open...
Across the room, Mother has her back to him. She's
WHISPERING something to no one. She turns...

Young Ichabod pretends he is asleep.

Mother brings SOMETHING in her hand to her lips, kisses it.

CONTINUED

She places it inside a dresser DRAWER. She goes to the bed, kisses Young Ichabod's forehead, then leaves.

Young Ichabod gets up, goes to open the drawer... finds something behind clothing there... a small HUMAN FIGURE made of WAX, with RED TWINE wrapped around the figure's torso.

Young Ichabod replaces it, closes the drawer.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Mother, with flowers in her hair, is crouched at the burning FIREPLACE with Young Ichabod. They use burnt twigs to draw PICTURES of ANIMALS on a hearth stone. Young Ichabod laughs. A DOOR is HEARD opening, and they turn...

Ichabod's FATHER stands in the doorway, an emotionless man; a man of the cloth, wearing the garb of a cleric.

Young Ichabod and Mother rise guiltily. Ichabod crosses as Father sits at the table, brings Father a dinner plate. Father places his BIBLE on the table.

Mother faces away, removes the flowers from her hair, throws them in the fireplace and gets to work.

Ichabod takes his place at the table, sits straight with hands folded. Mother begins to serve Father his supper.

In the fireplace, the flowers burn.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- STORM SKY -- NIGHT

LIGHTNING flashes over tree tops. RAIN POUNDS down...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

LIGHTNING flashes outside a WINDOW. The window is thrown CRASHING open by the storm, THUNDER BOOMING...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod is startled awake. He looks the the WINDOW of his dark room. It is shut to the stormless night.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Ichabod enters with a lantern and his ledger. He sits, studies notes, then notices a light down the hall.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SEWING ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod enters. Opposite an elaborate LOOM, Katrina reads by candlelight. She looks up.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

Sorry for disturbing you. I thought
a forgotten candle was burning.

Katrina self-consciously closes her shabby book, puts it
with another on her lap and covers them.

KATRINA

You do not disturb me. Trouble
sleeping? Did you dream, as I said?

ICHABOD

A little. Nothing of consequence.
May I ask... why do you cover your
book that way?

KATRINA

You pay great attention to small
things. I hide these as I hide all
my books. Father would not approve,
lest it were the Bible. You will
keep my secret, won't you?

ICHABOD

Yes. I have something to show you...

Ichabod sits, looking through his ledger.

KATRINA

These are strange... may I...?

Katrina takes his hand, spreads his fingers to the palm.
She touches the evenly spaced scars there.

KATRINA

These scars. How did you get them?

ICHABOD

I have had them since childhood. I
cannot remember what from.

Their eyes meet, till Ichabod eases his hand away. From his
ledger, he takes a PAPER DISK on two pieces of string; a
BIRD on one side, EMPTY CAGE on the other.

ICHABOD

A bird on one side, and his empty
cage. Now, stare at it...
(spinning the strings)
The bird seems to be inside his cage.

KATRINA

Yes, he does. May I try?

Ichabod gives it. Katrina spins it, smiling.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

It is a trick of the eye. The point being...

KATRINA

You made this, and the drawings?

ICHABOD

Yes, but listen. The illusion is easily explained, while some would say that this is magic...

KATRINA

But, don't you see why? Look closely a moment...

(spinning it)

Put your intellect aside. Can't you see what is inexplicable...?

ICHABOD

The eye retains each image, till they combine...

KATRINA

Oh, you are hopeless. May I keep it at least?

ICHABOD

If you please.

KATRINA

Then, I have a gift for you. True magic even you cannot deny...

She hands him a book. "ROMEO AND JULIET." Ichabod stands, offering it back, but she will not take it.

ICHABOD

Thank you, no. Here...

KATRINA

I insist that you have it.

ICHABOD

(leaving)

Very well. But, I warn you, it will only gather dust.

KATRINA

That would be a pity. Those words might open your eyes to something you've never seen.

Ichabod stops at the door, looks back at Katrina.

KATRINA

Sleep well.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod's in bed, trying to sleep, restless. He opens his eyes, staring at the ceiling. He sits up. Pause.

Ichabod crosses to pick up "Romeo and Juliet." He sits at the window, begins reading by moonlight.

EXT. PHILIPSE'S FARM -- DUSK

Ichabod walks with Philipse. Young Masbath holds horses. CRICKETS CHATTER from a vast corn field. BIRDS SING LOUDLY.

PHILIPSE

Not more than a year ago, a mob hung a man for stealing a horse. For mere thievery! And, you dig up our dead.

ICHABOD

Should I be fearful? Is this message passed on from Clergyman Steenwyck?

PHILIPSE

You are mistaken to belittle Steenwyck. His influence is strong, and these are God-fearing people.

ICHABOD

So I have seen.

The CRICKETS and BIRDSONGS go SILENT. Young Masbath notices.

PHILIPSE

I am telling you, if they turn against you, there will be trouble. If you are going to help us, you stop the Horseman. That is your task... to kill an undead thing.

ICHABOD

Listen to what you say....

PHILIPSE

No, you listen! You may think we are a pack of superstitious fools...

ICHABOD

At times I do.

YOUNG MASBATH

Um... excuse me, sirs...

Young Masbath looks to a fenced grazing area, worried. The sheep there are agitated, all running one direction -- away.

CONTINUED

PHILIPSE

What will it take for you to
realize... ?

The horses go crazy, BRAYING and rearing. Their reins yank Young Masbath off his feet as the horses flee. Ichabod and Philipse look to Masbath. A SOUND is HEARD, distant: THUNDERING HOOFBEATS. Wind kicks up.

Philipse looks to the corn field. A FLOCK of BIRDS alights.

PHILIPSE

Oh my... oh my oh my oh my...

Philipse runs towards his house, past Masbath. HOOFBEATS are LOUDER, CLOSER. Ichabod faces the corn field.

The field explodes open, stalks bending to make way as the HEADLESS HORSEMAN gallops into view atop DAREDEVIL.

Ichabod's stunned. He looks down to draw his flintlock pistol, but the Horseman ROARS by before he can raise it -- a blast of air knocks Ichabod off his feet.

The Horseman chases Philipse.

Ichabod scrambles to his feet.

Young Masbath is still down. Daredevil's pounding hooves will certainly crush him...

Daredevil leaps over Young Masbath, continuing the charge.

Ichabod gives chase, gun in hand.

The Horseman gains on Philipse...

Philipse has a long way to go before home. He looks over his shoulder. No way he'll make it.

The Horseman draws his sword.

Ichabod, running, watches Philipse slow.

Philipse gathers his courage and stops, turning. He raises his iron key talisman before him. The Horseman is closing...

ICHABOD

Philipse!

Philipse holds the talisman up, trying to be fearless. The Horseman swings his sword upon the talisman -- CLANK...

Philipse's severed head spins. His body falls and folds.

The Horseman turns Daredevil in a wide circle...

Ichabod stops running, points his pistol...

CONTINUED

Daredevil completes the turn, letting out a SCREECHY CRY as the Horseman rides straight towards Ichabod...

Ichabod gets to one knee, desperately trying to steady his aim. The Horseman closes. Ichabod FIRES...

The slug SLAMS the Horseman dead center -- BLASTS through and rends his uniform without slowing him...

The Horseman is upon Ichabod. Ichabod cringes, arms up...

The Horseman rides past, heading toward Philipse's corpse... leans effortlessly to skewer Philipse's head with his sword.

With the head as his prize, the Horseman races away.

Ichabod turns, watches the Horseman head to the forest.

Ichabod stands, stricken, looks to Young Masbath, finds his legs will not support him. He falls to his knees, trembling.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FRONT PORCH -- NIGHT

WIND WHISTLES through the glowing eyes of a Jack-o'-lantern... candlelight dimming... dying out.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALL -- DAY

Young Masbath is seated by a closed door. Lady Van Tassel comes to KNOCK. Sarah stands behind with a tray of food.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Has he not come out at all?

Young Masbath shakes his head.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, STAIRWELL -- DAY

Katrina heads up stairs, passing Sarah who carries the tray. Lady Van Tassel follows down, meeting Katrina.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Don't bother, dear. He does not answer.

Katrina looks up, worried. Lady Van Tassel speaks quietly.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Have you heard what I've heard... ?
About what he did that day he dug the
bodies from the graveyard?

KATRINA
What have you heard?

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- DAY

Sunlight streams in, but Ichabod sleeps, restlessly...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- FOREST -- DAY

Idyllic. Young Ichabod walks along beside Mother. She carries a basket. Mother offers her hand. Ichabod takes it.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S HOME -- NIGHT

A KEYHOLE. Young Ichabod's eye peers through...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- P.O.V. THRU KEYHOLE -- NIGHT

Mother kneels before FLOUR on the floor. She draws CRYPTIC PATTERNS in it, WHISPERING. She blows the flour away.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S KITCHEN -- DAY

Young Ichabod enters... faltering, worried...

Father is kneeled facing a wall, his Bible open before him, head bowed low. He rocks back and forth, eyes closed, hands clasped tight, PRAYING desperately under his breath.

Young Ichabod moves away, then notices...
On the table: the small WAX FIGURE wrapped with red twine.

Young Ichabod goes to wooden STAIRS, running up...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Ichabod runs straight to the DRAWER where he found the wax figure Mother left, searching... pulls out the clothing...

Nothing there... the drawer is empty.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Young Ichabod sits on his bed, distraught. VOICES come from downstairs, not understood. The first VOICE is FATHER'S, angry and loud. The second is MOTHER'S, plaintive, pleading.

FATHER'S VOICE overtakes, LOUDER still. Young Ichabod does not need to understand the words, covering his ears and shutting his eyes tight against them.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- STORM SKY -- NIGHT

LIGHTNING flashes over tree tops. RAIN POUNDS down...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

A window is thrown CRASHING open, THUNDER BOOMING...
Young Ichabod sits up in his bed. He goes to close the window, RAIN pouring in. He looks down...

CONTINUED

Below, in front of the home, a MAN drags Mother away towards a COACH. TWO MEN stand watching, faces hidden under hat brims. Mother looks back, eyes pleading, struggling.

YOUNG ICHABOD
Mother... !?

The TWO MEN look up to Young Ichabod: one is Father, and the THIRD MAN is a Cotton Mather-ish man with a villainous face.

Young Ichabod reaches towards Mother...

YOUNG ICHABOD
Mother! No... !

Mother looks up, helpless as she is forced into the coach.

The Third Man speaks to Father, then walks to the coach. He gets onto the coach as the coach starts away.

Father watches, rain flowing down his stony features.
LIGHTNING FLASHES...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod gasps awake in darkness. A KNOCKING is HEARD.

KATRINA (O.S.)
Constable Crane... ?

Ichabod looks at his hand balled into a fist. He opens his hand -- holds BOTH HALVES of PHILIPSE'S IRON KEY TALISMAN.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALL -- NIGHT

Katrina holds a tray of food, unhappy. Young Masbath is still seated by the door. The DOOR is HEARD UNLOCKING.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Katrina enters. Ichabod sits at his desk, refusing to look at her. Katrina puts down the tray, looks to see pieces of the PLASTER HOOFPRIINT CAST shattered on the floor.

KATRINA
I have been told something.
(pause)
It is said... that when the Widow Windsor was put back in her resting place, she was cleaved open.

Ichabod stews, his head in his hands.

ICHABOD
I performed an examination of the corpse.

CONTINUED

KATRINA

I have misjudged you I think. I did not imagine you so cruel.

ICHABOD

The body had been run through. The child the widow carried was near to birthing...

KATRINA

Must I hear this?

ICHABOD

The sword thrust had pierced its tiny heart exactly, as if to make certain the unborn died with its mother.

KATRINA

How can any of it matter?

ICHABOD

I had no solution for its meaning, but I could not just ignore it.

KATRINA

What brought you to Sleepy Hollow, Ichabod Crane? Young Masbath follows you to avenge his father's death. Why are you here?

ICHABOD

To find the murderer.

KATRINA

But, why? Tell me why.

Ichabod struggles for a reply.

KATRINA

You falter, because you will bring dignity to the dead even if you have to cut them into little pieces to do it.

ICHABOD

What is the point? You are right, none of this matters. If these are the stalkings of a monster, what good am I? With this failure, all I live for is undone.

KATRINA

If you fail, it is because you strive without putting the whole of your heart into it.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
 Enough! What should I expect? You
 are but a child. How can I expect
 you to understand?

Katrina's hurt, absorbing this. Ichabod's regretting.

ICHABOD
 I am sorry...

KATRINA
 The Widow Windsor, before she was a
 corpse to you, she lived a life...
 she harbored hopes... laughed and
 cried. If you cannot realize that
 more than just you intellect is
 needed, what good are you indeed?

Katrina leaves without looking back. Ichabod looks down,
 stares at the floor.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALL -- MORNING

Young Masbath is still camped out in a chair beside
 Ichabod's closed door, asleep. The door opens and Ichabod
 steps out, eyes tired, holding his satchel.

Ichabod nudges Young Masbath, awakening him.

ICHABOD
 Come along, little man.

Ichabod walks on. Masbath hurriedly gathers his things.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FRONT PORCH/LAWN -- MORNING

Moving past a LINE of MEN leading into the house, Ichabod
 and Young Masbath come out. HORSES are tied. GROUPS of MEN
 talk on the porch and the lawn, many holding papers.

Across the lawn, OTHERS head this direction, on horseback.

ICHABOD
 What is this?

YOUNG MASBATH
 Payment day. Loan monies go to
 Baltus each month. Everyone
 borrows... for tools or livestock.

Ichabod notes this, takes a place at the porch rail.

ICHABOD
 Gentlemen, gentlemen... I beg your
 attention. A moment of your time...

Men look to Ichabod, grumbling, gathering. Killian's there.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

I embark upon an expedition, of sorts. I need able men. So... who goes with me into the Western Woods?

Men look at each other, like Ichabod's crazy. Young Masbath is taken unpleasantly by surprise.

ICHABOD

Who is first to volunteer? Raise up your hands...

(worried pause)

No one? There must be at least one man willing? I offer a fair wage...

Men start walking away.

ICHABOD

What of you, Killian?

KILLIAN

I'm sorry, no. Anything but that.

In the group arriving on Horseback, Brom dismounts, along with Theodore and Glenn.

BROM

Hello, what's this? Ichabod Crane puts on some sort of entertainment.

ONE MAN

He wants to go into the Western Woods.

BROM

Then, I am right. It is comic farce. Listen to me, men, if you value your lives! Listen well...

Attention goes to Brom. MORE MEN come from the house, along with Baltus and Lady Van Tassel.

Brom takes a LONG RIFLE from Theodore, holding it up...

BROM

Took time perfecting it, but it is finally ready. Theodore, Glenn and I offer to ride each night and watch over the Hollow. We will haunt the Horseman for a change, with rifles like these... and slugs like these...

