

The Curious Tale of Rip Van Winkle

A Musical by Vincent Bonvissuto

*Based on the story, "Rip Van Winkle,"
by Washington Irving*

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DEDICATION

*To the Holy Family: Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of
Lords, His Blessed Mother Mary, and Good St. Joseph*

STORY OF THE PLAY

Set amidst the dark mists of the Catskill Mountains, *The Curious Tale of Rip Van Winkle* journeys to the colonial Dutch village of Knickerbocker, where legendary loafer Rip Van Winkle holds court. One fateful evening, Rip ventures into the woods, encountering the spirits of Henry Hudson and his crew. After drinking a flagon of "Hudson's Hearty Ale," Rip falls into a 16-year sleep, awakening in the midst of the Revolutionary War! Sparkling with Dutch dances ("Welcome To Knickerbocker") and rousing village choruses ("Responsibility"), this show will leave you as spellbound as a flagon of Hudson's mysterious ale!

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

The Curious Tale of Rip Van Winkle premiered June 17th, 2022, at the Gaslight Theatre in Dickson, TN. The original production featured the following creative team and cast:

Playwright, Composer, Lyricist.....Vincent Bonvissuto
ProducersVincent Bonvissuto & Marilyn Fair
Director/Musical DirectorMarilyn Fair
ChoreographerMaggie Gilchrist
Stage ManagerRachel Rinehart
Costume Designer.....Ruth Reynolds
Set Designer.....Owen Keeler
Prop MasterCassy Gilchrist

Rip Van Winkle.....Miles Minard
Hans Van HoebeekSamuel Jarzab
Judith Van Winkle.....Lucy Stubbs
Henry Hudson/Colonel KlaassenQuincy Minard
Nicholas VedderJoseph Bonvissuto
Dame Van Winkle.....Emme Rueff
Grethe Klaassen.....Kelsey Whiteford
Adelheid Stuyvesant.....Kayla Whiteford
Herman KrekelJean Arias
Dame Stuyvesant.....Haylei Sharp
Rip Van Winkle, Jr. (adult).....Dalton Johnson
Rip Van Winkle, Jr. (child).....Jackson Frawley
Hans Van Hoebeek, Jr.Noah Sullivan
Abraham Van HoebeekBryson Thompson
Wolf/Anna Van HoebeekAnna Hatcher
Dutch ManSzymon Jarzab
EnsembleBrooke Corlew, Cadence Frawley, Maksymus Jarzab, Delaney Lookenott, Anna Maxin, Mary McCaughey, Willow Grace Reed, Mollie Rees, Sienna Rinehart, Ava Schuster, Kayleigh Vollet

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 m, 6 w, 3 boys, 1 girl, extras and doubling possible)

Female Characters

DAME VAN WINKLE: Middle-aged, no-nonsense, sharp-tongued, domineering wife of Rip Van Winkle. Doubles as Townswoman. Solo songs: 1.

DAME STUYVESANT: Middle-aged, stately and refined, trying to find a husband for her daughter. Doubles as Townswoman.

ADELHEID STUYVESANT: Young woman, proud of her illustrious forebears, sharp-tongued, looking for a husband. Solo songs: 2.

GRETHE KLAASSEN: Young woman, jolly, domestic, looking for a husband. Solo songs: 2.

JUDITH VAN WINKLE: Young woman, loyal, sensitive, moody, looking for a husband. Solo songs: 3.

WOLF: Rip Van Winkle's dog, faithful, playful, coward. Doubles as Townswoman.

ANNA VAN HOEBEEK: Child (9), intelligent, inquisitive, dramatic. Doubles as Town girl.

EXTRAS: Townswomen (4-6), Town girls (4-6)

Male Characters

NICHOLAS VEDDER: Middle-aged, tavern owner, pushy, opinionated. Doubles as Sailor. Solo songs: 1.

COLONEL KLAASSEN: Middle-aged, former military, hunter, boastful. Doubles as Sailor. Solo songs: 1.

HANS VAN HOEBEEK: Young man, serious, cabinetmaker. Solo songs: 1.

RIP VAN WINKLE: Middle-aged, carefree, funny, very entertaining, very lazy. Solo songs: 3.

RIP JR.: Young boy (10), mischievous, like his father. Doubles as Town boy.

