

Hollow

A drama in one act

by Trevin McLaughlin

Based on the story by Washington Irving

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Hollow

- 2 -

STORY OF THE PLAY

Alina, a teen girl, is struggling with the anxiety of an ongoing custody battle between her parents. Meanwhile, she is taking on the responsibilities of her schoolwork, her friends, and taking care of her younger sister who has debilitating asthma. As she is set to testify in an upcoming hearing, Alina escapes through her favorite story, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. This show intertwines Alina's modern story with the classic story of Ichabod Crane and the Headless Horseman, using the words of Washington Irving himself. Can Alina find the courage to stand up to her father, who is hiding a dark secret? Approximate run time: 30 - 35 minutes.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Produced at North Oaks Middle School in Haltom City, Texas on April 14th, 2023. The original production was directed by Trevin McLaughlin, and the original cast and crew was as follows:

Alina	Addyson Mills
Brit	Heidy Ocasio
Mom	Kayden Lewis
Father	Lars Lanier
Dr. Lovett	Mikaylah McIntyre
Ms. Hodges	Nevaeh Garcia-Hill
Heather	Gabriana DeJesus
Mikki	Emma Plunkett
Ichabod Crane	Garrett Hilbert
Brom Bones	Lars Lanier
Katrina Van Tassel	Brylee Michlitsch
Baltus Van Tassel	Juliana Ensinia
Ensemble	Rove Brackett
	Carissiah Lira
	Elijah Saucedo
	Madilyn Young
Stage Manager/Lights	Mariah Dow
Stage Manager/Sound	Elsa Krengel
Stage Crew	Marjane Batista
	Natalie Baxter
	Emily Wilson

Hollow

- 3 -

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 5 w, 1 young female, 2 flexible, ensemble)

ALINA: 15, our hero.

BRIT: 8, a timid young girl with debilitating asthma.

MOM: 40s, over-worked and overwhelmed.

FATHER: 40s, a man hiding a dark secret. Played by the same actor as Brom Bones and The Headless Horseman.

DR. LOVETT: 30s - 50s, Therapist, kind. (Flexible)

MS. HODGES: -20s - 50s, Teacher, exhausted. (Flexible)

HEATHER: 15, Alina's friend.

MIKKI: 15, Alina's friend.

TARRYTOWN ENSEMBLE:

ICHABOD CRANE: 20s, the would-be hero turned coward.

BROM BONES: 30s, the aggressive foe. Played by the same actor as Father and The Headless Horseman.

KATRINA VAN TASSEL: 20s, strong and beautiful.

BALTUS VAN TASSEL: 50s, contented farmer.

HEADLESS HORSEMAN: Haunting. Played by the same actor as Father and Brom Bones.

REMAINING ENSEMBLE: Women, men, kids of any age.

PRODUCTION NOTES

There is a lot of creative freedom with staging this show. The Tarrytown Ensemble should represent many different types of characters - parents, children, contemporaries of Ichabod, etc. Their lines can be divided up amongst the members of the ensemble however the director sees fit, and you can have moments where two people, groups, or the whole ensemble speaks at once.

There should be a distinct tonal shift between the ensemble scenes inside the forest and outside. The forest scene should be as haunting and terrifying as possible: a suggestion would be to have some uniformity in the ensemble to represent the spirits of the wood (we used silver robes), but the other scenes have a lot of love, fun, and humor in them. Take advantage of Washington Irving's playful tone when staging those scenes.

The roles of Father, Brom Bones, and The Headless Horseman is played by the same actor. It fits with the theme of both Ichabod and Alina facing the manifestation of their greatest fear.

I encourage you to explore the connection and relationship between Ichabod and Alina throughout the process of the show. There's a reason Alina is drawn to this story as a source of comfort and escape from her life, and there are some enriching discussions to be had with your ensemble as to the reason why. At the end of the show, Ichabod shows cowardice by running away, but Alina stands up to her fears and triumphs over them.

Hollow

- 5 -

Hollow

(AT RISE: The show opens on an Early American, Greek chorus-style ENSEMBLE surrounding ALINA, a teen dressed in modern clothes seated, holding a pumpkin. The ensemble creates the action of the story as it is told. Ensemble lines can be spoken together and/or broken up and assigned to individual members as needed.)

