

Rip Van Winkle
by
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Based On "Rip Van Winkle"
by Washington Irving

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ACT I

SCENE 1

THE WOODS OUTSIDE A SLEEPY DUTCH VILLAGE IN THE CATSKILLS,
1770.

RIP VAN WINKLE ("a simple good-natured man; he was, moreover, a kind neighbor, and an obedient hen-pecked husband") sits at the edge of the stage with a giant fishing pole in his hand.

WOLF (his loyal dog) lays next to him.

RIP

What do you say, Wolf? What kind of day have we had?

WOLF

(Prompts the audience)

Rough! Rough! Rough!

(Quiets the audience down)

RIP

Rough? How can you say that, you silly dog? Fishing is easy, quiet work. Just right for the two of us. (beat) What have we got?

WOLF

(Prompts the audience)

Trout! Trout! Trout!

RIP

Trout? You silly dog, we got a large-mouth bass. It's not a great supper, but it's better than no fish. (beat) What could be better?

WOLF

(This takes some thought; then, ASL for house: roof and walls)

Home! Home! Home!

RIP

Home. You silly dog, home is not better than fishing. Home is -- well -- home is pretty rough. But, you're right, we should go home before we get into trouble with Dame Van Winkle.

Wolf does an elaborate shrug and head nod. It's Rip's gesture -- really -- but Wolf does it, too.

Rip picks up his pole and his lonely fish.

RIP (cont'd)

The babies will be there! Little Rip junior and the other one. The girl. What's her name?

WOLF

Bark! Bark! Bark!

RIP

Yes, you're about that, Wolf. My wife's a rough woman. She is rough like bark on the outside, but she has a strong heart. I think.

Curtain opens and we...

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 2

EXT. SLEEPY DUTCH VILLAGE.

In the center, the Inn has a bench and a picture of King George. STAGE RIGHT HAS a nice house. STAGE LEFT is The Van Winkle house, which is a little run down.

DAME GARDENIER is a pleasant young woman, holding a tiny baby.

Rip and Wolf saunter in from stage right with their huge pole and lonely fish.

DAME GARDENIER

Why if it isn't Rip Van Winkle, and his dog.
What's your doggie's name?

WOLF

Wolf! Wolf! Wolf!

RIP

It's still Wolf, Dame Gardenier. It has been
Wolf since we settled here.

DAME GARDENIER

So it has. So it has. Have you met my son,
Peter?

She jams the baby into Rip's face.
Rip steps back. Then he recovers
and tickles the baby.

RIP

Yes, I have, almost every day. Goo-goo-goo,
what a cute little boy.

DAME GARDENIER

What are you doing?

RIP

(puzzled)

Playing with the baby?

DAME GARDENIER

How can you play with the baby when his father
is so sick?

RIP

(taken aback)

Herr Gardenier is sick? That's terrible. What
will you do?

DAME GARDENIER

I just don't know, Rip, I just don't know.

WOLF

Trout! Trout!

RIP

Easy wolf, stop your silly barking. Dame Gardenier, you have a little baby boy, and you have to take care of your husband, also? Is there anything I can do to help? Do you need anything from the store?

WOLF

Trout!

RIP

(to Wolf)

Hush, now.

DAME GARDENIER

I think we're doing well enough. We might have just enough left-overs to get through tonight. Tomorrow... who knows? Maybe I can leave the baby with Dame Van Winkle while I try to catch some fish.

WOLF

(leaping)

Trout!

RIP

Fish! Say no more, Dame Gardenier. I'll give you my fish.

DAME GARDENIER

But it's your only fish.

RIP

Nonsense. I'll catch more. I love work.
(Sings)

"I LOVE WORK"

I love work, work i-is won-der-ful.

I love work, yes work defines your day.

Work work work work work; work makes me so grate-ful.

I love work, it sets me on my way.

I love work, it makes me feel
alive.

I love work, the village hurries
around.

Work work work, work is how we
thrive.

I love work, it fills the village
with sound.

I love work. I could watch people
work all day.

Yes, I could watch people work all
day.

RIP (cont'd)

Dame Gardenier, you take this fish to feed your
family tonight.

DAME GARDENIER

(Holds out the baby)

Say "thank you" to Rip Van Winkle, Peter.

RIP

(looks at the audience, looks back at the
baby)

You're very welcome. Tomorrow, I'll run to the
store for some medicine for Mr. Gardenier and --

DAME VAN WINKLE (an imposing
woman, intense, ambitious, loud)
comes out of the run down Van
Winkle house stage left.

She has a tiny baby in her arms,
also.

