

Rip Dreams
by
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Inspired by "Rip Van Winkle" by Washington Irving

Draft 3

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BLANK SCREEN

Thunder rumbles. Great peals of it CRASH and BOOM over a black screen.

Or is it thunder after all? No, it's starting to sound more like something else. Explosions, maybe? Or is it...

...not bowling balls?

EXT. CATSKILLS MOUNTAIN CLEARING - MORNING

RIP VAN WINKLE (40) lies on his back, eyes open, stretched over the roots of a large tree. He wears a tattered white shirt, vest, and cut-off trousers. Next to him lies a floppy farmer's hat.

He sits up, rubbing his head and looking around. Jamming his hat over his ears, he scans the empty ground around him.

RIP

By George, they've took my
firelock. Dame Van Winkle'll be
havin' my guts for garters, she
shall. Out all night, nothin' to
bring home for the table, and a
stolen gun to boot? Aye, me...

Grumbling, he stands all the way up. He spins around slowly, scouring the small clearing he finds himself in.

RIP

Now where are them blasted...
(shouting)
Hullo! Good gentlemen!
Hulllllloooooo!

Silence. A crow CAWS.

Disoriented, Rip looks up at the sky in puzzlement, pointer finger tracing various trajectories through the air. Without much confidence it settles on left, and he pivots his whole body to follow. He starts walking.

EXT. THICK WOODS - LATER

Rip passes a WOODCUTTER (35) chopping at a tree, and waves.

RIP

Hullo, good woodsman!

The man doesn't appear to hear. Rip walks towards him.

RIP
'Scuse me! Kind sir!

The man glances up. Hefting his axe, he steps out of sight behind the tree...and vanishes.

Rip walks all the way up to the tree and circles it. There is no sign of either the woodcutter or any axe-marks in the wood. He shrugs and keeps going.

EXT. STREAMBED - NOON

Soon he comes to a moderately flowing stream, and bends over to drink from cupped hands.

He happens to glance upriver, and:

Not more than twenty yards away, a large sturdy-looking raft floats towards him, crewed by three very strange looking people.

On one side sits the BUM (28), a grungy-looking man in a flannel shirt and jeans with a 1940's haircut. He smokes a cigarette and sits on a rucksack.

Opposite him stands the COLONIAL (33), sporting long beaded hair and dressed in buckskins and homespun. He leans on a rifle that's at least a head taller than he is.

Steering the raft by longpole is the KID (13), wearing only overalls with rolled-up cuffs and a broad straw hat. He chews on a long blade of grass.

The Colonial spies Rip. He turns around and WHISTLES to get the Kid's attention.

COLONIAL
Company ahead.

KID
(seeing Rip)
Well I'll be damned...what in the
sam hill is *he* doin' here?

BUM
Cat seems to have wandered into the
wrong dream. Let's stop, man. See
if he needs a lift or anything.

KID
Ain't got no time for socializin',
Sal. '

(MORE)

KID (cont'd)

Less a course you wanna wait fer
our friend back there t' catch up
t'us, and unleash a heap a hell on
our rumps.

BUM

Ah, you worry too much, kid. We've
got miles and miles of country
between it and us. Plus I'm
starving, man! We haven't eaten
since Halifax!

COLONIAL

Good hunting in these woods. Fresh
droppings on the breeze.

KID

Oh-kay, oh-kay, we'll stop a
spell...*shucks*, that *is* a nearabout
perfect spot for a lunch break,
ain't it. Figures. But if you hears
anything, Natty, we get back on
board and paddle like Tuesday.
Deal?

BUM

Come on, man, chill. We're safer
than a mouse in a malt heap out
here.

The Kid steers the raft up towards the bank.

KID

Mornin, mister!

Rip stares stupidly, cupped hands frozen below his lips.

KID

You dumb, or what? Ain'tcha gonna
say "good mornin'!" back, like a
proper gentl'man ought to?"

Rip slowly stands up.

RIP

Oh, I beg pardon...good morning,
lads, and God save the King!

The kid explodes into great GUFFAWS of laughter.