Brom takes a round SLUG from his pocket, brings it to his lips and blows. It WHISTLES.

BROM

Hollowed out, then filled with powder.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
I fired upon the Horseman and the
bullet did nothing.

BROM
You must have missed your mark.

ICHABOD
I hit him square.

BROM
(to everyone)
I say... I say if the Horseman is
solid enough to take our lives, he is
solid enough to feel this...

Brom aims the rifle at a WOODEN BARREL far across the yard,
sighting down a scope mounted on the gun -- FIRES...

The BARREL EXPLODES into pieces!

BROM
Constable Crane is not the only one
who fights with science on his side.

MEN CHEER Brom. Brom's pleased. Ichabod looks doubtful.

EXT. WINDMILL -- DAY

A massive, wooden WINDMILL. Ichabod and Masbath ride to it,
horses loaded for expedition.

Young Masbath dismounts. Ichabod climbs off Gunpowder, but
catches his foot and falls. Young Masbath's embarrassed.
Ichabod gets up, brushing off.

YOUNG MASBATH
You're getting better, sir.

Ichabod just looks irritated. They walk to the windmill.

YOUNG MASBATH
The Western Woods, you said?
(off Ichabod's nod)
Why?

ICHABOD
What else have we? If not in the
Horseman's lair, where might the
answers lie?

INT. WINDMILL DAY

Ichabod and Young Masbath enter via a ladder from the
underbelly. Gears and counter wheels turn millstones. A
FEW MEN work in the grain powder filled air.

CONTINUED

Ichabod leads the way up a twisting, turning STAIRCASE...

YOUNG MASBATH
Where are we going?

ICHABOD
Up.
(keeps climbing)
You should know... there is no need
for you to go with me. I mean, if
you are afraid...

YOUNG MASBATH
No. I'm with you.

Ichabod seems relieved.

YOUNG MASBATH
Aren't you afraid too?

ICHABOD
Mortified.

EXT. WINDMILL ROOF -- DAY

Ichabod and Young Masbath climb out a DOOR to the roof.
ROTORS spin nearby. Ichabod surveys the countryside.

Ichabod sits, takes a BOWL from his satchel, then a BOTTLE
of WATER. Young Masbath sits beside him. Ichabod begins
filling the bowl with water, points to the distance...

ICHABOD
Out there. What do you see?

YOUNG MASBATH
The Western Woods.

ICHABOD
Look again.

A PLUME of SMOKE rises from the woods, far off.

YOUNG MASBATH
Smoke. Chimney smoke.

Ichabod holds a piece of straw in his mouth, rubs the point
of a sewing NEEDLE against a small black rock; a MAGNET.

ICHABOD
Watch here.

Ichabod shows Young Masbath how the magnet grabs the needle.
Young Masbath is fascinated. Ichabod gives it to Young
Masbath and watches him toy with it.

CONTINUED

YOUNG MASBATH
It's... amazing.

ICHABOD
I suppose it is, yes. Keep it.

YOUNG MASBATH
No, I couldn't...

ICHABOD
I have others. All I need is this...

Ichabod takes the needle, poking it into the tip of the straw. Young Masbath studies the magnet, pockets it.

Ichabod drops the needle/straw into the bowl, where it floats on the surface and turns, like a COMPASS NEEDLE.

ICHABOD
If those woods are truly the Devil's
Glen, we shall see for ourselves.

Ichabod takes a SPYGLASS from his pocket, peers through it.

YOUNG MASBATH
Father said witches live there.

ICHABOD
I would say there is no such thing as
witches... except, not long ago, I
would have said the same of Headless
Horsemen.

EXT. BELLTOWER FIELD -- DAY

Ichabod and Young Masbath ride to the Western Woods. At the BELLTOWER REMNANTS, Ichabod slows... looks to the wreckage.

At forest's edge, Young Masbath waits.

Ichabod circles the tower. With a miserable sigh, he rides to join Young Masbath. They head into the woods.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS -- DAY

Dark, gnarled and creepy. Ichabod and Young Masbath move through. Young Masbath halts his horse, looks around.

ICHABOD
What is it?

YOUNG MASBATH
Listen.

ICHABOD
I hear nothing.

CONTINUED

YOUNG MASBATH
No crickets or cicadas. No birdsong.

STARK QUIET. Ichabod notes this, unhappy. They gallop away.

ICHABOD
Make haste. We want in and out
before the night falls.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS -- LATER DAY

Ichabod's hand drops the needle in the water bowl, then turns the bowl; using NOTCHES in the bowl's lip to navigate.

Ichabod rises, pointing the way to Young Masbath.

ELSEWHERE, SOMEONE WATCHES... a **MOVING P.O.V.** WATCHES
Ichabod and Young as they mount and ride, **FOLLOWING...**

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, FURTHER ON -- LATER DAY

Ichabod and Masbath reach a hill crest. They stop, uneasy.

BELOW, there is a CAVE with a rock archway. An ill-fitting DOOR covers the mouth. The chimney spews smoke.

ICHABOD
We have apparently arrived.

EXT. CAVE HOME -- DAY

The horses are tied to a tree. Ichabod walks to the cave door, Masbath following. Ichabod hesitantly KNOCKS.

INT. CAVE HOME -- DAY

The door is ajar... Ichabod and Young Masbath step in... Walls are hung with SKINS and SKELETONS. Across the cave, a CRONE sits facing away, motionless.

Ichabod and Young Masbath look to each other, fearful.

ICHABOD
Pardon... I knocked... there was no
reply. Are we intruding... ?

The Crone, with grey hair and grey features, sits disinterested. Behind, Ichabod edges slowly forward...

CRONE
You are from the Hollow?

ICHABOD
In a way, yes. I, um...

Ichabod is distracted by gourd BOWLS of DEAD INSECTS, LEAVES and ACORNS... KNIVES, SCISSORS and YELLOWED BONES.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
 I know nothing of you and your...
 ways. Not meaning to suppose... that
 you are... how should I say...?

The Crone places something on a table beside her... a DEAD
 BIRD, a bright red cardinal.

Ichabod backs away, but Masbath comes to stand beside him.

YOUNG MASBATH
 Do you know of the Horseman,
 ma'am...? The Hessian.

CRONE
 The ghost warrior.

YOUNG MASBATH
 We have questions.

ICHABOD
 Yes, questions...

Young Masbath takes off a heavy PACK, pulling it open and
 putting it on the ground, keeping his distance.

YOUNG MASBATH
 This is for you, ma'am. Sugar,
 molasses and salt, dried fish and
 meat, if you want it.

The Crone stands, faces them, tall... points to Ichabod.

CRONE
 You, follow with me.
 (to Young Masbath)
 Go out, child. Keep away. No matter
 what you hear, keep away.

She takes a candle and heads deeper into the cave...

INT. CAVE HOME, LOWER CAVE -- DAY

The Crone enters through a passage. Ichabod follows,
 terrified, bent under the low ceiling.

ICHABOD
 Um... what might he hear that he must
 keep away from...?

CRONE
 Sit there.

Ichabod sits on crooked stool. The Crone kneels with her
 back to him, gathers STRAW in a pile on the floor.

CONTINUED

CRONE

He rides, to the Hollow and back. I
smell the blood on him.

ICHABOD

Do you?

CRONE

You seek remedy against him. You
want to see the netherworld... I can
show you. Do not move or speak.

She gathers bowls, putting GRASS and POWDER on the pile.

CRONE

When the other comes, I will hold him.

ICHABOD

The other...?

She takes TWO JARS from a table, pours ASHES on the pile.

ICHABOD

What... what are you doing?

CRONE

(furious)

Keep silent! You are warned!

The Crone shakes one jar roughly, pulls the lid off and
upends it. A BABY BAT squirms on the floor, dazed.

The Crone grips the bat, uses a knife to cut off its head,
soaks the straw with blood, SPEAKING IN TONGUES, guttural.
Using her candle, she lights the straw.

She grasps two METAL CUFFS with chains attached, slides
these onto her bony wrists, then bends to inhale smoke...

CRONE

The other comes now.

Ichabod would like to leave now.

EXT. CAVE HOME -- DAY

Young Masbath waits. WIND picks up, kicking leaves, sending
them in swirls. Masbath holds himself against the chill.

INT. CAVE HOME, LOWER CAVE -- DAY

The Crone slumps face forward to the floor, suddenly
immobile, still with her back to Ichabod. WIND HOWLS
through a hole/window.

Ichabod looks around, uncertain, stands.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
Excuse me... woman...?

The Crone remains motionless. The WIND intensifies.
Candles blow out. Ichabod inches closer...

ICHABOD
Do you hear me... ?

The Crone suddenly jumps erect, spinning -- a half-human,
half-demon **CREATURE**, black clawed hands reaching...

Ichabod cries out, leaping backwards...

CHAINS on the restraining CUFFS around the creature's hands
go taunt, yanking the creature back.

Ichabod KNOCKS over a table of bones, hits the floor. The
creature is chained, but still wants Ichabod. It SHRIEKS.

The creature's face still seethes from transformation.

CREATURE/ CRONE
You seek the warrior bathed in
blood... the Headless Horseman...

Ichabod scrambles back as far as possible. The creature
claws the rock floor, yearning.

CREATURE/ CRONE
Follow the Indian trail to where the
sun dies. Follow to the Tree of the
Dead...

The creature yanks, testing the chains. Behind, the BOLT
holding the chains slips... the WALL CRACKS a little.

CREATURE/ CRONE
Climb down to the Horseman's soulless
place. Do you hear... ?

Ichabod nods, quaking, aghast. He glances to the exit.

The chain bolt gives more... coming loose...

Ichabod flees towards the door. The creature HOWLS,
leaping... the chain bolt BREAKS...

Ichabod cries out as he is TACKLED to the floor...

It is only the CRONE lying on him; she has returned to human
form, semiconscious. Ichabod desperately shoves her off...

EXT. CAVE HOME -- DAY

Ichabod sprints out from the cave, past Young Masbath.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
We are leaving.

YOUNG MASBATH
What happened?

ICHABOD
We are leaving now.

Ichabod scrambles onto Gunpowder, riding, glancing back.
Young Masbath follows.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, FURTHER ON -- LATER DAY

Ichabod and Young Masbath ride side by side.

YOUNG MASBATH
Maybe we passed it.

ICHABOD
How could something named "the Tree
of the Dead" fail to draw attention?

YOUNG MASBATH
Climb down to the Horseman's soulless
place. What's it mean?

ICHABOD
I admit not being anxious to find out.

As they ride...
Young Masbath begins staring up to the treetops.
Ichabod notices Masbath's mind is elsewhere.

ICHABOD
Penny for your thoughts.

YOUNG MASBATH
I think about my father.
(sad, looking up)
I wonder if he can see me now.

Ichabod searches for what to say.

ICHABOD
He sees you, I think. He sees you
and he is proud.

Masbath looks at Ichabod. Ichabod keeps his eyes forward.

YOUNG MASBATH
You owe me a penny.

A SNAPPING BRANCH is HEARD. Ichabod turns to look back...

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
 (whispers to Masbath)
 Quicken pace.

Ichabod rides faster. Young Masbath keeps up...

FURTHER ON, they charge over a hill. Ichabod halts
 Gunpowder, climbs clumsily off, handing the reins to Masbath.

ICHABOD
 Ride on.

Young Masbath obeys. Ichabod takes out his pistol and wades
 into forest growth, backtracking...

INSIDE THE FOREST, Ichabod moves through UNDERBRUSH, keeping
 low. A HORSE is HEARD SNORTING.

Ichabod forges on, pushes through branches, fearful...

He comes up behind a FIGURE IN A GREY CLOAK on horseback,
 raising his pistol, cocking the hammer...

ICHABOD
 Halt and turn! I have a pistol aimed.

The FIGURE stops, pushes off the cloak hood. It is Katrina.

KATRINA
 It is only me.

ICHABOD
 (lowers gun, shaken)
 Katrina... I might have killed you.
 Why do you follow?

KATRINA
 I heard you came here, how no one
 would go with you. I could not let
 you be alone in your bravery.

She smiles a little. Ichabod is heartened.

ICHABOD
 How good to see your smile again, I
 cannot tell you...

KATRINA
 I said things to you before...

ICHABOD
 Every sentence you spoke had truth in
 it, Katrina. I only pray you can
 forgive my words. I...

YOUNG MASBATH (O.S.)
 Excuse me, sir...

CONTINUED

Ichabod and Katrina look to see Masbath has backtracked.

YOUNG MASBATH
Now that nobody's alone in their
bravery, can we hurry before it's the
middle of the night?

Ichabod and Katrina move to follow Young Masbath.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, TREE OF THE DEAD -- DUSK

Ichabod, Masbath and Katrina come into a clearing, slowing their horses... looking up in wonder at...

The monstrously huge TREE OF THE DEAD, at the clearing's center. Its branches reach far and wide, knotted and gross, like agony captured in wood sculpture.

YOUNG MASBATH
The Tree of the Dead.

KATRINA
It does announce itself.

Ichabod dismounts, crossing a line beyond which grass and weeds will not grow. Young Masbath and Katrina dismount behind. They all walk towards the tree...

Ichabod stares up into the endless, dead canopy of branches.

There's a VERTICAL WOUND in the bark; like a terrible suture, now healed and scarred. Ichabod approaches...

He feels the mushy scar, picking at its scabs till sap begins to run. Red sap. Ichabod fingers it, sniffs it.

ICHABOD
Blood.

KATRINA
What did you say?

Ichabod goes to where Katrina and Masbath wait with the horses, digs in a saddle bag for a hand AXE.

YOUNG MASBATH
What is it?

ICHABOD
Stay here.

At the trunk, Ichabod thumps the flat end of the axe against the suture. It sounds hollow. He begins to CHOP...

He CHOPS into the suture... pulls away loose bark. The tree drips more blood and a goo. Ichabod uses both hands on the axe to hack at the festering suture.

CONTINUED

KATRINA
What are you doing?

ICHABOD
Just... keep where you are.

Young Masbath moves closer. Ichabod keeps CHOPPING, then grips a large, loose flap, trying to pull it away. It's not easy. Ichabod struggles.

Katrina follows Young Masbath's slow advance.

Ichabod's pulling -- the flap suddenly gives, revealing a blood-soaked, wide-eyed, gap-mouthed HUMAN HEAD.

Ichabod recoils. Behind him, Katrina stifles a scream, taking Young Masbath in her arms to keep him from looking.

Ichabod backs off, back of his hand to his mouth. It is PHILIPSE'S HEAD, hanging off the trunk flap, held by roots grown around and into the flesh.

FOUR other SEVERED, DECAYING HEADS are held by ingrown roots within the dewy innards.

KATRINA
My God...

