

# The Washington Witch

The truly terrible tale of superstition and stupidity set in Washington, County Durham, England around 1605.

Cast:

Jane Atkinson	-	frail old woman with old country cures for all
Simon Sackless	-	Village idiot with a small brain but a big heart
Farmer Foul	-	Local grasping landowner and bully
Henry Henchman	-	his stupid assistant
Dora delightful-		the village beauty she likes to think
Lisa Luscious	-	her rival beauty and lovely as a cow-pat
Percy Pure	-	The village squirt
Willie Womaniser	-	The village Casanova
Councillor Clod	-	The Future Mayor (he hopes)
Mrs Clara Clod-		His wife and campaign organiser
The village jobs	-	jobs. Any number you have spare

## 1 Outside Jane Atkinson's cottage

Jane Atkinson: (ENTER JANE) Here I is ... Jane Atkinson, wise woman of this village. I see into the future. Strange visions of what will be. Hang on! I feel a vision coming on now ... Woe! Woe! And thrice Woe! Death and destruction. I see it now, a death most cruel will fall on some poor soul before this day is done. I've seen the sign ... this morning a bat fell in me porridge! (SHE LEAVES FOR A MOMENT. SIMON ENTERS)

Simon Sackless: Here I is, Simon Sackless. I is the biggest idiot in the village of Washington maybe the biggest idiot in the whole world. Has anybody seen my friend Jane Atkinson? In her house? I'll just go and see ... (CALLS) Jane! (JANE RE-ENTERS)

Jane Atkinson: Simon, my little friend it's nice to see you!

Simon Sackless: Hello, Jane. I came to see if I could run any errands for you.

Jane Atkinson: That's very kind of you, Simon Sackless. Come in and have a cup of tea first.

Simon Sackless: Will you read my fortune in the tea leaves?

Jane Atkinson: I will! I will! But today's not a good day to have your fortune read. Today is a black day. I've already seen death and destruction in the porridge. Woe, woe and thrice woe! Death and destruction. I see it now, a death most cruel will fall on some poor soul before this day is done. (THEY LEAVE)

## 2 The path outside Jane Atkinson's Cottage

((ENTER FARMER FOUL AND HARRY HENCHMAN))

Farmer Foul: Here I is, Farmer Foul! I is the greediest, nastiest, most evil man in this village!

Harry Henchman: And here I is ... Harry Henchman! I is the second-greediest, second nastiest and second most evil man in this town.

Farmer Foul: Is this the cottage of Jane Atkinson:? The old witch? Well it won't be for much longer!

Harry Henchman: No! It won't be for much longer!

Farmer Foul: I want this cottage!

Harry Henchman: he wants this cottage!

Farmer Foul: And what I wants ... I gets!

Harry Henchman: And what I wants ... I gets!

Farmer Foul: No! What I wants I gets!

Harry Henchman: Sorry ... what he wants he gets!

Farmer Foul: Jane Atkinson's cottage shall be mine ... mine ... MINE!

Harry Henchman: Jane Atkinson's cottage shall be his ... his ... HIS!

Farmer Foul: (TO HARRY HENCHMAN) Oh, shut up!

Harry Henchman: (TO AUDIENCE) Oh, shut up!

Farmer Foul: (TO HARRY HENCHMAN) Not them! You, you fool!

Harry Henchman: (TO AUDIENCE) Not you! Me, you fools!

Farmer Foul: The stream that runs through this cottage garden flows through the village.

Harry Henchman: So what?

Farmer Foul: So ... if I own the stream I can cut off the village water and charge them for every drop they drink!

Harry Henchman: That's not very nice!

Farmer Foul: I'm not a very nice man.

Harry Henchman: Neither am I.

Farmer Foul: That's why you're here to help me.

Harry Henchman: Am I?

Farmer Foul: You are. First I'll try to buy the old witch's cottage.

Harry Henchman: What if she won't sell?

Farmer Foul: That's a problem.

Harry Henchman: I could duff her up for you!

Farmer Foul: No you can't. Simon Sackless wouldn't let you.

Harry Henchman: Do you think I'm afraid of the village idiot?

Farmer Foul: Yes.

Harry Henchman: (TO AUDIENCE) He's right!

Farmer Foul: So, if she won't sell her cottage, I'll threaten to cut off her food supply.

Harry Henchman: (TO AUDIENCE) He'll threaten to cut off her food supply.

Farmer Foul: Don't start that again!

