

ACT 2

Scene 4

The scene is back in the Van Tassel ballroom. Everyone at the party is gathered around OTTO, who is just finishing a story. MARTHA and EZEKIEL enter the room and mix with the guests.

OTTO

As Andre walked up to the tree, he shined his lantern into the deep, dark hole. And as he drew closer, he heard a voice calling, "Down here, inside the tree." So he stuck his head into the hole to have a better look...,

(Suddenly, with force)

...Suddenly, two skeleton hands rose up and grabbed him, pulling him into the tree!

(Screams and laughter from the crowd)

So to this day, if you walk by the great oak, near the cemetery, you just might hear a voice whisper, "Down here, inside the tree."

Everyone applauds as BALTUS approaches OTTO and takes the floor.

BALTUS

Now that's the kind of story we need tonight! Who has another?

(Beat)

Come now, surely someone else has a story to tell.

BROM steps forward from behind other guests and drains his stein of cider. This is the first that BALTUS has seen of BROM tonight and HE is furious.

BROM

I have one.

(Hands his stein to OTTO)

Here, Otto, go get me some more cider. I'll show you how to tell a real story.

BALTUS

You get out of my house. I told you you're not welcome here.

BROM

And miss the opportunity to tell a story at your world famous party? Not on your life!

OTTO returns BROM a full stein of cider.

GRETCHEN

Otto, no more! He's had too much already.

BALTUS

Leave my house! Now!

GRETCHEN

Baltus, just let him tell his story so there won't be any problems. And then he'll go.

(To BROM)

Right, Brom? One story and then you'll go?

BROM

Of course. I'm a man of my word.

(To the guests)

Consider yourself warned! The Horseman rides tonight!

(HE drains his stein once again)

SONG -- "THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN RIDES"

(Brom Bones)

BROM

Do you know what happens when it gets late?

Suffer now, you will not wait!

WHEN THE DARKNESS FALLS
AND THE MOON IS SHINING BRIGHT,
THERE'S A SPECTER HIDING IN THE WOODS,
JUST BEYOND YOUR SIGHT!
HE'S BIG AND HE RIDES A HORSE
WITH EYES OF FIRE RED,
BUT THE WORST THING ABOUT HIM
IS THE RIDER HAS NO HEAD!

RUN, EVERYBODY RUN,
IF YOU WANT TO SAVE YOUR HIDES!
RUN, PEOPLE RUN,
BEFORE THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN RIDES!

HIS HEAD WAS CARRIED OFF
BY A CANNON BALL IN FLIGHT,
AND NOW HE SEARCHES FOR HIS HEAD
WHILE RIDING THROUGH THE NIGHT.
YOU MAY WONDER WHERE OR WHEN,
OR IF HE'LL EVER STOP.
THE HAUNTINGS WILL CONTINUE
'TILL HE FINDS A HEAD TO CHOP!

RUN, EVERYBODY RUN,
IF YOU WANT TO SAVE YOUR HIDES!
RUN, PEOPLE RUN,
BEFORE THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN RIDES!

BROM (Cont'd)

NOW, IF YOU DOUBT THAT MY STORY'S REALLY TRUE,
I MET THAT GHOST A YEAR AGO AND BOY, I'M TELLING
YOU...

WHEN YOU GO HOME TONIGHT,
LOCK YOUR WINDOWS, BOLT YOUR DOORS!
HE'S LOOKING FOR A HEAD!
AND HE JUST VERY WELL MAY GET YOURS!

RUN, EVERYBODY RUN,
IF YOU WANT TO SAVE YOUR HIDES!
RUN, PEOPLE RUN,
BEFORE THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN RIDES!

(spoken)

Here he comes!

Everyone screams, then laughs gleefully at the scare.
PETER steps forward to tell another story.

PETER

That's all well and good, Brom, but I'll bet I can top that story!

(To the crowd)

Have you ever heard the story of the Woman in White, who wanders aimlessly among the
graves in the cemetery...?

PETER continues his story as the crowd gathers around
him. His speaking and the crowd's reactions fall into the
background. ICHABOD and KATRINA have moved to a
corner of the room, sharing quiet conversation as BROM
approaches. HE grabs ICHABOD by the shoulder and
swings him around violently.