ICHABOD
He... he tries to take the heads back with him. They will not pass...

KATRINA
We should go.

Ichabod looks to the branches towering above.

ICHABOD
This is... some sort of gateway,
between two worlds...

YOUNG MASBATH
It's getting dark.

Ichabod studies the ground, circling the trunk...
Around the other side, Ichabod gets to his knees...

He's found the HORSEMAN'S SWORD; the grave marker, jutting out from the ground, rusted twenty years worth, gripped by the tree trunk and vines.

ICHABOD
(touching the ground)
Climb down to the Horseman's soulless place...
(looks to Masbath)
Bring the shovel.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, TREE OF THE DEAD -- DUSK

Lantern light. Young Masbath's crouched, rifle across his knees. He watches the tree, looking up...

High branches swarm with BATS.

Behind Masbath, Ichabod and Katrina dig up the SHALLOW GRAVE. Ichabod throws aside his shovel.

KATRINA
Masbath... we've found it...

Young Masbath comes to the grave. Ichabod pulls at thick BURLAP CLOTH heavy with dirt... straining as it comes away...

Ichabod drops the burlap, looking down, disbelieving...

ICHABOD
It cannot be true.

WE SEE: roots have gripped the HORSEMAN'S BONES and tattered uniform. The skeleton is all there -- except the skull.

KATRINA
The skull is gone.

ICHABOD
Yes, I did notice that, thank you.

Ichabod steps out from the grave, weary in body and spirit.

ICHABOD
Why is it every grave I open holds a
new mystery inside?

Ichabod turns, distraught, looking to the bordering forest.

KATRINA (o.s.)
Ichabod... !

Ichabod turns, looks...
Katrina and Young Masbath back away, because...
the ROOTS in the grave are ALIVE, entwining around remains.

Ichabod spins to the twisted tree...

The vertical SUTURE SEETHES, pulling inwards...
sucking Philipse's head back in and closing, bubbling.

Ichabod bounds over grave dirt pile, hastening Katrina and Young Masbath along as he flees across the field.

At the tree, the suture swells.

Ichabod, Katrina and Young Masbath pass where their freaking horses are tied to a fallen trunk, heading for cover.

CONTINUED

A RUMBLING is HEARD from the tree. It's wound suddenly BURSTS wide, spitting smoldering cinders.

At the tree line, Ichabod, Katrina and Young Masbath take cover, looking back.

From the tree wound, a glow BRIGHTENS... till suddenly the Headless Horseman and Daredevil EXPLODE into existence... They hit the ground running.

Ichabod watches the Horseman ride away, bolts of LIGHTNING STRIKING the GROUND BEHIND.

The Horseman disappears in the forest.

ICHABOD
(to Masbath)
Give me distance, then guide her back
to the Hollow.

Ichabod runs towards the horses.

YOUNG MASBATH
Constable!

EXT. WESTERN WOODS -- NIGHT

The Horseman rips past on Daredevil...

EXT. BEHIND IN WESTERN WOODS -- NIGHT

Ichabod rides as fast as Gunpowder is able...

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, FURTHER ON -- NIGHT

Trees are silhouetted against the sky. As Daredevil's HOOFBEATS get LOUDER, branches bend like arms and fingers yearning to touch. As HOOFBEATS ROAR PAST, the trees relax.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, FURTHER BACK -- NIGHT

Ichabod ducks under foliage as he pursues. He sees...

Through the forest ahead: the SKY'S LIT UP. Distant fire.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, CAVE HOME -- NIGHT

The Crone's CAVE vomits FLAME. Ichabod arrives on Gunpowder, trying to see through BLACK SMOKE...

Embers swirl everywhere. Ichabod rides closer to the cave, struggling for control as Gunpowder rears...

The CRONE'S HEADLESS BODY lies near the cave entrance. The jagged skin of the neck wound still bleeds. The ground and dead leaves around the corpse are thick with BLOOD.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

Christ...

Ichabod kicks Gunpowder, returning to the chase...

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Small home. Killian, Thomas and BETH, Killian's wife, have finished supper. Beth clears plates as Killian picks his teeth with a knife.

THOMAS

May I be excused, father?

KILLIAN

Do you deserve to be?

THOMAS

(shyly)

I think so.

KILLIAN

(smiles)

Then, go.

Thomas gets down from his chair. He goes to the fireplace to light a tallow wick, which he takes to the next room.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- NIGHT

Thomas plops on the floor and lights his MAGIC LANTERN: a lantern with an outer sleeve of glass painted with SILHOUETTES of LIONS and MONSTERS.

Thomas turns the lantern and looks to the walls where the creatures' SHADOWS are cast. He roars for them, imagining them real and having a grand time.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Beth comes for more dishes.

BETH

Don't pick teeth. You teach Thomas bad habits.

Killian pulls her to him, playful.

KILLIAN

I am a bad habit. There's nothing for it.

BETH

(kisses him)

No one knows better than I.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- NIGHT

Thomas continues his fun, shadow animals circling him.

In the shifting light, a baby SPIDER comes from a crack in the wall. Then, another spider skitters out. More follow.

EXT. FORESTS -- NIGHT

A black horse runs, hooves pounding the ground. THUNDER is HEARD. The horse stops... it is Brom's horse, with Brom riding. Brom looks skyward.

All around, the WIND HALTS. A DEAD SILENCE falls. Distant HOOFBEATS can be HEARD.

Brom takes his long rifle from his shoulder, rides...

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- NIGHT

Thomas still watches shadow beasts, but sees something else. He goes to the crack where DOZENS of SPIDERS flee all directions. Thomas is amused.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Behind Killian, MANTELPIECE STONES pulse, breathing. Demonic faces form, then disappear. WIND HOWLS.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- NIGHT

Beth enters, looking at Thomas.

BETH

What are you doing there?

The magic lantern stops spinning. Shadow creatures freeze.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

The ENTIRE HOUSE CREAKS. Killian looks up.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- NIGHT

Beth comes to Thomas' side as he points.

THOMAS

Spiders.

Beth bends to see the swarming spiders. She looks up, noticing the FEROCITY of the WIND.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Killian stands, looking up. The HOUSE CREAKS again, then suddenly the WIND CEASES. Silence.

CONTINUED

KILLIAN

Beth...

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- NIGHT

Beth picks up Thomas. The magic lantern shadow creatures begin spinning anew, quickly, around and around.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

With a ROAR, the fire flares. Killian looks....
WHHOOOSH -- the fire shoots up the fireplace. Gone.

Behind Killian, the DOOR SPLINTERS INWARDS. The Horseman steps in, a battle axe in each hand. WIND BLASTS...

The DOOR to the other room SLAMS.

Killian grabs a chair and HURLS it...
The Horseman swings, SMASHING it aside.

KILLIAN

Beth... run!

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- NIGHT

Beth holds Thomas as she backs away from the closed door.

KILLIAN (o.s.)

(from kitchen)

Get out!

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Killian grabs an IRON SKEWER from the fireplace, SWINGS it to fend off a blow from the Horseman.

The Horseman SWINGS the other axe. Killian ducks. The axe CRACKS fireplace stone, throwing sparks.

Killian lunges, JAMMING the skewer into the Horseman...

The skewer comes through the Horseman's back. The Horseman SWIPES with the flat of one axe -- POUNDS Killian aside...

Killian hits the wall, BASHING his head. Hits the floor.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- NIGHT

Beth kicks a carpet to reveal a TRAP DOOR.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

The Horseman pulls the skewer out of his body, throws it. He goes to lift Killian by the hair with one hand, brings back the axe in the other hand...

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- NIGHT

At the trap door, Beth lowers Thomas to stairs leading to the CELLAR. Thomas is crying.

BETH
Don't let him get you.

THOMAS
Mommy...

BETH
You hide now... go...

Beth closes the trap door, frantically replacing the carpet. The room's door FLIES OPEN... the Horseman strides in, carrying Killian's severed head. Beth shrieks.

The Horseman steps forward, knocks over the magic lantern.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, CELLAR -- NIGHT

Beth's SCREAMS are abruptly CUT OFF. Her BODY is HEARD HITTING the floor above. Thomas crosses the cellar, stumbles. He scurries into the shelter of a wheelbarrow propped against one wall. FOOTSTEPS are HEARD...

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, WHITE ROOM -- NIGHT

The Horseman's hands place Killian's and Beth's heads in a sack, cinching the sack shut.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

The Headless Horseman enters, bends to retrieve the battle axe he left. He stands. Long, silent pause.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, CELLAR -- NIGHT

Thomas' trembling hands pull the wheelbarrow closer. QUIET.

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

The Horseman falls to his knees. He starts to CHOP at the floor with both axes. CHOPPING, CHOPPING, CHOPPING... making quick work of it...

INT. KILLIAN'S HOME, CELLAR -- NIGHT

A hole appears in the ceiling as debris falls...

Thomas looks up. He gets up to run away... The Horseman's arm SHOVES through from above -- grabbing Thomas and YANKING him up through the hole.

EXT. KILLIAN'S FARM, TOWN OUTSKIRTS -- NIGHT

Brom rides from the forest.

Ahead, at Killian's house, amongst scattered homes on the outskirts of town, Daredevil rides up as the Headless Horseman walks out with his sack of heads. The Horseman ties the sack to his saddle and leaps up.

Brom puts his reins in his mouth, aims his rifle... FIRING...

BOOM -- the slug blows the Horseman off Daredevil, EXPLODING. Daredevil keeps going. The Horseman's smoldering body is left "face down."

Brom halts his horse. He climbs down, pleased.

The Horseman moves.

Brom backs away, satisfaction diminishing.

The Horseman rises to his knees.

Brom falls to one knee, begins reloading. He fills the gun from his powder horn.

The Horseman stands, unsheathes his sword and turns. The blast has exposed rotten flesh and maggot-infested muscle.

Brom readies his ramrod, jams powder in the barrel.

The Horseman runs towards Brom...
Brom stands, pulling out the ramrod. The Horseman is on him. Brom swings the rifle, blocking.

The battle is on, with Brom fending off the Horseman's sword with the rifle -- CLANK... CLANK... CLANK...

ACROSS THE FIELD, Ichabod and Gunpowder arrive...

UP THE FIELD, the Horseman makes a backhanded swing, knocks Brom's rifle away, sends Brom to the ground...

Brom rolls to avoid as the Horseman SLASHES....

Brom scrambles up, flees, running towards Killian's.
The Horseman pulls and THROWS a knife...

THWAP -- the knife imbeds in Brom's thigh.

The Horseman strides to Brom.

Ichabod closes in, pulling an unlit lantern off his saddle.

The Horseman changes his sword grip, blade down... plants one foot on Brom's back, raising his sword to skewer...

CONTINUED

Ichabod arrives at full gallop -- SMASHES the lantern into the Horseman -- KNOCKING the Horseman off Brom.

IN THE DISTANCE, Theodore and Glen arrive on horseback. They halt where they are, watching.

Brom runs, limping, to Killian's house, a goal in sight: FARM IMPLEMENTS propped there. Brom grabs SCYTHES with long curved blades, one in per hand.

The Horseman rises.

Ichabod leaps off Gunpowder, runs to Brom's side.

The Horseman moves towards them, hefts a battle axe in his free hand. Ichabod steps up, pistol aimed, furious.

ICHABOD
For what it's worth...

FIRES -- the bullet rips through the Horseman's stomach to reveal putrid innards, not slowing his advance.

Ichabod throws the pistol at the Horseman.

Across the way, Theodore looks to Glenn, turns his horse and flees. Glenn follows Theodore away.

Brom steps up, scythes ready. He and the Horseman go at it -- Brom blocks axe and sword, deflecting blows...

Ichabod grabs a long handled SICKLE, circles them... SWINGS the sickle. The Horseman blocks.

The Horseman battles both men at once, catching blows... countering every strike, METAL RINGING.

Brom catches the Horseman's sword in one scythe, catches the axe handle in the other scythe...

The Horseman flatfoot KICKS Brom, sending him down.

Ichabod SWINGS the sickle...
The blade embeds in the Horseman down to the hilt.

The Horseman drops his axe, grasps the sickle handle...
The handle SLAMS Ichabod away...

Ichabod crawls, shaking off the blow. The Horseman staggers, trying to pull the blade from his body.

BROM
We cannot win this.

Brom yanks Ichabod to his feet. As they flee, Ichabod grabs a wood-splitting AXE from the stump where it's imbedded.

CONTINUED

Behind, the Horseman manages to extract the sickle, drops it.

Brom and Ichabod head towards the COVERED BRIDGE that leads across to the town square.

The Horseman strides after... retrieves his axe on the way...

ON THE COVERED BRIDGE

Brom and Ichabod start across. Ichabod must help support Brom as Brom limps.

Behind, the Horseman picks up the pace, running...

Inside the bridge, Ichabod and Brom are halfway across.

The Horseman sprints, nearing the bridge entrance...
He LEAPS -- IMPOSSIBLY HIGH IN THE AIR, cloak flowing...

On the bridge, Ichabod glances back... sees the Horseman is not behind them. POUNDING FOOTSTEPS are HEARD on the roof. Brom and Ichabod look up. The FOOTSTEPS pass over...

Ahead, at the mouth of the covered bridge, the Horseman leaps down, spinning in mid-air, lands, crouched.

Ichabod and Brom halt. The Horseman rises.

Ichabod releases Brom and moves forward, gripping his wood axe in both hands, SWINGING the axe downward...

The Horseman swings his axe -- SPLINTERS Ichabod's axe handle and THRUSTS with sword -- into Ichabod's upper chest, clean through. It SIZZLES as Ichabod screams.

The Horseman lifts his sword arm, THROWING Ichabod and withdrawing the sword in one motion...

Ichabod tumbles, doubled over, clutching his chest.

Brom moves forward with scythes. The Horseman sets upon him with incredible ferocity -- battling Brom back, striking so hard and fast it's hard for Brom to keep blocking.

Ichabod tries to get up, but falls, looking up...

ICHABOD'S P.O.V.

The Horseman KNOCKS one of Brom's scythes away, takes another SWING -- sends Brom spinning in a spray of blood... The Horseman stands over Brom's body, CHOPPING with his sword. Our POINT OF VIEW grows BLURRY...

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Candlelight. Ichabod, shirtless, feverish, opens his eyes. The wound at the top of his chest is raw. Katrina guides a NEEDLE inserted into the flesh around it.

KATRINA
Lay still. Do not move.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Doctor, he is awake.

Ichabod tries to sit, but pain stops him. Lady Van Tassel helps Katrina to bleed the wound with the needle and a tube leading to a SUCTION JAR slowly filling with blood.

ICHABOD
What... what is this... ?

KATRINA
I'm drawing bad blood from the wound.

Doctor Lancaster comes to the bedside.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
Keep still, Constable. You were barely half-alive when they found you.

