

# LIZZIE

By Steven Cheslik-deMeyer, Tim Maner, and Alan Stevens Hewitt

*A rock-show retelling of the bloody legend of America's favorite  
axe-wielding double-murderess and Victorian hometown girl, Lizzie Borden.*

# CHARACTERS

**Lizzie Borden** (high belt: F#3-F#5, belt to A5 if possible) is damaged, twisted. She can turn on a dime from fragile, broken, meek and obedient to conniving, sinister, furious and terrifying. She is a wounded animal backed into a corner, terrified but enraged. We find her at the moment she realizes she has nothing to lose. She is transformed through an act of unspeakable transgression, turning her own historical infamy into an ascension to legend.

**Emma Borden** (alto/mezzo belt: F#3-D5) is the older sister, eclipsed by the younger. She must content herself by playing a motherly Lady Macbeth to Lizzie, dripping her own hatreds into Lizzie's ears over the years, stoking the fires of Lizzie's rage, disappearing when the deeds must be done, and suffering with guilt afterwards. Emma is a woman who has come to see that every opportunity for happiness has passed her by. She's furious, but she's also desperately sad.

**Bridget Sullivan/Maggie** (contralto/low alto: F3 with E3 pick-up/ghost-notes in one number) – Eb5 (E5 opt. in one ad lib.) is the Borden's Irish maid. She may be a Banshee, called to wail at the Borden's door. She always seems to know what is going to happen, does things one step before anyone else. She's put upon, angry, and as resentful of the Borden sisters as she is of the parents. Bridget is the Sex Pistols rock and roll nihilist; ready to fuck things up because she knows that's the only way anything is ever going to get better.

**Alice Russell** (high mezzo lyric/mix/belt: G3 with F#3 pick-up/ghost-notes in one number- A5 legit soprano) is the Borden's next door neighbor. She is a luscious pear, the sensuous mother-sister-lover which is sorely lacking in Lizzie's life. She appears to Lizzie in her greatest moments of need and attempts to lead her away from a path of destruction and toward one of love, truth, and affection. Lizzie may have true feelings of affection for her, or she may be using Alice's feelings to build an alibi.

# 1: FORTY WHACKS (PROLOGUE)

A music box plays, as lights fade up darkly and eerily.

UNISON

*Lizzie Borden took an axe  
Gave her mother forty whacks.  
When she saw what she had done  
Gave her father forty-one*

Sound of a gavel, banging loudly, a court called to order. Lights up.

ALICE

I am Alice Russell. I have lived in Fall River a good many years. All that time the Bordens have occupied the house next door. I exchanged calls with Miss Lizzie Borden regularly. She always received me upstairs.

BRIDGET

The name's Bridget Sullivan. I was sometimes called Maggie by Miss Emma and Miss Lizzie. It being the name of the previous girl. I came to Fall River four years ago. Have worked for the Bordens ever since.

EMMA

My full name is Emma L. Borden. The "L" is for Lenora. I am the sister of Miss Lizzie Borden. I was just a trifle over 14 when my father married for the second time. And I remember my mother very well.

LIZZIE

My name is Lizzie Andrew Borden. Not Elizabeth, Lizzie. Andrew. After my father. I was so christened. I am innocent. I leave it to my counsel to speak for me.

## 2: THE HOUSE OF BORDEN

AUGUST 1892 IN THE BORDEN FAMILY HOME, FALL RIVER MASSACHUSETTS. OPPRESSIVE, SWELTERING. TWO LARGE SILHOUETTE PORTRAITS ONE OF ANDREW AND ONE OF ABBY. A MOODY, VICTORIAN DOOR FARCE, SLAMMING FOR EMPHASIS AND PERCUSSION.

BRIDGET

*In the house of Borden there's a lock on every door  
In every room a prisoner of a long, silent war*

Lizzie and Emma exit, slamming doors.

*Let us take you to an August back in 1892  
When all hell broke loose in the house of Borden*

Lizzie and Emma enter, cross to Bridget.

*Andrew Jackson Borden knows that pennies must be pinched  
So Monday's mutton supper will be Tuesday's mutton lunch  
And then to stretch it further Thursday's breakfast is mutton soup  
And we're getting sick in the house of Borden*

Emma and Lizzie are nearly overcome with nausea. They turn to vomit. Then...

LIZZIE/EMMA

*When Daddy was an undertaker, no body was too tall  
He'd charge 'em for the big box and bury 'em in the small  
To save a couple dollars, he'd chop off a couple feet*

BRIDGET

*He's fuckin' rich that Mr. Borden*

Alice appears outside the house.

ALL

*In the house of Borden there's a lock on every door  
In every room a prisoner of a long, silent war  
Let us take you to an August back in 1892  
When all hell broke loose in the house of Borden*

ALICE

*The sisters live in the front of the house; the old folks take the rear*

Lizzie and Emma exit, slamming doors.

*It seems a bit peculiar, but they've kept it up for years  
I won't say they're not cordial, crowded's more the word  
They get no peace in the House of Borden*

The sisters return.

BRIDGET

*Lizzie's not the brightest bird, and Emma's not so sweet (DOOR SLAM)  
Mind you, these are not my words, but I hear things on the street  
Any way you slice it, these girls are past their prime  
There's no wedding bells in the house of Borden*

ALL

*In the house of Borden there's a lock on every door  
In every room a prisoner of a long, silent war  
Let us take you to an August back in 1892  
When all hell broke loose in the house of Borden*

EMMA

*Father married Mrs. Borden after our mother died  
If she's in it for the money, she's in for a big surprise  
We've no personal objection, but she can't have what's ours  
Fair is fair in the house of Borden*

BRIDGET

*The family crest of Borden is a lion with an axe  
Running rampant into battle, ready to attack  
It's an oddly fitting emblem for a family like this  
And we're killing time in the house of Borden*

EMMA (into lizzie's ear)

*killing time*

LIZZIE (looks out at audience)

*killing time*

ALL

*In the house of Borden there's a lock on every door  
In every room a prisoner of a long, silent war  
Let us take you to an August back in 1892  
When all hell broke loose in the house of Borden*

All look at Lizzie.

LIZZIE

*When I was a girl I gave my father my gold ring  
He wears it to this day a symbol of my love for him  
My middle name is Andrew; Father wanted a boy  
But I'm Daddy's little girl now*

Lizzie slowly exits, pulling the door to her father's room gently closed behind her. Thick metal click of a lock.

BRIDGET

*The father loved the younger one; some say a bit too much  
They say she talks to pigeons, but who am I to judge?  
I don't mean to spread a rumor; these are just things that I hear  
But there's some crazy shite in the house of Borden*

Bridget exits, slams door.

### 3: THIS IS NOT LOVE

LIZZIE IS IN HER FATHER'S BEDROOM. WE NEVER SEE HIM, OR WHAT IS DONE. LIZZIE STANDS CENTER STAGE AT A MIC. SHE IS IN A SPOTLIGHT, THE BAND AND THE STAGE ARE WASHED IN BLUE. THE PORTRAIT OF ANDREW JACKSON BORDEN GLOWS IN THE BACKGROUND. ABBY'S PORTRAIT IS DARK. LIZZIE'S BODY IS STILL, TRAPPED IN ONE WORLD. HER VOICE CRIES OUT IN ANOTHER.

LIZZIE

*This, this, this is not love  
I don't know what it is, but I know this  
This is not love*

*You touch with selfish hands—this is not love  
You speak in cold demands—this is not love*

*Whatever you take, it isn't giving when I have no choice  
What kind of life am I living if I, I have no voice?*

Roadies appear on stage and move to Lizzie, who remains motionless. They dishevel her hair; rip the bodice of her dress.

*I don't know what it is, but...*

Roadies leave Lizzie alone on stage.

*Sometimes you say the words, but this is not love  
Afterthought apologies are not enough*

*To make me believe, make me forgive you, repair the damage done  
It's not enough to say you're sorry, and still have your fun*

Lizzie escapes into her fantasy. Spotlights begin to come up on her.

*I want to feel that I can fall and not be made to feel a fool  
I want to look up and see a bright light shining through  
To see arms outstretched to hold me, wanting nothing in return  
But only for me to feel safe and secure  
Is that too much to ask for?  
Is it so wrong to want more...than this?*

*Because this, this, this is not love*

*Oh, this is not love  
This is not love, This is not love  
This is not love, I don't know what it is  
But I want out of it.*

LIZZIE (flatly)

I love you too, Father.