KID (CONT'D)

King? Where the heck you from? *Eng-*
land?

RIP
 No, no, not I. My kin have lived
 here a century or more, true and
 loyal subjects of the Crown, to the
 last man!

KID
 (rolling his eyes)
 Ah, Lord Above. One a them.

The Kid anchors the raft against the bank, and the three hop
 off. He steps up to Rip.

KID
 Name's George. George...um...George
 Jackson. That there's, ah, Sal--

The Bum is wandering over to the nearest tree to relieve
 himself.

SAL
 Hey, Daddy-O.

GEORGE
 --and we just call *him* 'Hawkeye.'

The Colonial is strolling off into the woods in the other
 direction, rifle slung across his shoulder.

Rip shakes George's hand warmly.

RIP
 Rip Van Winkle, I am. A pleasure.

GEORGE
 Rip Van Winkle, huh? Hmm...rings a
 bell.

Pondering, George takes out a plug of chewing tobacco, plops
 down on a stump, and begins chewing.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 I think I heard a you.

RIP
 I?

Rip locates a nice rock and sits as well.

RIP (CONT'D)
 You flatter me! I'm but a poor,
 quiet farmer, from the small hamlet
 down in yonder valley.

Rip takes out a tobacco pouch and long wood pipe, and begins to stuff it. George watches him with a smile on his face.

GEORGE

(still grinning)

Well, I guess I must be mistaken. I met so many people before, I get 'em mixed up sometimes.

RIP

So...if you bear no patriotism to the King, God save him, well...just whom are you subject to?

GEORGE

That's a damn good question. Hey Sal! Who we subject to?

SAL

(craning his neck around while pissing)

I don't know, man. Who are we subject to?

GEORGE

C'mon now Sal, I seen you write it down in your li'l book yesterday. What was it. Somethin 'bout the bees and the scenery.

Sal pulls a flip-top notebook out of his back pocket, and flips through the pages one-handed.

SAL

You really dug that bit, huh kid. Let's see...here it is.

(clears his throat)

'The only kings I've known are the great beasts of machinery, click-clacking away their new holy dirges in the modern night.'

GEORGE

Ha. Well I guess *that's* who we subject to. Sal's mighty good with pretty words and such.

Rip strikes a match and takes a nice long pull from his pipe.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

So you ain't told me yet hows you managed a wander up to our river here.

RIP

Well, that's something of a tale,
friend. Yesterday I come sojourning
up in these woods to catch a bit of
sport with my rifle. Yet instead of
game, 'twas men I found, playing at
ninepins and drinking wine.

George raises his eyebrows.

RIP (CONT'D)

Now, ask any man what knows me, and
he'll tell you Rip Van Winkle is no
featherweight when it comes to his
spirits. Yet no more than a few
friendly nips of their drink and
lo! I fell fast asleep against a
stump. And guess *then* what there
happened?

George spits a stream of chew.

GEORGE

They stole ya gun?

RIP

Damned right they did! Robbed
blind, while I slumbered! What
think you of that?

GEORGE

Hm. That's a damn shame, mister. I
reckon those were some old spooks
you saw. Don'tcha know you don't
never drink no spook's hooch?

RIP

I don't believe I follow you.

GEORGE

His liquor. Putch a right to sleep,
and fo' a pow'ful long time, too.
They put they's spook-dust in it.

Rip looks blankly at him.

George stares right back, and spits again.

RIP

Where is it that you live, exactly?

GEORGE

Where do I *live*? Why, the raft,
'course. 'S been sorta ness-er-sary
a keep on the move a' late.

Sal has finished urinating, and has since tromped back to the raft. He rummages through his rucksack.

RIP

What's that, you live on your boat?
Ha! *Grand!* That's marvelous, God
bless you! And how is it?

GEORGE

Oh, it's awful nice. Other places
seem so cramped up and smothery,
but a raft don't. You feel mighty
free and easy and comf'table on a
raft.

RIP

And you three, you've been
companions long?

Sal produces a half-drunk bottle of wine and walks over to Rip and George.