ICHABOD
... Brom Bones...

DOCTOR LANCASTER
He is dead. You would be also, if your wound had not somehow shut.

ICHABOD
Bring Young Masbath.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
You need to sleep.

ICHABOD
Bring him.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
You need rest.

Ichabod gives up, closing his eyes. Katrina reaches to hold Ichabod's hand. Ichabod grips her hand tightly. Katrina sees that Lady Van Tassel notices this.

Lady Van Tassel gives a small smile.

Blood drips... drips... drips into the suction jar.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- CHURCH -- NIGHT

Empty church. Young Ichabod carries a lantern past pews. A MAN is seated near the altar with a rifle.

The soldier exits through a WHITE DOOR. Young Ichabod waits, afraid. The white door opens and the villainous Third Man steps out, walking to Ichabod, towers over him.

YOUNG ICHABOD
May I see my mother?

THIRD MAN
She stands accused.

YOUNG ICHABOD
Please, sir, she did nothing. She is only good and kind...

The Third Man does something unexpected... comes to place a sympathetic hand on Young Ichabod's shoulder.

THIRD MAN
Calm yourself, boy. I believe you.

The Third Man sits in a pew beside Young Ichabod, takes Young Ichabod's hand, comforting him.

THIRD MAN
What are you afraid of? If your mother is truly good, there is nothing to fear. I am certain you will see her soon. Now, put your trust in my task, as your father has. Go home.

Young Ichabod looks at The Third Man, then walks to leave. The Third Man watches him go, walks to exit back through the white door, shuts the door behind him.

Young Ichabod looks back over his shoulder.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Silence. Young Ichabod is at the supper table, watching Father eat. Father never looks up from his food, finishing, crossing himself and leaving; leaving Young Ichabod alone.

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Young Ichabod is kneeling at his bedside, praying with eyes shut. He stands, tucking in his shirt as he exits...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- YOUNG ICHABOD'S YARD -- MORNING

Young Ichabod comes out, stopping...
Father loads a WAGON full of belongings.

CONTINUED

FATHER
We are ruined here.

Young Ichabod walks forward, not understanding. Father continues loading the wagon, ever emotionless.

FATHER
She has admitted to her evil.

YOUNG ICHABOD
No...

FATHER
She admitted her evil and signed a written confession. All that is left for us now is to pray for her soul.
(long pause)
She has gone away.

Realization slowly comes to Young Ichabod. He runs, away towards the forest as Father calls after him...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- FOREST TRAIL -- MORNING

Young Ichabod runs, frantic, shoves through vegetation...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- CHURCH -- MORNING

Empty. Doors are thrown open and Young Ichabod enters, eyes filling with tears. FOLLOW as he runs to the white door...

ICHABOD'S DREAM -- CHURCH, BEYOND WHITE DOOR -- MORNING

Young Ichabod enters, halting. The room contains TORTURE DEVICES: IRON CUFFS, THUMB SCREWS, KNIFES and NEEDLES. There is a SPIKED CHAIR, fitted with sharp spikes, adorned with straps for holding down the "accused."

Young Ichabod backs away, terrified, then sees...

A shaft of light cuts across a large, sarcophagus-like IRON MAIDEN -- where MOTHER'S EYES can be seen through the slit in the Iron Maiden's face. Open eyes. Dead eyes.

Young Ichabod lets out a strangled cry, runs to the Iron Maiden, trying to pull it open, clawing at the lock...

YOUNG ICHABOD
No... no... !

Finally, Young Ichabod backs away, choking on misery. He looks around in despair. He falls to his knees at the spiked chair, places his hands on the spikes, pressing...

As he sobs, blood runs down from his hands.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

In bed, alone, Ichabod opens tear filled eyes. He sits up, bringing his trembling hands to wipe his cheeks. His hands trail blood. He looks at them...

The old scars are bleeding.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALL -- LATER NIGHT

Katrina comes with a candle, sees Young Masbath's belongings, but Young Masbath is not in the chair he usually occupies. Katrina slowly opens Ichabod's door...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Katrina finds the bed empty. Ichabod is seated by the open window, eyes bleary, palms wrapped with bloodied cloth.

ICHABOD
Give me some time. I have spent
every hour in the company of others.
I need to be alone.

Katrina comes to stand beside him.

KATRINA
You should not be out of bed.

Ichabod struggles up, goes to his desk chair, facing away.

KATRINA
I cannot sleep for worrying over you.
Is there nothing I can do?

Ichabod sits silent, eyes closed.

ICHABOD
Lady Van Tassel... she is your
stepmother? She bears so little
resemblance...

KATRINA
What?

ICHABOD
She is not your birth mother, is she?

KATRINA
No, but...

ICHABOD
What happened to your mother?

CONTINUED

KATRINA

(sadly)

She passed away... one year ago. Her lungs were diseased. The nurse who cared for her, during her illness, is now my stepmother. But, what can this be about?

ICHABOD

I lost my own mother. The memories have come back in dreams. I had them forgotten... I wish I could forget them again.

KATRINA

If you still want me to leave, I will. Do you want me to go?

ICHABOD

I do not know. I no longer know what I think or what I feel.

Katrina walks to him, places her hand on his shoulder.

KATRINA

Is there truly such harm in uncertainty?

She comes to kneel before him, looks into his eyes.

KATRINA

Dreams have purpose, though sometimes we cannot see it, even nightmares. They are the truth of ourselves. They are our lives lived without our consent.

ICHABOD

How are you so wise?

Ichabod reaches to touch Katrina's face, leans slowly forward to press his lips softly against her cheek, then rests his head against hers, eyes closed, whispering.

ICHABOD

When I am awake, I dream of you. Such dreams... such dreams as I should not allow myself.

KATRINA

Allow them.

Katrina kisses him on the lips. Ichabod puts his arms around her. They kiss passionately. Ichabod runs his hands down her body, fingers trembling.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Young Masbath sits. He has a large TURKEY LEG on a plate, begins eating. FOOTSTEPS are HEARD from ELSEWHERE. Masbath freezes in mid-bite, quickly blows out the candle before him.

FOOTSTEPS come DOWNSTAIRS, then a DOOR is HEARD OPENING and SHUTTING. Young Masbath gets up...

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, PORCH -- NIGHT

Young Masbath slowly opens the door to peer out. He walks out onto the porch, watching as...

ACROSS THE LAWN, a CLOAKED FIGURE walks, carrying a LANTERN. The figure heads onto the long straight road, into the forest, lantern light dissipating.

EXT. THE HOLLOW -- EARLY MORNING

Dawn light is visible over fog shrouded forests.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- MORNING

Ichabod's seated on the bed, his wound hurting. Young Masbath helps him into a shirt.

YOUNG MASBATH

Someone left last night. Looked like they were going to the town square, but I lost them in the woods.

ICHABOD

Man or woman?

YOUNG MASBATH

All I saw was their lantern. What could it mean?

Ichabod ponders this, troubled, buttoning his shirt.

ICHABOD

It may mean nothing, or everything, now that I know someone controls the Horseman. Every person in the Hollow is now suspect.

YOUNG MASBATH

What... ? What makes you say that?

ICHABOD

The witch... the crone, when I happened upon her corpse, she lay in a pool of blood.

YOUNG MASBATH

What of it?

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

If blood poured hard from her neck,
while victims of the Horseman's blade
bled next to nothing...

YOUNG MASBATH

She was not killed by the Hessian.
Someone only tried to make it look
that way.

ICHABOD

You grow sharper by the minute,
little man. It boggles my mind, but
you are one of the very few here I
can bear to converse with.

YOUNG MASBATH

Well, I'm one of the very few who
likes you.

ICHABOD

True enough.

Ichabod goes to his desk. He puts the ledger in the desk
drawer and LOCKS it with a small KEY.

ICHABOD

Mark my words, there is a mortal hand
at work after all. The Horseman's
skull is missing. Taken by whom, can
you tell me?

Ichabod readies his satchel, checking the contents.

YOUNG MASBATH

By whoever killed the Crone.

ICHABOD

Yes. Someone possesses the one thing
the Horseman wants -- his own head.
They lord it over him somehow. That
is why he rises now, after so many
years. That is why he murders, not
randomly, but as assigned.

YOUNG MASBATH

If someone has his skull... if they
control him, why didn't they send him
for your head yet?

ICHABOD

It is perfection for our murderer if
I return to New York City with
nothing more than ghost stories.
Ready the horses...

Ichabod brings his satchel and rifle, hands them to Masbath.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

We must find the hidden pattern in the victims chosen. What was taken, other than their lives? Who benefits by their deaths? Go. I am right behind.

Young Masbath hurries away. Ichabod goes to get his jacket and hat from a chair. He notices something out the window...

THROUGH THE WINDOW, Katrina can be seen across the front lawn, loading BASKETS of CORN onto a CART. She stands, pushes her hair from her face. She is so beautiful.

In the room, Ichabod watches a moment, taken. He closes his eyes, puts his hand to his chest, feels his heart. He holds a finger to his wrist, feels his pulse, opens his eyes.

ICHABOD

(to himself)

Strange... so strange.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FRONT PORCH -- MORNING

Ichabod comes out. Young Masbath brings the horses.

LADY VAN TASSEL (O.S.)

Good morrow.

Ichabod turns to see Lady Van Tassel by the porch rail.

LADY VAN TASSEL

Are you well?

ICHABOD

Better, thank you.

LADY VAN TASSEL

Heading into town?

ICHABOD

Yes, actually.

(studies her)

Do you know... I think those are the first words I have heard from you my entire time here.

LADY VAN TASSEL

As my husband says, a wife should be always like an echo, and at the same time quite unlike an echo.

(off Ichabod's confusion)

Like an echo, she should speak only when spoken to, and unlike an echo, should never try to have the last word. At least that is what he believes.

CONTINUED

Baltus comes out the door, angry, skillet in hand.

BALTUS

Constable... did you notice anything
out of the ordinary during the night?

Ichabod eyes the skillet, ill at ease.

ICHABOD

Um... I did not, no. Why?

BALTUS

Sarah is missing... my servant girl.
Her things are gone. Damn her. She
has joined the migration out of town.

(to Lady Van Tassel)

What about it, woman? Or, am I to
starve to death?

LADY VAN TASSEL

You needn't be so gruff.

Lady Van Tassel kisses Baltus' cheek, takes the skillet and
heads in. Baltus grumbles, embarrassed by this affection.

ICHABOD

I must be going...

BALTUS

You should know, there has been talk.

ICHABOD

What kind of talk?

BALTUS

Just, be careful. Panic has set in.

Baltus heads inside.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE/CHURCH -- DAY

WAGONS, HORSES and TOWNSPEOPLE swarm. A CROWD empties the
town's general store. Provisions are passed along, man to
man, and loaded onto wheelbarrows.

Ichabod and Young Masbath ride, passing MANY ANGRY FACES.

All up and down the long straight road, home owners board up
windows with lumber.

Ichabod and Young Masbath stop, tying their horses in front
of the "NOTARY." Ichabod looks off...

DOWN THE ROAD, people head to the CHURCH. Much activity...

ICHABOD

Sanctuary. Or, so they hope.

CONTINUED

People carry supplies into the church, within the bordering WROUGHT-IRON FENCE. Others work to build and erect massive WOODEN CROSSES.

In the crowd here, Father Steenwyck spots Ichabod and Young Masbath, pushes past people, shouting...

FATHER STEENWYCK

There he is! There... !

People begin to pay attention to Steenwyck as he climbs atop a crate, pointing towards Ichabod...

FATHER STEENWYCK

(to everyone)

There is our self-proclaimed savior.
Twice he met the Horseman, and twice
survived. How is it so... ?

AT THE NOTARY, Ichabod tries to ignore, heads inside.

IN THE CHURCH YARD, Steenwyck continues his rant.

FATHER STEENWYCK

How is it that the mighty Brom Bones
was killed, while the Horseman saw
fit to spare the life of Ichabod
Crane? Think on it, I tell you...
think on it well.

INT. NOTARY PUBLIC, HARDENBROOK'S OFFICES -- DAY

A small, tidy room. Ichabod hands a LIST to the doddering Notary, Hardenbrook. Young Masbath stands near.

HARDENBROOK

Yes, I have everything... last
testaments... birth certificates,
death certificates... deeds...

ICHABOD

But, do you have these persons' wills?

Hardenbrook studies the paper with his one good eye.

HARDENBROOK

Certainly... certainly.

Hardenbrook nods, hands the list back, still nodding.

ICHABOD

May I see them, sir?

HARDENBROOK

Hmm? See them?

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
May we look at them now?

HARDENBROOK
Of course. You want them... it shall
not take long. You... wait here.

Hardenbrook goes into the next room.
Ichabod waits. Young Masbath sits down. After a moment,
Ichabod looks uncertain, crosses to the half-open door...

INT. NOTARY PUBLIC, RECORDS ROOM -- DAY

Ichabod looks in, not liking what he sees...
Much disarray; tables and shelves of unevenly piled
DOCUMENTS. Hardenbrook looks on a shelf, confused, goes to
a table, searching there, mumbling to himself.

HARDENBROOK
Damn... damn... damn...

ICHABOD
Master Hardenbrook...

Hardenbrook turns, startled.

ICHABOD
Perhaps, I could assist in finding
them?

HARDENBROOK
(looks around)
Well... that might be... helpful.

INT. NOTARY PUBLIC, RECORDS ROOM (TIME CUT) -- DAY

Hardenbrook is asleep in a chair, snoring, blind eye open.
Across the table, Ichabod and Young Masbath face official-
looking documents. Ichabod's reads one WILL in hand.

YOUNG MASBATH
My father had farm land. It was the
all we had.

ICHABOD
(still reading)
And it now belongs to you, according
to Baltus. I heard him say it.

YOUNG MASBATH
Yes.

Ichabod puts down the will, stands, pacing.

ICHABOD
Then, where is your father's will?
Did he have a Last Will and Testament?

CONTINUED

YOUNG MASBATH

I don't know.

ICHABOD

Well, it is not here, and that may have saved your life.

Ichabod goes back to the wills on the table.

ICHABOD

Van Garrett denoted his elder son in his last wishes; the same son murdered along with him. But Van Garrett's wife and two infant children are not written... they were not killed. Do you see... ?

(looks at another will)

Killian bestowed his farm to his family, and so they died. Philipse was alone. But, here...

(holds up another)

The Widow Windsor was listed on her late husband's will. After her inheritance, she amended her document to include the bastard child she carried. Here is why the Horseman made certain to impale the her unborn. Here is the pattern...

Ichabod throws the wills down, sits.

ICHABOD

The heirs were murdered -- only the heirs. If your father had a will, it would have doomed you.

YOUNG MASBATH

I don't understand...

ICHABOD

This property has gone intestate. Your farm... all these farms... they belong to no one.