## 4: GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE

BORDEN HOUSE EXTERIOR. UNDER THE PEAR TREES. THE PORTRAITS ARE DIMMED OR TURNED INTO SHADOW OF THE BORDEN HOUSE WINDOWS AS SEEN FROM THE OUTSIDE IN. DAPPLED NIGHTTIME.

Lizzie exits house into the back yard.. Alice, on her way home, hears something, then sees Lizzie leaning against the tree in shadow. Alice approaches gently.

ALICE

Lizzie?

Lizzie startles but remains in the shadow. She straightens her hair, dress.

LIZZIE

Good evening, Alice.

ALICE

Are you alright?

LIZZIE

Yes, yes, I'm fine

Lizzie moves toward Alice, out of the shadow

ALICE

What happened?

LIZZIE

Nothing ... I just ...

ALICE

Are you having troubles again ...

LIZZIE

No.

ALICE

..with your —

LIZZIE

Alice!

Lizzie pulls Alice aside away from the house.

LIZZIE

*I gotta get out of here*

ALICE

Lizzie. Lizzie, listen to me.

LIZZIE

*I gotta*



ALICE

Lizzie, you can tell me anything

LIZZIE

*I gotta*

ALICE

Lizzie, I won't give you away.

LIZZIE

*I gotta*

ALICE

*Uhhhh*

LIZZIE

*There's something's hanging over me  
A thunderstorm I can't see,  
but I know it's there  
I gotta get outta here*

*Oh, Alice, I'm afraid tonight,  
'cause something doesn't feel quite right  
out there in the dark*

*This feeling comes over me at times no matter where I am  
And I know if I stay here longer, it's gonna turn out bad*

*Gotta get out of here, I gotta get out of here  
I gotta get out of here I gotta I gotta  
I gotta  
I gotta*

*I gotta go and do and have  
What all the uptown people have;  
don't I deserve it?*

*I gotta get out of here  
I want to go and disappear,  
But sis and me we're stuck down here;  
And it's killing me*

LIZZIE & ALICE

*I want to know who I am, free and clear  
I just don't know how  
I used to hope it'd be different, no more pain and fear  
But hope is disappearing now*

*Uhhnn ... I gotta*

ALICE

*Uhh*

LIZZIE

*I gotta Uhn Uhn I gotta Uhn Uhn uhn*

ALICE

*Uhh*

LIZZIE

*I gotta*

LIZZIE & ALICE

*And this feeling comes over me at times no matter where I am*

ALICE

*Stay here longer*

LIZZIE

*And I know if I*

LIZZIE & ALICE

*stay here longer*

LIZZIE

*it's gonna turn out bad*

*I gotta get out of here, I gotta I gotta*

*I gotta*

*I gotta get out of here*

Band thrashes, we see Alice and Lizzie in a struggle, Alice trying to convince her to stay, and Lizzie eventually leaving her alone.

## 5: IF YOU KNEW

ALICE LEFT ALONE

ALICE

*Always standing in your wake  
With a secret of my own  
Too afraid to share with you*

Alice goes to her home. Sitting in a chair by a window that overlooks the Borden house.

*So I come home alone each night and draw the curtain, shut the blind  
How will you trust me with your secret when I don't trust you with ...?*

*If you knew, knew how I've been watching you  
If you knew, knew how I see everything you do  
If you knew, could I still touch you?  
Would you let me comfort you if you knew?*

Alice stands, paces anxiously.

*The room is hot, the air is thick  
And I can barely breathe tonight  
Open the window, trim the wick  
Oh, this cannot be right, for it seems to me a secret's just a lie  
And Lizzie no one knows the emptiness of lying more than ...*

*If you knew, knew that every night I dream of you  
If you knew, knew that in my dream I come to you  
If you knew, would you still touch me?  
Would you tell me everything if you knew?*

*Together we'll be safe  
The truth will make it so  
Just like my dream each night  
For in my dream I know that you are in my arms and everything is fine  
Oh Lizzie, take me to your hiding place and I'll take you to ...*

*If you knew, knew that in my heart I always knew  
If you knew, knew that every word I spoke was true  
If you knew, I could protect you!  
Would you let me hold you close if you knew?*

Alice exits to find Lizzie and reveal her true feelings.

## 6: THE SOUL OF THE WHITE BIRD

LIZZIE ESCAPES TO THE BARN LOFT, HER PRIVATE SANCTUARY WHERE SHE CARES FOR HER BELOVED WILD PIGEONS. PORTAITS ARE DARKENED OR TRANSFORMED INTO SHADOW PLAY VERSIONS OF OLD BARN WINDOWS. PINHOLES OF LIGHT BEAM DOWN FROM THE BARN ROOF. LIZZIE HAS CLIMBED UP TO THE HIGHEST POINT SHE CAN REACH. IMPROVISED BIRD CAGES (POSSIBLY MADE OUT OF OLD WIRE VICTORIAN DRESS FORMS) HANG AROUND HER. IT IS DARK, FILTHY, COVERED IN BIRD SHIT AND FEATHERS. NIGHT, MOON, BIRDS, FORCED PERSPECTIVE MAKING US FEEL A SLIGHT VERTIGO AS WE LOOK UP AT HER. SYBIL. HITCHCOCK'S *THE BIRDS*. THROUGHOUT THE SCENE, FEATHERS INTERMITTENTLY FALL FROM THE CEILING OF THE HOUSE ONTO THE AUDIENCE. SOUNDS OF WINGS FLAPPING OPEN THE SCENE

LIZZIE

*Who are these that fly like a cloud to my window  
Coming with the waxing of the moon?  
To the beating of your wings and the violence of freedom  
I love you, I am hopeful, am I doomed?*

*I clamor and I moan; that house is not my home  
My silver wings are pinioned with green gold  
My ghost, my dove, my innocence, my love  
Am I utterly forgotten, left alone?*

As the music shifts. Lizzie has a "peculiar spell," transformed and dark. Bridget, inside the house, feels something come over her. Time shifts. Zoetrope.

BRIDGET	LIZZIE
<i>La la la la la la , La la la la la la La la la la la la , La la la la la la</i>	<i>The boys ... wanna come ... Wanna play ... with my pigeons</i>
	<i>And you never let the boys come Boys come boys come</i>
	<i>Hand on my knee on my Never let the boys come Chasing all the boys away I feel myself disintegrating</i>
	<i>Please daddy please daddy If I stay with you daddy Fingers on my knee daddy Stop it stop it stop it daddy</i>
	<i>Fingers on my fingers on my Boys pigeons fingers daddy Stop it, stop it Daddy (daddy daddy daddy)</i>

BRIDGET

*And if there are survivors, they will be on the mountain  
Like doves of the valley, all of them moaning*

Bridget's vision breaks. She is slightly shaken by it. Emma in the house.

LIZZIE/EMMA

*Oh, that I had wings like a dove  
I would fly away, and be at rest*

Again, Lizzie is taken in a peculiar spell and that feeling rises in Bridget again. Time shifts. Zoetrope.

<p>BRIDGET</p> <p><i>La la la la la la , La la la la la la La la la la la la , La la la la la la</i></p>	<p>LIZZIE (RAGEFUL)</p> <p><i>Lock away your secrets Lock away my life what if I unlock your secrets to your stupid little wife? I want a</i></p> <p><i>New dress daddy need some Money for a new dress New dress daddy money Please daddy please</i></p> <p><i>I want a new dress just like All the girls up on the hill And all the girls in pretty dresses Pretty dresses pretty boys and</i></p> <p><i>Girls come round to the Pretty houses, pretty penny Hand on my knee on my Fingers on my pretty penny</i></p>
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BRIDGET

*And the soul of the white bird on the wings of six black birds  
Will be carried in the night to the mountain*

Alice enters the barn and sees Lizzie is high in the loft, at the end of the beam, dangerously mid-air.

LIZZIE/ALICE

*Oh, lord, do not deliver the soul of the white bird  
The soul of the white bird to the wild beast*

Lizzie moves forward suddenly as if she is about to take wing.

ALICE

Lizzie don't!

Lizzie halts, teetering on the edge, awakening. A spell broken, sounds of birds cooing. Lizzie as if nothing has happened...

LIZZIE

Is that you, Alice?

ALICE

Yes. Lizzie. I've been looking all over for you.