ENSEMBLE: It was the very witching time of night that Ichabod, heavy-hearted and crestfallen, pursued his travels homewards, along the sides of the lofty hills which rise above Tarrytown, and which he had traversed so cheerily in the afternoon. The hour was as dismal as himself.

(ICHABOD enters riding Gunpowder, his horse.)

ICHABOD: As he approached the stream, his heart began to thump; he summoned up, however, all his resolution, gave his horse half a score of kicks in the ribs, and attempted to dash briskly across the bridge...

ENSEMBLE: But instead of starting forward, the old animal made a lateral movement, and ran against the fence. Ichabod, whose fears increased with the delay, jerked the reins on the other side, and kicked with the contrary foot: it was all in vain; his steed started, it is true, but it was only to plunge to the opposite side of the road into a thicket of brambles and alder bushes.

(ICHABOD falls off Gunpowder.)

ICHABOD: The hair of the affrighted pedagogue rose upon his head with terror. What was to be done? To turn and fly was now too late; and besides, what chance was there of escaping ghost or goblin, if such it was, which could ride upon the wings of the wind?

ENSEMBLE: Summoning up, therefore, a show of courage, he demanded in stammering accents,

Hollow

- 6 -

ICHABOD: Who are you?

ENSEMBLE: He received no reply. He repeated his demand in a still more agitated voice.

ICHABOD: WHO ARE YOU?!

ENSEMBLE: Still there was no answer.

(ENSEMBLE takes the pumpkin from ALINA, who is free to explore the scene as the story unfolds.)

ENSEMBLE: Just then the shadowy object of alarm put itself in motion, and with a scramble and a bound stood at once in the middle of the road. He appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions and mounted on a black horse of powerful frame.

(The HEADLESS HORSEMAN appears.)

ICHABOD: Ichabod now quickened his stride in hopes of leaving him behind. The stranger, however, quickened his horse to an equal pace.

ENSEMBLE: Ichabod pulled up, and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind—the other did the same. His heart began to sink within him; he could not utter a stave.

(ENSEMBLE gives the pumpkin to the HEADLESS HORSEMAN, representing his head.)

ENSEMBLE: On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow-traveler in relief against the sky, gigantic in height, and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horror-struck on perceiving that he was headless!—

(The HEADLESS HORSEMAN lets out a menacing laugh.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Cont'd.)* But his horror was still more increased on observing that the head, which should have rested on his shoulders, was carried before him on the pommel of his saddle!

Hollow

- 7 -

(The HEADLESS HORSEMAN lets out an even more menacing laugh.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Cont'd.)* His terror rose to desperation; the specter started full jump with him. Away, then, they dashed through thick and thin; stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound.

(The HEADLESS HORSEMAN gives chase to ICHABOD.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Cont'd.)* They had reached the road which turns off to Sleepy Hollow. An opening in the trees now cheered him with the hopes that the church bridge was at hand.

ICHABOD: If I can but reach that bridge,

ENSEMBLE: thought Ichabod,

ICHABOD: I am safe.

ENSEMBLE: Just then he heard the black steed panting and blowing close behind him; he even fancied that he felt his hot breath. Ichabod cast a look behind to see if his pursuer should vanish in a flash of fire and brimstone.

(ICHABOD stands to face the HEADLESS HORSEMAN.)

ENSEMBLE: *(Cont'd.)* Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, and in the very act of hurling his head at him.

(The HEADLESS HORSEMAN holds the pumpkin up as to throw it at ICHABOD, who lets out a terrifying scream. Just then, the LIGHTS cut out on that scene, and switch to a different area of the stage with ALINA reading a book to DR. LOVETT.)

ALINA: The next morning the old horse was found without his saddle, and with the bridle under his feet, soberly cropping the grass at his master's gate. Ichabod did not make his appearance at breakfast; dinner-hour came, but no Ichabod.

Hollow

- 8 -

DR. LOVETT: Thank you for sharing, I've never heard the actual story before. I saw the Johnny Depp movie several years ago, but I guess they changed a lot.