ADULT RIP JR.: (As man) Young man, lazy, drinker, carefree, like his father. Doubles as Townsman. Solo songs: 1.

HERMAN KREKEL: Young man, nerdy, schoolteacher, rule-follower.

HENRY HUDSON: Middle-aged, brash, bold, loud, haughty. Doubles as Townsman. Solo songs: 1.

HANS VAN HOEBEEK JR.: Adolescent boy (12), strong-willed, brave. Doubles as Town boy.

ABRAHAM VAN HOEBEEK: Young boy (7), rascal. Doubles as Town boy.

EXTRAS: Dutchman, Townsmen (4-6), Sailors (4-6), Soldiers (4-6), Town boys (4-6)

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES AND SONGS

ACT I

Scene 1: The Village

*Welcome To Knickerbocker
Rip Van Winkle*

Scene 2: Inside the Cottage

For Better Or For Worse

Scene 3: Outside the Cottage

*I See
Why Worry*

Scene 4: The Village

Responsibility

Scene 5: The Woods

Strange Brew

ACT II

Scene 6: The Woods

*I'm Not The Me I Used To Be
Why Worry (Reprise)*

Scene 7: Outside the Cottage

*Yankee Doodle
Come Home Soon*

Scene 8: The Village

*Responsibility (Reprise)
Rip Van Winkle (Reprise)*

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SYNOPSIS

The Curious Tale of Rip Van Winkle opens in 1765 in the Dutch colonial village of Knickerbocker, nestled in the Catskill Mountains of New York. Three of the young women in the village – the proud, sharp-tongued Adelheid Stuyvesant, jolly and domestic Grethe Klaassen, and moody romantic Judith Van Winkle – all long to find a husband; not an easy task in a town filled mostly with young boys and old men. Much to their delight, a handsome young traveler, Hans Van Hoebeek, passes through town one morning, and once the entire town greets him ("Welcome To Knickerbocker"), the three rivals vie for Hans' affection.

Adelheid's mother, Dame Stuyvesant, comes to her aid, proudly revealing to Hans her daughter's illustrious lineage as a descendant of the great Dutch governor, Peter Stuyvesant. Grethe's father, Colonel Brom Klaassen of the Army of the Dutch Republic, counters by boasting of Grethe's prowess as the best cook in the village – a claim vehemently denied by Dame Stuyvesant. The proprietor of the local inn, Nicholas Vedder, joins the fray, insisting that Hans enter the inn, eat a plate of rookwurst, and take a room for the night.

Poor Judith has no advocate – until her father, Rip Van Winkle, enters the village surrounded by children, delighting them with dances, jokes, juggling tricks, assorted feats of goofing, and by whistling his signature tune ("Rip Van Winkle"). Rip suggests a clever trick to Judith to help her land Hans, and by scene's end, Hans is heading off to the Van Winkle cottage for supper.

After the meal at the cottage, Judith manages to sneak Hans outside on the pretext of getting firewood, while Rip, his son, Rip Jr., and his dog, Wolf, slip away to frolic in the woods, leaving the irritable Dame Van Winkle to handle all the chores alone, which she does while singing of the "joys" of being married to the "legendary loafer of Knickerbocker" ("For Better Or For Worse").

Outside the cottage, Judith uses all of her feminine charms to reel in Hans, but the young carpenter, who is preoccupied with worldly concerns – especially the task of chopping firewood – seems impervious to her efforts ("I See"). Rip, Rip Jr. and Wolf return from their sojourn, only to feel the wrath of Dame Van Winkle, who schools Rip Jr. on the use of his "schlingshot" by plinking him with walnuts. As the irate Dame retires to the cottage, Hans thanks his hosts and heads back to the village to recover his tools and take a room at Vedder's Inn. Judith laments her lost chance of landing a husband, but Rip comforts her, assuring her that she'll find her prince "all in good time."

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In the meantime, he advises her, "Forget what you don't have and enjoy what you do have!" the maxim by which he lives, and the reason he remains carefree and happy in all circumstances ("Why Worry"). The moment Rip is done dispensing his advice, Dame Van Winkle emerges from the cottage to deal with her "vagrant" husband, ordering him to take her cracked pot to the blacksmith the following morning so it can be repaired. Cowed by his wife's threatening tone, Rip sheepishly agrees to fulfill the task.