LIZZIE

Are you alone?

ALICE

Yes.

LIZZIE

Then come up. Come up and see them.

Father says birds are filthy, but I think they're beautiful

Alice climbs up to the loft. She and Lizzie sit together, silently watching the cooing birds. Lizzie lays her head on Alice's lap.

LIZZIE

Why can't it be different? Emma and I used to think that it ought to be  
... we used to hope it might be different.

ALICE

Maybe someday it will be.

## 7: MAYBE SOMEDAY

Night falls. Lizzie falls asleep. Alice watches over her and begins to sing a lullaby.

ALICE

*Maybe someday your heart will be open  
Maybe someday you will know  
Maybe someday I will make you see  
That your secret's safe now  
my secret's safe now  
your secret's safe now with me.*

## 8: “THE WILL” (UNDERScore)

THE NEXT DAY. BORDEN HOUSE INTERIOR., PORTAITS LIT. MUSIC ACCENTUATES EVERY PHYSICAL MOVE OF EMMA’S MOOD SWITCHES: CHINESE OPERA MEETS ROCK OPERA.

Emma enters carrying a copy of Mr. Borden’s will and yelling to her stepmother as she leaves the room.

EMMA

What OUR Father does for YOUR people, he ought to be doing for his own daughters! You are not our mother and you never will be!

BRIDGET

Miss Emma, what do you want for breakfast?

EMMA

I don’t want any breakfast.

Maggie, have you seen Lizzie this morning?

BRIDGET

No, but she must have gotten up early. Her bed is freshly made, as if she hadn’t slept in it at all.

Bridget exits.

EMMA

Lizzie!

Lizzie is awakened by Emma’s voice. She is startled. Jumps up.

LIZZIE

What time is it?

Lizzie quickly stands up, dusting off her dress and trying to get the feathers out of her hair.

ALICE

We must have fallen asleep.

EMMA

Lizzie! Where are you!?

LIZZIE

I have to go.

Lizzie moves to leave the bird loft, Alice takes her arm..

ALICE

Lizzie, shall I call on you tonight?

LIZZIE

Yes.

Lizzie and Alice leave the barn loft. Lizzie rushes into the house. Feathers in her hair, the same dress as last night. A little rough around the edges.

LIZZIE



Emma! What are these goings on?

Emma places a packed bag by the door.

Why has Maggie packed your bag?

EMMA

I am going to Fairhaven.

LIZZIE

What has happened?

EMMA

This is what has happened. (She hands Lizzie the copy of the will). That woman has convinced Father to change his will. She is trying to close us out.

LIZZIE

How could she do that?

EMMA

Look here (points to part of document) If Father dies before her, she'll take everything and we'll have nothing. And then what shall we do?

Emma turns to go.

LIZZIE

(Pleading) Emma, please...

EMMA

Lizzie, I must get away for a few days. I shall figure something out.

LIZZIE

Please don't leave me here alone with them.

EMMA

I am afraid somebody would do something if I were to see her again.

Bridget holds out a packed suitcase, Emma takes it as she crosses to the door. Lizzie stops her in her tracks with...

LIZZIE

Emma wait! What if Mrs. Borden dies first?

## 9: SWEET LITTLE SISTER

Emma grabs a mic.

EMMA

*I was a trembling child just twelve years old  
When mother placed you in my arms  
You were only two  
You never knew  
My sweet little sister*

*She touched my face and she pulled me close  
And Mama whispered in my ear  
Don't let her go! Don't let her know  
Your sweet little sister*

*For years I tried to be to you  
All the things she was to me  
I tried to give you all the love you needed  
But now I fear without a word  
I've told you everything  
And now I hear a warning and it must be heeded*

*Sweet little sister, I'm so afraid to leave you  
Sweet little sister, I've got to get away*

*I was a dark-souled girl of fourteen years  
When father married his new wife*

EMMA

*You were only four  
So I kept score  
My sweet little sister*

*She touched his face and she pulled him close (ha ha ha ha ha)  
And then she whispered in his ear (ha ha ha ha ha)*

EMMA/LIZZIE

*He let us go  
She runs the show  
Sweet little sister*

During the next stanza, Emma sees something change in Lizzie. Lizzie grabs Emma's mic.

LIZZIE

*For years I've tried to keep you safe  
From the darkness in my heart  
But now I see my troubled soul reflected*

EMMA

*I look into your cold blue eyes  
And they tell me everything  
And now I know that no one's been protected*

Emma takes advantage of the moment, and seals the deal with Lizzie.

*Sweet little sister, what I don't see*

LIZZIE

*What you don't see*

EMMA

*Sweet little sister, can never hurt me.*

LIZZIE

*No never hurt you  
Sweet sister, what you don't know*

EMMA

*What I don't know  
Sweet little sister, I can never show*

Becomes a full-on rock and roll number – we lose track of the Victoriana. Guitar solos on “Sweet Little Sister”

*I'm so afraid to leave you  
but I'm more afraid to stay  
I'm scared of what may happen  
Sweet Little Sister, I've got to get away, I've got to get away, I've got to get away*

The world comes back to that dark Victorian House. Emma leaves for Fairhaven.

## 10: SHATTERCANE AND VELVET GRASS

CHROMATROPE IN HUES OF BLUE. VICTORIAN PSYCHEDELIA. FATHER'S PORTRAIT IS NOT ILLUMINATED, ABBY'S IS LIT IN BLUE. THE SONG BECOMES A DANCE, A POISONING PAS DE DEUX BETWEEN BRIDGET MAKING THE TEA AND LIZZIE IMAGINING THE POISONING. ROCK ROADBOX ON WHEELS AS TEA CART.

BRIDGET

Miss Emma, you've forgotten your book! Oh. And she'd asked me to pack it special.

LIZZIE

I shall take care of it for her.

Bridget, smiling, hands Lizzie the book. Lizzie, reading the title...

LIZZIE

"The Book of Household Poisons"

BRIDGET

Time for Mrs. Borden's tea...

Bridget prepares a cup of tea for Mrs. Borden.

BRIDGET

*Fire burn and toil*

*Kettle bubble, water boil*

*Assam, Ceylon*

*Bitter, trouble, very strong*

Lizzie opens the books, its pages glow an eerie blue light, shining up into her face as she starts reading the marked page.

LIZZIE

(flipping over to the page that is marked, reading aloud...) Prussic acid is one of the most rapidly acting toxins that affects mammals...

BRIDGET

*Black leaves and steep*

*Settle, cozy, dark as sleep*

*O soothe this day*

*Milk and sugar, cuppa tay*

Bridget drops a sugar cube into the tea. It starts to steam, dry ice, fog pouring over the brim...filling the stage...the lights wash the stage in psychedelic patterns,

LIZZIE

(reading more...) Several common plants can accumulate large quantities..

As song continues, Lizzie starts out speaking as if she is continuing to read, then with rhythm, then melody.

LIZZIE	BRIDGET
<i>Shattercane and velvet grass, sorghum and white clover</i>	<i>Fire burn, and toil</i>
<i>Millipedes and burnet moths, flax when winter's over</i>	<i>Kettle bubble, water boil</i>
<i>Cherry stones and apricots, pale and milky silent</i>	<i>Assam, Ceylon</i>
<i>Poison forage Prussian blue ...</i>	<i>Bitter, trouble, very strong</i>
	<i>Black leaves and steep</i>
	<i>Settle, cozy, dark as sleep</i>
	<i>O soothe this day</i>
	<i>Milk and sugar, cuppa tay</i>

Bridget Exits, going to get something forgotten for the tea.

*Ferric ferrocyanide three hundred parts per million*  
*Prussic acid, bluish-clear, protoplasmic poison*  
*Boils at twenty-six degrees and faintly tastes of almonds*  
*Death is by paralysis of heart and respiration*  
*Passes through unbroken skin*  
*Careful, for it's found within*

Lizzie moves in on the tea set, as it pulls her towards it.

*Shattercane and velvet grass, sorghum and white clover*  
*Millipedes and burnet moths, flax when winter's over*  
*Cherry stones and apricots, pale and milky silent*  
*Poison forage, Prussian blue, beautiful and violent*

Lizzie, like a tiny Alice at the Mad Hatter's table, toys with the teacup and the idea of poison....

