

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Morrison Mysteries

The story you're about to hear was found written down among the papers of a dead man. The horrible and frightening tale it was of a haunted town, a dedicated schoolteacher, and a man who'd lost his head.

Sound like an episode of Dateline?

Or could be?

But no.

I'm Keith Morrison, and this is the story of Ichabod Crane and the Headless Horseman.

Welcome to our new podcast series, where the stories will be classics and some of the most mysterious, suspenseful, and spine-tingling fiction you have ever heard.

Since this Halloween, we begin with a truly harrowing tale, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow by Washington Irving.

It happened, this otherworldly haunting, this terror in the night, a long time ago.

The year was 1790, just north of New York City, in a place the local housewives dubbed Territown, to the way their husbands terried at the village bar on the way home.

They were Dutch, many of them, descendants of the original settlers, and they farmed the tranquil lands around them.

But they knew, all of them, about the silent glen nestled in the hills nearby.

The place they called with a shudder, Sleepy Hollow.

But the villagers seemed almost to feel the ghosts around them, felt a haunting shiver when they blew out the candles at night, and thought about that story of the soldier, beheaded in the Revolutionary War, who was said to roam the countryside at night in an endless search for his lost head.

And then one day, a tall man arrived in this little town, a schoolteacher for the local children, and his name was Ichabod Crane.

And now, Washington Irving's words as we pick up the story.

He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders and 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, sniped nose, so it would look 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.

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 stood in a rather lonely but pleasant situation, just at the foot of a woody hill, with a brook running close by, and a formidable birch tree growing at one end of it, from hence the low murmur of his pupil's voices might be heard in a drowsy summer's day, like the hum of a beehive.

Thank you for listening.

To hear all three episodes of The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, just search Morris and Mysteries wherever you get your podcasts.