The next morning, as Adelheid and Grethe continue to woo Hans at the inn, the village simmers with indignation as the schoolmaster, Herman Krekel, informs the village elders that the British Parliament has imposed on them a new stamp tax. As Colonel Klaassen, Vedder and the rest try to decide how to react to this unwelcome news, the rollicking trio – Rip, Rip Jr. and Wolf – enter the town square and, unconcerned with the momentous news of the new tax, ask if anyone wants to go fishing. Exasperated with Rip's lazy, carefree attitude, the elders try to convince Rip Jr. that "life is more than fishing and slingshots," reminding him that every villager has a responsibility to work for the good of the families of Knickerbocker ("Responsibility").

As Rip wiles away the afternoon (with the unmended pot beside him), Dame Van Winkle enters the town square in a fury, looking for that "useless Van Winkle" and her pot, which she needs at once so she can cook their supper. Rip tries to hide, but to no avail; Dame Van Winkle tracks him down, attempts to clobber him, and storms out demanding her pot be mended immediately. Rip turns that task over to his son and sets off with Wolf to do a little fishing before the sun sets.

That night, Rip and Wolf lose their way in the woods and stumble upon a band of ghostly figures: the spirits of Henry Hudson, the famous explorer, and his lost crew. The brash and boastful Hudson and his men have much fun at Rip's expense, and when the latter asks to try a flagon of "Hudson's Hearty Ale," the mischievous spirit agrees. Upon drinking the ale, Rip becomes stupefied, his intoxication giving way to a deep slumber ("Strange Brew").

Upon awakening, in ACT II Rip sports a long gray beard and feels years older – 16 years older, to be precise ("I'm Not The Me I Used To Be"). At first, he is unaware of how long he has been asleep, but as he discovers his home decrepit and abandoned, his son fully grown – and now the town drunk ("Why Worry [Reprise]") – his daughter Judith raising children with her husband off to war ("Come Home Soon"), the town square flying a Betsy Ross flag ("Yankee Doodle"), and Continental soldiers meandering about, he realizes that something drastic has occurred: he has lost 16 years of his life.

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In the village, Rip attempts to find his old friends, but no one recognizes him, not even his own children ("Responsibility [Reprise]"). At first, the villagers are amused by his outmoded clothing and odd behavior, but their mirth turns to anger when Adelheid, Grethe and Herman accuse him of being a British spy.

Just as the townsmen are about to bind Rip to a tree and "beat the truth out of him," Captain Hans Van Hoebeek appears, back from his tour of duty with General George Washington. The happy reunion with his wife, Judith, and their children is cut short, however, as the villagers demand Captain Van Hoebeek interrogate their prisoner. Rip attempts to get Hans, Judith and Rip Jr. to recognize him – and to believe his fantastic tale of a 16-year nap brought on by the ghost of Henry Hudson and his "wicked ale" – but he fails miserably. As the villagers close in on Rip, Captain Van Hoebeek tries one last tactic to determine the truth of the stranger's story. He begins to whistle the first few notes of "Rip Van Winkle," and Rip whistles back the missing notes of the tune, something no stranger would know, but Rip Van Winkle would! Judith is thrilled to be reunited to her father, and Rip Jr., seeing the trouble the "wicked ale" caused his father, vows to mend his ways and join General Washington in fighting for the villagers' rights. The story ends with the whole village welcoming Rip back as revered elder and friend ("Rip Van Winkle [Reprise]").

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OVERTURE

Scene 1: The Village

(AT RISE: It is noon time on a fall day, and the VILLAGERS are busy hauling water, gathering sticks, moving barrels, etc. JUDITH is carrying water buckets, GRETHE holds two baskets filled with bread, and ADELHEID is carrying wood. Little CHILDREN are running about the town, playing hoop and stick games, tag, etc., while getting underfoot of the three woman and annoying them.)

JUDITH: *(Cheerfully.)* Good morning, Grethe!

GRETHE: *(Tiredly.)* Good morning, Judith.

JUDITH: How are you this morning?!

GRETHE: The same as every morning – tired!

(ADELHEID approaches.)

JUDITH: *(Cheerfully.)* Good morning, Adelheid!

