Waking Sleepy Hollow

By Jonathan Yukich

Adapted from “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” by Washington Irving

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Welcome to present-day Sleepy Hollow. This famed little town now has traffic lights, modern plumbing, even a Dunkin' Donuts – but traces from its past remain. A troupe of actors takes us on a tour of Sleepy Hollow, but the participants begin to suspect that there is perhaps more truth to the legend than they realized. This inventive adaptation delivers a faithful retelling of the classic short story within a contemporary framework. The past clashes with the present, as the young square off with the dead, and the Headless Horseman is thrust into a 21st century of bicycles and cell phones. About an hour.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Mount Holyoke College, October 2015.

The production was directed by Noah Tuleja. The set design was by Vanessa James and Caroline Clowers; the costume design was by Kimberly Dildine; the lighting and sound design was by Lara Dubin; the production stage manager was Courtney Closson; the production dramaturg was Maria Signorelli. The cast included Julia Cole, Kate Collier, Robyn Sutton-Fernandez, Rachyl Carey, Amy Welch, Chrissy Barney, Bec Rose, Sam Eisenstein-Bond, Natalie Riquelmy and Grace Brunson.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 m, 9 w, 6 flex. 9 actors with doubling)

PIPER
NICOLE
MAYOR Z
OLAF
ICHABOD CRANE
PUPIL WHO CAN ADD
PUPIL WHO ASKS QUESTIONS
PUPIL WITH GUTS
MOTHER OF JOHNNY
MOTHER OF EVA
MOTHER OF LUKE
KATRINA VAN TASSEL
BROM BONES
OLD LADY
REALLY OLD LADY
FARMER BART
MRS. FARMER BART
MR. VAN TASSEL
PARTY-GOER WITH PIPE
PARTY-GOER WITH CAKE
PARTY-GOER WITH BIG HAIR
THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN
EXTRAS: Various pupils, choir member, party-goers.

SUGGESTED DOUBLING

ACTOR #1 plays PIPER, PUPIL WHO CAN ADD, MOTHER OF JOHNNY and PARTY-GOER WITH BIG HAIR
ACTOR #2 plays NICOLE, PUPIL WITH GUTS, MOTHER OF LUKE, MRS. FARMER BART and PARTY-GOER WITH PIPE
ACTOR #3 plays MAYOR Z
ACTOR #4 plays OLAF
ACTOR #5 plays ICHABOD CRANE
ACTOR #6 plays PUPIL WHO ASKS QUESTIONS, MOTHER OF EVA, REALLY OLD LADY, FARMER BART and MR. VAN TASSEL
ACTOR #7 plays the HEADLESS HORSEMAN and PARTY-GOER WITH CAKE
ACTOR #8 plays BROM BONES and OLD LADY
ACTOR #9 plays KATRINA VAN TASSEL

NOTE ON SETTING

The stage should resemble an attempt to recreate the setting for Sleepy Hollow in the year 1790. Please note the word “attempt,” as its realization should be a cross between authentic reproduction and the sort of garish, hokey contrivances you find at some historical sites that are also tourist traps. It’s okay to let the artifice show. All design components can be as simple or as elaborate as the given production deems necessary.

Waking Sleepy Hollow
Scene 1

(AT RISE: An old-timey banner reads "Welcome to Sleepy Hollow: Home of the Legend." PIPER and NICOLE, dressed in costumes of late 18th century America, are both absorbed in their cell phones. Several hushed seconds go by.)

PIPER: *(Abruptly reacting to something on her phone.)* Shut up!
NICOLE: I didn't say anything.
PIPER: *(Yelling at her phone.)* No! No! No! NOOOOOO!
NICOLE: Piper, what have I told you about phone rage?
PIPER: My life is ruined!
NICOLE: Calm down.
PIPER: I'm going to be sick!
NICOLE: What happened?
PIPER: *(Showing HER the phone.)* This happened!
NICOLE: It's a picture of Robby. So what?
PIPER: He just posted it! Look who he's with!
NICOLE: It's a selfie.
PIPER: In the background!
NICOLE: Where?
PIPER: *In the background!*
NICOLE: Who? That girl?
PIPER: Yes, *that* girl!
NICOLE: You can barely see her. She's like twenty yards away.
PIPER: See how she's ogling him?
NICOLE: I don't think she's ogling him.
PIPER: It's pathetic.
NICOLE: I think she's asleep.
PIPER: She's peeking; I can tell!
NICOLE: I don't get the big deal.
PIPER: The big deal, Nicole? The big deal is Robby's in France, and I'm here! He gets to study overseas for the summer, and I'm stuck playing dress-up in Dullsville, USA.
NICOLE: It's not such a bad job.

PIPER: It's called *Sleepy* Hollow for a reason. I should be with Robby. I should be there to fend off prowlers like her!
NICOLE: I really think she's napping.
PIPER: Robby wouldn't stray…would he? He wouldn't… would he? No, never…would he?
NICOLE: Piper, deep breaths. Whenever Robby posts a picture with another girl anywhere in the frame you freak out.
PIPER: But he's so far away.
NICOLE: You have to trust him.
PIPER: I do trust him; it's barracuda Barbie I don't trust. I mean – come on! – WHO LOOKS LIKE THAT WHEN THEY SLEEP? She's perfectly angelic! I hope she snores, or drools…or both! Can we pretend she snores and drools?
NICOLE: Put the phone away. You're flipping out.
PIPER: You're right. I'll forget about her. And him. And all the fun he's having – seeing Europe, the culture, the food. I'm going to forget all about that. And try to enjoy myself, working all summer as a hokey tour guide, retelling a 200-year-old story for googly-eyed tourists who have nothing better to do! *(Stops, foot in mouth. Gazes out at the audience, i.e. the tourists.)* Oh, hi there…googly-eyed tourists…

(PIPER and NICOLE sheepishly put phones away, shift into bright-eyed-tour-guide mode and address the audience)

NICOLE: A hearty hello from Sleepy Hollow!
PIPER: What I said there, it's all part of the act.
NICOLE: Pay no attention to her.
PIPER: I didn't mean to say that you have googly-eyes. You don't, of course. *(Beat.)* At least not all of you.
NICOLE: You should stop talking.
PIPER: Welcome to the Sleepy Hollow Tour!
NICOLE: I'm sure you're an awesome group. So, without further ado…

(THEY begin the story-mode spiel.)

End of Freeview

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