Harry Henchman: (TO AUDIENCE) Don't start that again!

### 3 The garden of Jane Atkinson's cottage

Farmer Foul: Jane Atkinson! Here I is! Farmer Foul!

Jane Atkinson: (FROM HOUSE) I wondered where the funny smell

was coming from.

Farmer Foul: I've come to buy your cottage.  
Jane Atkinson: But it's not for sale.  
Farmer Foul: Sell it to me or ... or I'll tell the village shop to stop selling food to you. What will you do the?  
Harry Henchman: What will you do then? You'll starve!  
Jane Atkinson: No I won't. I'll eat the food I grow in my own garden.  
Harry Henchman: She said she'll eat the food she grows in her own garden.  
Farmer Foul: I heard her, stupid. Right, you old witch, I'll find some other way of getting even with you. (EXIT WITH HARRY HENCHMAN)  
Simon Sackless: You saw him off right enough, Jane.  
Jane Atkinson: But not for long. His sort don't give up easy. He can cause a lot of trouble for a poor old lady like me.  
Simon Sackless: Then why didn't you just sell him your cottage?  
Jane Atkinson: Because then I'd have nowhere to live, you Sackless boy. Sometimes I think you're as daft as they say.  
Simon Sackless: Sometime I think that too! (THEY ENTER THE COTTAGE)

#### **4 The road to the village green**

(DORA DELIGHTFUL AND LISA LUSCIOUS STROLL ON AND WALK TOWARDS JANE ATKINSON'S COTTAGE)

Dora Delightful: Here I is ... Dora Delightful. The most adorable, beautiful and cuddly girl in the whole village of Washington ... maybe in the whole world!  
Lisa Luscious: Here I is ... Lisa Luscious. I's even more adorable, beautiful and cuddly than her.  
Dora Delightful: I suppose that extra bit of fat does make you a bit more cuddly, my dear.  
Lisa Luscious: Farmer Foul said he fancied me!  
Dora Delightful: Yes, he fancied you to pull his plough. You look more like a horse than his Dobbin!  
Lisa Luscious: You're just jealous because nobody fancies you.  
Dora Delightful: That's not true. All the boys fancy me (TO AUDIENCE), Don't you lads?  
Lisa Luscious: They may fancy you ... but have you seen the state of that lot? Uglier than a pig's bum the lot of them! You just name me one really handsome boy that fancies you.  
Dora Delightful: Willie Womaniser does. You just watch this ...

#### **5 The Road outside Jane Atkinson's cottage**

(ENTER WILLIE WOMANISER AND PERCY PURE.)

Willie Womaniser: Here I is, Willie Womaniser! I's the greatest lover the Washington girls have ever seen. Maybe the greatest lover the world has ever seen.  
Percy Pure: And here I is, Percy Pure. The nicest boy in Washington anyone could ever wish to meet.  
Willie Womaniser: Say, Perce, did you get an eyeful of that Dora Delightful?

Percy Pure: She seems like a nice girl.

Willie Womaniser: Nice? She's gorgeous ... and she's crackers about me.

Percy Pure: How do you know, Willie?

Willie Womaniser: Why ... why ... why, because any girl would be crackers about a handsome hunk like me. (TO AUDIENCE) Wouldn't they? Watch this ... (CALLS) Dora!

Dora Delightful: What do you want, Fish Face?

Willie Womaniser: What about coming down to the village green for a quick spin around the maypole with me?

Dora Delightful: Well, I may ... (CACKLES AT HER OWN JOKE) Get it? May Maypole. Oh, never mind. Then again I may not.

Willie Womaniser: May not? You mean you can resist my overpowering charms?

Percy Pure: (FEELS WILLIE'S MUSCLES) You never told me you had overpowering arms.

Willie Womaniser: I said charms, you fool.

Dora Delightful: What sort of girl do you take me for? I'll have you know, I'm very hard to get. (THE GIRLS EXIT)

Percy Pure: What are you going to do about that, Willie?

Willie Womaniser: Do? Do? I'm going to see old Jane Atkinson.

Percy Pure: What for, Willie?

Willie Womaniser: Because I hear she can make love potions!

## 6 The garden of Jane Atkinson's cottage

Willie Womaniser: Jane Atkinson!  
(JANE COMES TO THE DOOR OF HER COTTAGE)

Jane Atkinson: What can I do for you, young man?

Willie Womaniser: I hear you're a witch and you can make a love potion?