ADELHEID: What's good about it? The sticks are damp, my arms are sore, and I need to fetch two more bundles!

(ADELHEID tries to navigate around two TOWN BOYS who are playing tag all around her.)

JUDITH: Maybe one of the boys would help you.

(The TOWN BOYS, scurrying about, bump into ADELHEID, look at her, then dash away.)

ADELHEID: *(Sarcastically.)* Oh, ja – and perhaps Prince Charming will emerge from the woods to relieve me of my burden!

(HANS enters from the woods SR, carrying a pack over his shoulder and his toolbox. ALL stop and stare at him; in sequence, JUDITH drops her bucket, GRETHE, her breadbasket, and ADELHEID her bundle of sticks.)

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“WELCOME TO KNICKERBOCKER”

ADELHEID:

WELCOME TO KNICKERBOCKER
COME AND SIT HERE IN THE SHADE
RELAX, PERHAPS
YOU'D LIKE SOME ALE.

GRETHE:

WELCOME TO KNICKERBOCKER
COME AND REST BENEATH THE OAK
YOU MUST BE HUNGRY
HERE HAVE A LOAF.

ALL:

WE'RE JUST A SIMPLE VILLAGE
OF ENGLISHMEN AND DUTCH
WE HAVE EVERYTHING WE NEED
'CAUSE WE DON'T NEED VERY MUCH!

WELCOME TO KNICKERBOCKER
AND MAY WE SAY
WE HOPE THAT YOU DECIDE TO STAY!

JUDITH:

WELCOME TO KNICKERBOCKER
COME AND SEE OUR FINE OLD CHURCH
COULD USE MORE PEWS
AND THE ROOF HAS LEAKS.

VEDDER:

WELCOME TO KNICKERBOCKER
COME AND STAY AT VEDDER'S INN
GOOD STEW, GOOD BREW
AND A COZY FIREPLACE.

ALL:

WE'RE JUST A SIMPLE VILLAGE
OF ENGLISHMEN AND DUTCH
THE TOWN'S BEEN HERE FOREVER
BUT IT NEVER CHANGES MUCH!

WELCOME TO KNICKERBOCKER
AND MAY WE SAY
WE HOPE THAT YOU DECIDE TO STAY!

*(During the musical interlude, the VILLAGERS dance around
HANS.)*

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ALL:

WE'RE JUST A SIMPLE VILLAGE
OF ENGLISHMEN AND DUTCH

VEDDER and KLAASSEN:

A MAN COULD MAKE A HOME HERE

ADELHEID, GRETHE and JUDI!TH:

WITH A WOMAN'S TOUCH

ALL:

WELCOME TO KNICKERBOCKER
AND MAY WE SAY
WE HOPE THAT YOU DECIDE

ADELHEID, GRETHE, JUDITH:

TO TAKE YOURSELF A BRIDE!

ALL:

WE HOPE THAT YOU DECIDE TO STAY!

VEDDER: I am Nicholas Vedder, proprietor (*Pointing with his pipe to the tavern sign, which has a silhouette of King George surrounded by the words, "King George III Inn."*) You are looking for a room, perhaps?

HANS: Perhaps.

VEDDER: You are hungry? (*Pointing to the tavern with his pipe.*) Come, have big plate of rookwurst, then you take room.

(As VEDDER begins to lead HANS to the door of the tavern, DAME STUYVESANT and ADELHEID cut off their approach.)

DAME STUYVESANT: Ah, Mr. Vedder, I see you have a new guest.

HANS: (*Bowing slightly.*) I am Hans Van Hoebeek, from Kaaters-kill.

DAME STUYVESANT: Van *Hoebeek* – such a *fine* Dutch name! (*Eyeing HANS.*) Tell me, Mr. Van Hoebeek, are all the young men from Kaaters-kill so... *healthy*?!

HANS: (*Shrugging.*) Most are like me.

DAME STUYVESANT: I am Dame Stuyvesant, and this is my daughter, Adelheid. You know the name... *Stuyvesant*?

HANS: Oh, ja! Are *you* a descendent of the great...

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(ADELHEID and DAME STUYVESANT stand proud and erect.)

ADELHEID: ...Peter Stuyvesant!