YOUNG RIP JUNIOR ("as ragged and
wild as if they belonged to
nobody. His son Rip, an urchin
begotten in his own likeness,
promised to inherit the habits,
with the old clothes of his
father") tags along behind her.

DAME VAN WINKLE

Rip! Rip Van Winkle!

RIP

Oops, got to run.

He turns and runs off stage right,
followed by Wolf.

Dame Van Winkle bustles after him,
followed by Young Rip Junior.

DAME GARDENIER

Good day, Dame Van Winkle.

DAME VAN WINKLE

Was that my worthless husband, Rip?

DAME GARDENIER

I couldn't say. (Shoves the baby in Dam Van
Winkle's face) Have you met my son, Peter?

DAME VAN WINKLE

Yes, I certainly have met your son, Peter, Dam
Gardenier. He's a darling baby. I'm looking
for that lazy, good-for-nothing Rip Van Winkle
who can't seem to do any jobs around MY house!
Just look at the place. It's a dump, an eye-
sore. The fence is falling the pieces and the
cow has wandered away, again. All we have left
is a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes,
and he can't seem to tend that, either.

Dame Van Winkle and Young Rip
Junior follow Rip off stage right.

Dame Gardenier exits stage left.

CUT TO:

With an elaborate bow, Vedder passes the paper to Van Bummel. Van Bummel, with an elaborate bow, takes the paper.

VAN BUMMEL (cont'd)

You know, Herr Vedder, the paper would be more useful to you, if you learned to read.

VEDDER

What?

VAN BUMMEL

(louder)

You should learn to read!

VEDDER

Reading? Bah. Reading is for school teachers and children. You can read for me.

RIP VAN WINKLE sidles in, looking this way and that.

RIP

(Whispering)

Is she here?

VEDDER

Herr Van Winkle! How good to see you. What? Speak up, please.

RIP

(Whispering)

Dame Van Winkle. Have you seen her?

VEDDER

Who?

RIP

(A little louder)

Dame Van Winkle.

VEDDER

Who? What did you say?

RIP

(shouts)

Dame Van Winkle!

VEDDER

You don't have to shout, I'm not completely deaf.

VAN BUMMEL

But you are mostly deaf.

VEDDER

Yes, I am at rest. It's my age. I deserve to rest.

VAN BUMMEL

(To Rip)

You see.

RIP

(To Van Bummel)

Deaf as a post.

VEDDER

There is no ghost. I tell you, there is no ghost. The "Headless Horseman" is just a story to frighten children. (beat) The paper, Van Bummel, the paper.

RIP

Yes, the paper!

ENSEMBLE

(sings)

"CHIT CHAT"

Chit-chat, chit-chat

Sitting at the coffee shop

Chit-chat, chit-chat

News and Gossip goes non-stop.

Chit-Chat and all that

Sitting on the front stoop

Chit-chat and all that

Chatting with the village group.

It's a chit-chat day

A chit-chat week

A chit-chat village

Where our friends all meet.

Chit chat tit-for-tat

Read the paper get the news
Chit char tit-for-tat
Visit friends trading views.

It's a chit-chat day
A chit-chat week
A chit-chat village
Where our friends all meet.

VAN BUMMEL
(loud enough for Vedder)
King George is going to levy a new tax on tea.

VEDDER
A Tax? On Tea? How can he do that?

VAN BUMMEL
(quietly)
We are Englishmen. He is our king.

VEDDER
I'm a Dutchman.

VAN BUMMEL
You could hear that pretty well. (beat) We
live in an English colony. He's our king, is
he not?

RIP
Who's face is on the inn?

VEDDER
King George!

VAN BUMMEL
King George, exactly. Our king, even though we
were Dutchmen once upon a time. Today we're
Englishmen, so we must pay English taxes.

VEDDER
Taxes! Heavens! Who's paying taxes?

VAN BUMMEL
We are. We're paying new taxes on tea, it
says, right here in the paper.

VEDDER

Taxes. To a King. In England. How about you Van Winkle? What do you say to paying taxes to the king.

RIP

Two things.

VAN BUMMEL

(With BIG gestures)

Two things? How can you say two things? Either taxes are good or they're bad. They can't be both!

Rip does his elaborate shrug and eye-rolling bow.

RIP

With your permission, I'll say two things. From Rip Van Winkle, subject of King George, we must pay his taxes on tea, even though we're poor Dutch farmers in the Catskills.

VAN BUMMEL

What's the other thing?

RIP

Dame Van Winkle, my sweet wife, would say that taxes aren't good. We should be independent of England; we should be a country of our own, not a colony of theirs.