*Following directions in the Book of Household Poisons*  
*Just a drop dropped in the milk and hope that she'll enjoy some*  
*Mind you don't forget to close your eyes and hold your breath, but*  
*wouldn't it be easy now, a perfect little death? Just*  
*drop a grain into her tea,*  
*Mrs. Borden R.I.P.*

Bridget reappears. Pas De Deux Ritual of Tea.

LIZZIE	BRIDGET
<i>Shattercane and velvet grass, sorghum and white clover</i>	<i>Fire burn, and toil</i>
<i>Millipedes and burnet moths, flax when winter's over</i>	<i>Kettle bubble, water boil</i>
<i>Cherry stones and apricots, pale and milky silent</i>	<i>Assam, Ceylon</i>
<i>Poison forage, Prussian blue, beautiful and violent</i>	<i>Bitter, trouble, very strong</i>
	<i>Black leaves and steep</i>
	<i>Settle, cozy, dark as sleep</i>
	<i>O soothe this day</i>
<i>Shattercane and velvet grass, sorghum and white clover</i>	<i>Milk and sugar, cuppa tay</i>
<i>Millipedes and burnet moths, flax when winter's over</i>	<i>Milk and sugar, cuppa tay</i>
<i>Cherry stones and apricots, pale and milky silent</i>	<i>Milk and sugar, cuppa tay</i>
<i>Poison forage, Prussian blue, beautiful and violent</i>	<i>Milk and sugar, cuppa tay</i>

A slow transition out of the psychedelic world of the song...

LIZZIE

Maggie, I am going out!

BRIDGET

At this hour? Miss Lizzie, where could you be going?

LIZZIE

To Bence's pharmacy.

BRIDGET

Bence's Pharmacy? That's clear on the other side of town. If you are feeling ill Miss Lizzie, you ought to lie down and I shall go call on Dr. Bowen.

LIZZIE

I am not faint. I don't need anything from Dr. Bowen.

BRIDGET

Well, what are you needing then?

LIZZIE

Prussic Acid.

BRIDGET

Miss Lizzie, whatforever would you need that?

Music stops.

LIZZIE

To clean a stain ...

Lizzie exits the house

BRIDGET

(as Lizzie leaves) A stain, what stain? On that old sealskin cape? Miss Lizzie, what would you be needing that cape for in this heat?

Bridget picks up The Book of Household Poisons and carries it off with the Tea.

## 11: “THE MILK” (UNDERScore)

Lizzie, outside, runs into Alice again who has come calling as planned. Crickets, Cicada, Wind rustling through trees, horse drawn carriage in the distance.

ALICE

Lizzie!

LIZZIE

Alice...

ALICE

Will you receive a friend here in the yard, or shall we go upstairs?

LIZZIE

Oh Alice. I am so sorry. I must go to Bence's pharmacy.

ALICE

Why?

LIZZIE

Mr. and Mrs. Borden were awfully sick last night.

ALICE

Are your Father and Mother alright?

LIZZIE (dark and deliberate)

Don't call her mother.

Crickets and Cicadas are silent.

ALICE

(reaches out to touch her) Are you well?

LIZZIE

We were all sick. (casually) All but Maggie.

MUSIC STARTS – We see Bridget's ear perk up.

LIZZIE

The milk ... I think our milk might be poisoned. We all drank of it, all but Maggie, and Maggie wasn't sick.

Bridget, irritated at the inadvertent set-up that may make her a suspect, exits.

ALICE

If it had been the milk from the farmer himself, I should suppose other people would be sick, and I haven't heard of anybody. How do you get your milk?

LIZZIE

We have the milk come in a can and set on a step, and we have an empty can. We put out the empty can overnight, and the next morning when they bring the milk they take the empty can.

ALICE

And, what time does the farmer come?

LIZZIE

I think about four o'clock.

ALICE

Well it is light at four. I shouldn't think anybody would dare to come then and tamper with the cans for fear that someone should see them.

LIZZIE

I shouldn't think so. But Mrs. Borden even told the Doctor that she thought she had been poisoned.

Music Stops

ALICE

Who would do something like that?



## 12: WILL YOU STAY?

BACK IN THE WORLD OF ALICE, OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE, STAGE DAPPLED IN LEAFY SHADOWS, GREEN AND YELLOW, THE EVENING FADES, THE PORTRAITS ARE NOW WINDOWS LOOKING OUT. FROM DUSK TO NIGHT ACROSS A SKY, SILHOUETTES OF BRANCHES, PEAR TREES RIPE WITH FRUIT. AS IF ALICE MAKES THE WORLD FECUND.

LIZZIE

I don't know, but I can't sleep at night. Father has so many enemies. I'm afraid that somebody will do something. I don't know but what somebody will do something.

LIZZIE

*I want to sleep with my eyes half open. One eye open half the time.*

ALICE

*But if you close your eyes you'll see  
The golden pear, it hides the key  
That can open up your heart  
And end your toil*

*See how they ripen on the bough  
Now they're falling to the ground  
To be gathered up in skirts  
Before they spoil*

*Will you lay next to me  
In the shade of the tree?  
Will you bite through the skin  
To the sweet flesh within?  
Will you rest for awhile  
Let me bring back your smile  
Will you lay next to me?  
Will you stay?*

Alice touches Lizzie.

LIZZIE

I ought to be on my way...

Lizzie moves as if to leave. The song transforms and becomes a ROCK show number, Alice as super sister woman lover, rock force, pulling Lizzie to her bosom, to her heart.

ALICE

*The pear is jealous of the rose  
Because she hears of all your woes  
But she never gets a chance  
To taste your pleasure*

*And though she's luscious to the taste  
She's always eaten in great haste  
For the autumn winds that blow  
Steal all her treasure*

*Will you lay next to me  
In the shade of the tree?  
Will you bite through the skin  
To the sweet flesh within?  
Will you rest for awhile?  
Let me bring back your smile.  
Will you lay next to me?  
Will you stay?*

They kiss.

ALICE  
*Sleep, sleep, sleep  
I'll keep my eyes half open  
One eye open half the time*

As the song ends, they kiss again. Alice leads Lizzie by the hand toward the barn loft, but they are interrupted by Bridget who is descending from the loft in a bloodied apron, holding a small bloody bundle.

# 13: WHY ARE ALL THESE HEADS OFF?

THE BARN LOFT. BACK TO FEATHERS AND SHIT AND NOW BLOOD. PIN LIGHTS... AS THE CHORUS EXPLODES A DARK ZOETROPE OF HEADLESS BIRDS AND BLOOD SPLATTER. A PUNK ANTHEM, A LITTLE OZZY OSBOURNE/ALICE COOPER. WHITE LIGHTS POUND THE STAGE – NO RED LIGHT YET...JUST THE RED OF THE BIRDS' BLOOD.

BRIDGET

Miss Lizzie, your father doesn't want you nor Miss Russell up in the barn no more.

LIZZIE

(seeing all the blood on her) Maggie, what do you have there?

Lizzie moves toward Bridget cautiously.

BRIDGET

*Listen to me, Lizzie, it's bad, and I don't know how to say this  
But your father saw you in the barn, he saw you go up there with Alice  
He said I told her to leave those birds alone, they're sick and dark and filthy  
Then he took an axe and chopped their heads off, one by one he killed them*

Bridget hands Lizzie the bloody bundle. She unwraps it, finding her beloved birds, decapitated, bloody, dead, cradles their headless bleeding bodies as she becomes more and more enraged.

LIZZIE/(ALICE)

*The sound of beating pigeon wings is ringing in my ears  
And the taste of blood is on my tongue and it's been rising up for years (Aaaaah)*

*My world is growing darker, he is shutting out the light  
There's no way out of this pressure cooker, no way out alive*

Zoetrope.

LIZZIE/BRIDGET/ALICE

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off? (Why why why?)*

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off?*

ALICE

Wait! Wait! Wait!

ALICE

*Everything is fine, Lizzie  
We will find a better way  
If you stay with me, Lizzie  
I will protect you*

BRIDGET

*There are two sides, Lizzie  
You didn't choose which side you're on*

ALICE

*But there is right*

BRIDGET

*And there is wrong*

LIZZIE

*And I will choose my weapon*

Zoetrope.

LIZZIE/BRIDGET/ALICE

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off? (Why why why?)*

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off?*

*Why are all these heads off? (Why why why?)*

Lizzie is transformed, her voice explodes. Alice, overcome, leaves.