YOUNG MASBATH

But, why? If that is so, how does anyone end up with them?

Ichabod stares off, lost in thought.

ICHABOD

Property gone intestate often passes to whomever the deceased was indebted to...

(looks to Masbath)

And, who in this town is owed a great many debts?

CONTINUED

YOUNG MASBATH
Baltus. Baltus Van Tassel.

Ichabod stands, gathering wills, grim.

ICHABOD
Tonight, we find answers. And, to
discover who moves about the Van
Tassel house after dark... all we
need is a candle.

A LOUD NOISE is HEARD from the other room. Ichabod looks up.

INT. HARDENBROOK'S OFFICES -- DAY

Ichabod bursts in. No one here, but a CHAIR has been
knocked over and the front door is open. Ichabod moves...

EXT. NOTARY -- DAY

Ichabod comes outside. The commotion of humanity in the
square continues. No telling who it was who just fled.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, KITCHEN -- DAY

Ichabod enters with a lantern, goes to the fireplace. He
uses a wick to light the lantern, then notices...

THROUGH A DOORWAY, Baltus, Dr. Lancaster and TWO FARMERS
speak in hushed tones. Doctor Lancaster sees Ichabod.
Lancaster comes to shut the door.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALL -- DAY

Ichabod arrives to find the door to his room ajar...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Ichabod enters, puts down his lantern, not understanding.
Katrina is seated at his desk, reading his ledger. She
looks up, stands guiltily.

KATRINA
Constable. I'm sorry... I came to
wait for you.

Ichabod comes to close the ledger, uncomfortable.

ICHABOD
These are private writings. I
thought I had locked them away...

KATRINA
The drawer was open. I know I should
have asked, but I found it too
fascinating to resist. Forgive me.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
Of course. It is just that...

KATRINA
Where have you been? I thought of
you all day.

Katrina takes Ichabod's hand, stands close.

ICHABOD
And I of you.

As SOMEONE is HEARD coming down the hall, Ichabod drops
Katrina's hand and steps back. Young Masbath enters
carrying belongings and Ichabod's satchel, indifferent.

YOUNG MASBATH
Hello.

Young Masbath ignores them as he unburdens himself. Ichabod
walks Katrina to the doorway. They want to kiss, but are
prevented by Masbath's presence.

KATRINA
Will I see you tonight?

ICHABOD
Perhaps.

KATRINA
Later then.

Ichabod nods, watches Katrina leave, vaguely troubled.
Masbath places Ichabod's satchel on the desk, but the
satchel falls... hits the floor...

The satchel's contents spill... the BOTTLE of GREEN POWDER
bounces, uncorked... rolls under the bed...

ICHABOD
Careful, boy.

YOUNG MASBATH
Sorry...

Ichabod comes to help pick up. He sees a trail of the
green, blood-detecting powder leading under the bed...

ICHABOD
Damn.

Ichabod kneels, pained. The bottle is out of reach.

YOUNG MASBATH
I'll get it.

CONTINUED

Young Masbath gets down to crawl for the bottle, but Ichabod stops him, still peering under...

ICHABOD

Wait.

Far under, near the bottle, some POWDER is BUBBLING.

Ichabod rises, worried. He moves to the foot of the bed, lifting, pained. Masbath helps, dragging the bed aside, then he and Ichabod stare down at what they have found...

UNDER THE BED: a Satanic PENTAGRAM has been DRAWN IN BLOOD.

YOUNG MASBATH

Sir... who could... ?

Ichabod clasps his hand over Masbath's mouth. He puts a finger to his own lips, walks to close and LOCK the door.

YOUNG MASBATH

(whispers)

Who did this?

Ichabod walks back to look at the bloody symbol, his features drawn tight. He picks up a WASH BASIN -- dumps the water to wash the Pentagram away.

EXT. CHURCH -- NIGHT

Quiet. The church is a sight, surrounded by CROSSES. Boarded over windows leak shafts of light.

MOVING PAST THE WINDOWS: many eyes peer out from the slats.

UP IN THE BELFRY, TWO RIFLEMEN are on watch.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Young Masbath is seated, arms crossed, waiting. By LAMP LIGHT, Ichabod writes in his ledger under a SKETCH of the PENTAGRAM. A KNOCK is HEARD on the door...

Ichabod closes a cover on the lamp, darkening the room. Both he and Young Masbath look to the door.

KATRINA'S VOICE (O.S.)

(from outside door)

Constable... are you there... ?

(long pause)

Ichabod... ?

Ichabod keeps silent, saddened.

The KNOB is tried, found LOCKED. Pause. KATRINA'S FOOTSTEPS are heard WALKING AWAY.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- LATER NIGHT

Young Masbath, fully dressed, sleeps on the bed.

Ichabod sits waiting. He takes the cover off the lantern, looks at a CLOCK. Midnight. Ichabod stands, picks up an unlit CANDLE, goes to wake Young Masbath.

ICHABOD
Midnight seems an appropriate hour.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Ichabod and Young Masbath come down STAIRS with a lantern, cautious. They move to the nearest DOOR...

Ichabod crouches... uses the CANDLE to mark the seam of the door and doorframe, making a low, WAX SEAL. If the door opens, the seal will be broken.

They move to a SECOND DOOR, quietly, doing the same here.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FOYER AND ENTRANCE HALL -- NIGHT

Ichabod and Masbath come DOWNSTAIRS. Ichabod continues his wax marking at EACH DOOR...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, BALTUS' OFFICE -- NIGHT

Ichabod and Young Masbath enter, shutting the door. Ichabod walks to SHELVES behind Baltus' desk, sorts through ribbon bound DOCUMENTS, hands some to Masbath.

Young Masbath pulls off the ribbon, pages through these "LOAN AGREEMENT" parchments. Ichabod brings more.

ICHABOD
(whispering)
They are alphabetical by name.

Young Masbath looks through... "MARYIE," "MEGAPOLENISIS," AND "MELYN..." Not finding what he wants.

YOUNG MASBATH
There's no Masbath. My father's loan papers are missing.

ICHABOD
(regarding his documents)
None for Magistrate Philipse either.
"Paasch, James" "Pieter, Thomas"
"Pos, William."

A FLOORBOARD CREAKS. Ichabod looks, blows out the lantern. He and Young Masbath stand frozen.

Across the room, LIGHT comes under the door, stops...

CONTINUED

then continues. A DOOR is HEARD OPENING and SHUTTING.
Ichabod crosses to follow, pointing back.

 ICHABOD
 Keep looking. Then, hide in my room
 and bolt the door.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

LANTERN LIGHT moves, far ahead. Ichabod follows, fearful.

EXT. FOREST, FURTHER ON -- NIGHT

Ichabod stops, keeping hidden. He can see the LIGHT ahead,
but it is no longer in motion. He advances...

EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- NIGHT

The lantern sits on a rock. On a blanket, a semi-naked MAN
and semi-naked WOMAN are in the midst of rough SEX.

Ichabod crawls to peer from underbrush.

The couple keeps coupling, the MAN on top. His grunts and
gasps are particularly desperate. He's all over the WOMAN,
who lays back... it is LADY VAN TASSEL.

Ichabod swallows.

Lady Van Tassel pulls down the man's shirt, exposes his
flesh. She raises a small, sharp KNIFE behind his back.

Ichabod's eyes widen. He's about to shout a warning, but...

Lady Van Tassel brings the blade to her own hand, slicing
deep into her palm. Blood flows. She rubs her cut hand
over her partner's arching back, smearing blood.

Lady Van Tassel caresses the man's chest, neck, face...
trailing blood. The man lifts his head, in ecstasy, sucking
the woman's bloody fingers... it's FATHER STEENWYCK.

Ichabod backs away, having seen more than enough.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Young Masbath unlocks the door. Ichabod enters, winded.

 YOUNG MASBATH
 I was worried. Who was it?

 ICHABOD
 It was Lady Van Tassel.

 YOUNG MASBATH
 What was she doing?

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
 Something... something I wish I had
 not seen. Never mind that. Did you
 find the victims' loan agreements?

YOUNG MASBATH
 No. They are all missing.

This troubles Ichabod greatly.

YOUNG MASBATH
 There is more, though. While you
 were gone, I heard someone else
 walking through the house.

Ichabod looks to Masbath.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Ichabod and Young Masbath creep round a corner. Coming to
 the LAST DOOR... Ichabod kneels, eyes narrowing...

The wax seal is broken; flecks of wax on the floor.

YOUNG MASBATH
 (whispers)
 This is Katrina's door.

Ichabod fingers the flecks of wax, miserable.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FOYER AND ENTRANCE HALL -- NIGHT

Ichabod and Young Masbath return downstairs, checking all
 the wax marks. Masbath finds one broken.

YOUNG MASBATH
 Here. This way...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SEWING ROOM -- NIGHT

Young Masbath enters with Ichabod following. This is the
 room that contains the large, elaborate LOOM.

YOUNG MASBATH
 There are no other doors. This is as
 far as she could've gone.

Ichabod makes a quick search with his lantern. At a table,
 he touches a candle. The wax is still wet.

ICHABOD
 It is nothing. She comes to read
 books here, so that her father will
 not find her.
 (to convince himself)
 It is absolutely nothing.

CONTINUED

YOUNG MASBATH

What books?

ICHABOD

Fiction plays and novels. Baltus does not approve. Now, come. It may not be long before Lady Van Tassel returns...

YOUNG MASBATH

But, sir... what books? Where are they?

Ichabod stops, looking around. No books anywhere.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SEWING ROOM -- LATER NIGHT

SEARCH MONTAGE:

- DRAWERS are opened and searched, quietly.
- Young Masbath uses the lantern to look up the FIREPLACE.
- Ichabod opens a linen CABINET, unfolding blankets.
- Young Masbath looks in a CLOSET filled with big spools of sewing thread, opens a wooden BOX.

Ichabod pulls up a RUG, feeling along floorboards.

ICHABOD

There is no secret hiding place.
This is a waste of time.

Young Masbath crawls, tapping his knuckles on the floor --
TAP... TAP... TAP...

YOUNG MASBATH

You said that everyone in the Hollow is suspect.

ICHABOD

Not her.

YOUNG MASBATH

How do you know?

ICHABOD

I just know. I have faith. Katrina plays no role in this.

Young Masbath crawls beneath the loom. TAP... TAP... PLONK.
A hollow sound. He taps again... PLONK... PLONK.

YOUNG MASBATH

Constable...

CONTINUED

Ichabod comes over as Young Masbath lifts a LOOSE BOARD. Under the floor, there are PILES of BOOKS. Masbath brings them up, handing them to Ichabod.

Young Masbath reaches in up to his shoulder. He comes up with a handful of "LOAN AGREEMENTS."

YOUNG MASBATH
Fie... here they are. The loans...

Ichabod takes them, studies them. Names are near the top of each: "MASBATH," "VAN GARRETT," "PHILIPSE," and "KILLIAN."

Ichabod drops them. He crawls away, backing against a wall, holds his fists to his eyes, his heart bitterly broken.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, KITCHEN -- MORNING

Lady Van Tassel prepares food with two servants at the open fireplace. Ichabod enters, impatient.

ICHABOD
Lady Van Tassel... Katrina is nowhere to be found.

LADY VAN TASSEL
She has gone out.

ICHABOD
Where?

LADY VAN TASSEL
She has taken the last of our grain to be milled.
(crossing to Ichabod)
You do have a background in the medical arts, don't you... ?

ICHABOD
Very little. I must go...

Lady Van Tassel holds out her cut palm, the gash SEWN SHUT.

LADY VAN TASSEL
I cut my hand this morning. I sewed it myself, but I am afraid it will go bad.

ICHABOD
It has already clotted...

LADY VAN TASSEL
Look closer. Have you anything to clean it with?

ICHABOD
It is fine. Now, I must...

CONTINUED

Lady Van Tassel GRABS Ichabod by the wrist, tight...

LADY VAN TASSEL
(whispering, close)
I know you saw me.

ICHABOD
What... ?

Lady Van Tassel glances to servants, her voice low.

LADY VAN TASSEL
I know you followed last night. You
must promise not to tell my husband
what you saw... promise me...

Ichabod tries to pull away, but she grips tighter. The
FRONT DOOR is HEARD SLAMMING. Ichabod is panicky.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Have mercy. Please, have mercy...
I'm begging you... !

Ichabod pulls away just as Baltus enters. Lady Van Tassel
goes back to work as if nothing happened.

BALTUS
Constable, it is urgent that we speak.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FOYER AND ENTRANCE HALL -- MORNING

Baltus leads Ichabod into the hall.

BALTUS
Clergyman Steenwyck is calling a
meeting. He will preach against you.
He is determined to have you forced
out, or worse...

ICHABOD
How did you hear this?

BALTUS
He came to me. He promised violence,
said I should cast you out for my own
protection. With Brom's death, there
is no reason to think he will not
meet with success...

The CHURCH BELL is HEARD TOLLING from outside.

BALTUS
That is the meeting bell already. I
must speak honestly. If... if you
were to leave now, you would be
saving your own skin.

CONTINUED

Ichabod studies Baltus, wary.

ICHABOD
Thank you for the advice.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FRONT PORCH -- MORNING

The day is gloom. RAIN POURS down. Ichabod runs out the front door, bounding down the porch stairs...

Young Masbath brings the horses. Ichabod runs to him...

YOUNG MASBATH
Where is she?

ICHABOD
Things have become complicated...

Ichabod takes Gunpowder and climbs up.

ICHABOD
Katrina is at the windmill. Ride ahead and find her. Bring her to meet me outside the church. Find her at all costs. Quickly.

They ride fast away from the Van Tassel house...

EXT. FOREST -- DAY

A small PILE of STRAW burns. GLOVED HANDS unfold a paper filled with HAIR CLIPPINGS, which are sprinkled on the fire.

A cloaked FIGURE kneels at the pile. This person removes a HUMAN SKULL from a cloth bag.

The skull is placed at center in the flames. It's teeth are sharp, cut to points -- the HORSEMAN'S SKULL.

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

Residents of the Hollow enter the church. A few miserable people talk in small groups.

INT. CHURCH, STEENWYCK'S QUARTERS -- MORNING

LOOKING INTO THE CHURCH: it's crowded with families. Pews are filled with bedding and belongings. Steenwyck comes to CLOSE the DOORS of his private quarters, turning, angry...

FATHER STEENWYCK
Do you truly think your accusations frighten me?

Ichabod does nothing to hide his disdain.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

Only if I repeat them outside this room. And, I will...

(points to doors)

For all to hear. Or you may speak as planned, but tell them you feel compelled to move on to greener pastures.

FATHER STEENWYCK

Are you a deist, is that it? A free thinker who does not believe in divinity... ?

ICHABOD

It is only important what you are. An adulterer...