VEDDER

A country? We should be a country? Can you imagine such a thing? Dame Van Winkle is a Patriot?

VAN BUMMEL

She's more than just a patriot.

RIP

I'll say, Dame Van Winkle is much more --

DAME VAN WINKLE appears, holding the baby.

DAME VAN WINKLE

Rip Van Winkle!

VEDDER AND VAN BUMMEL

Dame Van Winkle!

RIP

Dame Van Winkle! I mean -- yes, my sweet?

DAME VAN WINKLE

What are you doing here?

RIP

We were analyzing the news, my love. It's very important to be --

DAME VAN WINKLE

(to Vedder)

You and your news! That paper is a month old! Someone left it in the Inn. You are just idlers. Herr Vedder, you are doing nothing but reading.

VEDDER

Me? Reading? I apologize, but it was Herr Van Bummel who was reading. I was doing nothing.

DAME VAN WINKLE

(to Van Bummel)

You!

VAN BUMMEL

Me?

VEDDER

Well, I see that it's time to tend my garden. See you all tomorrow.

Vedder slinks away to stage left while Dame Van Winkle gives Van Bummel the evil eye.

VAN BUMMEL

Yes, well, I see that I shall have to prepare my lessons for tomorrow. Perhaps this paper will have something that I can use.

DAME VAN WINKLE

That old paper is full of Royalist clap-trap. Tripe. Tyranny. That King George is a tyrant. A bully! He's a bossy, bossy man. Being a king and being an oppressor is just wrong.

Rip shrugs, bows and rolls his eyes.

DAME VAN WINKLE (cont'd)

Don't you start that attitude with me, Rip Van Winkle.

VAN BUMMEL

Well, yes, then good day.

"Rip Van Winkle"

13.

Van Bummel slinks away stage
right. Dame Van Winkle gives him
the evil eye as he goes.

CUT TO:

SCENE 4

EXT. SLEEPY DUTCH VILLAGE.

DAME VAN WINKLE has her husband cornered. She cradles the baby as she confronts Rip.

RIP VAN WINKLE cowers before her.

YOUNG RIP JUNIOR, holding up his pants, follows his mother.

WOLF slinks back on stage to join his master.

DAME VAN WINKLE

Where have you been?

RIP

I was just trying to --

DAME VAN WINKLE

I'll tell you what you were trying to do! You were trying to get out of doing your chores. The fence is broken, the cow has wandered off. Are you listening to me?

RIP

(With an elaborate shrug, bow and roll of the eyes)

Yes, my sweet, always.

DAME VAN WINKLE

What are you going to do about it? And another thing, your little perpetual club of sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village has got to stop. Those people are a bad influence on you.

RIP

I'm sure they are.

Young Rip Junior picks his nose.

DAME VAN WINKLE

Rip!

RIP

Yes, my sweet.

DAME VAN WINKLE

(to Young Rip Junior)

Not you. Rip! Don't pick your nose.

YOUNG RIP JUNIOR

Yes, mother.

DAME VAN WINKLE

(to Rip)

Do you know what's wrong with your philosopher's club? They're royalists. They support the King!

RIP

We are an English colony.

DAME VAN WINKLE

Don't you see? The king's a tyrant. He's everyone's boss. His rules are unfair. He can't just tell everyone what to do. It's not right to manage everyone's affairs here in the colonies. Now you go home, find the cow and fix the fence.

RIP

How can I go home and find the cow? What if the cow's not home?

DAME VAN WINKLE

(Exasperated)

Rip Van Winkle!

YOUNG RIP JUNIOR

Yes, mother?

DAME VAN WINKLE

Not you, your father. Don't you want to make something of yourself?

RIP

Of course, my sweet, anything you say.

DAME VAN WINKLE

This English Colony could become a great country. If only it was not bossed around by King George in England. You're just like this colony, Rip Van Winkle. You could be a great man, but instead, you just goof off, doing nothing. Is there anything you can do?

RIP

Anything you ask, my sweet. Just tell me what you need done.

DAME VAN WINKLE

Oh! The baby's hungry! I'll go home and feed little Judith. Rip!

RIP
Yes, my sweet?

DAME VAN WINKLE
Not you, your son.

YOUNG RIP JUNIOR
Yes, mother.

DAME VAN WINKLE
Help me feed Judith.

She bustles off, stage left.

Rip gets his gun.....

RIP
(Sings)

"IT'S A LIFE"

It's a dog's life;

(Rough, rough, rough)

Yes, it's a dog's life;

(Rough, rough, rough)

As long as we're clever,

We're friends forever

It's a dog's life

It's a dog's life;

(Work, work, work)

Yes, it's a dog's life;

(work, work, work)

There's no use confronting --

Let's go hunting.

