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# Lizzie Borden Took an Ax

By Stephen Kay

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Hello, Patty.

I heard you threw

your man around

Pick him up

just to let him down

It's a shame, baby,

but I always knew

Just the way you're gonna do

Incredible wordstoday, Reverend.

Thank you very much.

Just a psychotic girl

and I won't get lost...

It's a beautiful day.

Oh, it's hot.

Did you see the new carriage

the Andersons have?

Father prefers

we walk.

Mr. Borden,

how is everything?

Fine, fine, fine.

Your daughters

are looking lovely.

Lovely?

If they're so lovely,

why don't I have

many grandchildren by now?

Are we having the mutton again

for lunch today?

You don't have to eat it.

I do worry it's making us

all sick.

You will eat what's put

in front of you,

or you won't eat at all.

May I please be excused?

No, Lizzie, you may not.

Excuse me, Father.

I've asked you not to make noise

while I'm in this room.

Pardon me.

What are you doing here, Sousa?

Don't you ever come to my house.

I need to  
pay my men.  
You can't cheat us,  
Mr. Borden.  
We've had enough.  
You get paid for  
the work that you do,  
not a penny more.  
You're not gonna  
get away with this.  
Mrs. Borden,  
the church is  
always short of funds.  
Fight the horde,  
scratch the nails  
'Ware the charging  
lion's tails  
In all the blackest  
of the blues  
I need a longer fuse  
Whenever I...  
My father thinks he can forbid me  
from going.  
What will he do?  
Lock you in your room?  
Believe me,  
he would if he could.  
How is Emma doing?  
I love my sister,  
but she likes to  
hide her head in the sand.  
I've always wanted more,  
more than she's wanted.  
I just wish I had the freedom  
to live the life  
I've always imagined.  
Nothing wrong  
with dreaming, Lizzie.  
Hmm.  
It's difficult to dream in that place.  
Sometimes, Alice,  
I have a feeling that  
something terrible  
is going to happen there.

What do you mean?

Well, my father  
has so many enemies.

There have been  
so many arguments  
and disputes.

I fear someone might try to hurt him.

Miss Borden,  
your mother said that  
we aren't to extend  
any more credit to you  
without her permission.

Oh.

Well, how embarrassing.

I suppose I'll have to pay  
the old-fashioned way.

That would be fine.

Thank you.

All ready, Miss Borden.

Wonderful.

I'll have Bridget  
come by and pick it up.

Of course.

I hope you enjoy your party.

Thank you.

Father?

What are you doing?

Father's upset.

Did you steal a mirror  
from the dress shop?

The owner said  
you took a mirror  
from her store.

That's ridiculous.

Why do you lie to me, Lizzie?

I don't lie to you.

You lie to everyone.

So what did father do?

He paid, of course.

Could we have a moment, please?

It was an accident.

The mirror must have fallen  
into the dress box.

Don't think you're going to

that party tonight.  
Of course, I'm going.  
Who will be your escort?  
I am perfectly capable  
of walking there on my own.  
I don't need an escort.  
I will not have you  
traipsing about Fall River  
all alone at night.  
You will not go unaccompanied.  
Oh, Father.  
I do love you so.  
But I'm not that  
little girl anymore.  
No, no, no.  
The answer is no.  
Whoo, boy  
Whoo, boy  
Give me a shout,  
so I'll be hypnotized  
With them swinging hips  
and them workout thighs  
Oh, Lord, what's a man to do?  
Spent all my time at bars  
Trying to find  
what I'm looking for  
But, baby, baby,  
I still ain't found you  
Whoo, boy!  
Lizzie!  
Alice.  
Took you long enough.  
Stanley Jefferies.  
Lizzie Borden.  
Are you actually here?  
Think of me  
as a figment  
of your imagination.  
Lizzie, I don't know  
much about you.  
I've seen you at church,  
but never had  
the chance to speak.  
Aren't you a Sunday school teacher?

Only on Sundays.

- Lizzie.

- Nance.

Lizzie Borden.

Come on, I have some  
peoplel want you to meet.

Whoo boy!

Lizzie? Wake up.

You're wanted downstairs.

Lizzie,

there has, uh...

There's been a robbery.

Mrs. Borden's gold watch  
and chain were taken  
and, uh, \$20 in cash.

The watch that

my mother gave me

before she died.

That's terrible.

Do you have any idea  
what might have happened?

Of course not.

Marshall.

Um...

As I was saying, Mr. Borden,  
there seems to be no sign  
of forced entry.

And since your maid saw  
or heard no one enter,  
well, I'm inclined  
to think that...

Yes?

Perhaps there's  
another possible explanation.

Well, Marshall Fleet,

I want to thank you  
for your help,  
and if we hear  
anything more  
about the situation,  
you'll be the first to know.

What do you have to  
sayfor yourself, Lizzie?

