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Вашингтон Ирвинг

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О СОННОЙ
ЛОЩИНЕ

Washington Irving

THE LEGEND
OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

Адаптация текста, упражнения
и словарь С.А. Матвеева

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IRVING WASHINGTON

**THE LEGEND
OF SLEEPY HOLLOW**

**Found among the papers
of the late
Diedrech Knickerbocker¹.**

¹ **the late Diedrech Knickerbocker** — покойный Дитрих Никкербоккер

A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the **half-shut**¹ eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
Forever flushing round a summer sky.

(Castle of Indolence)

In the bosom of one of spacious coves of the eastern shore of the **Hudson**², there lies a small market town or **rural port**³, which by some is called **Greensburgh**⁴, but which is more generally known by the name of **Tarry Town**⁵. This name was given, in former

¹ **half-shut** — полуприкрытый

² **the Hudson** — Гудзон

³ **rural port** — сельская пристань

⁴ **Greensburgh** — Гринсбург

⁵ **Tarry Town** — Тэрритаун

days, by the good housewives of the country, because their husbands liked to linger about the village tavern on market days. I do not know whether it is true or not, but I want to be precise and authentic. Not far from this village, perhaps about two miles, there is a little valley among high hills, which is one of the quietest places in the whole world. A small murmuring brook glides through it, and the occasional whistle of a quail or tapping of a woodpecker is almost the only sound there.

If I want to retreat and live quietly away the remnant of a troubled life, I know where to go: to this little valley.

Due to the listless repose of the place, and the peculiar character of its inhabitants, who are descendants from the original Dutch settlers, this glen has long been known by the name of Sleepy Hollow, and its rustic lads are called the Sleepy Hollow Boys throughout all the neighboring country. A drowsy,

dreamy influence hangs over the land and pervades the very atmosphere. Some say that the place was bewitched by a German doctor, during the early days of the settlement; others, that an old Indian chief, the prophet or wizard of his tribe, held his powwows there before the country was discovered by Hendrick Hudson. Its inhabitants are subject to trances and visions, and frequently see strange sights, and hear music and voices in the air. The whole neighborhood abounds with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions.

The dominant spirit, however, that haunts this enchanted region, and is the **commander-in-chief**¹ of all the powers of the air, is the apparition of a figure on horseback, without a head. Some say it is the ghost of a **Hes-**

¹ **commander-in-chief** — главнокомандующий

sian trooper¹, whose head had been carried away by a cannon-ball, in the battle during the Revolutionary War. They say that the body of the trooper was buried in the churchyard, and the ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head. Such is this legendary superstition, which gives materials for many wild stories in that region of shadows; and the spectre is known by the name of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

It is remarkable that the superstition that I have mentioned is not confined to the native inhabitants of the valley, but is unconsciously imbibed by every one who resides there for a time. The strangers, in a little time, inhale the witching influence of the air, and begin to grow imaginative, to dream dreams, and see apparitions.

¹ **Hessian trooper** — гессенский кавалерист

I mention this peaceful spot with all possible laud. In this place of nature there abode, in a remote period of American history, that is to say, some thirty years since, a worthy gentleman of the name of **Ichabod Crane**¹, who stayed in Sleepy Hollow, for the purpose of instructing the children of the vicinity. He was a native of Connecticut, a State which is famous for the colonists and country schoolmasters. Ichabod Crane was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might serve for shovels. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long nose, so that it looked like a weather-cock which tells the way the wind blew. He was like the genius of famine descending upon the

¹ **Ichabod Crane** — Икабод Крейн

earth, or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

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 copy-books. It was secured at vacant hours by a willow twisted in the handle of the door. The stakes were set against the window shutters. So a thief might find some embarrassment in getting out. This idea was probably borrowed by the architect from the fishermen. The schoolhouse stood in a rather lonely but pleasant place, just at the foot of a woody hill, with a brook running close by. A formidable birch-tree was growing at one end of it. Truth to say, the teacher was a conscientious man, and ever bore in mind the golden rule: "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Ichabod Crane's scholars certainly were not spoiled.

But he administered justice with discrimination rather than severity. He took the burden off the backs of the weak, and laid it on those of the strong. All this he called "doing his duty by their parents".

When school hours were over, he was even the companion and playmate of the larger boys; and on holiday afternoons he convoyed some of the smaller ones home, who had pretty sisters, or good mothers. His appetite was wonderful and he was always hungry. He had the dilating powers of an anaconda; but to help out his maintenance, he was, according to country custom in those parts, boarded and lodged at the houses of the farmers whose children he instructed. So he lived successively a week at a time, then he moved to another house, with all his baggage tied up in a cotton handkerchief.

His rustic patrons considered the costs of schooling a grievous burden,

and schoolmasters as mere drones. That is why he was always doing something useful and agreeable. He assisted the farmers occasionally in the lighter labors of their farms, helped to make hay, mended the fences, took the horses to water, drove the cows from pasture, and cut wood for the winter fire. He was petting the children, particularly the youngest. He often sat with a child on one knee, and rocked a cradle with his foot for whole hours.

Moreover, he was the **singing-master**¹ of the neighborhood, and picked up many bright shillings by instructing the young folks in psalmody. On Sundays, he took his place in front of the church gallery, with a band of chosen singers. Certain it is, his voice resounded far above all the rest of the congregation; and there are peculiar quavers still to be heard in that church, and which may

¹ **singing-master** — РЕГЕНТ

even be heard half a mile off, quite to the opposite side of the mill-pond, on a still Sunday morning, which are said to be legitimately descended from the nose of Ichabod Crane. Thus, in that ingenious way which is commonly denominated "by hook and by crook," the worthy pedagogue got on tolerably enough, and was thought, by all who understood nothing of the labor of headwork, to have a wonderfully easy life of it.

The schoolmaster is generally a man of some importance in the female circle of a rural neighborhood. He is a kind of idle, gentleman-like personage, of vastly superior taste and accomplishments to the rough country swains. His appearance, therefore, gets the addition of a supernumerary dish of cakes or sweetmeats for the tea-table, or the parade of a silver teapot. Our man, therefore, was peculiarly happy in the smiles of all the country damsels. How graciously

he was walking them in the churchyard, between services on Sundays; gathering grapes for them from the wild vines that overran the surrounding trees; reciting for their amusement all the epitaphs on the tombstones; or sauntering along the banks of the adjacent mill-pond; while the more bashful country bumpkins were envying his superior elegance.

From his half-itinerant¹ life, also, he was a kind of traveling gazette, carrying local gossip from house to house, so that his appearance was always greeted with satisfaction. He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, for he had read several books, and knew **Cotton Mather's**² "History of New England Witchcraft," in which, by the way, he most firmly and potently believed.

¹ **half-itinerant** — полубродячий

² **Cotton Mather** — Коттон Мезер

He was, in fact, an odd mixture of shrewdness and simple credulity. His appetite for the marvelous, and his powers of digesting it, were equally extraordinary. Both were increased by his residence in this spell-bound region. No tale was too gross or monstrous for him. It was often his delight, after his school was dismissed in the afternoon, to stretch himself on the rich bed of clover bordering the little brook that whimpered by his school-house. There he read old Mather's direful tales, until the dusk of evening made the printed page a mere mist before his eyes. And then he went to the farmhouse.

The fireflies, which sparkled most vividly in the darkest places, now and then startled him. And if, by chance, a huge beetle came against him, the poor varlet was ready **to give up the ghost**¹, with the idea that he was

¹ to give up the ghost — испустить дух