ALINA: And the crazy part is that the ending is kind of up to you. There's a postscript at the end that says Katrina, Ichabod's love, married Brom Bones, who bullied Ichabod. And everyone assumed Ichabod died that night, but some people claim they saw him in New York City many years later, just living a normal life.

DR. LOVETT: Well, thank you for sharing that with me. We only have half our time remaining for the week, and our agreement was that we can talk about whatever you want for the first 30 minutes, as long as we talk about the real issue the second half.

ALINA: I don't want to talk about that.

DR. LOVETT: I know that, Alina. And I don't want to push you, but we only have two weeks until the hearing, and I can't help you if I don't know anything.

ALINA: I know.

DR. LOVETT: Look-- I'm not going to make you talk about anything you don't want to talk about, but I know I could help out if you just talk to me. (*ALINA shifts in her seat.*) This is a safe space.

MOM: Alina! In here, NOW!

(*LIGHTS shift to another area of the stage representing the kitchen. MOM is there, overwhelmed, and disheveled, looking at the floor.*)

ALINA: I'm coming, Mom. (*Enters the space.*)

MOM: I told you to mop this floor, right?

ALINA: Yes, Mom.

MOM: Then why am I staring at a dirty, sticky floor? You know how easily we get roaches in here.

ALINA: I'm sorry, I forgot.

MOM: (*Forcibly grabs the mop in frustration and starts mopping.*) I told you to get this done. That's not too much to ask.

Hollow

- 9 -

ALINA: I was going to take care of it, I promise. I had to help Brit with her homework first.

MOM: *(Quiets her voice but keeps the sharp tone.)* You can't keep using your sister as an excuse to not help out around here! I'm doing everything I can for both of you and you keep throwing that—

ALINA: Did you remember to refill her inhaler? It's almost out.

MOM: Alina, I'm trying. I called but your father hasn't verified it with his insurance, and it's three times more expensive on my plan. Plus, I'm working double shifts all week. I'm already on thin ice with my stupid boss because I'm late every time I have to drive you two to school—

(BRIT wakes up in the other room, starts coughing. MOM realizes her volume is the cause and reacts in frustration.)

ALINA: I'll take care of Brit. Can you just call Dad?

MOM: Alina!

(ALINA shoots MOM a pleading look then goes to BRIT'S room. Mom pulls out her phone as Alina exits.)

BRIT: *(Coughing and breathing shortly.)* I heard yelling.

ALINA: It's okay, Brit. It's just Mom. Breathe.

BRIT: I'm trying, I can't—

ALINA: Match my breathing.

(ALINA and BRIT stare at each other and breathe slowly and deeply. Soon after, Brit's breathing slows down. She still coughs intermittently. Alina helps Brit get back in bed.)

BRIT: Can you tell me a story?

ALINA: Sure, as long as you go back to sleep. I know you didn't sleep at all last night. I heard you coughing.

BRIT: I will, I promise. The stories help. As long as you skip the scary parts.

ALINA: Of course.

Hollow

- 10 -

(As ALINA tells the story, the TARRYTOWN ENSEMBLE takes over the center of the stage.)

ALINA: *(Cont'd.)* People only remember Ichabod Crane for being the victim of the Headless Horseman—

BRIT: *(Frightened.)* Alina!

ALINA: *(Calming her sister down.)* —but he was so much more. He was a teacher and he led the choir at the local church, and he had a very unique look and style.

(Through the following, the ENSEMBLE manipulates ICHABOD as if they are giving a medical lecture, moving him about and showing off his features as if he's a puppet.)

ENSEMBLE: The surname of Crane was not inapplicable to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weather-cock perched upon his spindle neck to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

(The ENSEMBLE begins to construct the Schoolhouse, which should be done with simple, suggested pieces, perhaps held together by the members of the ensemble. A meager amount of STUDENTS sit in the classroom.)

ICHABOD: His schoolhouse was a low building of one large room, rudely constructed of logs; the windows partly glazed, and partly patched with leaves of old copybooks. It was most ingeniously secured at vacant hours, by a vine twisted in the handle of the door, and stakes set against the window shutters; so that though a thief might get in with perfect ease, he would find some embarrassment in getting out.

End of Freeview

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