LIZZIE

*I'm standing*

*looking forward*

*In the dark*

*A feeling brushes past me*

*And I know the wind has changed*

BRIDGET

*(Banshee Wail)*

*Ah ah ah ahhh ah ah ah ahhhh ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ahhhh*

*Ah ah ah ahhh ah ah ah ahhhh ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ahhhh*

## 14: MERCURY RISING

A MOMENT FROZEN IN TIME, THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM, THUNDER AND LIGHTNING IN THE DISTANCE. LIZZIE RITUALLY PREPARES THE BIRDS FOR BURIAL AS BRIDGET SEES THE COMING OF DEATH AND SINGS HER BANSHEE WAIL. A NEW PATH IS CHOSEN. VENGEANCE IS LIZZIE'S.

BRIDGET

*Air stands still  
Thick with rain that hasn't yielded  
Thunder rumbles low  
But still no storm*

Lizzie carefully prepares her beloved birds for burial, wrapping them gently in the bloodied rag.

*Foul winds blow  
Leave a strange metallic aftertaste  
And carry whispers  
Too soft to hear*

*(woeful)  
Ahhhh  
Ahhhh*

*Mercury rises  
As the drops of stifled rage  
Collecting weight begin to fall*

BRIDGET/LIZZIE

*Ahhhh  
Ahhhh*

BRIDGET/LIZZIE/EMMA/ALICE

*Ahhhh  
Ahhhh*

Bridget stands as a banshee in the doorway.

*Ancestral blood  
Stains a daughter's ivory hand  
And splatters o'er  
The reeking floor*

## 15: SOMEBODY WILL DO SOMETHING

SUDDEN LIGHT SHIFT. MORNING IN THE BORDEN HOUSE. PORTRAITS OF ANDREW AND ABBY ILLUMINATED. THE MURDERS. VICTORIAN SHADOW PLAY MEETS PSYCHO SHOWER SCENE. RED LIGHTS FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE MURDERS BECOME A FRENZIED CATHARSIS. BLOOD.

BRIDGET

Miss Lizzie, what do you want for breakfast?

LIZZIE

I don't know as I want any breakfast. But I guess I'll have some coffee  
... and cookies ...

Maggie are you going out to wash the windows?

BRIDGET

Yes. I done 'em inside already, but Mrs. Borden wants 'em done inside  
and out.

Your Father's gone to town. Your stepmother is cleaning the guest room  
upstairs.

(into mic) All by herself.

And I'll be out around here, so you needn't lock the door. Or you can  
lock it if you want to. I can get the water in the barn.

BRIDGET

*Somebody will do something  
Somebody will take something  
Somebody will strike something  
Somebody will die*

LIZZIE

*Axe Fall River Runs Red*

*Maggie's washing windows  
Father takes a walk  
Mrs. Borden goes upstairs  
And I can hardly talk*

*I'm so afraid*

*I went down to the cellar  
And searched behind some sacks  
My eyes they never saw it  
But my hands they found the ax*

Bridget hands Lizzie the ax.

*I'm so afraid*

BRIDGET/EMMA/ALICE (OFFSTAGE)

*Somebody will do something  
Somebody will take something  
Somebody will strike something  
Somebody will die*

LIZZIE

*I step onto the staircase  
Stepmother hears me not  
I step into the bedroom  
“Oh, Lizzie! What have you got?”*

*I’m so afraid*

Lizzie leaves through the door to Mrs. Borden’s room.

BRIDGET/EMMA/ALICE (OFFSTAGE)

*Somebody will do something  
Somebody will take something  
Somebody will strike something  
Somebody will die*

The Murder of Mrs. Borden.

BRIDGET

*(Banshee Wail)*

*Ah ah ah ahhh ah ah ah*

Lizzie and Bridget enter through the opposite doors. Lizzie is covered in blood. Bridget gasps.

BRIDGET

Oh! Miss Lizzie, you startled me.

Mr. Borden’s just come home. He said to keep the noise down.

He’ll be napping in the living room and doesn’t want to be disturbed.

LIZZIE

Maggie, you are going out this afternoon?

BRIDGET

I don’t know. I might and I might not. I don’t feel very well.

LIZZIE

If you go out be sure to lock the door, for Mrs. Borden has gone out on a sick call, and I might go out too.

BRIDGET

Miss Lizzie, who is sick?

LIZZIE

I don’t know. Somebody.

BRIDGET

Somebody?

LIZZIE

Yes, she had a note from somebody this morning. It must be in town.

Bridget stands her ground, not leaving. Lizzie takes a wad of bloody money from the body of Mrs. Borden and hands it to Bridget.

There is a cheap sale of dresses at Sergeant's this afternoon, pennies on the yard.

BRIDGET

I am going to have a lovely one.

Bridget exits

LIZZIE

*With Maggie so retired  
Stepmother quite undone  
Father will be napping  
He'll wish he'd had that son*

*I'm so afraid*

Lizzie leaves through the door to Mr. Borden's room.

BRIDGET/EMMA/ALICE (OFFSTAGE)

*Somebody will do something  
Somebody will take something  
Somebody will strike something  
Somebody will  
Somebody will die*

The Murder of Mr. Borden.

BRIDGET

*(Banshee Wail)*

*Ah ah ah ahhh ah ah ah*

Lizzie reappears even bloodier. She is removing her bloody dress.

LIZZIE

Maggie!

Bridget enters.

Go and get Miss Russell. I don't want to be alone in this house.

BRIDGET

What is the matter?

LIZZIE



Father is dead. Somebody came in and killed him.

They look out to audience. Lizzie tosses the dress to the floor. Blackout. End of Act 1.

# ACT II

## 16: FORTY WHACKS (ENTR'ACTE)

THE PORTRAITS OF ANDREW AND ABBY ARE NOW GONE. GIVING THE AUDIENCE A BETTER VIEW OF THE BAND.

## 17: THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF BORDEN/ “THE ALIBI”

The scene is almost as we left it. The blood has been cleaned up, EXCEPT for the bloody dress which sits in a pile on the floor right where Lizzie left it. Bridget has just finished cleaning up as Lizzie enters putting on a new clean dress.

BRIDGET

*In the house of Borden, “somebody” left us quite a mess*

Bridget nods over to Lizzie

*Splattered blood and brains on everything, except on Lizzie's dress*

Lizzie sees the bloody dress and starts to move toward it

*It's a crime scene, it's a nightmare, it's a bloodbath, it's a fright*

Lizzie picks up the dress and carries it offstage, careful not to soil her clean dress.

*It's a butcher shop in the house of Borden.*

Bridget opens the door. Flash bulb flashes.

*A mob is gath'ring outside, half the town is in the yard  
The press is in a frenzy; cops are standing guard  
It must have been a lunatic, a foreigner, a beast  
But it's just us girls in the house of Borden*

Alice enters through the front door. Lizzie enters the room. Alice runs to her.

ALICE

Lizzie, are you alright? Where were you when it happened?

LIZZIE

I was in the backyard.

ALICE

Did you see anyone or hear anything?

LIZZIE

I saw no one, heard no screams.

ALICE

Where in the yard were you?

LIZZIE

I was up in the barn loft.

ALICE

Why would you go back up there, after your father ...

LIZZIE

I went out to get a ... lead sinker for my fishing trip.

I heard a distressing noise, like scraping and came back and found the screen door open.

ALICE

How long were you up there?

LIZZIE

Twenty minutes...

ALICE

It must have been sweltering.

LIZZIE

I ate some pears.

Lizzie looks into Alice's eyes, smiling, she takes her hand as they cross offstage.

BRIDGET

*Lizzie was in the back yard, or did she say the barn?  
It's only been a day now, and she's spinning quite a yarn  
What we know for sure is there were four and now there's two  
There's no coming back to the house of Borden*

*In the house of Borden, "somebody" left us quite a mess  
Splattered blood and brains on everything, except on Lizzie's dress  
It's a crime scene, it's a nightmare, it's a bloodbath, it's a fright  
And it blew the roof off the house of Borden*

During the final verse, the bodies are revealed, covered in bloodied white sheets, like oversized versions of the pigeons after Lizzie had prepared them for burial.

*We laid 'em out in the dining room; it's going on day two  
I know it sounds disgusting, but it's 1892  
There's no a.c., it's August, and it's 95 degrees  
[spoken:] Well, you do the math*

Bridget exits. Lights out.