Honestly, Father,

what are you thinking?  
We don't see  
how anybody else  
could have gotten in.  
Oh, is that so?  
How can she steal  
from her own family?  
I did not steal those items  
from the house, Father.  
Nor would I ever think to do so.  
Don't walk away from me, Lizzie.  
Let her go.  
Why bother with her anymore?  
You let me deal  
with my daughter  
in my own way, please.  
You let her accuse me of stealing?  
In our house?  
She's the thief.  
The one stealing from you  
and me and Emma.  
She's bleeding you dry.  
It's her family coming to you  
for loans and handouts.  
You bought them that beautiful house  
on the hill,  
while Emma and I  
are prisoners  
in this horrible place.  
You are blessed to have a  
roof over your head.  
I have prayed for you. I protected you.  
I have paid for your fines.  
And you have tested and shamed me  
as a parent and a Christian.  
Have you never felt grateful in your life?  
You don't want me to  
become anything, do you?  
You just want me to stay here forever  
with you.  
No, that's... That's...  
Preposterous.  
That's preposterous.  
That's...

It looks handsome on you.  
I remember the day  
you gave it to me.  
You'll find someone.  
Someone smart enough to  
see you for who you are.  
To marry?  
What if I don't  
want to get married?  
You want to grow old alone?  
A spinster?  
That's not what I meant.  
Never mind.  
Lizzie?  
I'm leaving for Fairhaven.  
My friend Greta had a baby,  
so I'm going to  
make myself useful.  
I shouldn't be more than a day or two.  
Yes, you should stay a few days.  
Lizzie, are you all right?  
Perfectly.  
Bridget, you've got to get these  
windows clean before it gets too hot.  
Yes, ma'am.  
Hello?  
Morning. Morning.  
Bridget?  
Since when do we  
lock the dead bolt?  
Was the door locked?  
No, no, Bridget,  
I just like to  
knock on my own  
front door for a bit.  
Beg your pardon,  
Mr. Borden.  
Where is Mrs. Borden?  
I'm not sure. Perhaps...  
Mother went out.  
She did?  
She received a note  
from a sick friend.  
She must have



gone out to see her.  
Oh.  
Father?  
Lizzie?  
Lizzie, that's enough.  
Are you all right?  
Yes.  
Why are you sweating so?  
It's hot.  
I'm glad you're home.  
Father?  
What?  
Are you going to take a nap?  
Yes.  
Hello, Patty. Hello.  
How are you?  
Fine, thank you.  
Miss Lizzie?  
Is something the matter?  
Father is dead.  
Someone came in  
and killed him.  
Help!  
Help!  
Dr. Bowen, help!  
Dr. Bowen, please!  
Dr. Bowen!  
Bridget. My goodness, what is it?  
Mr. Borden.  
He's been killed.  
Ladies.  
Officers.  
Would you like to  
sit down, Miss Lizzie?  
Would you get him some  
water, please, Bridget?  
Yes, ma'am.  
Lizzie, what happened?  
What's going on?  
My father is dead.  
What?  
Someone came in and killed him.  
Your father?  
Oh, my God, Lizzie.

Oh, my God.

Where is your mother?

Who?

Where is Mrs. Borden?

Oh. Uh...

She said she went out  
to see a sick friend.

I didn't see her go.

Why don't you check upstairs?

The guest room.

Do you need the room cleared?

Gentlemen, we have to  
take some pictures.

Stand back, please.

Gentlemen, please.

Doctor.

I had no idea we could fit so  
many people in this house.

Miss Lizzie.

I need to ask you  
some questions,  
if I could?

I would like to know  
what, if anything,  
you know about  
what happened here today.

I...

I was in the barn,  
so I don't really know  
what happened.

And what were you doing in the barn?

I was looking for  
my fishing tackle.

We are going fishing next week.

I ate a pear.

I beg pardon?

I ate a pear.

I ate three pears,  
and then I came inside  
and I saw my father.

Perhaps we should talk tomorrow  
when you're in  
a clearer frame of mind.

Yes?

My mind is pretty clear  
right now.

If you could excuse me for one minute.

What are they going to do?

That is the medical examiner.

They need to examine him now.

In the dining room?

Yes. Please.

Miss Lizzie,

could you please

show me your hands?

My apologies for this.

It is just a procedure

for anybody who was

in the house.

I understand.

You're seeing if

there's blood on them.

Over.

Thank you.

Miss Lizzie, what is this stain?

Oh.

It's stew, I think.

Stew?

I see.

Arms up, please.

District Attorney Knowlton.

Marshall.

Who are all these people?

Neighbors.

Word travels fast.

Has the Medical Examiner determined a time  
of death yet?

He believes the lady  
was taken at approximately

**9:**

the old man

perhaps an hour after that.

Was there a struggle?

The setting seems

to be undisturbed.

Evidence of theft?

Not at first glance, no.