He offers Rip the bottle, then sits down on the ground and takes off his flannel shirt.

RIP

Many thanks, stranger!

Sal begins patching up a hole in his shirt with a needle and thread he brought from his rucksack.

Rip takes a swig of wine, and his eyes open wide.

RIP

Flaming Atoga! Now *that's* the
bounty of the vine, the way God
intended! From Italy I'll wager?

SAL

San Francisco.

RIP

San Francisco, eh? Hmm...no, no I
can't say I've heard of it. Of
course, I've not looked at a map of
Europe since I was a young lad in
school, and I confess I never had
much of a head for Geography.

(MORE)

RIP (cont'd)
 (passing George the
 bottle)
 You've been to Italy then, have
 you?

Sal stops sewing and looks up dreamily into space.

SAL
 I made plans to go, once upon a
 time. But I think deep down we knew
 it was little more than a pipe
 dream.

He resumes his needlework thoughtfully.

SAL (CONT'D)
 Just a crazy dream.

George takes out his tobacco plug and swigs some wine, then
 replaces it in his lip. He passes the bottle to Sal.

SAL (CONT'D)
 There's no more ocean voyages for
 us cats. We got no choice, it's
 westwards or bust.
 (taking the bottle)
 Thanks.

RIP
 You have business out West, do you.

George spits out another stream of juice.

GEORGE
 We look like we businessmen to you?

RIP
 (looking from one to the
 other)
 Well, no, I...I suppose not. Just
 why are you going west then, if you
 don't mind my asking?

SAL
 (coldly)
 We do mind your asking.

He stares Rip in the eyes. No one speaks for a few seconds.

Suddenly Sal LAUGHS.

SAL (CONT'D)
 Ha! Only messing. Here ya go.

He offers Rip the wine, who reaches out a hand to take it.

Suddenly a loud GUN SHOT booms off screen. Rip starts and nearly drops the bottle.

RIP

Blood and ashes! Who the devil's shooting at us?

GEORGE

Calm ya-self now, that's just Hawkeye a-fixin' after our lunch. And I'll betcha a nickel you won't hear another.

RIP

Another what?

George spits again.

GEORGE

'Nuther gunshot. He's plumb dirty on his mark.

Beat.

RIP

So...you were nearabout to telling me--

Suddenly Hawkeye CRASHES out of the woods, wildly disheveled, face dripping with either red paint or...blood. Ugly purple bruises wreathe his neck and wrists.

HAWKEYE

It's here.

The others stare at him in shock for half a moment, then all three begin talking at once.

GEORGE

It's here?! Sunnamabitch, it caught us!! Oh, shit on a whistle we gotta MOVE!

SAL

You're a madman, you damn white Injun! Nothing could've gone that fast. I've driven Jags that never went so fast!

RIP

*What is here? 'Scuse me! Gentlemen!
What is here?*

Hawkeye plunges into the water and drags the raft out until it's free-floating.

George leaps up to give him a hand, grabbing the longpole.

Sal rises nervously and peers through the trees, jamming a cigarette into his mouth and lighting it with shaky hands from a Zippo lighter.

GEORGE

*Sal! Winkle! You soakin' up the
sunshine? C'mon, now, we fixin' to
skedaddle here!*

Sal starts toward the raft, but spins to look at the motionless Rip.

SAL

You coming, man, or what?

A pause, all three watching him.

RIP

*Gentlemen, I haven't the faintest
idea what seems to be scaring the
britches off you, and I really must
be headed back to hearth and home.
I already stand to face the sharp
edge of Dame Van Winkle's tongue,
and I don't have a mind to make it
any sharper by delaying my
homecoming. Now, as you're headed
west, and I east, then I shall bid
you a good morning and carry on my
way.*

George and Hawkeye exchange a look.

GEORGE

*East? What are you, stupid? Aintcha
heard the Injun?*

HAWKEYE

*You'll find naught but your grave
upriver, my brother. A great Evil
hounds us.*

(MORE)

HAWKEYE (cont'd)

We escaped its claws once, but it has since caught our scent and now charges blindly on the warpath, thirsting after all men's blood.

