

# THE WISHING SHELF BOOK AWARDS

29<sup>th</sup> April 2018

**TITLE:** *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*

**AUTHOR:** *Washington Irving. Abridged by Fiza Pathan and Michaelangelo Zane. Illustrated by Farzana Cooper*

**Star Rating:** 4

## CATCHY QUOTE

*'A well-pruned, wonderfully illustrated abridgment. A gripping retelling of the classic.'* *The Wishing Shelf*

## REVIEW

*Firstly, I must tell you, I do enjoy the classics. For me, there is little to compare with the joys of Dickens or Joyce; and I'm most happy settling down with a copy of Pride and Prejudice than, say, The De Vinci Code. So, I happily undertook a newly abridged copy of The Legend of Sleepy Hollow by Washington Irving.*

*This book, it seems, is very much for children between the age of 8 and 12. As such, the abridging authors have worked hard to simplify the language; and, I'm happy to report, they have worked wonders. Written in 1820 and at just under 12,000, the original short story is, 'wordy' – and that is putting it mildly. For example, 'Be that as it may, I do not vouch for the fact, but merely advert to it, for the sake of being precise and authentic.' A story written in this manner is a daunting prospect for any young reader; and, no doubt, for the poor teacher trying to instigate any sort of enthusiasm in the classroom. But, with a gold-tipped pen, Pathan and Zane have pruned, nipped and manipulated the text in such a way as to open it up to children.*

*Now, there's always the risk of killing the story if the abridging author cuts too deeply. But, happily, this is not a problem here. Yes, many of the rambling paragraphs have been altered and cut, but the tormenting plot of ghostly goings-on in Tarry Town is still very much there to be enjoyed.*

*If I was to suggest anything to the two authors, it might be that they be very daring, and introduce speech into the story. Having worked with children and books all of my life, I have discovered that the 'chattering' of a character always seems to help the unwilling reader to access the text. Of course, by adding speech, this would be altering the text to a very large degree. However, I think it might be worth it. Although this abridged text is considerably more accessible to children than the original, the lack of any speech between the characters will still be a huge hurdle that many reluctant readers will not be capable of overcoming.*

*Finally, I must discuss the illustrations. They are, in every way, wonderful. They reminded me of the old wood cuttings that can still be seen in books dating as far back as the 1600s. There is so much 'happening' in the drawings that I was very much enthralled by them; in every way, they add considerably to the book. In fact, I would go as far as to say, it is the illustrations that make this book stand out from other books of this nature. Children will undoubtedly love them.*

## *A 'Wishing Shelf' Book Review*

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