Marshall, get this area secure.  
And get these people out of here  
so we can conduct  
a proper investigation.  
You said she received  
a note before she left?  
Yes.  
Do we have that note?  
Do you have the note?  
Why would I...  
No. Bridget, do you?  
No, ma'am.  
It must be with  
Mrs. Borden.  
Mrs. Borden is  
your stepmother, correct?  
Yes, she was.  
Miss Borden, did you  
love your stepmother?  
How dare you ask that question?  
Of course I did.  
Marshall, must we  
endure this inquisition?  
Emma, it's okay.  
Mr. Knowlton, what else  
would you like to know?  
Did you love your father?  
This...  
My father is a complicated man,  
and he was known to be difficult,  
but I loved him  
like any daughter  
would love her father.  
Should we stay here tonight?  
I'll stay with you both,  
if you wish.  
Thank you, Alice.  
Why don't I have some food  
brought over from my house?  
We have some roast lamb.  
I am rather hungry.  
See you soon.  
I suppose we should move now.  
The Maplecroft house

is for sale.  
Why are you  
talking about this now?  
You know, Lizzie,  
that I'm always here  
for you, to protect you.  
Is there anything you want to tell me?  
What would I want to tell you, Emma?  
Why didn't you run  
when you saw  
someone had killed father?  
Why would I run?  
Did you know  
the house was empty?  
The madman could've  
still been in the house,  
he could have  
killed you, Lizzie.  
It didn't feel to me  
like anyone else  
was in the house.  
But how could you know that?  
I told you what happened.  
Do you think I'm hiding  
something from you?  
No, of course not.  
Good.  
I'm so glad.  
You know why I didn't run?  
Why?  
Because I thought to myself,  
"That's what killers do.  
They run."  
I didn't want to  
look like a killer.  
Cuba moon, pitch-black sky  
Chasing smoke  
on a thin white line  
I've got a dangerous...  
One misused cleaver,  
one broken ax handle,  
one ax head without a handle, dusty.  
Two larger axes, both war axes.  
One ball-peen hammer,

one large pair of scissors.  
Oh, I've got a dangerous  
A dangerous, dangerous mind  
Good afternoon.  
How may I help you?  
My name is Andrew Jennings.  
Mr. Jennings.  
I was a friend  
and associate  
of your father.  
I'm so sorry for your loss.  
We were having tea.  
Oh, I'm disturbing you.  
No, not at all. Join us.  
I'm surprised we haven't met before, Mr.  
Jennings.  
The last I worked  
for your father  
was on the Wilson Tanning  
and Dye case.  
Oh.  
Well, that's too bad.  
Those people said  
the most terrible things  
about our father.  
Yes, I remember now.  
You were his lawyer,  
weren't you?  
That's right.  
In fact, I am counsel  
for the family.  
I'm on retainer.  
So technically,  
I am your lawyer.  
But that was a criminal proceeding.  
Are you a criminal lawyer?  
Criminal law  
is my expertise, yes.  
Do I need a criminal lawyer?  
You were present  
during a murder.  
I was not present.  
The police,  
as you may imagine,

Miss Borden,  
are under a great deal  
of pressure to apprehend  
the culprit  
of this terrible act,  
to find someone to blame.  
So tell me, Mr. Jennings,  
who will they blame?  
So none of these  
are the murder weapon?  
No, Mr. Mayor,  
they do not appear  
to have blood  
or any other matter on them.  
What about this day laborer,  
Mr. Sousa?  
He's being questioned  
right now  
by the police in Tiverton.  
Hmm.  
What are your thoughts, Hosea?  
We should look at the children.  
The two daughters?  
Really?  
Yes. If you consider  
the order of the murders,  
Mrs. Borden was killed  
before Mr. Borden.  
Why is that so crucial?  
Because if Andrew  
was to pass first,  
the entire inheritance  
would go to  
Abby Borden's family,  
not the daughters.  
But wasn't one of  
the sisters out of town?  
Yes.  
But Lizzie was home,  
alone, in the house, the entire time.  
Abby Borden was killed at

**9:**

A violent crime scene.

Are we to believe  
a stranger came into  
that house, killed Abby,  
and hid for almost  
two hours, unnoticed?

It's inconceivable.

Are you saying  
that the girl did it?

Yes.

I think Lizzie Borden  
killed both her parents  
with an ax, in cold blood.  
We cannot bring these two  
loving souls back to us,  
but we can celebrate them  
by living our lives  
the way they did,  
with honor and dignity and piety.

I also ask that we, as a church,  
as a community,  
offer love and support to  
the poor, stricken girls  
left behind in this tragedy.

May they both be comforted  
and may they both  
realize how fully  
God is their refuge.

Amen.

Amen.

All these troubles, Lord  
All these troubles, Lord  
All these troubles, Lord  
They got me seeing blue...  
Hold it.

All these troubles, Lord  
I'll go determine what this is about.  
Gentlemen.

This is a private service.  
What is the meaning of this?

No disrespect, Reverend,  
but we've been instructed  
to remove the bodies  
of the deceased.

This is church property.