FATHER STEENWYCK

I am the Lord's voice in this town.

ICHABOD

Wallowing in sin and lust...

FATHER STEENWYCK

They need my guidance...

ICHABOD

Wallowing quite literally in blood.

FATHER STEENWYCK

Damn you, sir. God damn you to hell! You will not run me out.

ICHABOD

You seem so upset now, Father... yet, you were in such high spirits last night.

Ichabod walks to leave. Steenwyck is humiliated.

FATHER STEENWYCK

You cannot do this to me. I am a man of God.

ICHABOD

Climb to the top of the tallest ladder you can find. That is the closest you ever come to God.

Ichabod exits.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Pews are packed. Steenwyck enters, walks to the altar. EVERYONE QUIETS. Steenwyck has composed himself, barely.

CONTINUED

FATHER STEENWYCK

My friends... dear friends. Those of
you still on your farms, I thank you
for coming.

He spots Ichabod near the back, standing with arms crossed.
THUNDER is HEARD outside.

FATHER STEENWYCK

I... I address unfortunate business.
(long pause)
I am forced to take my leave from
Sleepy Hollow. I will be moving on
to do the Lord's work elsewhere.

The GATHERERS MURMUR shock. Ichabod walks out.

EXT. THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD -- DAY

RAINING. Baltus and Lady Van Tassel ride hard...

BALTUS

Hurry. The meeting has already
begun. We do not need Steenwyck as
our enemy.

Baltus rides ahead. Lady Van Tassel trails.

Ahead on the trail, Lady Van Tassel's HORSE suddenly REARS,
frightened, THROWING Lady Van Tassel...

She hits the ground hard. Her horse runs.

Baltus looks back, stopping his horse. He looks immediately
around to the forest. No sign of anyone or anything. ONLY
the SOUND of RAIN. He looks to his wife.

BALTUS

Are you alright?

LADY VAN TASSEL

I... I think so...

Lady Van Tassel gets to her feet. She looks down as she
brushes herself off, then looks back up to Baltus...

Baltus stares past her, mouth agape, terrified...

Lady Van Tassel turns to see...

Behind on the trail, the Headless Horseman moves slowly from
the forest, on Daredevil, calmly unsheathing his SWORD.

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

RAIN. Near the CHURCH YARD GATE, Young Masbath rides with
Katrina following on her horse.

CONTINUED

Ichabod walks to meet them as Katrina dismounts.

KATRINA
What is so urgent?

ICHABOD
Come with me.

Ichabod leads her to where they can talk away from Masbath.

KATRINA
Why have I not seen your face for so long?

Katrina puts the back of her hand to Ichabod's face, but he takes her wrist, places the loan agreements in her hand.

ICHABOD
Explain these. I found them secreted away in the sewing room.

Katrina looks at them, her expression changing ever so slightly to guilt. It confirms the worst of Ichabod's fears.

ICHABOD
Why... ? Why have I scrambled and run and clawed in all directions, only to find you against me?

KATRINA
I rode to catch up with you at the Notary yesterday, out of curiosity. I overheard what you said...

ICHABOD
It was you there?

KATRINA
When I heard my father's name along with accusations, I could not believe it. I had to hide these... at least till I could confront him myself.

ICHABOD
What did he say?

KATRINA
He did not do these things. If you knew him, you would realize...

ICHABOD
What did he say, Katrina?

KATRINA
I have not been able to face him yet.

Ichabod hangs his head.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD

These loans give the victims' properties to your father. It does not matter survivors are still on their farms, they can be thrown off...

KATRINA

There must be another explanation.

ICHABOD

Then, tell it to me, I beg you. Say whatever it takes so that I may trust you again.

Katrina's tiring of this, getting angry.

KATRINA

I've told you the truth. But, if you think I am behind this, speak the words...

ICHABOD

The name Van Tassel is blackened. You share that name...

KATRINA

Call me a liar then, and a murderess. What is stopping you... ?

ICHABOD

What would you have me believe?

KATRINA

Should I confess? Will that ease your suffering? Will that make it easier for you to hate me?

ICHABOD

Hate you? No, no, no...

Ichabod paces away, agonizing. Rain pounds down harder.

ICHABOD

I hate myself! I am the one who dared to care for you. It was me who let myself imagine... for a moment, the merest moment, to imagine you might care for me. Christ, the wounds you inflicted are so deep...

The words bring Katrina to tears.

ICHABOD

That day in the Western Woods, I actually thought you followed to be with me. And, that night...

(more)

CONTINUED

ICHABOD (CONT.)

That one night after which my heart
hurt just to be away from you, how
clearly I see the truth of it now.
What a fool you made of me, and made
well. Katrina... I would give
everything if only I could hate you.

Katrina is ruined, voice quaking.

KATRINA

Is this you at last... that you can
accuse me this way? You are not the
man I thought you were...

A TORTURED CRY is HEARD. Young Masbath turns to look...

Ichabod and Katrina turn...

Baltus comes charging through the TOWN SQUARE on his horse.

BALTUS

The Horseman... !

Baltus is barely hanging on. He stops, falling off his
horse, scrambling towards Katrina and Ichabod...

BALTUS

Save me...

KATRINA

Father... ?

BALTUS

He murdered her...

Baltus grasps Katrina, deathly afraid.

BALTUS

The Horseman has killed her.

HOOFBEATS are HEARD... the SCREECHY CRY of Daredevil.
Baltus looks...

The Horseman rides into view, giving chase...

Instant mayhem -- the few people in the church yard flee,
heading for the church...

Baltus runs towards the church...

KATRINA

Father!

Katrina chases after Baltus. Ichabod runs to sweep Young
Masbath up into his arms, following...

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

The GATHERERS in the pews react to the commotion, shouting, some running to the windows... to the doors...

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

Baltus pushes through the IRON GATE, across the church yard, bounding up the stairs...

The Horseman rides behind...

Katrina and Ichabod, with Masbath, follow into the church yard. Ichabod glances back...

As the Horseman reaches the open gate, Daredevil rears up violently, snorting, unwilling to enter.

The Horseman grabs Daredevil's reins, tries to move forward again. Same result -- Daredevil freaks.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Baltus makes his way into the church, shoving people aside.

Men pass RIFLES from stockpiles and climb onto pews at the boarded windows. Women herd children into a cellar.

Baltus searches for a hiding place, moves towards the back...

At the front of the church, Katrina and Ichabod squeeze in just as the front doors are forced shut. Ichabod puts Young Masbath down, surveys the madness...

Katrina moves through, following Baltus...

Ichabod runs to a window, looking out between boards...

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

At the iron gates, the Horseman gives his AXE an underhand toss... to the ground inside the gate...

The AXE instantly BEGINS TO DEGRADE -- DUST in the rain.

The Horseman steers away, keeping outside the fence.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Ichabod comes away from the window, looking to the mass of panicked citizens. He sees Katrina pushing up the aisle... she's heading towards Baltus.

RIFLES BOOM LOUDLY as men at the windows begin FIRING...

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

The Horseman circles, under fire.

Great clouds of gun smoke shoot from the church.

Men fire down from the belfry.

Parts of the Horseman and Daredevil splatter red into the rain as slugs hit, without effect.

At the other side of the church...

The Horseman circles, heading to the town square...

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Rifleman shout to each other, running to the opposite windows to follow the Horseman.

Young Masbath grabs a rifle, leaps to join the brigade.

Baltus is trying to force his way to one of the cellar doors, when Steenwyck grips him angrily, SHOVES him...

FATHER STEENWYCK

You'll kill us all... !

Baltus stumbles back, topples pews. Katrina's near.

STEENWYCK

You're the one the Horseman wants.

KATRINA

No!

Steenwyck grabs Baltus, dragging him to the front, shoving Katrina aside as she tries to come to Baltus' aid.

Ichabod's pushing past people, trying to get to them.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE/CHURCH -- DAY

The Horseman brings Daredevil to a halt, yanks a large coil of ROPE off a hitching post, turns to ride back...

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Baltus pulls free from Steenwyck, falls to the floor again.

STEENWYCK

Why should we die for you? Get out!

Others join the rage, pulling Baltus towards the front of the church, shouting. Ichabod arrives, struggling to push people off of Baltus...

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
Stop this... !

Ichabod gets to Baltus' side, trying to protect.

ICHABOD
The Horseman cannot enter! It does
not matter who he wants, he cannot
cross the gate... !

At the windows, ONE RIFLEMAN cries out.

ONE RIFLEMAN
He's coming back!

More panic. Steenwyck points towards Baltus.

STEENWYCK
We have to save ourselves... !

Baltus pulls the PISTOL from Ichabod's holster...

BALTUS
No! Unhand me! Stand off... !

Baltus brandishes the gun. Everyone backs off.

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

The Horseman rides past the front, fired upon...
The Horseman halts along a length of the wrought gate,
reaches... yanks off one IRON POST, which is pointed on top,
like an arrow head.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Baltus holds everyone away with the pistol, enraged...

BALTUS
The next person to lay hands on me
will have a bullet.

KATRINA
Father, don't...

BALTUS
You would give me over to the devil
without a second thought!? God damn
you, every one of you! How dearly
you'd love to watch me die, and your
debts die with me. How eagerly you
all must have waited for this day.
Well, not today...
(points at Ichabod)
You said it. This is holy ground.
He cannot enter...

CONTINUED

Steenwyck moves forward from the side. Baltus FIRES -- blasts a bloody hole in Steenwyck's stomach...

Everyone backs further away as Steenwyck falls. Steenwyck lays gasping, eyes huge. He tries to crawl...

KATRINA

No... oh, God... no...

Steenwyck lays still with a bloody gurgle, face down. Baltus looks to all the horrified people around him.

BALTUS

The Horseman will not have me. He will not... !

CRASH! -- the IRON POST comes SPEARING through a window, trailing rope...

CRACK -- SKEWERS Baltus from behind, it's bloodied point bursting out through his breast bone...

Baltus gasps, stunned... he drops the gun, looks down to clutch the post. Blood streams out his mouth.

Katrina screams.

The rope tied to the post suddenly YANKS Baltus backwards with incredible force -- SLAMS him into the WINDOW...

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

Baltus CRASHES backwards through the window, hits the ground, DRAGGED...

OUTSIDE THE FENCE, Daredevil runs away with the rope tied around his saddle pommel. The Horseman strides forward, towards the fence, sword out...

Baltus SLAMS the fence. The rope SNAPS. Baltus is held there awkwardly, gurgling blood.

The Horseman arrives, his sword raised high... he chops off Baltus' head.

INT. SLEEPY HOLLOW FOREST -- DAY

The storm has passed. Empty forest. Long, peaceful pause, till Ichabod makes his way through, searching.

Ichabod comes to look down a small hill... The CORPSE of LADY VAN TASSEL lies headless, in a dirty, torn dress. Ichabod walks to the body.

No blood on the ground. Lady Van Tassel's arm is horribly twisted behind; the SEWN CUT on her palm facing up.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
(shouting back)
Here! I have found her... !

Ichabod's voice falters. He looks to the corpse.

ICHABOD
(quietly, miserable)
Here she is.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALL -- EARLY EVENING

Doctor Lancaster comes out from Katrina's room, where Katrina lies asleep, shuts the door. Ichabod waits.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
It has been a terrible jolt to her system.

ICHABOD
You will stay by her side?

Lancaster nods. Ichabod stares at the floor, then walks...

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, STAIRS -- EARLY EVENING

Young Masbath sits waiting. Ichabod starts down the stairs. Young Masbath follows.

YOUNG MASBATH
What now, sir? What is next?

ICHABOD
I need time for thinking. Without you hanging on my coattails for a change.

Ichabod continues. Young Masbath stops, wounded.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE -- EARLY EVENING

Dusk. Ichabod comes out, crosses the porch. A few of the Hollow's residents are here, watching him pass. Ichabod unties Gunpowder, climbs up and rides...

EXT. FOREST -- MORNING

Dawn. Ichabod is seated overlooking the Hudson. He broods through bleary eyes. Gunpowder is tied to a tree.

The LEDGER is open in Ichabod's lap. He thumbs pages absently, just keeps staring off. Finally, he stands, walks to begin picking up rocks, arranging them in a circle.

EXT. FOREST -- LATER MORNING (TIME CUT)

A FIRE burns in the circle of rocks. Ichabod's ledger is thrown in. The pages catch quickly.

Ichabod watches. He walks to Gunpowder, about to climb on, but pauses. He opens his satchel and digs out a BOOK.

He walks back to the fire, looks at the book in his hand, "ROMEO AND JULIET." He stands staring down at the fire.

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FRONT LAWN -- NIGHT

Ichabod carries BAGGAGE. Young Masbath follows, troubled.

YOUNG MASBATH
Won't you change your mind? What can
I can say to stop you... ?

ICHABOD
Nothing. To hell with this place and
all the people here.

YOUNG MASBATH
Why... why are you like this?

Ichabod looks at Young Masbath, stops, softening.

ICHABOD
You do not know all that has happened.

YOUNG MASBATH
It was her, wasn't it.

ICHABOD
You cannot understand.
(pause)
Tell no one. No one can ever know.

A decrepit COACH, with Gunpowder as one of its team, waits. Van Ripper comes to meet Ichabod.

ICHABOD
Half now, half when we reach the city.

Ichabod gives Van Ripper money. Van Ripper takes the baggage. Ichabod looks to the Manor House. Only one light shines, in a SECOND FLOOR WINDOW.

Katrina can be seen there a moment as she closes curtains.

Ichabod turns to Young Masbath.

ICHABOD
This is farewell.

CONTINUED

YOUNG MASBATH
Take me with you. There's nothing
left for me here.

ICHABOD
I cannot.

Tears comes to Young Masbath's eyes. Ichabod kneels.

ICHABOD
You should not worry...
(pause, sorrow)
Van Ripper and his wife will look
after you. They will. You will be
well cared for...

Young Masbath hugs. Ichabod hugs back, swallowing hard.

ICHABOD
I am sorry...
(quietly)
I failed you. Forgive me. Please,
forgive me...

Ichabod releases Masbath and goes quickly away, finding this
misery unbearable. He climbs into the coach.

YOUNG MASBATH
Do not go. How can you leave?

INSIDE THE COACH, Ichabod slumps back in darkness. He
pounds twice on the coach wall.

OUTSIDE, Van Ripper whips the reins. The coach starts.
Young Masbath runs after as the coach picks up speed and
heads for the long straight road.

Young Masbath stops, wiping tears.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE/CHURCH -- NIGHT

Ichabod's coach crosses the covered bridge... past the town
square. The coach stops in front of the church. Ichabod
opens the coach door, looking out, shouts...

ICHABOD
Nothing can be done against the
Horseman. He cannot be stopped.

Movement is seen through the slats of the church windows.