It's a dog's life.

It's a dog's life;

(Bark, bark, bark)

Yes, it's a dog's life;

(bark, bark, bark)

We'll do some walking

And some talking.

It's a dog's life.

Rip and Wolf trudge off, dragging
the elaborate old blunderbuss that
Rip carries as a hunting gun.

RIP (cont'd)

You know, Wolf, I'd say that my wife has the
sharpest tongue of any woman.

Wolf stops.

RIP(cont'd)

A sharp tongue is one tool that never gets dull
or wears out. An axe gets dull, a knife gets
dull, but she just -- What is it boy?

HUDSON (O.S.)

Rip Van Winkle

Rip cowers with Wolf.

RIP

Did you hear that?

HUDSON (O.S.)

Rip Van Winkle

RIP

What was it?

WOLF

Ghost! Ghost! Ghost!

CURTAIN:

END ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 1

INT. A HIDDEN GLEN.

RIP trudges in from stage left, carrying his gun.

WOLF lopes along beside Rip.

KEGGER ("a short square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair, and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion - a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist - several pair of breeches, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulder a stout keg, that seemed full of liquor") enters from stage right.

THUNDER rumbles.

Kegger motions to Rip to take the Keg.

RIP

Excuse me, but do you need some help?

Kegger motions, impatient.

RIP (cont'd)

Yes, I guess you do need some help.

Rip hurries over to Kegger on stage right. Together, they carry the keg to stage left.

THUNDER rumbles.

NOSEY ("the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat set off with a little red cock's tail") enters with a bowling pin.

HUDSON ("a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance;

he wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger, high-crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, with roses in them" enters with a bowling ball.

HUDSON

(Hard, Glaring)

Rip Van Winkle!

RIP

At your service.

Hudson nods. Kegger and Nosey nod. Rip looks around. Wolf cowers between Rip's legs.

HUDSON

(Easier)

Rip Van Winkle.

RIP

Just the same, sir. Do you need any other help with your keg?

HUDSON

(Questioning)

Rip Van Winkle?

RIP

Very much, so, your honor. Very much so.

Hudson walks all the way around Rip, looking at him closely. Rip turns to face Hudson as he walks around. Wolf tries to turn, but falls over himself in the process, and sprawls on the floor.

HUDSON

What brings you here, Van Winkle?

RIP

Mostly, I walked, sir.

HUDSON

(with an encompassing gesture)

Not here! Here!

RIP

Sir?

HUDSON

You're a Dutchman. You live in a Dutch settlement. Why are you here in this English colony, not in Holland?

RIP

Well... I...

HUDSON

Why would you settle in another country?

RIP

It just sort of happened.

Rip starts his bow and shrug, but Hudson stops him.

HUDSON

Van Winkle!

Rip straightens and staggers back. Nosey and Kegger watch closely.

HUDSON (cont'd)

Van Winkle. Things don't just 'happen.' You made a choice. What were you thinking?

RIP

Well, mostly, I think it was Dame Van Winkle who did the thinking.

HUDSON

And what do you think Dame Van Winkle was thinking?

RIP

I think that I thought that she thought that she wanted something.

HUDSON

(big explanatory gestures)

What? Hold on, you're confusing me. What do you think that you thought that she thought that she wanted?

RIP

She wanted something more for herself and her children.

HUDSON

(Getting somewhere)

And you? What did you want?

RIP

Uhhh... Me?

HUDSON

What did you want?

RIP

A quiet, easy life.

HUDSON

Was that all?

RIP

All? What more could there be?

ENSEMBLE

(Sings)

"Ambition" (Grieg's Hall of the
Mountain King)

All we want is everything,
Everything, everything.

All we want is everything and so
we set to sea.

All we want is fame and wealth,
fame and wealth, fame and wealth.

All we want is fame and wealth and
so we sailed from home.

To be the best we'll do hard work,
do hard work, do hard work.

To be the best we'll do hard work,
we'll do hard work each day.

All we want is everything,
Everything, everything.

All we want is everything and so
we set to sea.

(They hum the tune)

HUDSON

Rip Van Winkle. Why are you here?

RIP

We came to the new world for an opportunity. A
chance to do well. To have our own house, our
own cow.

(sings)

"AMBITION"

I came here to have a life, have a
life, have a life,

I came here to have a life, to
have a better life.

I came here for everything,
everything, everything.