## 18: WHAT THE FUCK NOW, LIZZIE?

LATE THAT NIGHT. IN THE DARKENED HOUSE, A DOOR OPENS WITH A CREAK, A SLIVER OF LIGHT SLICING ACROSS THE FLOOR. A FIGURE ENTERS IN SHADOW. IT IS EMMA, BACK FROM FAIRHAVEN. SHE CROSSES IN THE DARKNESS UPSTAGE TO THE COVERED BODIES, SHOCKED BY WHAT SHE SEES.

EMMA

Lizzie!!

Lizzie enters.

EMMA

*My sweet little sister what have you done?*

LIZZIE

*Well, I wasn't gonna wait for an engraved invitation!*

EMMA

*Now I got twice the trouble. Got two for one!*

LIZZIE

*Quit your bitching, can't you see a win-win situation?*

EMMA

*What the fuck? What the fuck, what the fuck, what the fuck now, Lizzie?*

LIZZIE

*Well he ain't crawlin' back in the bed now, is he?*

EMMA

*Nooooooh!*

EMMA

*Lizzie my love, is this the best that you could do?*

*Damned if I leave you alone for a minute!*

*What possessed you to murder the old man too?*

*Made a deal, had a plan, and an axe wasn't in it!*

*What the fuck? What the fuck, what the fuck, what the fuck now, Lizzie?*

LIZZIE

*Well he ain't comin' round in the dark now, is he?*

EMMA

*What the fuck? What the fuck, what the fuck, what the fuck now, Lizzie?*

LIZZIE

*And she ain't gonna get all the dough now, is she?*

EMMA

*Noooo!*

LIZZIE

*Noooo!*

LIZZIE/EMMA

*Noooo! Noooo!*

LIZZIE

*A foolish thought to say a sorry sight*

EMMA

*Did he look? Did he blink? Did he know who did him?*

LIZZIE

*My hands are red, but I wear a heart so white*

LIZZIE/EMMA

*Who'da thought the old man had so much blood in him?*

EMMA

*What's done is done but there's a knocking at the gate*

*Gotta clean up the scene, gotta act like we're normal*

*Get your shit together, get your story straight*

*Gotta talk to a cop, gotta cry at a funeral*

EMMA

*What the fuck? What the fuck, what the fuck, what the fuck now, Lizzie?*

LIZZIE

*Well he ain't gonna lock all the doors now, is he?*

EMMA

*What the fuck? What the fuck, what the fuck, what the fuck now, Lizzie?*

LIZZIE

*And she ain't gonna get all the dough now, is she? (Nooooo!)*

EMMA (LIZZIE)

*What the fuck? What the fuck, what the fuck, what the fuck now, Lizzie?(Nooooo!)*

*What the fuck? What the fuck, what the fuck, what the fuck now, Lizzie?(Nooooo!)  
What the fuck what the fuck, what the fuck, what the fuck now, Lizzie?*

LIZZIE

*Well he ain't coming round in the dark now, is he?*

BOTH

*Nooooo! Nooooo! Nooooo! Nooooo!*

Lights. A beat. And then, the music resumes.

LIZZIE

*Sister, put on your nightgown, go to bed*

EMMA

*Gotta figure out a plan, gotta spring into action*

LIZZIE

*Ain't nobody home but the sleeping and the dead  
Gonna sleep tonight in sweet satisfaction.*

Lizzie sends Emma off to bed. She then returns to Alice. Doors close.

## 19: “THE DRESS” (UNDERScore)

DOORS OPEN. THE NEXT MORNING.

BRIDGET

Miss Emma, I didn't hear you come home last night. I'm so sorry about your father and mo.....Mrs. Borden. (Breaking the mood abruptly)  
What do you want for breakfast?

EMMA

I don't want any breakfast. Where is Lizzie?

BRIDGET

I haven't seen her this morning. She must still be sleeping. Poor thing.  
I did find her dress all in a heap. Gonna be hell to get out all of this--

Bridget holds out a bundle with the bloodied dress. Emma sees it.

EMMA

Maggie, give that to me.

Emma goes to take the dress, but Bridget pulls it back.

BRIDGET

The name's Bridget. (pause)

EMMA

(saccharine) Bridget....give that to me.

Emma goes to take the dress, but Bridget doesn't budge.

BRIDGET

Well, Miss Lizzie did say there was a cheap sale of dresses at Sergeant's this afternoon.

Emma takes hands Bridget several bills.

Pennies on the yard.

Emma hands her several more bills. Bridget tosses the bundle and exits.

EMMA

Lizzie?!?!?!?

Lizzie comes into the room.

LIZZIE

Emma!

EMMA

You haven't destroyed the dress yet?

LIZZIE

No...

EMMA

Why didn't you? You had better! I would if I were you!



Alice, hearing the raised voice, comes into the room. She has obviously slept over.

ALICE

Lizzie? (seeing Emma) Emma.

EMMA

Alice.

A slightly uncomfortable pause, as Emma connects the dots about Alice and Lizzie, and Alice begins to connect the dots about Lizzie and Emma.

ALICE

What are you doing?

LIZZIE

I'm just going to burn this old thing up. It is covered with—

Music out.

EMMA

Paint.

Alice starts to say something...Bridget enters.

BRIDGET

The policemen have returned. They'd like to speak to Miss Russell

Alice exits. Bridget gives the sisters a look and shuts the door behind her as she follows Miss Russell out.

## 20: BURN THE OLD THING UP

THE STAGE BECOMES A BURNING FURNACE.

EMMA

Do it. Do it. Do it!

LIZZIE

*Fire burns small dark figures you and I*

EMMA

*Don't let them see*

LIZZIE

*Don't let them see how the fire burns*

LIZZIE/EMMA

*Fire burns*

EMMA

*Smoke rises black as night blocks the light*

LIZZIE/EMMA

*From deep inside*

*Burn the old thing up*

*Burn the old thing up*

*Burn the old thing*

*Burn the old thing*

*Burn the old thing up*

Emma pulls out the will. Ritually they cross to the stove, open the door, push the dress and the will into the fire. The lights flash, fire erupts on stage. We are suddenly inside the oven. Fires flares around them... blasts of flames....red, yellow, orange. They stand triumphant as the old world burns around them.

*Burn the old thing up*

*Burn the old thing up*

*Burn the old thing*

*Burn the old thing*

*Burn the old thing up*

The flames die down, ashes, darkness...the smoky remains....

EMMA

*Burnt down to the ground everything*

LIZZIE

*All that was*

EMMA

*All that was*

*Burn it down*

Alice reappears in the room and is shocked to see what she sees.

## 21: QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

AN INTEROGATORY DANCE WITH VICTORIAN FANS, HANKIES AND FOR BRIDGET, A RAG. NERVOUS ANXIETY, FANS COVERING AND REVEALING, HIDING, BREATHING, PANTING CENTERED ON ALICE AS THE OTHER THREE TRY TO SEE WHAT ALICE IS GOING TO SAY AND DO.

ALICE

Lizzie, what have you done? I'm afraid the worst thing you could have done was to burn that dress. The police have been asking questions.

LIZZIE

Why didn't you come tell me? Why did you let me do it?

ALICE

Questions all about your dresses.

LIZZIE

Alice, what did you tell them?

ALICE

Questions and more questions.

