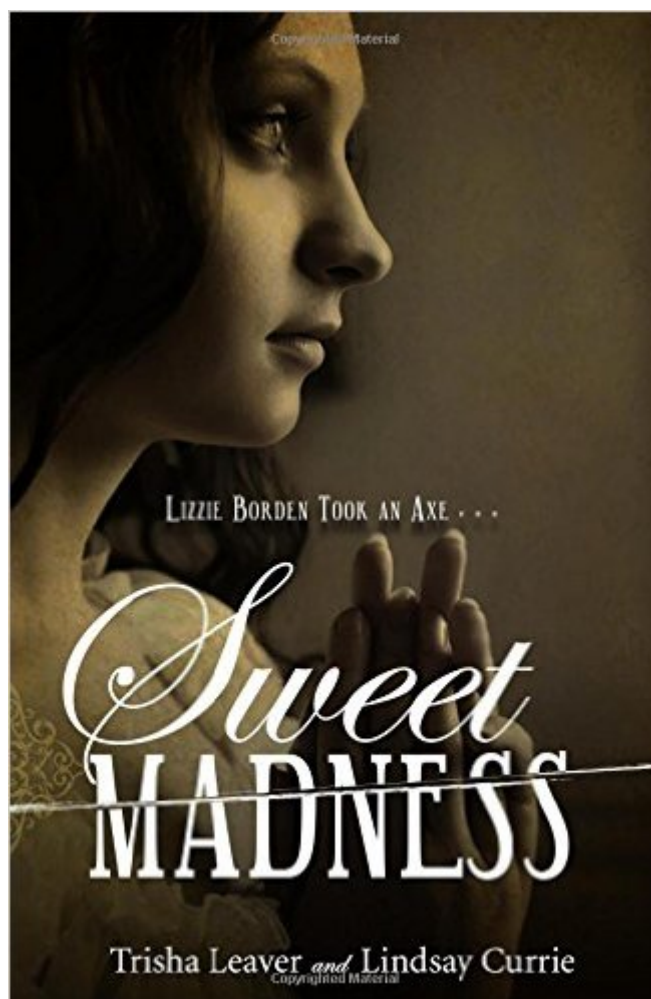


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Sweet Madness



Synopsis

Who was Lizzie Borden? A confused young woman, or a coldhearted killer? For generations, people all over the world have wondered how Andrew Borden and his second wife, Abby, met their gruesome deaths. Lizzie, Andrew's younger daughter, was charged, but a jury took only 90 minutes to find her not guilty. In this retelling, the family maid, Bridget Sullivan, shines a compassionate light on a young woman oppressed by her cheap father and her ambitious stepmother. Was Lizzie mad, or was she driven to madness?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

We are fascinated by the story of Lizzie Borden. Who doesn't want to hear about a woman that not only was blamed for the gruesome death of her father and step-mother, but also was determined by the jury to be not guilty? The more we learn about her situation, the more we want to know. It's a creepy, sad story that would most likely not have the same outcome today, since in those days, no one could believe that a woman could be capable of something so horrific. Leaver and Currie have taken this sordid tale and turned it into a novel of a twisted family that is touched by madness. Crazy is a family trait, and the narrator, a seventeen-year-old Irish maid, gets stuck in the middle of something sinister. The patriarch is a miserly, controlling man; his wife spends most of her time in her room, due to the heat; the eldest daughter, Emma, is often absent, trying to stay away from the oppressive home environment by staying with friends; and the younger sister, Lizzie, is a lonely 32-year-old unmarried woman completely and utterly under her father's thumb. Because it is hard for them to keep a maid, the Borden family pays more than other people do, and Bridget is eager to

save enough money to bring her younger sister over from Ireland to live with her. While she doesn't feel unsafe there, Bridget can feel the weight of the secrets in the house and the gossip in the town. She becomes Lizzie's only friend and confidante, and the stories she tells Bridget (and what Bridget sees and hears on a day-to-day basis) are both frightening and heartbreaking. Mental illness runs in the family, and it takes a toll on all of the Bordens in one way or another. But hearing both sides of the story only serves to confuse Bridget even more.

Sweet Madness was basically a compilation of a lot of fabulous things rolled into one. Fast paced? Yes. Mysterious? Yes. Historical awesomeness? Yes. Fabulous, multifaceted characters? Yes. Twists I did not see coming? Yes. Lizzie freaking Borden? Of course! (Granted, that last one is pretty unique to this book, but that doesn't make it less fabulous.) If you know about the Lizzie Borden case, you'll know how creepily fascinating the whole thing is. If you don't know about it... well, get thyself to Wikipedia . While I've never read any fiction about the Bordens before, I have watched an unhealthy amount of documentaries about them. There were a couple years where Investigation Discovery channel was my jam, and nothing was more fun than an old timey mystery. Also, Lizzie had the crazy eyes. For real. So it's told via Bridget's point of view. She's the maid, and she is so likable, which I think is the key to this story. I mean, I don't think you could make Lizzie likeable enough to tell a book from her POV, because she (historically speaking, not just in this book) was one high maintenance lady. But I think that the authors did a fabulous job of humanizing everyone in this book. Through the story, there was no "villain", it was just a family with a lot of issues, a maid caught up in their nonsense, a town that knew they were all batshit crazy, and it made it impossible to know the outcome ahead of time, which for me was perfect! I also loved how the authors were able to really make you feel like you were in Fall River in the late 1800s, but more specifically, what it would have been like to live in the Borden household.

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