I came here for everything, but I
need to get to work.

Life is slowly passing by, passing
by, passing by.

Life is slowly passing, passing
right away from me.

HUDSON

Serve us up some Hollands, Van Winkle.

Rip takes the cups, and begins to
draw some drinks from the keg.

HUDSON (cont'd)

The nine-pins boys, the nine-pins. We'll make
the valley rumble while we're bowling.

Nosey runs around and struggles to
get a ball without dropping it.
Rip gives him a cup as he passes
by.

Kegger runs around and struggles
to get a bowling pin with dropping
it. Rip gives him a cup as he
passes by.

HUDSON (cont'd)

Van Winkle. Do you bowl? What's your
handicap?

Rip hands a cup to Hudson.

RIP

My handicap? I think my handicap is laziness.

HUDSON

Ambition!

KEGGER AND NOSEY

Ambition!

The three drink and heave a big sigh. Rip and Wolf watch, dejected.

HUDSON

And now, on to nine-pins.

Kegger and Nosey start setting up their bowling pins and mark out their bowling lane. They work upstage, while downstage Rip grabs a fourth cup from near the keg and fills it up.

WOLF

Rough. Rough.

RIP

You're right, Wolfie, old boy. It's been a rough day. We need to get back home and get to work don't we?

Wolf watches the cup like a hawk. Rip almost drinks.

WOLF

Rough. Rough.

RIP

You're right. We need to get the cow.

Wolf watches the cup. Rip almost drinks.

WOLF

Rough. Rough.

RIP

Good thinking. We need to fix the fence, otherwise the cow will just get out again. First things first, old boy.

Wolf watches the cup. Rip almost drinks.

Hudson, Nosey and Kegger quietly slip away.

WOLF

Rough. Rough.

RIP

No, I don't think that we should do any more hunting.

(MORE)

RIP (cont'd)

I don't think a squirrel or pigeon would be what Dame Van Winkle wants. I think she wants her cow, her fence and a big garden.

Rip knocks back the drink.

RIP (cont'd)

(Over The Top)

Whoa! What was that? That wasn't Root Beer!

Rip falls flat on his back, feet flying up in the air, they shake, then -- one at a time -- his legs fall back to the stage.

WOLF

I told you not to drink that stuff, Rip.

Rip sits up and stares and Wolf.

RIP

You can talk?

WOLF

No, I can't talk, what are you, silly? I'm a dog.

RIP

But you're talking!

WOLF

No, I'm not.

RIP

How come I can hear you?

WOLF

Because you're dreaming! Go back to sleep.

Rip collapses.

CUT TO:

END ACT II

ACT III

SCENE 1

INT. A HIDDEN GLEN.

RIP VAN WINKLE is laying on the ground with a rotten old, broken gun. His hair is long and white.

Rip rolls around in the throws of a bad dream.

RIP

(Dreaming)

Yes, my sweet. Certainly my sweet. The cow, yes. The fence, yes. A tyrant, yes. A new country, yes, dear. Whatever you say, dear.

Rip rolls over, yawns and stretches.

Then he struggles to his feet.

RIP (cont'd)

Oh goodness! I had the strangest dream. I dreamt that last night, someone snuck into the village and stole my house -- stole my house while I was sleeping -- I don't know how they did that, but they stole the house from right on top of me. In my dream they stole my gun and my dog and my cow and everything. I dreamt that I was sleeping under a tree in the Catskill mountains. (beat) Ooooh, my aching back. The bare ground doesn't make a good bed.

Rip does a double take. The tree. The woods. The hidden glen in the mountains.

RIP (cont'd)

It's true! They stole my house! They stole the whole village! And they replaced our valley with a mountain! (beat) Wait a minute. You can't steal a valley.

Rip wanders around.

RIP (cont'd)

Wait a minute. Now I remember. The keg, the bowling. Ohh. I fell asleep up in the mountains. Oh. That's going to be awkward. (beat) I need to get home. The Cow. The Fence. The leaky roof!

Rip looks around for Wolf.

RIP (cont'd)

Wolf! Here boy! Wolf! We've got work to do.
Where did you go, you silly dog? (beat)
Probably chasing a squirrel or partridge.

Rip picks up the remains of his
gun.

RIP (cont'd)

Oh, what happened here? Those men last night!
They took away my nice new gun and gave me this
rotten old gun. That's hardly fair of them. I
carried their keg. I poured their drinks for
them. And they took my gun.

Rip starts to hobble off stage,
using his gun as a cane.

RIP (cont'd)

I wonder what Dame Van Winkle will say about
this? (beat) First things first: fix the
fence. Then find the cow. (beart) I did
have the strangest dream...