ALICE

*Answering questions questions  
More and more question questions  
Every day questions questions  
Filling my mind with questions*

ALL

*Answering questions questions  
More and more question questions  
Every day questions questions  
Filling my mind with questions*

ALICE

*What do you know? Who told you that?  
What's that you say? Who would do this to them?*

ALICE

*What did you see? Were you alone?  
See anybody else? Were there strangers around?*

ALICE (LIZZIE, EMMA, AND BRIDGET BUILD INTO THIS CHORUS)

*Answering questions questions  
More and more question questions  
Every day questions questions  
Filling my mind with questions*

ALICE (THEN BRIDGET, EMMA, AND LIZZIE, IN THAT ORDER)  
*What do you know? (Bridget: Did you know that they'd been murdered?)*  
*Who told you that? (Emma: Did you see 'em with your own eyes?)*  
*What's that you say? (Lizzie: Did he have enemies?)*

ALICE  
*Who would do this to them?*

ALICE (THEN BRIDGET, EMMA, AND LIZZIE, IN THAT ORDER)  
*What did you see?(Where were you when it happened?)*  
*Were you alone? (Did your mother have a visitor?)*  
*See anybody else? (Near the house? On the street?)*

ALICE  
*Were there strangers around?*

ALICE (WITH LIZZIE, EMMA, AND BRIDGET)  
*Answering questions questions*  
*More and more question questions*  
*Every day questions questions*  
*Filling my mind with questions*

ALICE (THEN BRIDGET, EMMA, AND LIZZIE, IN THAT ORDER)  
*How about at home? (Was everybody cordial?)*  
*Did they share all their meals? (Did you ever call her mother?)*  
*And what about their dad?(Cash or bonds, property?)*

ALICE  
*Had he written a will?*

ALICE (THEN BRIDGET, EMMA, AND LIZZIE, IN THAT ORDER)  
*Any weapons found? (Have you ever used a hatchet?)*  
*And what about an axe? (Did your father kill some pigeons?)*  
*Then what did she do? (Did you buy poison there?)*

ALICE  
*Was ev'rybody sick?*

ALICE (WITH LIZZIE, EMMA, AND BRIDGET)  
*Answering questions questions*  
*More and more question questions*  
*Every day questions questions*  
*Filling my mind with questions*

*Answering questions questions  
More and more question questions  
Every day questions questions  
Filling my mind with questions*

ALICE (THEN BRIDGET, EMMA, AND LIZZIE, IN THAT ORDER)

*What did you hear?(What time did you hear it?)  
Did it sound like a groan? (Or maybe like a scraping?)  
Did she go to the barn?(Did you laugh on the stairs?)*

ALICE

*Was their blood on her hands?*

ALICE (THEN BRIDGET, EMMA, AND LIZZIE, IN THAT ORDER)

*What did she wear?( Was she wearing a blue dress?)  
Was it stained at the hem?(Did she change into another one?)  
See blood on the skirt? (Are you sure, just a drop?)*

ALICE

*Did she burn the thing up?*

<i>ALICE</i>	<i>BRIDGET/EMMA</i>	<i>LIZZIE</i>
<i>Answering questions questions More and more question questions Every day questions questions</i>	<i>What did you hear?(What time did you hear it?) Did it sound like a groan? (Or maybe like a scraping?) Did she go to the barn?(Did you laugh on the stairs?)</i>	<i>Hear them. Groaning. Hands of blood.</i>
<i>Answering questions questions More and more question questions Every day questions questions</i>	<i>Was their blood on her hands? What did she wear?(Was she wearing a blue dress?) Was it stained at the hem?(Did she change into another one?) See blood on the skirt? (Are you sure, just a drop?)</i>	<i>Blue dress. Hem stained. Burn it up.</i>
	<i>Did she burn the thing up?</i>	

EMMA/BRIDGET

*Did she burn the thing up?*

## 22: WILL YOU LIE?

ALICE RUNS OUT OF THE HOUSE, FOLLOWED BY LIZZIE. BACK TO THE PEAR TREES WHERE THEIR LOVE HAD BLOOMED. IT IS NOW A PUMPED-UP VERSION OF THE BOWER. LEAF GOBOS, BUT MORE SATURATED, ANGULAR. LIZZIE IS IN CHARGE. SHE TURNS THE LOVE SONG INTO PLEA OF DESPERATION, A SEXUAL BRIBE, A LAST CHANCE.

ALICE

*Stop! Stop! Stop!*

*The lies are all half-spoken, half-lies spoken all the time.*

LIZZIE (WITH EMMA BRIDGET OFFSTAGE)

*But if you close your eyes you'll see*

*My golden pear you hide a key*

*That can lock a secret in and never tell*

*The fruit of sin weighed on their boughs*

*Somebody came in and cut them down*

*Now they've fallen to the ground, with no farewell*

*Will you lie, here, for me?*

*With your lips, silently*

*Will you bite through the skin?*

*(secret safe now?)*

*To the sweet truth within*

*(Is my secret safe now?)*

*Will you rest for awhile?*

*Let me bring back your smile.*

*Will you lie, here, for me?*

*Will you stay?(Stay!)*

ALICE

*The pear is frightened of the rose*

*For now your thorns are all she knows,*

*And she's seen the pain that comes with your displeasure*

*And though the prick was most unkind*

*You think it leaves no trace behind,*

*But it leaves a drop of blood upon the measure*

Alice tries to leave, Lizzie forcefully, physically stops her.

LIZZIE (WITH EMMA BRIDGET OFFSTAGE)

*Will you lie, here, for me?*

*With your lips, silently*

*Will you bite through the skin?*

*(secret safe now?)  
To the sweet truth within  
(Is my secret safe now?)  
Will you bite through the skin?  
(Is my secret safe now?)  
To the sweet truth within  
(Is my secret safe now?)*

*Will you rest for awhile?  
Let me bring back your smile.  
Will you lie, here, for me?  
Here for me. Are you? Will you?  
Stay! (Stay! Stay!)  
Will you?*

Alice pulls away from Lizzie....

LIZZIE

What are you going to tell them?

ALICE

The truth.

LIZZIE

The truth?! I want to know the truth!

ALICE

I saw you.

Jumpcut: Interrogation: Alice is suddenly illuminated in a glaring white light. She speaks as if to an unseen policemen.

I saw Miss Lizzie Borden burn that dress.

Alice exits.



## 23: WATCHMEN FOR THE MORNING

A CELEBRITY PERP WALK, A PRESS OPPORTUNITY, THE PIETY OF THE NEWLY ACCUSED, FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY, REPORTERS, THE CROWDS ON THE STREET. THE PUBLIC WORLD WHERE LIZZIE WILL LIVE FROM NOW ON. THE ROTATING RED, BLUE, WHITE LIGHTS OF A POLICE CAR FLASH ACROSS THE STAGE.

Borden house interior. Bridget appears with Emma clutching a bible.

BRIDGET

Miss Lizzie, one of the police gentlemen wants to speak with you.

LIZZIE

Why?

EMMA

I tried to keep it from you as long as possible. I begged them to let you stay here with me. Lizzie, they have come to take you to the jailhouse in Taunton until a trial date can be set.

BRIDGET

Miss Emma, the police have pulled the carriage around the front of the house. Should I have them move it to the back?

LIZZIE

No. I am ready to go.

Bells chime in the distance. Clocks and churches. Lizzie on the front steps addressing the town of Fall River. Emma at her side clutching her bible

LIZZIE

Good people of Fall River, my sister and I thank you for your kind regards in our time of sorrow. We have this day offered a five thousand dollar reward to be paid to anyone who may secure the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who occasioned the death of our father...

EMMA

... and his wife. Until that time, we pray that the Lord will sustain us.

LIZZIE/EMMA

*Out of the depths, I cry to thee*

*Lord, Lord hear my voice*

*Let thy ears be attentive*

*To the voice of my prayer*

*My soul waits for the lord*

*And in his word I hope*

*My soul waits for the Lord*

*More than watchmen for the morning*

A sudden shift. SFX: Old jail door slams and locks. We are in the jail now. Bars of light reminiscent of the barn loft. A solitary stool for Lizzie to sit on. Emma visits Lizzie in jail. There is a strange silence between them. Emma opens her bible and reads. By the end of the song, Lizzie is standing looking down at Emma who has kneeled down in prayer.

LIZZIE

Emma, are you going to give me away?

EMMA

No Lizzie, I won't.

LIZZIE

Yes, you will. But I will let you see. I won't give in one inch.

Alone, the sisters confront the possible future.

EMMA (LIZZIE)

*If Thou should mark iniquities  
Lord, Lord who could stand?  
But there is forgiveness with thee  
That thou may be feared*

*My soul it waits, it waits for the Lord  
And in, and in his word I hope*

*My soul waits for the Lord  
More than watchmen for the morning  
More than watchmen for the morning  
More than watchmen for the morning*

The cell transforms into a witness stand as the other women come onstage, into the courtroom.

## 24: MAYBE SOMEDAY (REPRISE 1)

SPLIT SCREEN SEQUENCE BETWEEN LIZZIE IN JAILHOUSE, AND THE WOMEN AT TRIAL.

Gavel bangs

LIZZIE

My name is Lizzie Andrew Borden. Not Elizabeth. Lizzie. Andrew.  
After my father. I was so christened. I am innocent. I leave it to my  
counsel to speak for me.

LIZZIE

*Maybe someday I'll walk in the open*

Lizzie leaves the courtroom and returns to the prison cell in Taunton Jail as the women begin to testify.