Beat. Rip looks skeptically upriver at the calmly flowing water.

GEORGE

God *damn*, we ain't got *time* fo fools! C'mon, Hawkeye, get his legs. Grab his arms, Sal.

With George holding the raft, Sal and Hawkeye lunge towards Rip. He backs up slowly, nervously, holding up a hand as if to ward them off.

He tries to spin around and run, but can't quite manage. His feet seem to be tied to lead weights, and he can't lift them more than a few inches off the ground. He GROANS, then SHOUTS.

Sal reaches him first, and though Rip thrashes his arms around a little, Sal quickly subdues him and throws a cord of rope around his wrists. Hawkeye helps tie it off, then they bind Rip's legs together.

GEORGE

Let's go, boys! I thunk I hear Big Nasty just behind them trees!

Hawkeye slings the bound Rip over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes and carries him onto the raft, where he throws him down (none too softly) and promptly sits on him.

Sal and George leap onto the raft and kick off, sending it into the quick current.

RIP

Let me go, you devils! Shame, shame on you! Why, if Dame Van Winkle were to catch you now, she'd... she'd have you horsewhipped! She'd skin your hides and use them for a doormat! You've got no right abusin' strangers this way! If only I had my flintlock, you'd...you'd think twice before messing with Rip Van Winkle!

GEORGE

Oh, pipe down, Rip. Lord.
(to Sal)

(MORE)

GEORGE (cont'd)
You figger he gon' be like this the
whole way?

SAL
Just paddle, Huck, he's the least
of our worries.

GEORGE
I *am* paddlin'. What the hell are
you all doin? Make ya-selves useful
and find a stick a sumpthin'.

SAL
(grumbling)
Okay, okay...cause we got so many
sticks lying around this goddam
floating nuthouse...hey, Hawkeye,
pass me that rifle of yours, would
ya? I bet that'd work.

HAWKEYE
(haughtily)
If you'd ever owned a gun, Master
Jack, you might know a rusty barrel
and wet powder make for poor
shooting.

SAL
(trying to grab it)
Ah, come on, man, I'll dry it off
when I'm done...

In the blink of an eye, Hawkeye pulls a knife from his belt
and sticks it against Sal's neck.

Hawkeye speaks in Mohican.

HAWKEYE (SUBTITLE)
The white man drinks so much, he
forgets his fancy clothes won't
protect his heart from Hawkeye's
knife.

Sal backs up with hands raised defensively.

SAL
Don't get cranked, I'm just trying
to help...

GEORGE
Hawkeye! Just g'im ya gun!

HAWKEYE
 (quietly)
 Pardon?

GEORGE
 Bullets ain't no good against that
 thing, you know that! And the
 longer y'all squabble the sooner we
 all dead! Let's go, shake a leg!

Hawkeye stands up and towers over George threateningly.

HAWKEYE
 I begin to wonder why I choose to
 take orders from children and
 simpletons. Perhaps it is only you
 and not I that the Beast chases.

GEORGE
 Watch it, Sal, 'e's gone crazy!
 Help! Help!

Sal feebly tries to tackle Hawkeye, who knocks him onto the deck with a backblow from his forearm. Hawkeye then grabs George around the throat with the free arm.

As the three initiate a small fist-fight on the raft, Rip kicks, rolls, and tumbles over the side of the raft with a SPLASH.

Beat. Limbs flail. Waves churn.

Soon Rip is clawing his way to the bank, and flops down in the mud, panting. Somehow his bonds lie in tatters next to him.

He looks around. The raft is nowhere in sight, and the woods are quiet.

He stands up, bedraggled, and wrings some of the river water out of his hat. For a moment, he gazes curiously downriver where the raft was presumably headed.

RIP
 (turning back around)
 Blasted foreigners...all the sense
 they make would scarce fill a
 teacup.

Grumbling, Rip heads upriver.

EXT. DEEPER WOODS - CONTINUOUS

As Rip pushes into thicker brush, the lighthearted mood of the forest quickly gathers tension. The birds stop chirping, and each of his steps CRUNCH all too loudly in the eerie silence. Something seems to be watching him.