Reverend,  
we have documents  
issued by the court  
instructing us to  
exhume these remains.  
The bodies are to be  
taken to Cambridge.  
Lord, Lord, Lord  
They're exhuming the bodies.  
But how can this happen?  
Are they not to be buried?  
All right, I'm done.  
Alice, would you mind reading?  
My eyes are too tired.  
"Reward offered. \$5,000 reward.  
"The above reward will be paid to anyone  
"who may secure  
the arrest and conviction  
"of the person or persons  
"who occasioned the death  
of Andrew Borden  
and his wife.  
"Signed Emma L. Borden  
and Lizzie A. Borden."  
Mr. Mayor.  
Mayor.  
Good day, Mr. Mayor.  
Good afternoon, ladies.  
This is Mayor Coughlin.  
Your Honor, this is  
Lizzie and Emma Borden.  
It's a pleasure to meet you both  
and please accept  
my deepest condolences.  
Thank you.  
I'm here today  
to inform you that  
the county coroner  
has taken it under advisement  
to open and conduct  
an official inquiry  
into the murder of your parents.  
Your presence is requested  
tomorrow morning at 9:00.

An officer will be sent  
to escort you  
to the police station.

**Very well. 9:**

It's just a formality.

That's all.

And what about lunch?

- We'll be done by lunch.

- Well...

And we'll get you home  
right after.

Thank you, Mayor.

It was a pleasure meeting you.

Thank you.

The Mayor in our house.

What do you think of that?

Lizzie, stop!

Didn't you hear him?

We have to go to  
the police station tomorrow!

It's only a formality, Emma.

It's interesting.

Interesting?

Don't you think?

No, I do not!

Our parents are dead!

Good night, Emma.

Good night.

Look right.

Do you have anything  
to say to the press?

The Herald wants to know.

Give me your full name.

Lizzie Andrew Borden.

What is your  
date of birth, please?

July 19, 1860.

Your mother is not living?

No, sir.

When did she die?

She died when I was  
two years old.

You don't remember her, then?

No, sir.

Have you any idea how much your father was worth?

No, sir.

Have you ever formed an opinion?

Never.

You have been on pleasant terms with your stepmother?

Yes, sir.

Cordial?

That depends upon one's idea of cordiality.

What dress did you wear the day your parents were killed?

It was a blue cotton dress with embroidery.

Do you know whether there was any blood on that dress?

The Marshall checked it for blood, I believe.

Marshall Hilliard?

Yes.

When did he do this?

When you were all at the house.

You mean the day your parents were killed?

That day, yes.

Well, there was blood found on that dress, Miss Borden.

It was not brought to my attention.

Where is that dress now?

I have no idea.

At home, I suppose.

We'll need to see that dress in evidence.

What does that mean?

We will send a court officer around to collect that dress and admit it into evidence.

Lizzie? What are you doing?

What is that?

It's that dress.

Don't you need to bring that  
to the police station?  
This doesn't concern you, Emma.  
Lizzie,  
you can't burn that dress  
after they've asked for it!  
They'll think  
you're hiding something!  
Just go back to bed!  
Do you want to go to jail?  
This will get you  
in so much trouble!  
Just go back to bed, Emma!  
Excuse me, I'm here to speak with  
the Staff Sergeant.  
Go right in, Miss.  
Thank you.  
We attempted to collect the item,  
but the officer was told  
it no longer existed.  
No longer existed?  
What does that mean?  
She burned it.  
Your Honor,  
she knowingly  
destroyed evidence in order  
to conceal culpability.  
We asked for the dress,  
she destroyed it.  
She didn't just throw it away.  
She burned it.  
That is enough to  
convince me of her guilt.  
Well, I'm just having  
a difficult time believing  
she could do this.  
Because she's a woman?  
Insane asylums are  
full of insane women.  
She's an insane woman.  
She killed her parents.  
So do you  
want to formally charge her?  
No, I want her to confess.

Don't be  
too ambitious here, Hosea.  
That woman  
hacked her parents  
to death with an ax.  
This is not about my ambition.  
You are in the barn,  
you are looking for  
a tackle kit  
for a fishing trip  
that is not going to  
happen for another week.  
And yet there is  
no fishing tackle  
to be found  
and neither Bridget Sullivan  
nor your own sister  
even know you own  
a fishing tackle kit.  
And while you're in there,  
you stop to eat,  
not one, but three pears,  
in a hot and dusty barn,  
next to a filthy pigeon coop.  
Did you go into the basement that morning?  
No.  
Did you get an ax  
from the basement?  
No, sir.  
Did you go upstairs  
and have an argument  
with Abby Borden?  
No.  
Did you conspire with others  
to do away with your own parents  
in order to inherit  
their estate?  
Absolutely not!  
Did you see  
your father's face,  
dead on that sofa?  
Did you see his face?  
Yes. Yes, I did.  
Did you feel sorrow for the man?

