



The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

Washington Irving (1783 - 1859)

Read by:	Phil Chenevert	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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Set in the autumn of 1790 in the secluded glen of Sleepy Hollow in the countryside near Tarrytown, New York, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* tells the story of the mysterious disappearance of Icabod Crane, a gangly, superstitious schoolmaster from Connecticut who competes with a town rowdy for the hand of the daughter of a wealthy farmer. He attends a harvest party to propose and is rejected. Returning home with a heavy heart and his mind alive with imaginings from ghost stories told at the party, he encounters a Headless Horseman. Thinking it the ghost of a Hessian soldier, he races off to the bridge by a burial ground, where legend says the ghost will disappear, but is overtaken by the specter, who hurls his head into Crane's horrified

face. Crane disappears, and the rowdy seems to have some inside information whenever the matter comes up. The story was the longest in *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* and has remained a staple of horror and supernatural fiction, inspiring numerous adaptations for film, television and the stage for nearly 200 years.

Washington Irving (April 3, 1783 – November 28, 1859) was an American author and diplomat best known for his stories “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle”. He was born in Manhattan the youngest of eight children of Scottish-English immigrant merchants. He found early fame submitting commentaries to the *New York Morning Chronicle*. His first book was *A History of Old New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty by Diedrich Knickerbocker*, a fictional historian (1809). Prior to publication Irving placed a series of missing person ads seeking the return of the missing Knickerbocker, which generated public interest and helped make the book a hit. Irving went to England in 1815 to save the family trading company, which was badly damaged by the War of 1812. It failed and he started writing. The result was *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819-1820), a series of short pieces that began with “Rip Van Winkle”, included “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”, and brought him international recognition. He remained in Europe for 17 years, ending with a term as Secretary to the American legation in London before returning to America in 1832, where he settled in Tarrytown, New York in a property he named Sunnyside. He was appointed Minister to Spain in 1842, serving for four years. His last work was a five volume biography of George Washington the he considered his masterpiece and finished shortly before his death. Irving was the first American Man of Letters, an important voice in the emergence of a uniquely American literature and one of the first Americans to achieve recognition and respect in Europe.