Jane Atkinson: Well, you heard wrong. I'm not a witch.

Willie Womaniser: All right, then, you're the village wise woman.

Jane Atkinson: That's better.

Willie Womaniser: But can you make me a love potion? I want Dora Delightful to fall madly in love with me.

Jane Atkinson: That'll make two, then!

Willie Womaniser: Two what?

Jane Atkinson: Two people madly in love with you.

Willie Womaniser: Why? Who's the other one?

Jane Atkinson: Why, you, you young peacock. You're madly in love with yourself already.

Willie Womaniser: Very funny. Now, do you have a magic potion or don't you?

Jane Atkinson: I don't. But I do know that they say you must take the rose petals from a freshly-filled grave.

Willie Womaniser: (REPEATING TO MEMORISE) Rose petals from a freshly-filled grave.

Jane Atkinson: Scatter them on the ground ...  
Willie Womaniser: Scatter them on the ground ...  
Jane Atkinson: And the next person to walk over them will fall madly in love  
with you.  
Willie Womaniser: So, all I have to do is make sure Dora Delightful walks over  
the petals first.  
Jane Atkinson: If that's the young lady you want. But beware! The spell will  
only last for a year and a day. Beware! Beware! (JANE EXISTS)

## 7 Path to the green

Willie Womaniser: Percy Pure! Fetch me the rose petals from a newly-filled  
grave.  
Percy Pure: Here they are, Willie.  
Willie Womaniser: See! I scatter them on the path ... (HE DOES SO) ... now  
just ask Dora Delightful to step this way!  
Percy Pure: (CALLS) Dora Delightful! Dora Delightful! Come over  
here. Willie Womaniser has something to tell you!  
Dora Delightful: (CALLS BACK) Tell Willie Womaniser he's too late.  
I've just had a much better offer from Farmer Foul, and he's filthy rich. So  
long, squirt!  
Percy Pure: Sorry, Willie, she wouldn't come. ( H E S T E P S  
TOWARDS WILLIE WOMANISER AND GOES THROUGH THE ROSE  
PETALS. HE STANDS, QUIVERING FOR A FEW MOMENTS, THEN GAZES  
LOVINGLY AT WILLIE WOMANISER.) Willie! Oh, Willie! Darling ... I'll love  
you for a year and a day!  
Willie Womaniser: Holy Cow! Just wait till I get my hands on that stupid old  
woman Jane Atkinson! (HE RUNS OFF, PURSUED BY PERCY  
PURE)

## 8 The road outside Jane Atkinson's cottage

(ENTER CLARA CLOD)

Clara Clod: Here I is ... Clara Clod! Lady Mayoress to be. You see, my husband  
is Councillor Clod ... until tomorrow when the election comes around.  
Then he'll be mayor. Here he is now.

(ENTER HER WEEDY HUSBAND, COUNCILLOR CLOD)

Councillor Clod: Here I is ... Councillor Clod. I'm very big in the Village of  
Washington.

Clara Clod: He is. Very big ... (HISSES IN HIS EAR) ... s t a n d u p  
when you are talking to the ladies and gentlemen!

Councillor Clod: I AM standing up dear.

Clara Clod: My husband and I are conducting an opinion poll to see how many  
people are going to vote for him.

Councillor Clod: That's right. We're conducting an opinion poll ...

Clara Clod: Shut up, Shorty, I'm talking!

Councillor Clod: Sorry, dear.

Clara Clod: (TO AUDIENCE) Now then, raise your hands if you want to  
vote for Councillor Cuthbert Clod ... I see. Let me put it this way ... anyone  
who votes for my husband will receive five pounds in cash after the  
election. Now ... who wants to vote for him? That's better. (SHE TURNS TO

COUNCILLOR CLOD) There you are! You're elected.

Councillor Clod: I think I'd like a second opinion, dear.

Clara Clod: Very well, we'll go to old Jane Atkinson. She can see into the future.

## **9 Jane Atkinson's Garden**

Clara Clod: Atkinson? Are you there?

Jane Atkinson: (COMING TO DOOR) What do you want, young Clara Clod?

Clara Clod: We've come to consult you about the future.

Councillor Clod: We want to know if I'll win the election.

Clara Clod: Shut up, Shorty, I'm talking.

Councillor Clod: Sorry, dear.

Clara Clod: We want to know if he'll win the election.

Jane Atkinson: Of course he will. He'll win by a short head.

Clara Clod: How do you know? Did you see it in the cards? Or in the crystal ball?