ICHABOD
Take everything you can, pack up your
families, and get out.
(pause)
Leave this place!

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Young Masbath enters, looks around the empty room. He goes to sit, crosses his arms on the desk and lays down his head.

EXT. THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD -- NIGHT

Van Ripper leads the coach through the STONE PILLARS marking the entrance of Sleepy Hollow.

INT. ICHABOD'S COACH -- NIGHT

Ichabod takes off his hat, sets it on the seat. A small window in front of him slides open and Van Ripper looks back, offering SOMETHING...

VAN RIPPER

Sir... this is yours. The Van Tassel girl said to give it to you after you was gone.

Ichabod takes it. It is the bird/cage spinning toy. He looks at it in his hand. What melancholy.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, PARLOR -- NIGHT

Katrina is slumped in a chair, heartbroken, staring into the burning fireplace.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, FOYER AND ENTRANCE HALL -- NIGHT

Moonlight streams in. The hall is empty.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

The kitchen is empty.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Where Ichabod first met Katrina, empty and dead quiet.

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, STAIRS -- NIGHT

Empty... till a SHADOW creeps up the stairwell.

INT. ICHABOD'S COACH -- NIGHT

Ichabod turns the strings on the bird/cage toy, watching it... the paper disk spins, images flickering until the bird appears to be inside the cage.

Ichabod keeps spinning it, but puts back his head and closes his eyes, tears rolling down his face.

The toy's rotation slows... stops.

Ichabod looks at it a long moment, wipes tears.

CONTINUED

He pockets it, leans to slide open the front window...

ICHABOD
Van Ripper, turn the coach... !

VAN RIPPER
What?

ICHABOD
Turn around, now!

INT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE, ICHABOD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Young Masbath still sits at the desk with his head buried in his crossed arms. He does not notice as a SHADOW falls across him from behind...

Does not notice as a GLOVED HAND raises a PISTOL.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE, DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE -- NIGHT

The coach comes to Lancaster's. Ichabod climbs out before it even stops fully, satchel in hand. He runs...

INT. DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, PARLOR -- NIGHT

Doctor Lancaster, groggy, comes to answer BANGING on his door. Ichabod pushes past, taking Lancaster's lantern.

ICHABOD
Pardon the intrusion...

INT. DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, MEDICAL ROOM -- NIGHT

Ichabod enters. There are TWO COFFINS on the floor.

ICHABOD
I never examined these bodies. They
are the only stones left unturned.

Ichabod throws off the the lids from the coffins, looking to the headless BODIES of BALTUS and LADY VAN TASSEL.

DOCTOR LANCASTER
Oh, help yourself, you pompous ass.
I will be in bed.

Ichabod falls to his knees beside Lady Van Tassel. The neck wound is covered by a stained brown cloth. Ichabod grasps the cloth, hurriedly unwrapping it...

ICHABOD
Stains of blood...

DOCTOR LANCASTER
What did you say?

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
Blood, doctor... old blood...

Ichabod opens his satchel, pulls out his MAGNIFICATION
SPECTACLES and dons them. He bends to examine the neck...

ICHABOD
Jagged flesh... the spinal bone
splintered, by Christ! The Horseman
did not do this...

VAN TASSEL PARLOR -- INTERCUT

Katrina still sits, her eyes closed.
A FIGURE in BLACK moves forward in the darkness behind...

MEDICAL ROOM -- INTERCUT

Ichabod goes to lift Lady Van Tassel's hand with the GASH on
its palm, bends to study... pulling at the sewn wound...
pulling the stitches apart between his thumbs...

ICHABOD
No clotting or gathering of pus.
This shows no sign of healing...

VAN TASSEL PARLOR -- INTERCUT

Katrina hears a BOARD CREAK. She sits up, turning...

KATRINA
Hello... ?

MEDICAL ROOM -- INTERCUT

Ichabod releases the corpse's hand, tears off his
spectacles, shaken by realization...

ICHABOD
When this cut was made... this person
was already dead.

Ichabod grabs his satchel, bolts out the door...

VAN TASSEL PARLOR -- INTERCUT

The FIGURE moves closer in darkness...

KATRINA
Who is there... ?

The FIGURE comes into the dim, flickering fire light...
LADY VAN TASSEL, gripping a GAGGED Young Masbath by the
shirt in one hand, pointing a pistol with the other.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Hello, dear girl...

CONTINUED

Katrina stands, mortified, trying to form words...

LADY VAN TASSEL
Not even a hug, to greet your beloved
stepmother?

Katrina's eyes roll up as she FAINTS dead away to the floor.

EXT. CHURCH/TOWN SQUARE -- NIGHT

Ichabod charges up to the church doors, POUNDING.

ICHABOD
Open the doors. Open, damn you, Lady
Van Tassel is alive! Please... !

The door opens and a HUGE FARMER points a rifle at Ichabod.
Frightened people peer out from behind.

HUGE FARMER
Aren't we rid of you?

ICHABOD
Listen to me. Lady Van Tassel has
faked her death. I need your help...

HUGE FARMER
She is dead, and you have gone mad.

ICHABOD
No...

HUGE FARMER
Go, or I swear I will pull this
trigger.

Ichabod backs away from the gun, frustrated, runs...

At the DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE, Van Ripper is still on the coach.
Ichabod sprints over, frantic, drawing his pistol.

ICHABOD
Van Ripper... you have a gun?

VAN RIPPER
Yes...

Van Ripper holds up a RIFLE.

ICHABOD
Quickly, may I see it?

Van Ripper's confused, but hands the rifle over. Ichabod
immediately raises his pistol at Van Ripper...

ICHABOD
Get down! Hurry!

CONTINUED

Van Ripper climbs off. Ichabod climbs up, whips the horses.

ICHABOD

Sorry.

Van Ripper watches the coach leave, still with his hands up.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

In a wooded area, Katrina lies unconscious. Lady Van Tassel cuts off a clump of Katrina's hair with SCISSORS.

A conjuring pile has been prepared, containing a small ANIMAL'S HEART with an iron NAIL through it. Lady Van Tassel adds Katrina's hair, lights the pile off a lantern.

Young Masbath is kneeled on the ground, hands tied behind him, stilled gagged. A WHITE HORSE is tied nearby.

Lady Van Tassel WHISPERS over the fire. She looks to Katrina, who stirs.

Lady Van Tassel takes the HORSEMAN'S SKULL from a bag over her shoulder, places it in the flames. THUNDER is HEARD.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, TREE OF THE DEAD -- NIGHT

The WIND scatters dead leaves. The TWISTED TREE OPENS WIDE with a RUMBLE -- SHAFTS of LIGHT shooting out.

EXT. THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD -- NIGHT

Ichabod drives the coach hard ahead.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Katrina sits up, groggy, looking around... sees the dying fire, and Lady Van Tassel standing with pistol in hand.

LADY VAN TASSEL

Awake at last. Pleasant dreams, I trust.

KATRINA

You... you are alive.

LADY VAN TASSEL

Am I? Or, are you and Young Masbath dead along with me?

Katrina crawls to Young Masbath, pulls the gag down.

YOUNG MASBATH

She is a witch. She commands the Horseman.

CONTINUED

LADY VAN TASSEL
Pity that knowledge comes to late.

KATRINA
Father saw you die...

LADY VAN TASSEL
He saw me thrown, saw the Horseman
loom over me. What I wanted him to
see. But, so long as I govern the
Horseman, he will not harm me, and
Baltus did not stay to see that. He
fled as a coward, to save himself.

YOUNG MASBATH
Then... whose body was found...?

LADY VAN TASSEL
The servant girl, Sarah. I killed
her and kept the corpse hidden, till
I needed it.

KATRINA
You killed them all. Why?

LADY VAN TASSEL
Oh, my young life was not so
privilege as yours, precious Katrina.
My family were exiles, because of our
practices. Forced to live in
squalor, fleeing persecution, till we
took refuge in the Western Woods.
Those very woods where, along with my
sister, my path first crossed the
Horseman's...

FLASHBACK -- FOREST BATTLEFIELD (WESTERN WOODS) -- DAY

The Hessian Horseman (avec head) has happened upon TWO YOUNG
GIRLS gathering firewood. The girls stand frozen at the
sight of him, till one girl drops her firewood and runs...

The second girl remains, holding the Horseman's gaze.

EXT. FOREST -- BACK TO SCENE -- NIGHT

LADY VAN TASSEL
For twenty years he was legend, but
only that. Till I was able to
conjure him for my purposes. As for
my estranged sister, our recent
reunion was tragically brief...

FLASHBACK -- OUTSIDE CRONE'S CAVE HOME -- DAY

The Crone falls to the ground outside her cave, unconscious,
beaten and bloodied.

CONTINUED

Lady Van Tassel comes to stand over her, breathing hard, gripping a bloody AXE HANDLE...

EXT. FOREST BACK TO SCENE -- NIGHT

LADY VAN TASSEL
But, she brought her demise upon
herself...

FLASHBACK -- OUTSIDE CRONE'S CAVE HOME -- DAY

Lady Van Tassel holds a SWORD high, SWINGS DOWN...

EXT. FOREST -- BACK TO SCENE -- NIGHT

LADY VAN TASSEL
(points at Young Masbath)
... by aiding you. She should have
kept her mouth shut.

YOUNG MASBATH
The Crone.

LADY VAN TASSEL
My sister. I had left her behind, at
the bloom of my womanhood. I shed my
skin to make a new life in Sleepy
Hollow. As lowly servant, as
nursemaid and nurse, I gained
acceptance over the years.
Practicing my craft all the while,
until my abilities came in line with
my ambition. And so, here stand I,
once cast out by the likes of you and
yours... my conquest now complete.

LIGHTNING BRIGHTENS the forest. Lady Van Tassel looks up.

LADY VAN TASSEL
It won't be long. He's on his way.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS -- NIGHT

The Horseman rides Daredevil, a freight train of moldering
flesh, heading towards a deep chasm with no bridge...

They reach it, galloping in mid-air to the other side.

INT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Katrina and Young Masbath are still kneeled.

YOUNG MASBATH
You can't go back to the Hollow.
They think you're dead.

CONTINUED

LADY VAN TASSEL

I return tomorrow, clever boy, to
tell my version of the truth...
How that raining day, I followed
Baltus into the woods, not knowing
where he was going. I worried for
his safety.

Katrina cautiously moves her hand behind her, feels a
sizable ROCK... clutches it.

LADY VAN TASSEL

Imagine my horror... having found him
on a liaison with a common servant
girl. Sarah. A girl who had
apparently become his secret love.

KATRINA

No one will believe your lies.

LADY VAN TASSEL

(feigning meekness)

Oh, woe is me, while spying on my
husband in his indiscretion, he and
Sarah were beset by the Horseman!
Pity me... so overcome was I having
witnessing Sarah's beheading, I
wandered the forests aimlessly...
blind from terror.

(emoting...)

By sheer luck I found my way back to
the Hollow. But, no, what new horror
is this... ?! My dear, sweet step-
daughter Katrina is dead...

She picks up the Horseman's skull in her gloved hand, smiles.

LADY VAN TASSEL

Slain by the Headless Horseman.

EXT. LONG STRAIGHT ROAD/VAN TASSEL ESTATE -- NIGHT

Ichabod's coach charges out from the forests of the long
straight road, heading for the Van Tassel Estate...

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

THUNDER BOOMS. WIND HOWLS. Lady Van Tassel stands with the
skull in one hand, pistol in the other.

LADY VAN TASSEL

Not one will suspect this sad woman,
with only the empty solace of her
land and wealth to comfort her. And
the Horseman will disappear, fading
into legend once more.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD'S VOICE (O.S.)
 (from far away)
Katrina... !

Lady Van Tassel turns towards the voice, astonished.

Katrina reacts -- THROWS the ROCK she clutched...

 KATRINA
Murderer!

The rock STRIKES Lady Van Tassel's forehead, sends her down... her gun dropped...

Katrina leaps up, grabbing Young Masbath and pulling him to his feet as they flee...

EXT. VAN TASSEL HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ichabod leaps from the coach, bounds up porch stairs...

 ICHABOD
Katrina!

 KATRINA'S VOICE (O.S.)
 (far way)
Ichabod!

Ichabod stops, looking towards the voice. He runs... leaps back up to the coach and takes off...

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Lady Van Tassel rolls, recovering, not very concerned.

 LADY VAN TASSEL
How tiresome.

She gets up, forehead bloodied, goes to retrieve the Horseman's skull, in no hurry.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Katrina and Young Masbath break out into the open from a line of trees. They're at a far end of the Van Tassel lawn.

ACROSS THE LAWN, Ichabod drives towards them...

 KATRINA
Ichabod!

 YOUNG MASBATH
Here we are!

BEHIND, Lady Van Tassel rides out on her white horse, blood streaming down her face, not bothering to follow.

CONTINUED

LADY VAN TASSEL (O.S.)
Run, Katrina! Run as fast as your
pretty legs will carry you...

MIDWAY ACROSS THE LAWN, Ichabod reaches Katrina and Masbath,
pulling hard on the reins to halt his team...

ICHABOD
Climb up!

YOUNG MASBATH
Lady Van Tassel...

ICHABOD
I know, I know! Hold on!

With Katrina and Masbath on, Ichabod turns the coach,
whipping reins, picking up speed. HOOFBEATS are HEARD...

Behind, wind tosses Lady Van Tassel's dress and hair. She
holds the Horseman's skull up in one hand.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Nothing will stop him now!

Ichabod glances back towards Lady Van Tassel.

ALONG THE TREELINE, the Horseman breaks into the open --
Hell on horseback -- full speed ahead...

ICHABOD
Here he comes... !

EXT. THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD/FOREST -- NIGHT

The coach hits the long straight road, rumbling at top speed
away from the Van Tassel Estate, into the forest...

Katrina and Masbath hold on as the coach shakes violently.

KATRINA
Where are we going?

ICHABOD
Anywhere but here.

YOUNG MASBATH
He's right behind!

Behind on the trail, the Horseman chases, closing fast.

KATRINA
Can we make it to the church?

ICHABOD
I doubt it.

CONTINUED

Young Masbath grabs Ichabod's satchel, offers it...

YOUNG MASBATH

Here, sir... you must have something
in your bag of tricks.

ICHABOD

Nothing that will help us, I am
afraid. Take the reins...

Young Masbath takes them. Ichabod gives Van Ripper's rifle
to Katrina, then crawls back across the coach roof.

Ichabod gets to a baggage area at the rear, struggling to
open a storage box.

Behind, the Horseman draws his sword, closer.

Ichabod opens the box, pulls out a jagged HAND SAW.

KATRINA

Look out... !

Ichabod looks. The Horseman rides up, SWINGS his sword...

Ichabod recoils -- THWACK -- just missed.

The Horseman lets the coach get a ahead, shifting to the
other side of the trail... coming along side again...