RIP EXITS

SCENE 2

EXT. SLEEPY DUTCH-AMERICAN VILLAGE.

The Inn is no longer the King George, it is now "The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle". The picture of King George is now a picture of George Washington. "Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now was reared a tall naked pole, with something on the top that looked like a red night-cap, and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes"

The Van Winkle house, stage left, is now completely fallen apart; "the house gone to decay - the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges."

RIP VAN WINKLE shuffles from stage right, dragging his gun. The gun falls apart. Rip stops to pick up the pieces.

Everything is strange to him. He stares in the window of the left-most host.

He stares into the window of the inn.

He stops on front of the Van Winkle house.

WOLF comes out, pushing a walker.

WOLF

Rip! Rip! Rip!

RIP

Who are you ripping at, you silly old dog?
Don't rip at me.

Rip takes a close look at Wolf.

RIP (cont'd)

I've got a dog that could be your son. Yes, my wolf is a young pup that looks just like you. Last night I had a dream that someone took away my village. And they left me this new village--

WOLF

Rip! Rip! Rip!

RIP

And you look like you could be Wolf's father.
I never expected to see Wolf's --

Rip grabs Wolf by the collar and looks very closely.

Rip is faint.

RIP (cont'd)

Wolf? Is that you?

WOLF

Wolf! Wolf! Wolf!

RIP

Wolf! What's happened? You're old. The village has changed. I had the strangest dream last night. Then I woke up and you're old, and my house is empty, forlorn and abandoned. Where is everybody? Rip Junior! Baby Judith! Dame Van Winkle!

Wolf hangs his head and slumps down on his walker.

RIP (cont'd)

Wolf, old boy, what's the matter? Is something wrong with the family? We still have each other. I had a strange dream and now I see that strange things have happened! That drink I took in the mountains has addled my poor head sadly. But we have each other.

(Sings)

"IT'S A DOG'S LIFE"

It's a dog's life;

(Rough, rough, rough)

Yes, it's a dog's life;

(Rough, rough, rough)

As long as we're clever,

We're friends forever

It's a dog's life

Rip and Wolf exit stage left.

FADE TO:

SCENE 3

EXT. SLEEPY DUTCH-AMERICAN VILLAGE.

WILLIAM GREEN ("a lean, bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of handbills, was haranguing vehemently") is standing on a bench.

GROWN RIP JUNIOR stands near by and listens.

MR. TRICORNE ("a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat")

WILLIAM GREEN

Citizens! Hear Me! Today's election is the most important in our young country's history. Our members of congress will harvest the seeds of liberty that were sown on Bunker Hill by the heroes of seventy-six.

RIP VAN WINKLE shuffles in from stage left, using his gun as a cane.

WOLF pushes his walker in after Rip.

Green, Tricorne and Young Rip all stare at the newcomers.

WILLIAM GREEN (cont'd)

Hullo, sir. Good day.

RIP

Good day to you.

William Green jumps down off the bench, and leads Rip downstage by the elbow.

WILLIAM GREEN

Which way did you vote, if I may ask?

RIP

Vote?

WILLIAM GREEN

Vote, yes. Did you vote Federal or Democrat?

RIP

Federal? Democrat? Vote? Who am I to vote?
What are you talking about? What is this about
voting? Congress? Liberty? That's all
perfect nonsense! (beat) Listen, I had the
strangest dream last night. I dreamt that
someone stole my village -- this village -- and
--

Tricorne, plants himself before
Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo,
the other resting on his cane, his
keen eyes and sharp hat
penetrating, as it were, into
Rip's very soul.

MR. TRICORNE

It's election day, sir. You must have come
here to vote for a delegate to congress. What
brings you to our election with a gun? Are you
here to disrupt our voting?

Rip backs up and bumps into Wolf,
Wolf backs up and bumps into
William Green.

RIP

Alas! Gentlemen. I am a poor quiet man, a
native of the place, and a loyal subject of the
king, God bless him!

WILLIAM GREEN

He's a Tory! A Spy! A refugee! Catch the
Spy!

Green tries to grab Rip, Wolf
barks and jumps around, Rip runs
around. There's a tangle of
people swirling around Mr.
Tricorne until...

MR. TRICORNE

Halt!

They freeze.

MR. TRICORNE (cont'd)

What did you come here for? Who are you? Who
are you looking for?

Rip unfreezes.

RIP

I'm just a poor native of this town. I came here looking for my friends and family. Last night I had the strangest dream --

MR. TRICORNE

Friends and family? Who are your friends in this village?