KLAASSEN: *(Bolts from his chair, removes his hat, and stands at attention.)* To the memory of Peter Stuyvesant, the great protector of our people! May his soul rest in peace.

(All the TOWNSMEN remove their hats in perfect unison and bow their heads, while all the TOWNSWOMEN look up to Heaven.)

VEDDER: *(Taking HANS' arm.)* Now, you eat rookwurst!

(HANS and VEDDER begin to move towards the inn, but ADELHEID slips in-between them.)

ADELHEID: Hans, you are traveling, perhaps, to see family?

HANS: Ja, I go to New York City to live with my uncle. I will be working in his shop.

DAME STUYVESANT: A shop in New York City?! Ah! Your uncle – he is *wealthy* merchant?

HANS: No, no – we are cabinetmakers.

KLAASSEN: *(Steps up to HANS.)* Cabinetmaker?! This is *good* profession! I had *many* fine carpenters in my command. *(Extending his hand to HANS.)* Colonel Brom Klaassen, Army of the Dutch Republic.

VEDDER: Retired...

(GRETHE clears her throat and tugs hard on KLAASSEN'S sleeve.)

KLAASSEN: My daughter, Grethe.

GRETHE: Papa served in the army in the Old Country, before settling down *here* to do battle with the moose and the bear.

Do *you* like to hunt?

HANS: Oh, ja!

GRETHE: Perhaps you will go hunting with Papa?!

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KLAASSEN: There is *good* hunting here! I have killed 17 bears
– 16 with musket, and one... with knife.

HANS: (*Amazed.*) You killed a bear with just a knife?

KLAASSEN: Ja, with just a knife. It was right after the great
blizzard of '49.

(*VEDDER and DAME STUYVESANT look at each other and
shake their heads, having heard this story countless times
before.*)

VEDDER: (*Muttering and throwing up his hands.*) Oh, no, not
"The Bear Story" again!

KLAASSEN: The snow was up to HERE! (*He places his hand
above his head.*)

GRETHE: (*Giving KLAASSEN a skeptical look.*) Papa...

(*KLAASSEN eyes GRETHE then drops his hand to neck
level.*)

KLAASSEN: Here! (*Dramatically, with great gestures and
exaggeration.*) He was a huge beast – at least *twelve* feet
tall, with massive jaws and claws...

VEDDER, DAME STUYVESANT (*Holding up their hands like
claws.*) **and KLAASSEN:** ...Long and sharp like daggers!

(*VEDDER turns his head in disgust as DAME STUYVESANT
rolls her eyes.*)

GRETHE: Papa, Hans does not want to hear your stories. He
is *hungry!* (*SHE looks at KLAASSEN and nods her head
longingly towards HANS.*)

KLAASSEN: Ja, perhaps you would care to dine with us
tonight. My Grethe is a *fine* cook – finest in the village!

DAME STUYVESANT: *That* is debatable.

KLAASSEN: Who is better cook?!

DAME STUYVESANT: (*Turning to HANS.*) My Adelheid
makes the *best* bitterballen in the whole valley! She uses a
secret recipe known *only* to the Stuyvesant family. We
would be honored to make it just for you!

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VEDDER: No! He is hungry for *rookwurst!* Come!

GRETHE: (*Grabbing HANS' arm.*) Rookwurst?! Baah! He needs a *proper* supper, a nice hot *stew.* (*Moving in close to HANS.*) You like *ha-chee?*...with black bread and fresh butter?...and *Gouda?*!

HANS: Oh, ja!

ADELHEID: (*Grabbing HANS' other arm and moving in close.*) Or perhaps you like bitterballen and sweet appeltaarte?

HANS: Ja! Delicious!

VEDDER: He wants rookwurst!

ADELHEID: Baah! Your rookwurst is the *worst* of the wurst!

VEDDER: (*To ADELHEID and GRETHE.*) This is a lie!

DAME STUYVESANT: You are calling my Adelheid a *liar?*! A Stuyvesant *never* lies!

KLAASSEN: This is true!

VEDDER: *You* are authority on what is true?! You?! "Killing bears in the snow with a knife!" "Claws like daggers..." Baah!

KLAASSEN: You question my word?!

VEDDER: (*Folding his arms and looking away.*) Just stories...