BROM

I warned you, school teacher, but you just couldn't leave well enough alone!

KATRINA

Brom, you need to leave. Papa told you to go home!

BROM

(Shouting)

There's nothing wrong with me!

With this sudden outburst, the background story chatter
comes to a stop and everyone looks in Brom's direction.
BALTUS approaches BROM, clearly very angry.

BALTUS

I told you to go home! You told your story, now get out!

BROM

(Loudly, for everyone to hear)
Not until Katrina agrees to marry me.

KATRINA

Brom, this is neither the time, nor the place!

BROM

I disagree! I think everyone would like to hear your answer!

BALTUS

Go home, Brom! You don't know what you're doing!

BROM

I know exactly what I'm doing!
(To KATRINA)
Katrina?

KATRINA

Please don't do this.

SONG – “BROM’S FINAL DEMAND”

(Brom & Ichabod)

BROM

I STILL LOVE YOU, BUT YOU DON'T SEEM TO CARE.
I HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT TO YOUR HAND.
I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THERE
ANYTIME YOU HAVE NEEDED ME,
IN THE NIGHT TIME OR THE DAY.
YOU CAN'T GET RID OF ME THAT EASY!
I WON'T LET YOU JUST THROW ME AWAY!

I FEEL A CHANGE WITHIN ME...
SOMETHING BEYOND MY CONTROL.
I NEED YOU HERE BESIDE ME
TO FILL THIS ACHING HOLE!
EVERYTHING WAS FINE! EVERYTHING WAS RIGHT!
YOU LEFT ME NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO FIGHT!

Mr. Crane, I offer you a challenge! If you truly love Katrina, then prove it!

(HE produces the scroll from his coat pocket)

Read this.

BALTUS

Have you lost your mind?

KATRINA

Stop it, Brom! That's enough! Don't listen to him, Ichabod! It's just a story, born from someone's imagination!

BROM

Then you have nothing to fear, schoolmaster! Read the scroll and put your demons to rest once and for all.

EZEKIEL emerges from the crowd and crosses to ICHABOD.

EZEKIEL

Don't do it, Mr. Crane! It's too dangerous! The Horseman is real and he's taken others from the woods!

BROM

Go home, Zeke!

EZEKIEL

Mr. Crane is a good man! You leave him alone!

ICHABOD

It's okay, Zeke..., he's not real.

EZEKIEL

But he is! I've seen him!

(A rumble from the guests)

I was out in the woods tonight! He was wearing a cloak with a hood and he had a sword!

BROM shoots EZEKIEL a sharp look.

ICHABOD

Zeke...! I'll be fine. I'll see you at school tomorrow.

EZEKIEL

(In tears)

No, you won't! You'll be gone!

BROM

Shut-up, Zeke!

BALTUS

Brom, stop this nonsense! You're scaring the boy!

ICHABOD

(Crossing to BROM)

Give me the scroll.

KATRINA

Don't let him force you into this. You don't have to prove anything to me. I love you no matter what you believe.

ICHABOD

No, he's right. My fears have held me captive for far too long. I need to prove, to myself, that this is all just a bunch of nonsense.

ICHABOD takes the scroll from BROM and unrolls it.

EZEKIEL

Please, Mr. Crane! Don't!

ICHABOD takes a deep breath and begins reading.

ICHABOD

“SPIRITS, DEMONS HEAR MY PLEA.
STRIKE HIM DOWN BENEATH THE TREE.

“ROSE OF BLOOD, BONES TO DUST.
ROSE OF WHITE, REVENGE IS JUST.

“INTO ETERNITY, BREATHE AS ONE.
REST YE SPIRITS, WHAT'S DONE IS DONE.
SUFFER NOW, I WILL NOT WAIT.
ROSE OF WHITE WILL SEAL YOUR FATE!”

BROM takes the scroll from ICHABOD.

BALTUS

All right, that's enough!

(HE takes the scroll from BROM)

You've had your fun, now get out!

BROM starts to exit, then turns toward ICHABOD.

BROM

RUN, ICHABOD, RUN...!
BEFORE THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN RIDES!

Blackout.

END SCENE 4