

Ichabod: And Mr. Bones seems to have been playing his practical jokes at the schoolhouse.

Mrs. Mellema: That boy always was mischievous, and kind of stupid.

Mr. Mellema: Well, I guess it is time for some ghost stories. Have you heard the one about the **Headless Horseman**, Mr. Crane?

Lights dim.

Ichabod: Headless Horseman? No, sir, I haven't.

Mr. Mellema tells the story in a slow, scary voice. As he speaks, Ichabod looks scared and stops eating.

Mr. Mellema: Well, the Headless Horseman is probably the most powerful and notorious ghost around these parts. A frightening fellow, full of evil and vengeance! Now, no one knows for sure where he came from, but most people believe that he was once a soldier in the Revolutionary War. In the heat of the battle, he was hit by a huge cannonball, and it blew his head clear off! Blood and gore were everywhere! The word is that they searched and searched, but they never could find his head. They buried him in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, without his head.

Ichabod: The poor man!

Mr. Mellema: Well, now he haunts the area around Sleepy Hollow! Whenever there is a full moon, the ground near his grave cracks open like an earthquake, and, he rises out of grave, horse and all. Then he rides around the countryside looking for his lost head! And heaven help the poor person who gets in his way. Many people have had their heads cut off with his sword, as if he is getting even, you know?

Ichabod drops his fork, is wide-eyed and very scared.

Ichabod: To—tonight is a full m-m-m-moon, is-is-isn't it.

Mrs. Mellema: Why, yes, I believe it is.

Joe and Joan look at each other and giggle.

Mr. Mellema: Most of the time, he kills anyone he meets, but the one person who saw him and lived to tell about it, said that the Headless Horseman is dressed in all black clothes, black boots and a black cape. He is surrounded by an eerie light! Some

people think the light is his anger and violence emanating out of him. He rides a black horse, and at the top of his shoulders, there is no head.

Ichabod: H-h-how does he s-s-see where he is going without a head?

Joe: They say he has a big, scary-faced jack-o-lantern, all lit up on the horn of his saddle to show him the way. He's a frightening fellow, all right.

Ichabod: H-he certainly s-s-sounds like someone I would not want to m-m-meet. How did the man get away?

Mrs. Mellema: They say that the Headless Horseman cannot go past the bridge just beyond the village, you know, the one not far from the cemetery? Some people think that maybe he died near there, and he can't go beyond that point, for some ghostly reason.

Joan: Why, isn't that the cemetery and bridge near your schoolhouse, Mr. Crane.

Joe: Gee, you have to walk by there on your way home...on a night with a full moon!

Joe and Joan look at each other and smile, while Ichabod looks scared and kind of sick.

Mr. Mellema: Now children, let's not scare Mr. Crane.

Ichabod: Oh, n-n-nonsense. I am not afraid of ghosts or spirits. S-s-silly stories! I will be fine! But...uh...maybe another glass of wine before I go.