KLAASSEN: You challenge my honor! (*HE throws down his walking stick.*)

GRETHE: (*Placing herself between the two MEN.*) Now Papa, Papa...

(A general melee ensues, with hats thrown up and down, fingers wagging, with large gesticulations. Quietly, JUDITH steps forward with a ladle of water for HANS. The melee in the background freezes.)

HANS: Thank you. We have not met.

JUDITH: I am Judith. Judith Van Winkle.

(HANS bows, then sips the water.)

JUDITH: (*Cont'd.*) You are cabinet-maker?

HANS: Ja.

JUDITH: You like this work?

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HANS: I love it.

JUDITH: Why?

HANS: Well, a carpenter takes a simple piece of wood, and with his skill, he pours his heart and soul into the wood and turns it into a beautiful cabinet. Then the cabinet is taken into a home and becomes part of a *family*. They fill it with colorful plates and candles, they use it *every* day, and they hand it down to their children and their children's children. Years after the carpenter is gone, his heart and soul are *still* there - in the wood of the cabinet. In a way, he will *always* be a part of that family.

JUDITH: One day, *you* will have a shop of your own!

HANS: And how do you know that?

JUDITH: A man who walks all the way from Kaaters-kill to New York City to work from his heart, is a man who will own his own shop!

(SFX: Suddenly, from the woods, there arises the sound of whistling. The TOWNSPEOPLE unfreeze and look to see what is happening.)

HANS: Who is coming?

JUDITH: It is my father.

(RIP enters SR surrounded by WOLF and the BOYS and GIRLS and is carrying a young boy with red feather in his cap, RIP JR., on his back. As the children continue whistling the first four notes of, "Rip Van Winkle," Rip Jr. slides off Rip's back. The TOWNSPEOPLE begin to sing...)

"RIP VAN WINKLE"

RIP VAN WINKLE TELL US A TALE,
SING US A SONG, DANCE A JIG!
RIP VAN WINKLE GIVE US A JOKE!
SHOW US A TRICK, (MEN) TAKE A SWIG!

(RIP takes a swig from a jug.)

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“RIP VAN WINKLE” (Cont'd.)

RIP VAN WINKLE CLIMB UP THE TREE,
SPIN LIKE A TOP, STAND ON YOUR HEAD!
RIP VAN WINKLE, JUGGLE THE PINS,
JUMP THROUGH THE HOOP, (MEN) LET WOLF PLAY DEAD!

(RIP pretends to shoot WOLF, who plays dead.)

GIRLS: WHO ELSE CAN LEAP LIKE A FROG?

BOYS: WHO'S BEST AT ROLLING A LOG?

MEN: WHO'S A CRACK SHOT WITH A GUN?

WOMEN: WHO DISAPPEARS WHEN THERE'S WORK TO BE
DONE?

(RIP grabs a drum and starts marching and drumming.)

ALL: RIP VAN WINKLE MARCH IN THE SQUARE,
PLAY ON THE FIFE, BEAT THE DRUMS!
RIP VAN WINKLE PLAY ON THE SPOONS
WHISTLE YOUR TUNES – HERE HE COMES!

(RIP dances about, playing with the children.)

GIRLS: WHO ELSE CAN RUN LIKE A DEER?

BOYS: WHO LOVES TO WIGGLE HIS EAR?

MEN: WHO'S ALWAYS FISHING FOR TROUT?

WOMEN: WHO IS THE MASTER OF FOOLING ABOUT!

ALL: RIP VAN WINKLE MARCH IN THE SQUARE,
PLAY ON THE FIFE, BEAT THE DRUMS!
RIP VAN WINKLE PLAY ON THE SPOONS
WHISTLE YOUR TUNES – HERE HE COMES,
HERE HE COMES, HERE HE COMES!

(RIP approaches HANS and JUDITH.)

JUDITH: Papa, this is Hans Van Hoebeek.

RIP: *(RIP raises his hat with each of the four “welcomes.”)* I
welcome you. My daughter, Judith, welcomes you. My son,
Rip Jr., welcomes you. My dog, Wolf, welcomes you. *(To
WOLF, gesturing to HANS.)* Wolf...

*(WOLF salutes and HANS salutes back. RIP takes up his
fishing pole.)*

End of Freeview

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