Jane Atkinson: I know because I know what sort of man he is. I don't need a crystal ball.

Councillor Clod: You mean, I'll win because I'm a great man whose destiny it is to rule? No, I mean because you're a cheating little rogue who'll lie and bribe the voters to make sure you win. Along with your crooked wife.

Clara Clod: (FURIOUS) I didn't come here to be insulted.

Simon Sackless: Where do you usually go?

(COUNCILLOR CLOD AND CLARA CLOD EXIT)

Jane Atkinson: Oh, dear. That's someone else I've upset today. I knew it was going to be a bad day. Woe, woe and thrice woe! Death and destruction, I see it now, a death most foul will fall on some poor soul before this day is done.

(SIMON SACKLESS AND JANE ATKINSON EXIT)

## **10 The village green**

Clara Clod: That woman has got to go. We can't have her spreading evil lies about you dear.

Councillor Clod: But what can we do?

Clara Clod: We'll call a public meeting, you'll see. (CLARA CLOD RINGS A BELL TO GATHER ALL THE CHARACTERS, AND YOBS, EXCEPT JANE AND SIMON. THEY STRAGGLE IN, CURIOUS.) Friends! My husband has called this meeting to tell you about a serious danger that threatens this village.

Councillor Clod: I have?

Clara Clod: Of course you have. There is a witch at large and, until she is destroyed, our lives are in danger.

Councillor Clod: In danger!

Clara Clod: My husband will tell you her name ...

Councillor Clod: I don't know it.

Clara Clod: It's Jane Atkinson, you fool!

Councillor Clod: (TO VILLAGERS) It's Jane Atkinson, you fools!

Farmer Foul: That's right. Two of my cattle died last week. She must have put a curse on them.

Willie Womaniser: And Dora Delightful has gone off to marry someone else. Jane Atkinson has put a curse on me!

Clara Clod: There you are. Simon Sackless befriended her and she stole the brains out of his head. He hasn't the sense he was born with. What shall we do about her?

All: Hang her!

Simon Sackless: (RUNS ON FROM WHERE HE HAS BEEN HIDING AND WATCHING) But you have to give her a trial first.

Farmer Foul: Right. We'll try her by ducking her. You lads go and fetch her to the village pond. (THE VILLAGE YOBS GO AND DRAG JANE ATKINSON ON.) We'll throw her in. The law says that if she floats she is guilty of being a witch.

Harry Henchman: What do we do then?

Farmer Foul: Then we take her out and burn her.

Harry Henchman: And if she sinks?

Farmer Foul: Then she's innocent.

Simon Sackless: But if she sinks she'll drown.

Farmer Foul: (CRUEL LAUGH) That's her bad luck. (THE YOBS DRAG JANE ATKINSON TO THE CENTRE OF THEIR CIRCLE AND MIME THROWING HER IN A POND. THEY CHEER AS JANE SCREAMS)

Simon Sackless: She's sinking! She's innocent! (HE RUSHES THROUGH CORDON BUT IS PUSHED BACK)

Farmer Foul: She's innocent of my charge maybe. But what about Willie Womaniser's charge? She may be guilty of that. What shall we do?

Willie Womaniser: Try her again! (THEY THROW HER IN AGAIN)

Simon Sackless: She's sinking ... she's innocent I tell you. (THIS TIME HE SUCCEEDS IN DRAGGING JANE FROM THE CENTRE OF HER ACCUSERS)

Clara Clod: Now let's see if she's innocent of my charge! Throw her in again! (THEY TEAR HER FROM JANE'S GRASP AND THROW HER BACK)

Simon Sackless: Can't you see, she's sinking? Help me drag her out.

Farmer Foul: Hah! Would you believe it? She's innocent after all.  
(THEY ALL BEGIN TO EXIT)

Clara Clod: Still, the ducking will teach her a lesson.

Willie Womaniser: Serves the old crow right.  
(ONLY SIMON SACKLESS AND JANE ATKINSON ARE LEFT)

Simon Sackless: Jane, are you all right?

Jane Atkinson: (WEAKLY.) Woe, woe and thrice woe! Death and destruction. I see it now, a death most cruel will fall on some poor soul before this day is done. (SHE DIES IN SIMON SACKLESS' ARMS)

Simon Sackless: But Jane ... if you'd been a real witch ... you would have known that the poor soul was going to be you.  
(HE EXITS CARRYING THE BODY OF JANE ATKINSON)

END