WOLF

(Brightly)

Nick! Nick! Nick!

RIP

Hush, Wolf. There is Nicholas Vedder.

MR. TRICORNE

Nicholas Vedder, who would sit here in front of the inn and read the paper?

RIP

Exactly.

MR. TRICORNE

He's been dead these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the church-yard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotten and gone too. Who else do you claim to know?

Rip staggers back, pursued by Mr. Tricorne.

RIP

Brom Dutcher?

MR. TRICORNE

Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stony Point -- others say he was drowned in a squall at the foot of Antony's Nose. I don't know -- he never came back again.

Rip has to sit down. Tricorne leans over him.

Wolf puts a hand on Rip's shoulder. This is tough news.

RIP

And Van Bummel? The schoolmaster? He would read the paper to us. He was not daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary.

Mr. Tricorne sits down next to Rip.

William Green exits.

MR. TRICORNE

(Pats Rip on the shoulder)

He went off to the wars too, was a great militia general, and is now in congress.

Wolf leans against Rip, also.

RIP

War? Congress? Stony Point? What has happened? I had a dream that someone stole my village! But now it looks like I slept through everything. What have I missed?

ENSEMBLE

(sings)

"CHIT CHAT"

Chit-chat, chit-chat

Sitting at the coffee shop

Chit-chat, chit-chat

News and Gossip goes non-stop.

Chit-Chat and all that

Sitting on the front stoop

Chit-chat and all that

Chatting with the village group.

It's a chit-chat day

A chit-chat week

A chit-chat village

Where we all get to speak.

RIP

This looks like my village! I think it was my village. Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?

MR. TRICORNE

Rip Van Winkle? Is he one of your friends?
Oh, to be sure! That's Rip Van Winkle yonder,
leaning against the tree.

Rip jumps up and runs over to
Grown Rip Junior, "a precise
counterpart of himself, as he went
up the mountain: apparently as
lazy, and certainly as ragged."

They circle around each other,
dressed identically, moving
identically.

Wolf rubs on Grown Rip Junior.
Grown Rip pets Wolf -- they know
each other perfectly.

RIP

I'm not myself -- I'm somebody else -- that's me
yonder -- no -- that's somebody else got into my
shoes -- I was myself last night, but I fell
asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my
gun, and every thing's changed, and I'm
changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or
who I am!

JUDITH GARDENIER ("a fresh comely
woman"), carrying a babe in arms
(Rip III) enters.

Mr. Tricorne taps his fingers
against his head to show that Rip
must be crazy. Grown Rip Junior
pulls his chins and thinks about
this.

Wolf growls at Mr. Tricorne.

Mr. Tricorne backs away.

FADE TO:

SCENE 4

EXT. SLEEPY DUTCH-AMERICAN VILLAGE.

RIP VAN WINKLE, old, puzzled,
leaning on his gun.

GROWN RIP JUNIOR, young, puzzled,
looking at his long-lost father.

WOLF, old, leaning on his walker.

JUDITH, grown, with RIP III in her
arms, moves up to take a close,
close look at Rip.

JUDITH

(To Rip III)

Hush, Rip, hush, you little fool; the old man
won't hurt you.

RIP

Wait a minute! What was that baby's name?

JUDITH

Rip Van Winkle, like his father and his uncle.

Rip and Judith circle each other,
just like Rip and Grown Rip
Junior. She's dressed similarly
to Rip and Grown Rip Junior.

Wolf rubs on Judith. Judith pets
Wolf -- they know each other,
also.

Grown Rip Junior joins, and they
switch directions, all four of
them circling each other.

Rip stops, thinks, and they switch
directions and start circling
again.

RIP

What's your name, good woman?

JUDITH

Judith Gardenier.

RIP

Judith Gardenier? But Dame Gardenier only had
a baby boy, named Peter.

(MORE)

RIP (cont'd)

She didn't -- couldn't have -- back then she didn't -- but that doesn't mean that some day she won't -- then was then -- but now is now. There was -- is -- couldn't have been... (beat) Who's your father?

JUDITH

Ah, poor man, Rip Van Winkle was his name, but it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, and never has been heard of since -- Wolf, here, came home without him; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then but a tiny baby, I hardly knew him.

Rip sits down, again.

RIP

It's just too much. Too much. Where is your mother?

JUDITH

Oh, she, too, died but a short time since; she broke a blood-vessel in a fit of passion at a New-England peddler.

RIP

My wife? Gone?

Rip totters back to his feet.

RIP (cont'd)

I am your father! Young Rip Van Winkle once -- old Rip Van Winkle now! Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle?