EMMA

My full name is Emma L. Borden. I am the sister of Miss Lizzie Borden.

LIZZIE

*Maybe someday we'll all forget*

BRIDGET

The name's Bridget Sullivan. I was sometimes called Maggie by Miss  
Emma and Miss Lizzie.

LIZZIE

*Maybe someday they won't whisper, point, and stare*

ALICE

I am Alice Russell.

LIZZIE

*But my secret's safe now*

ALICE

I exchanged calls with Miss Lizzie Borden regularly. She always  
received me upstairs.

LIZZIE

*My secret's safe now*

## 25: THIRTEEN DAYS IN TAUNTON

The Trial of Miss Lizzie Borden.

ALICE

Lizzie spoke of trouble with her stepmother, that Mrs. Borden thought so and so; but the whole thing was, as far as I could see, that one's own mother might have had more influence over the father; it was the father more than the mother. They were young girls. But young girls cannot go and do and have...

LIZZIE

*They tried to keep me down  
But I said no!  
I'm moving uptown honey  
That's where I'm gonna go  
But I'm down here in the big house  
Help me count the days  
I got thirteen days in Taunton  
Then I'll fly away*

EMMA

I have no recollection of anything of that kind. No sir, I don't seem to remember it. I don't remember what you asked me . I don't remember the question nor the answer. I can only say I don't remember giving it. I don't know whether I did or not. I can't tell you, I don't know. I was in Fairhaven.

LIZZIE

*I got my dream team working  
on my defense  
Cost me a bloody fortune, but I spare no expense  
'Cause let me tell you, losing is  
not a game I play  
I'm leaving by the front door  
When I fly away  
I got twelve more days in Taunton  
And then Ill fly away  
I got .... And then I'll fly away*

ALICE

About seven o'clock on the evening of Wednesday, August 3rd, I was waiting for Miss Lizzie Borden. But when she came, she said--

BRIDGET

She was on her way to Bence's Pharmacy. For Prussic acid. To clean a stain.

ALICE

And she said, "Mr. and Mrs. Borden were awfully sick last night. We were all sick, all but Maggie."

BRIDGET

I had a sick headache, and I was sick to my stomach.

ALICE

And she said, Mrs. Borden even told the Doctor that she thought she had been poisoned. I asked her, who would do something like that, and she didn't know. She said, "I can't sleep at night. I am afraid that somebody will do something."

LIZZIE/EMMA

*Now that you mention it, I  
can't stand the night  
I sit here in the darkness waiting  
For the light*

LIZZIE

*Eleven days in Taunton  
Waiting for the break of day  
Ten more days in this hole  
Then I'll fly away*

*They love me in the jailhouse  
They love me in the street  
They love me in the courtroom, yeah  
I know I got 'em beat  
I got nine more days in Taunton*

ALICE

*This, this, this is not love, I don't know what it is*

LIZZIE

*And when this whole thing is over  
I've got to get away*

EMMA

Well I don't know how to describe it to you.

BRIDGET

It was not a Calico dress.

ALICE

It was a cheap cotton Bedford cord.

EMMA

An American cloth.

ALICE

All cotton.

EMMA

I think one part of it was black or very...

BRIDGET

Light blue

ALICE

With a small dark figure.

BRIDGET

A sprig.

ALICE

I did not suggest to Miss Lizzie Borden that she change her dress.

EMMA

I think she did.

ALICE

I saw no blood on that dress. Not a drop.

LIZZIE

*Can we just drop the dress talk?  
The subject's getting dull*

LIZZIE/BRIDGET

*Gonna buy myself a new dress, gonna  
buy a whole damn closet full  
'Cause I got plenty of money  
Girl, I just got paid*

LIZZIE

*Four more days in Taunton  
Then I'll fly away*

BRIDGET

After Mrs. Borden told me to wash the windows, I didn't see her anymore until I found her dead upstairs. I don't remember to have heard a sound of anyone about the house until Mr. Borden came to the door. As I unlocked it, I said, "Oh Pshaw," and Miss Lizzie laughed at the top of the stairs.

LIZZIE

*You say that I'm not weeping  
That I'm not dressed in black  
Call me a Yankee Clytemnestra  
Well imagine that  
I've done my share of crying  
Lord, my dues is paid  
I got three more days in Taunton  
And then I'll fly away*

ALICE

Her sister turned and said, "What are you going to do?"

EMMA

I swear that I didn't say it. The reason that I say I didn't say so is because I didn't say so.

ALICE

And Lizzie said, "I am going to burn this old thing up;

EMMA

There was nothing of that kind said.

ALICE

it is covered with—"

EMMA

Paint. It was soiled. Just as any dress would get soiled. And I said, "Why don't you?" or something like that. I can't tell the exact words.

ALICE

I am quite sure I left the room and I told the officer that I saw Miss Lizzie Borden burn that dress.

LIZZIE/ALICE

*Turn of the century  
Turn of the screw  
Turn of the tables  
Between me and you*

LIZZIE

*Got two more days in Taunton  
Till my judgment day  
one more day in Taunton  
And then I'll fly away*

LIZZIE

*Take me to the courthouse  
The verdict's coming in  
It only took an hour  
for those white-haired gentlemen  
To put this all behind me  
Oh, today's the day  
When the old man says*

BAND

*"Not guilty"*

LIZZIE

*Watch me fly away*



## 26: MAYBE SOMEDAY (REPRISE 2)

EMMA

*Maybe someday*

LIZZIE

*I'll walk in the open*

EMMA

*Maybe someday*

LIZZIE

*We'll all forget*

EMMA

*Maybe someday*

LIZZIE

*They won't whisper, point, and stare*

*But my secret's safe now*

EMMA

*Yes, your secret's safe now*

BOTH

*Our secret's safe now*

LIZZIE/EMMA

*Maybe someday, we'll tell the world (Ooooooh)*

*Maybe someday, we'll make them understand (Ooooooh)*

Lizzie exits, waving to the crowd, the flash and glare of paparazzi coming from the wings as she exits towards them.

EMMA

*Maybe someday, you'll come back to me*

*But your secret's safe now*

BRIDGET/ALICE

*Her secret's safe now*

ALICE/BRIDGET/EMMA

*Our secret's safe now*

## 27: INTO YOUR WILDEST DREAMS (EPILOGUE)

Lizzie enters, the theater is her rock concert arena and she is the superstar. An unseen fan billows the fabric of her silver-white dress, wing-like. Her name in lights behind her LIZZIE

LIZZIE	BRIDGET/EMMA/ALICE
<i>I'll fly into your wildest dreams I'll fly upon my silver wings I'll fly, fly, fly. I'll fly</i>	
<i>Fly you'll see my face in every night sky You'll hear my voice in every long goodbye goodbye Into your wildest dreams I'll fly.</i>	<i>And the soul of the white bird Will be carried to the mountain And the soul Fly</i>
<i>You'll hear my voice in every long goodbye goodbye Into your wildest dreams I'll fly Fly</i>	<i>And the soul of the white bird Will be carried to the mountain And the soul Into your wildest dreams I'll fly Into your wildest dreams I'll fly</i>
<i>Fly Fly Fly</i>	<i>Fly into your wildest dreams Fly into your wildest dreams Fly into your wildest dreams</i>
<i>I'll fly.</i>	<i>Fly.</i>

In the break in the vocals, the lights suddenly all red, turning Lizzie's white dress bloody. Wind in her hair. Then with vocals, back to white light, Like Medea, Lizzie ascends. Avis Ex Machina..

LIZZIE	BRIDGET/EMMA/ALICE
<i>I'll fly.</i>	<i>Fly.</i>

## 28: FORTY WHACKS (CURTAIN)

ALL

*Lizzie Borden took an axe  
Gave her mother forty whacks.  
When she saw what she had done  
Gave her father forty-one*

**THE END**

# LIZZIE

*A rock-show retelling of the bloody legend of America's first and favorite  
axe-wielding double-murderess and Victorian hometown girl, Lizzie Borden.*

Music by Steven Cheslik-deMeyer and Alan Stevens Hewitt

Lyrics by Steven Cheslik-deMeyer and Tim Maner

Book by Tim Maner

Additional Music by Tim Maner

Additional Lyrics by Alan Stevens Hewitt

Based on an original concept by Steven Cheslik-deMeyer and Tim Maner

Orchestrations by Alan Stevens Hewitt