I... I was in  
a state of shock.  
Remorse?  
Remorse?  
I don't understand.  
Remorse because of the fact  
you slaughtered  
the man with an ax.  
Stop it! Stop saying that!  
You are a murderer.  
You lied to this assembly...  
These accusations  
are slanderous  
and unfounded.  
Just please stop.  
You destroyed  
evidence.  
Just stop.  
And you killed  
both your own parents  
in order to garner their estate.  
Please stop. Just stop!  
Compel this man to stop!  
Counsel.  
Ma'am. You startled me.  
Sorry, Bridget.  
I understand  
the police spoke to you  
for quite some time  
after I left the station.  
They did, ma'am.  
They wanted to  
know my whereabouts  
at the time of the...  
On that day.  
What did you tell them?  
I told them I was  
cleaning windows and such.  
Did they ask you  
if you thought I did it?  
I told them there was no way  
that you would  
ever do such a thing.  
I appreciate that.

Bridget, things are different  
around the house now.  
With money being what it is,  
Emma and I can't afford to  
keep you on any longer.  
There are enough funds here.  
It's three months' wages.  
Are you letting me go,  
Miss Lizzie?  
That is what I'm saying, yes.  
You must be quite exhausted.  
It was  
a very long session,  
Dr. Bowen.

**From 9:**

Mmm-hmm.  
Well, now you can get some rest.  
What is that exactly?  
It's just morphine.  
I'd never been in  
a police station before.  
These small doses are for you.  
You use them  
if the anxiety  
is too great.  
No more than two a day. Very good.  
Thank you, Doctor.  
Emma?  
Do you think  
there really was  
blood on my dress?  
I don't know, Lizzie.  
Here. Just try and rest.  
Just try and rest.  
Hello?  
Oh, look up, look down  
Look out, look all around  
Shook up, shot down, shook out  
Shake it all around  
The New York Times.  
What can you tell us  
about the case?  
Yeah, mama,

shake it, baby, now  
Yeah, mama,  
shake it, baby, now  
Yeah, mama,  
shake it, baby, now...  
Did you eat breakfast  
that morning?  
Did you eat breakfast  
that morning in the barn?  
You said you were eating  
in the barn, correct?  
I was eating, so yes. Yes, I was eating.  
Then what did you do?  
I asked her to  
draw the curtains  
because the sun was so hot.  
Asked who?  
It must have been  
Mrs. Borden.  
Are you sure you  
were in the kitchen  
when your father returned?  
When he returned, I was upstairs.  
Miss Borden, you have  
told us several times  
that you were downstairs  
when your father came home.  
I don't know what I've said.  
I have been asked  
so many questions,  
and I'm so confused.  
So you were upstairs.  
Were you with Mrs. Borden?  
I don't know a thing anymore.  
Were you with Bridget?  
No. No.  
Bridget was outside.  
Did you see  
your mother upstairs?  
Your Honor, please.  
Did you see  
your mother upstairs?  
Miss Borden,  
did you love your mother?



She's not my mother!  
Lizzie. Miss Lizzie,  
Judge Blaisdell sent me.  
"Lizzie A. Borden,  
the Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts complains  
"that you did, feloniously  
and with malice aforethought,  
"make assault with a  
certain sharp instrument  
"in and upon the head  
of Andrew J. Borden."  
Please, stop.  
What exactly does this mean?  
We have to take you  
into custody.  
Under whose authority?  
I was sent by court decree.  
You know what they think.  
Your attorney, Mr. Jennings,  
is waiting for you.  
When the aim is low  
When the shot is wide  
You got to set your shoulder  
Keep 'em satisfied  
And the honey flows  
And the black is white  
You got to lock and load  
And leave your soul behind  
Why is this happening?  
Lizzie, you are under arrest.  
They're officially  
filing charges.  
They believe  
you killed your parents.  
How could they believe that?  
The prosecutor  
is very determined.  
And why have I been brought  
all the way out to this place?  
Because Fall River  
has no facility for  
housing female prisoners.  
You'll be taken care of here.

We'll bring you  
what you need,  
meals, anything.  
And what will happen to me now?  
Are you telling me I was arrested because  
I burned an old dress?  
No. But they think  
the act is enough  
to show intention and motive.  
They looked at it once.  
I was never told to keep it.  
Of course not.  
It is not evidence,  
not admissible.  
It provides no insight.  
It proves nothing.  
It's that act of  
burning the dress, Lizzie,  
that created suspicion.  
Can they keep lying about me?  
Everything  
they say is a lie.  
All they have are  
the stories they create.  
Your statement at the inquest  
is not admissible at trial.  
Everything I said?  
Not admissible at trial.  
They didn't advise you  
of your rights.  
They thought you would confess.  
Why would I do that?  
Exactly.  
We have the truth  
on our side and we have  
the law on our side.  
But you need to think about this.  
Your case is now headline news.  
Everything you say,  
your every move,  
will be examined and dissected,  
and you will be judged  
by your actions.  
I hate this photograph of me.

