



0. Lizzie Borden - Story Preface

1. WHO WERE THE BORDENS?
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Photograph of Lizzie Borden taken in 1889. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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

So goes the rhyme many of us learned as school kids. BUT - what was Lizzie really doing on August 4, 1892? Did she viciously kill her father with an axe? (The murder weapon was actually a hatchet.) Did she brutally shatter her stepmother's body?

Her jury didn't think so. Even though the prosecution presented an overwhelming case of circumstantial evidence, Lizzie's jury of twelve men (women couldn't serve as jurors back then) acquitted her.

Some folks think Lizzie's verdict was an early case of "jury nullification" - when the jury ignores plain evidence to reach a result they think is fair. It was said at the time the jury didn't believe a Christian young woman (who taught Sunday School in Fall River, Massachusetts) could have killed her father in such a heinous way.

Other folks think differently. They think Lizzie didn't do it, and the verdict was exactly right. There's even talk Lizzie took the fall for a rumored illegitimate brother.

What do you think? The evidence in this story (including crime scene photos, maps and Lizzie's inquest testimony) will help you answer that question.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Lizzie-Borden>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Lizzie-Borden>

Media Stream



Lizzie Borden

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Lizzie Borden - Discovering Two Vicious Murders

From *The Legend of Lizzie Borden*, starring Elizabeth Montgomery.

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