Judith pulls back. Grown Rip Junior pulls back. Wolf pulls back.

DAME VANDERDONK (an old woman, "the most ancient inhabitant of the village, and well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighborhood") enters.

JUDITH

Good day, Dame Vanderdonk.

DAME VANDERDONK

Judith Gardenier, and little Rip. How are you?

JUDITH

We're very well, thank you.

DAME VANDERDONK

Rip Van Winkle.

RIP

Yes, ma'am?

GROWN RIP JUNIOR

Yes, ma'am?

DAME VANDERDONK

(To Old Rip)

Not you, you old buzzard. (beat) Wait a minute! Who are you? Are you Rip Van Winkle? Sure enough! it is Rip Van Winkle - it is himself! Welcome home again, old neighbor. Why, where have you been these twenty long years?

RIP

Well, I had the strangest dream where someone stole my village and --

JUDITH

Father?

GROWN RIP JUNIOR

Father?

WOLF

Rip! Rip! Rip!

Rip, Grown Rip Junior, Judith all hug and dance around. Dame Vanderdonk applauds.

ENSEMBLE

(Sings)

"MY FAMILY" (to the tune of I Love Work)

My Fam-i-ly; my fam-ily's all here.

My Fam-i-ly; yes Fam-i-ly is my life.

My Fam-i-ly; it fills me full of cheer.

My Fam-i-ly; I only miss my wife.

My Fam-i-ly; I could be with them all day.

Yes, I could be with them all day.

Father? JUDITH

Yes? RIP

Father? GROWN RIP JUNIOR

The very same! RIP

Rip! WOLF

Listen, last night I thought I had a strange dream, but today I've found out that it wasn't so strange. RIP

You must come over to my house, Peter will be so excited to see you after all these years. JUDITH

Peter Gardenier? RIP

Yes, he's my husband. JUDITH

He can't be your husband, he's just a baby, no older than little Rip you're holding. RIP

Father, that was twenty years ago. JUDITH

Right. Right. That's going to take some getting used to. RIP

I'm so excited to have you back, Father. You'll come straight over to our house and we'll talk about all the things that have happened. JUDITH

Actually, I was asleep. All I could do is tell you about a strange dream I had. I think you should tell me about yourself and Peter and the children and all the things I missed. RIP

JUDITH

Right. This will take some getting used to. I'll go home and tell Peter, and then I'll get some get dinner ready for you, Rip. (beat) You come too, Rip.

Rip and Grown Rip Junior look at each other.

GROWN RIP JUNIOR

Did she mean you?

RIP

I think she meant you.

GROWN RIP JUNIOR

This is going to take some getting used to.

Judith exits.

RIP

I suppose I should figure out this congress business so I can go and vote. Who are the Federals and who are the Democrats? What's a congress?

GROWN RIP JUNIOR

Federal? Democrat? Vote? Who am I to vote?

WOLF

Vote! Vote! Vote!

RIP

You didn't vote?

Grown Rip Junior mimics his father's elaborate bow, shrug and eye-rolling.

GROWN RIP JUNIOR

This politics is silly to me. They meet down in New York City, nowhere near here.

RIP

Don't you start that attitude with me, Rip Van Winkle. (beat) My wife used to say that all the time. Now I now why. We're a country! You mother would be so proud. She wanted to form a better country -- one without kings and tyrants. What would your mother say about voting?

GROWN RIP JUNIOR

Mother would make me vote. Mother was very proud of being a new nation. She said that our little colony was all grown up.

RIP

And that's why we've got to vote. It's our job. Our country is all grown up. And you're all grown up. And Judith is all grown up. And now we've got work to do. (beat) After goofing off for the last twenty years, I've got a lot of work to do.

(sings)

"AMBITION"

I came here to have a life, have a life, have a life,

I came here to have a better life.

I came here for everything, everything, everything.

I came here for everything, but I need to get to work.

Life is slowly passing by, passing by, passing by.

Life is slowly passing, passing right away from me.

ENSEMBLE
(Sings)

"Ambition" (Grieg's Hall of the Mountain King)

All we want is everything,
Everything, everything.

All we want is everything and so
we set to sea.

All we want is fame and wealth,
fame and wealth, fame and wealth.

All we want is fame and wealth and
so we sailed from home.

To be the best we'll do hard work,
do hard work, do hard work.

"Rip Van Winkle"

40.

To be the best we'll do hard work,
we'll do hard work each day.

All we want is everything,
Everything, everything.

All we want is everything and so
we came to here.

(They hum the tune)

THE LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK...

THE END