Do you understand  
the gravity  
of these charges?  
The penalty  
for this crime is death.  
But I am innocent.  
I'm innocent!  
There she is! Comment.  
The Boston Globe  
has a question for you.  
There she is!  
She couldn't possibly have done it.  
She's pretty.  
She couldn't kill anybody.  
Are you well, Lizzie?  
I'm fine.  
Upon the fourth day of August,  
an old man and woman,  
husband and wife,  
each without  
a known enemy in the world  
and in their own home,  
upon a frequented street  
in the most populous city  
in this county,  
were first one, then after an interval of  
almost two hours, another,  
severally killed by unlawful human agency.  
Fact  
and fiction have furnished  
many astounding examples  
of crime  
that have shocked the senses and staggered  
the reason of men.  
Yet, I think not one  
has ever surpassed  
the mystery of this case.  
Today,  
this woman of  
good social position  
and unquestionable character,  
a member of a Christian church,  
active in its good works,  
the very own daughter

of one of the victims,  
sits before you in this court,  
charged by the Grand Jury  
with these crimes.  
The brutal,  
indeed savage character  
of the crime,  
the audacity of its location,  
and the extraordinary accusation  
that the youngest daughter  
of one of the victims  
is the insane fiend  
who carried out this act.  
It was an incredible crime,  
a bloody and unthinkable crime.  
Because the cold  
merciful fact  
that confronts us  
is that it was  
committed by a woman.  
You might come to believe that  
only a feral thing  
could dispatch  
their own forbearers  
with such malice and impunity.  
You might wonder  
what kind of dark heart  
resides in that soul.  
But I am telling you, that dark heart is in  
this room right now.  
She did not strike her father one time.  
Not once.  
Not twice.  
Not even three times.  
But 11 times in the face,  
with an ax.  
Harry?  
We're going to take a short recess.  
I'll see counsel in my chambers.  
Your Honor,  
look at the facts  
of the murder.  
Female victim,  
struck numerous times

with an ax, nothing taken.  
The killer hid inside the house.  
Same time of day.  
It's the same  
modus operandi.  
And our suspect  
was locked away in prison.  
We don't know all the facts.  
We don't know if that was  
a crime of passion.  
We don't know anything.  
The state has spent months  
building a case  
against this woman.  
We can't just  
stop this trial  
because of a similarity.  
And so the idea  
being presented here  
is that there is  
yet another ax murderer  
loose in this very same city?  
I agree with Mr. Knowlton.  
The machinery  
we have impelled  
cannot be ground to a stop.  
The case will go on.  
And Miss Borden  
will be tried in the matter  
of which she was accused.  
The prosecution calls  
Miss Bridget Sullivan.  
Do you swear to tell the whole truth  
and nothing but the truth,  
so help you God?  
I do.  
You mentioned something  
when we had our interview  
that I thought was interesting.  
You said, in all the years  
you worked there,  
you never saw Lizzie  
give her father a gift.  
Is that a true statement?

No. She gave him a ring.

A ring.

It was from her  
high school, I believe.

Other than this ring,  
did you ever see her  
give her father anything  
as far as you know?

They weren't that kind of family.

What kind of family were they?

Your Honor,  
is the witness expected  
to answer such a broad question?

Counsel.

You were present  
on the morning  
of the murders?

I was there.

We have established  
that Mrs. Borden  
was killed around 9:30  
that morning.

Was Lizzie present at that time?

**At 9:**

Around that time, yes.

And then around 10:30,  
when Mr. Borden came home,  
you saw Lizzie  
at that time also, correct?

Yes.

Was this when you  
had the discussion  
about Mrs. Borden's  
whereabouts?

Yes.

She simply said  
that she had to visit  
a friend who was sick  
and you were to  
finish the windows.

Summoned by a sick friend.

Was the friend named?

No, sir.

Did Lizzie show you the note?

No.

Did Mrs. Borden  
have a lot of friends?

Not many.

Not many or not any?

Maybe one.

Has she been known  
to help people in need?

Not especially.

So while you were being told  
Mrs. Borden was out attending  
to her sick friend,  
the reality was,  
Mrs. Borden was laying dead  
in that guest room upstairs.

Is that correct?

Yes.

I was upstairs  
looking out their window  
and saw her walk out back  
and place the dress into a pot  
they had in the yard.

Did she burn the dress?

Yes.

Was there any reason given?

No.

Your report indicates  
that you saw a small stain  
on her dress.

I did.

But you determined  
that it was not blood.

I saw a small stain that looked old  
and did not appear to be blood.

What did you do  
when you observed the stain?

I asked Miss Borden  
about the stain  
and she told me  
she thought it was  
from a stew.

And that was  
all you needed to hear?

Feet away  
from two deceased souls,  
both violently murdered,  
that this possible  
blood stain was stew,  
and you left it at that?  
Would you explain, for the jury,  
the basic nature of your duties  
when you arrive,  
92 Second Street,  
Mr. Hilliard?  
I secure the area  
known as the crime scene,  
in this case, the house,  
and I conduct  
interviews with anybody  
who might have been present,  
uh, what is known as  
the eyewitness.  
Did you interview Miss Borden?  
I did.  
What did she witness,  
according to her statement?  
She discovered  
the body of Andrew Borden.  
She found her own father, dead.  
Did you examine  
Miss Borden on your arrival  
for any marks  
or for any blood  
on her person?  
Yes, I examined her for blood or injury.  
Miss Lizzie,  
could you please  
show me your hands?  
And you found neither?  
I did not.  
The records do indicate  
that you did find  
a small stain.  
The nature of the assault  
would have produced  
much more blood  
than a single stain.