Ichabod backpedals, looking to Masbath.

ICHABOD

Keep him off! Block him!

Masbath guides the horses over. The Horseman must fall
behind to avoid the wheels.

One wheel hits a large rock...

Ichabod bounces, falling, drops the saw...
He hangs off the side of the coach.

The saw clatters away on the trail.

Ichabod tries for better purchase. He grips the coach door.

Katrina climbs to offer her hand.

KATRINA

Take my hand!

Ichabod reaches to her, but the coach door falls open...

Ichabod clings helplessly to the door as branches slam him.

Ichabod's reaching to the coach threshold, reaching...

CONTINUED

He pulls himself inside the coach, just as...

BOOM -- the door hits a tree trunk, bashed to pieces.

Ichabod looks out from the coach, dazed. He climbs.

Katrina helps Ichabod up as Young Masbath guides the coach to block the Horseman again.

The Horseman sheaths his sword, riding... reaching to grip the back corner of the coach.

Katrina gives the rifle to Ichabod. Ichabod moves back towards the Horseman, struggles for balance, aims, FIRES...

BANG! -- splattering the Horseman's hand point blank. The Horseman hangs on with his other hand...

The Horseman re-grips with the blasted hand, amazing since it now all gore and bone.

The Horseman dismounts, clinging to the coach, climbing...

Daredevil veers away, into the forest.

On the coach, the Horseman rises, drawing his sword.

Ichabod hefts the rifle, SWINGS...

The Horseman knocks the rifle away with a backhanded swat...

Ichabod falls back, crawls away, doomed...

The Horseman moves in, raising his sword...

Behind Ichabod, Katrina SWINGS Ichabod's satchel by it's strap in a wide arch, releases...

The satchel SMASHES the Horseman, catching him off balance and sending him backwards...

ON THE TRAIL BEHIND, the Horseman tumbles from the coach... SLAMS the ground, rolling, as the contents of Ichabod's satchel fly all directions.

ON THE COACH, Ichabod looks to Katrina, looks back.

KATRINA

It was more useful than you thought.

BEHIND ON THE TRAIL

The Horseman gets to his feet. Ahead, Daredevil runs out from the forest, stands waiting, giving a SCREECH.

AHEAD ON THE TRAIL

ON THE SPEEDING COACH

Katrina and Ichabod rejoin Masbeth on the driver's perch.
Ichabod takes the reins.

YOUNG MASBATH
He'll be right back on us.

ICHABOD
We have to get out of the open.

KATRINA
(pointing)
There...

Through the tree line, the Hollow's massive WINDMILL can be seen silhouetted against the night sky.

EXT. WINDMILL FIELD -- NIGHT

The coach heads towards the windmill.

Behind, low hanging BRANCHES and VINES at the forest edge creep to life, parting... forming a sort of black tunnel...

The Horseman gallops out, throwing leaves in his wake. He readies a battle axe.

Ichabod halts the coach at the windmill, grabs a lantern. They all climb off... running under the windmill...

ICHABOD
Hurry!

Young Masbath scurries up the ladder and in. Katrina's next. Ichabod looks behind...

The Horseman is almost upon them.

Ichabod follows Katrina, pulling himself up. The Horseman arrives, dismounting, moving forward...

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

Ichabod leaps up, lifts the heavy trap door on it's hinges, slams it. The door is POUNDED from outside, buckling.

YOUNG MASBATH
It won't hold.

Ichabod goes to a large GRINDSTONE against a wall. He struggles to roll it...

Young Masbath helps him roll it to the trap door. It falls on top with a THUD. Masbath jumps back as the Horseman's sword jabs up through a grindstone's center hole.

CONTINUED

The sword withdraws. POUNDING begins anew.

EXT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The Horseman chops at the door with his axe.

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

POUNDING CONTINUES. Katrina and Young Masbath back away. Ichabod holds his lantern up, desperate for ideas, searching.

Above, to the right, is the high MILLING PLATFORM, where grain is ground and bagged, and a ladder leading to it. To the left is the crooked, open STAIRCASE.

Ichabod picks up a BAILING HOOK, a plan forming. He gives his lantern to Katrina and points.

ICHABOD
Get up those stairs. Open the door
to the roof and wait.

Katrina and Young Masbath obey, heading left. Ichabod crosses to the right, starts climbing the ladder to the milling platform...

On the platform, Ichabod grasps a wooden lever, pulling it. The entire windmill CREAKS and GROANS as massive GEARS and COUNTER-WHEELS above begin to turn.

EXT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The windmill's rotors slowly begin spinning.

UNDER THE WINDMILL, the Horseman keeps chopping... His axe exposes grindstone, throwing sparks.

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

Katrina looks down from the stairway.

The POUNDING on the trap door causes the grindstone to jump.

KATRINA
Ichabod...

ICHABOD
Keep climbing. I will follow...
(under his breath)
Hopefully.

Ichabod drags large BAGS of GRAIN, lining them up at the edge of the milling platform.

ABOVE, Young Masbath throws open the door to the roof.

CONTINUED

BELOW, Ichabod uses the bailing hook to cut holes into the grain bags, so that MILLED GRAIN SPILLS out and falls to the floor, creating clouds of grain dust...

Ichabod grabs one open bag, dumps it.

He slices into a sack hanging from a pulley system, pushes it so it swings in circles, grain flooding out...
More and more DUST RISES, filling the air...

EXT. WINDMILL ROOF -- NIGHT

Masbath and Katrina come out. Rotors spin behind them.

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The GRINDSTONE blocking the trap door FALLS THROUGH as wood splinters and gives. A moment, then the Horseman climbs in.

KATRINA
(looking in from above)
Behind you!

Ichabod looks down, sees the Horseman, then looks to the staircase adjacent from the high platform. He runs...

He LEAPS across the space between the platform and stairs...

Ichabod grasps the outer rail of the staircase, hanging on, pulls himself up onto the stairs...

Ichabod's pistol slips from its holster, falls.

Below, the Horseman moves through clouds of billowing dust, runs and LEAPS, incredibly high...

The Horseman grasps a hanging chain, swinging, his momentum carrying him in a wide arch...

Above, Ichabod runs upstairs, to the roof door.

The Horseman's weight swings him towards the stairwell...
He releases the chain... airborne momentarily...

The Horseman lands high up on the stairwell.

EXT. WINDMILL ROOF -- NIGHT

Katrina and Young Masbath help Ichabod onto the roof.

KATRINA
Quickly, close it.

ICHABOD
No...

Ichabod takes the lantern from Katrina.

CONTINUED

ICHABOD
(points)
Get to the crest of the roof and be
ready to jump. I'm going to burn the
grain...

YOUNG MASBATH
Jump? Jump where?

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The Horseman clomps upstairs, axe in hand.

EXT. WINDMILL ROOF -- NIGHT

Ichabod shepherds Katrina and Young Masbath to the edge,
where the rotors spin close.

ICHABOD
The blades will carry us to the
ground. Face front and wait for me.

KATRINA
I... I can't do this.

ICHABOD
We have no choice.

Ichabod moves back to the trap door. Katrina and Young
Masbath look at the rotors, and down at the long distance
between them and the ground.

ICHABOD
Be ready...

Ichabod DROPS the LANTERN into the windmill and runs...

ICHABOD
Now!

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The Horseman continues up. The lantern falls past...

EXT. WINDMILL, ROOF -- NIGHT

Young Masbath jumps. Ichabod grips Katrina, jumps...
They hit one rotor, gripping the frame and cloth as the
rotor begins its DOWNWARDS TURN...

INT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The lantern hits the ground and shatters -- FLAMES EXPLODE!

Throughout the windmill's interior, grain dust is consumed
instantaneously -- FLAMES ROAR upwards...

CONTINUED

FLAMES engulf the Horseman...

EXT. WINDMILL -- NIGHT

The rotor is halfway to its lowest point. Masbath, Katrina and Ichabod hang on as the ENTIRE STRUCTURE TREMBLES...

Flames shoot out windows, doors and seams!

On the rotor, Ichabod struggles to keep a grip on Katrina. Masbath drops. Ichabod and Katrina fall...

They all hit the ground. Ichabod rolls over, gasping, holding his shoulder, getting to his feet...

Ichabod, Katrina and Young Masbath run away as smoldering debris rains down.

ACROSS THE FIELD

Ichabod ushers them along as they run, heading uphill. Lightning flashes across the sky. THUNDER RUMBLES.

Behind, the WINDMILL begins to CRUMBLE; huge burning sections crashing to the ground.

AWAY FROM THE WINDMILL

Ichabod, Katrina and Young Masbath slow, looking back at the incredible conflagration.

YOUNG MASBATH
Is that the end of him?

ICHABOD
I would not count on it.

LADY VAN TASSEL'S VOICE (O.S.)
Absolutely right, Constable...

Ichabod, Katrina and Young Masbath turn...
Riding over the crest of the hill, comes Lady Van Tassel, on her white horse, face still bloody, pistol aimed...

LADY VAN TASSEL
You should have stayed away.

Ichabod reaches to his holster, only to find it empty.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Your efforts are futile. Katrina is
marked to die tonight...
(pointing)
See for yourself...

IN THE WINDMILL RUBBLE, the Horseman rises, shoving off burning debris. His flame-ravaged uniform smolders.

CONTINUED

LADY VAN TASSEL
You cannot kill what is already dead.

Across the distance, the Horseman strides this direction.

ICHABOD
Run, Katrina...

Lady Van Tassel points her gun at Katrina.

LADY VAN TASSEL
Yes, do run. It makes it so much
more entertaining...

ICHABOD
Run!

Ichabod makes a move towards Lady Van Tassel, but Lady Van Tassel aims and FIRES -- shoots Ichabod in the chest!

Ichabod goes down...

KATRINA
No!

Young Masbath cries out, falls to his knees beside Ichabod. Katrina moves to Ichabod...

Lady Van Tassel rides forward -- GRABS Katrina by the hair, PULLING HER, riding off towards the Horseman...

Ichabod lays clutching the smoldering wound in his chest, gasping for air. Young Masbath holds him...

YOUNG MASBATH
Oh, God... no... no...

Lady Van Tassel drags Katrina by the hair as Katrina screams and struggles and kicks.

The Horseman keeps coming...

Lady Van Tassel stops her horse, halfway to the Horseman, drops Katrina and starts riding back, shouting...

LADY VAN TASSEL
There she is. Claim your prize!

Katrina gets up to run, stumbles, falls...

The Horseman closes in...

Up the field, Ichabod gets to his knees, feeling his chest with both hands, not quite understanding, struggling to shake off delirium...

CONTINUED

YOUNG MASBATH

Sir, you're... you're not dead...

ICHABOD

Not... yet...

Ichabod looks up, trying to comprehend...

Lady Van Tassel had turned her horse, her back to us, keeping her distance from the Horseman. Beyond her, Katrina flees this direction with the Horseman at her heels.

Ichabod's focused on something...

The black BAG slung over Lady Van Tassel's shoulder.

Ichabod rises out of pure determination, runs...

Katrina runs... the Horseman is mere yards behind her.

Lady Van Tassel watches, grinning, but at the last second something catches her eye and she turns, just as...

Ichabod LEAPS at Lady Van Tassel...

TACKLES Lady Van Tassel off of her horse, taking her down to the ground HARD... her bag falling open...

The Horseman's skull rolling out...

Ichabod PUNCHES Lady Van Tassel in the face. She's out.

DOWNHILL, the Horseman catches Katrina...

UPHILL, Ichabod sees the skull. He climbs off Lady Van Tassel, scrambles towards the skull...

DOWNHILL, the Horseman takes Katrina by the hair as she falls to her knees, screaming...

UPHILL, Ichabod falls, reaches...grasps the Horseman's skull.

DOWNHILL, Katrina struggles, but the Horseman holds her ready by her hair... raises his sword...

UPHILL, Ichabod rises, THROWS the skull with all his might...

ICHABOD

Horseman!

The skull spins through the air...

The Horseman suddenly drops Katrina, reaches up with one hand... catches the skull.

Katrina runs. Ichabod runs to meet her, grabs her as she falls. Together, they back away from the Horseman...

CONTINUED

The Horseman holds the skull out... brings it to his shoulders, to its rightful place. THUNDER POUNDS.

TRANSFORMATION begins -- blood and flesh rise up from the Horseman's throat and grip the skull...

Young Masbath watches in awe.

The Horseman's reformation continues. Muscle forms. Liquids become solids. He is made whole once more, the same evil, human face we saw in Baltus' stories.

The Horseman looks to Ichabod and Katrina, touches his restored face. Daredevil rides up, SCREECHING. The Horseman replaces his sword, climbs into the saddle.

He rides towards Katrina and Ichabod, but he does not want them. They are so exhausted they fall down. Young Masbath comes to stand with them.

The Horseman leans to grab Lady Van Tassel's unconscious form, pulls her up across Daredevil's back.

The Horseman rides away with her.

Ichabod and Katrina watch him go. They look at each other, then kiss gratefully. Ichabod looks to Young Masbath...

ICHABOD

How are you?

YOUNG MASBATH

Tired.

Ichabod holds out his arm. Masbath comes over. Group hug. Katrina touches the burnt bullet hole in Ichabod's clothing.

KATRINA

Lord... I thought I had lost you.
How... ?

Ichabod reaches into his clothing, takes out a BOOK he kept in an inner pocket close to his heart...

"ROMEO AND JULIET," with a bullet lodged in it.

Katrina wraps her arms around Ichabod.

EXT. WESTERN WOODS, TREE OF THE DEAD -- NIGHT

HOOFBEATS. The Horseman enters the clearing, keeping a hand on Lady Van Tassel. Ahead, the Tree of the Dead awaits.

Lady Van Tassel is awakening...

The Horseman grips Lady Van Tassel's hair, pulling her face up closer to his, just as she opens her eyes...

CONTINUED

Lady Van Tassel screams...

As the Horseman brings his face to meet hers, about to engage in a KISS, his jagged teeth opening wide.

Ahead, the twisted tree's wound opens, deep and glowing, as Daredevil picks up speed...

Daredevil JUMPS in the air just as a LIGHTNING BOLT blasts down from the sky, striking the Horseman...

For an instant, Horseman and horse are transformed, SKELETONS OF LIGHT, entering the tree!

Silence and smoke. At the tree, Lady Van Tassel's hand sticks out from the tight-shut suture.

The sewn wound on her palm seeps blood as her fingers curl.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET, ICHABOD'S HOME -- DAY

A bright, busy day in New York. A coach pulls up to Ichabod's home. Ichabod is the driver.

He gets off, goes and opens the coach door. He helps Katrina down. Next, Young Masbath sticks his head out.

Katrina holds Young Masbath's hand, and they look down the street in wonder. Ichabod comes to hold Katrina's hand.

End