He begins to hear sounds echoing in the depths of the woods ahead of him:

A LOW WHINE, that turns into a steady drone. It's a chainsaw.

A MUTED BOOM that sounds like dynamite.

A RADIO being tuned as it tries to find a clear channel.

A man's ENTHUSIASTIC SPEECH, distorted enough so we can't actually hear the words but accompanied by THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE and heavy CHEERING and CHANTING.

As Rip's ears fill with the anachronistic sounds of an industrial age, he looks around wildly, trying to see where all the noise is coming from.

There's nothing but foreboding trees.

The sounds crescendo and build. We hear STEAM ENGINE WHISTLES, POLICE SIRENS, and the POUNDING of a JUDGE'S GAVEL, with a voice shouting "ORDER! ORDER!"

Rip begins to get frantic, spinning around in wild jerking motions.

A copy machine sits in some brush ten feet to his left. We can be fairly certain it wasn't there a moment ago. As Rip cautiously walks toward the strange machine, it begins to gently snow white business cards. He catches one and looks at it. It reads SYRACUSE LIFE INSURANCE in big plain letters, with some agents, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses printed at the bottom.

More things fall from the sky: crushed Budweiser cans, junk mail, solo cups...

Rip stares up at the forest canopy in disbelief, backing up slowly, and:

EXT. INTERSTATE FREEWAY - DAY

...suddenly he emerges from a clump of brush onto a 21st-century freeway. Traffic races past him and he YELPS WITH TERROR as a semi almost nicks him.

Standing alongside the highway are hitchhikers, thumbs stuck out and hand-written signs held high.

One is a SHORT BALD MAN (35) in aviators, a visor cap, and 1970s clothing. His sign says "LAS VEGAS."

Another is a BEARDED GENTLEMAN (30) in an early 19th-century suit and ascot, holding a sign for "WALDEN."

A third is a SCRUFFY KID (21) wearing a modern hiking framepack, heading to "ALASKA."

Behind him, a GREASER (38) in a white 1940's suit and bowtie, going to "CASABLANCA."

Last is a COWBOY (35) in a bowler cap and 1880's suit, headed for "HOLE-IN-THE-WALL."

EXT. DOWNTOWN CITY SIDEWALK - DAY

A car ZOOMS past Rip and suddenly he's standing in a crowded metropolitan street, pedestrians roughly shoving him from all sides.

Wide-eyed, the terrified Rip feebly pushes at the people around him. He looks like he might be sick. He GASPS for air.

Someone shoves him hard in the back, and he loses his balance and falls over. He stares up into the silhouettes of marching 21st century urbanites as one raises a heavy dress-shoe directly over his face.

BLACK OUT

EXT. CATSKILLS MOUNTAIN CLEARING - MORNING

Rip wakes up.

He is sitting under the same tree from the beginning, but now his beard is long and frosted with icicles. Next to him is his flintlock rifle, sure enough, but it's completely rusted through and iced over.

He gives a TREMENDOUS YAWN and gets to his feet, shaking off most of the snow and ice. He rubs his knuckles in red-rimmed eyes.

In the distance he spies a plume of smoke floating over the trees. He starts for it.

EXT. COLONIAL VILLAGE OUTSKIRTS - LATER

He walks along a mountain path and soon comes to a look-out. Down below, he sees his lazy little hometown spread out before him.

RIP

Ah...right where I left you!

With curiosity, he watches villagers bustle about and smoke drift out of the chimneys.

He rubs his forehead and, turning around, looks back up the road he came down. It bends around a few crags and plunges back into the mountain forest. He stares into these dark woods for perhaps half a minute.

Suddenly his stomach GROWLS. He looks down at it.

RIP

Indeed? Sounds to me like you're in
want of your breakfast. By George,
I can almost smell it from here!
Dum, dum, da-da-da dum...

Humming to himself, he heads on down the mountain towards town, and we can just make out a VILLAGER hoisting an 18th-century American flag up a pole.

FADE OUT.