Unsolicited!

Can the testimony adhere  
to what is known  
and not what is assumed?  
Is this your first visit  
to a violent crime scene?  
It is not.

And is it your opinion  
that a bloody crime scene  
is likely to produce a situation  
in which blood would be found  
on the perpetrator?

That is often the case, yes.

Did you, on arrival  
to 92 Second Street,  
find any evidence of blood  
on anyone in the house?

I did not.

Thank you.

Did Lizzie Borden  
visit your pharmacy  
in the days leading up  
to her parents' deaths?

She did.

What did she wish to procure?

Potassium cyanide,  
a very toxic poison.

Excuse me, Mr. Bence.

Will this powder kill  
the rats in my attic?

She indicated that it was for  
a vermin problem.

The Bordens  
experienced extreme  
gastrointestinal distress  
prior to their deaths.

Could that be the result  
of cyanide poisoning?

It could, yes.

Mr. Bence, did you sell  
any potassium cyanide  
to Miss Borden?

No. I did not.

Did either Abby or Andrew Borden

show any signs of  
a defensive wound?

Neither did.

No marks or cuts on their hands?

No, none at all.

Anything to show  
that they fought  
for their lives?

No.

Can it be ascertained  
that the first blow  
to Andrew Borden  
was enough to kill him?

Yes.

Evidence of incised  
wound 4 inches long,  
beginning at the cavity  
of the left eye,  
reaching to lower  
edge of lower jaw,  
cutting through nose,  
upper lip, lower lip,  
and slightly into bone.

So the first strike  
was the fatal strike?

In my opinion, yes.

And how many times  
was he struck?

Eleven.

So a single strike  
with an ax killed him,  
and then 10 more times.

Your post mortem report from the  
scene of the crime indicates that  
you found that  
Abby Borden died

**around 9:**

and Andrew close to 11:00.

How can you make such a determination?

Well, judging by  
the state of rigor,  
the condition of the wounds,  
and the texture of the blood,

I would say  
more than an hour  
passed between each act.  
So the picture  
that's starting to form  
seems to emerge thusly.  
Someone killed Abby Borden  
with incredible violence.  
Then paused,  
somehow, somewhere,  
for almost two hours.  
Then managed to  
repeat the crime  
on a second victim.  
All without being detected by two women  
who were in  
and around the house.  
Your Honor, as you know,  
we've had the bodies exhumed  
and the certain parts have been preserved  
to be brought here  
for your consideration.

- Order!

- Lizzie!

Order!

Order in the court. Order!

There are three exterior doors.

The front door,  
leading directly  
from the sidewalk.

All right.

At approximately 11:00 a.m.,

someone stepped up

to Andrew Borden

and struck him 11 times

with a hatchet-like weapon.

The blows left a 4-inch

gash through his temple

and cut into the bone of

his upper and lower jaw.

Thank you.

I've sent Alice Russell a note advising her

she's no longer welcome

in our home.

They're having metestify today.

Mr. Knowlton

will try to intimidate you.

Prepare yourself.

I'm nervous. I don't... I don't want to say anything wrong.

What could you possibly say?

That I'm capable of murder?

No one in this town thinks

I'm capable of anything.

Just tell them the truth.

Good morning, Emma.

Would you,

for the members of the court,

describe your relationship

to the defendant?

She is my younger sister.

Has Lizzie ever shown

violent tendencies

or irrational tendencies in her life?

Never.

Well, then how would

you describe her?

Kind, gentle, devoted.

She is deeply involved

in the church and

in the volunteer service.

And how would you describe

her relationship

with your parents?

She was a good daughter to them.

Obedient, respectful, loving.

Is this the ring your father wore

on his fourth finger?

Yes, sir.

Did Lizzie give it to him?

Yes.

Did he wear it often?

He never took it off.

Did your father love Lizzie?

Very much.

Did Lizzie love your father?

Of course.

Do you believe

your sister murdered  
your parents?

No.

I do not.

Thank you.

You said, "Of course,"

your sister

loved your father,

because one assumes

a man's child loves him.

But Bridget Sullivan,

in the house for five years,

testified that

Lizzie never bought him

anything, ever.

Bridget Sullivan is not

the most reliable person

in the world.

Did she lie

on the witness stand?

She didn't see

everything that

happened with our family.

I suppose not.

I want to ask you

about the night

of September 15th,

when your sister burned a dress.

Yes.

You were with her

when she was

destroying the dress?

I was.

Did she tell you

why she was

destroying the dress?

We both agreed

the dress needed

to be discarded.

You both agreed?

Yes.

It brought back

too many terrible memories.

We hated having it in the house.

So I said to her,  
"Let's get rid of the thing."  
Lizzie, you can't burn that dress  
after they've asked for it.  
They'll think  
you're hiding something.  
Were you made aware  
that the police inquest  
wanted to see that dress?  
Not until the next day.  
Lizzie did not mention it?  
Just go back to bed.  
No.  
I gave her  
those exact instructions  
on the day  
the dress was destroyed.  
Did you or did you not conspire  
to destroy that dress  
because you knew  
there was blood on it?  
No, I did not.  
Did you or did you not  
burn that dress  
to destroy evidence of  
your parents' murder?  
No, I did not.  
If Lizzie did  
something that was wrong  
by burning that dress,  
then it was my fault.  
I told her to do it.  
Why did you tell her to do it?  
Because it was  
old and terrible  
and we wanted it gone.  
Because it was old and terrible  
and you wanted it gone.  
Emma!  
Tell us the truth,  
Miss Borden.  
What did you tell them?  
Emma!  
What's happening?

Is Lizzie guilty?  
It was a terrible crime.  
An impossible crime.  
But it was committed.  
Mrs. Borden had been slain  
by some sharp  
and terrible instrument,  
inflicting on her  
defenseless head  
18 blows,  
13 crushing through the skull.  
The prisoner  
before you at the bar  
is a woman.  
It is hard to conceive  
that a woman could be guilty  
of this crime.  
I need say nothing  
with regard to the blood,  
for there was no blood found.  
I need say nothing with regard  
to the physical evidence,  
because there is no physical evidence.  
There is not one particle  
of direct evidence  
linking Lizzie Andrew Borden  
to this crime.  
No thief did this.  
No random assailant.  
There was nothing in these blows  
but hatred, hatred  
and a desire to kill.  
We have heard testimony  
of a stranger  
who was seen about  
the household  
on the day of the murder.  
They have produced no suspect.  
But the mere fact that  
persons unknown had  
access to the property  
is more than enough  
to introduce  
an element of doubt.

If you can even conceive  
of any other hypothesis  
in which it is possible  
that someone else did this deed,  
then you  
have a reasonable  
doubt in your mind.  
Lizzie Borden, loving daughter,  
ever went up those stairs, never  
went up those stairs that morning.  
Something else went up those stairs.  
Something unholy and devoid of feeling.  
Something we cannot fathom  
with our own minds.  
That was the Lizzie Borden  
who pursued that poor woman  
up the stairs to her death,  
and then waited, weapon in hand,  
for the appropriate moment  
and did the same to her father.  
To find this defendant  
equal to that enormity,  
her heart so blackened  
with depravity,  
her very existence  
such a web  
of violence and crime  
is to find this tender young lass guilty.  
But to do that, you, gentlemen of the jury,  
you must allow your minds  
to consider her  
not just a brute,  
but a deeply, pathologically  
depraved butcher.  
Miss Lizzie Andrew Borden,  
although you have now  
been heard from fully  
through your counsel,  
it is your privilege to add any words  
you may desire to say  
in person to the jury.  
I'm innocent.  
I leave it to my counsel  
to speak for me.



Very well.  
Now, gentlemen,  
the case is committed  
into your hands.  
This court now stands adjourned  
until verdict.  
An hour and 10 minutes.  
They must have known  
all along.  
She will hang.  
All rise.  
Is it a bad sign that  
they are back so soon?  
We must maintain our composure.  
Lizzie Andrew Borden, stand up.  
Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed  
upon your verdict?  
We have.  
Please return  
the paper to the court.  
Mr. Foreman, look upon the prisoner.  
Prisoner, look upon the foreman.  
What say you, Mr. Foreman, of the  
charge against Lizzie Andrew Borden?  
Not guilty.  
Order! Order, please!  
Business of this court  
is concluded.  
Them black-eyed dogs  
are out  
Go in ahead  
I just seen you  
In the eye of the storm  
Will you stay in this town?  
Morning, Marshall.  
You are not welcome.  
"Take courage,  
my children, cry to God  
"and he will deliver you  
from the power and hand  
of the enemy.  
"For I have put my hope  
in the Everlasting  
to save you,

"because of the mercy that  
will soon come to you  
"from your everlasting Savior.  
"For I sent you out  
with sorrow and weeping,  
"but God will give you  
back to me  
"with joy  
and gladness forever."  
Drink up, everyone. It's almost New Year.  
Nance, I'm so glad you made it.  
How could I miss it?  
I've missed you.  
Ten...  
Nine, eight, seven, six, five,  
four, three, two, one!  
Happy New Year!  
Is this really the life you want?  
Why are you so upset?  
I just can't believe  
how cavalier  
you can be sometimes.  
What am I being cavalier about?  
Those people, they're not  
your friends, Lizzie.  
Nonsense.  
They aren't here  
because they like you.  
You're a carnival attraction  
to them.  
They think you got away  
with murder.  
What do you think?  
Please.  
Do you want to know?  
Lizzie, stop.  
Lizzie?  
Miss Lizzie?  
Is something the matter?  
Father is dead.  
Someone came in  
and killed him.  
When she saw  
what she had done

Gave her father 41

Lizzie Borden took an ax

Gave her mother 40 whacks