

## Murder Ballad Lighting Concept

### Adv. Lighting Studio

The lights dim until all that's left is a muddy puddle of light around an old baseball bat. An old, beat up jukebox glows as a record turns over and the sound of a single guitar chord fills the hazy bar. The narrator begins to tell the story, striking a match on the opposite side of the room. As she continues to sing, she lights small candles in colored glasses. The dingy room begins to glow slowly, the light emanating from the jukebox and candles: strong neon, and flickering flames creating strange shadows on the walls. Her match is brightest thing in the room, drawing the other actors from the audience to her like moths. As the song ends, she leaves the actors, now Sara, Tom, and Michael, onstage to retreat behind the bar where she places her match in one final candle. The stage is set for this story.

From the bar she's trapped behind, the narrator comments on Sara and Tom's relationship, filling in details. The room darkens to a hazy night at the bar. The deep reds and acidic cyans of the bar's lights bounce back and forth (I Love NY) as Sara and Tom recap and tear apart their relationship. As Sara heads home close to dawn, she bumps into Michael. The sun rises as they talk, casting the room in natural dappled sunlight. Light ambers and pinks brighten and envelop Sara and Michael in a rosy glow as they establish a relationship as the haze clears.

Sara begins feeling unsatisfied with her relationship and as she thinks of Tom (Prattle 2), the soft natural pinks twist into harsher neon magenta. Sunset falls as she meets Tom. Magentas deepen to blood reds and the cyan beams return, overtaking the now hazy space. Lit by only neon and the ever-present candles, Sara and Tom resume their relationship (Mouth Tattoo). Sara returns to Michael in the now crisp and harsh grey daylight (Sugar Cubes and Rock Salt). The light grows brighter, revealing the dirt and clutter in the room and the reality of his relationship.

The conflict between the artificial relationship Sara thought she wanted and the real relationship she actually wanted come to a head in her mind (Built for Longing). As she realizes she doesn't want Tom, this she pictures both him and Michael. Tom in the harsh cyan neon lights of the bar and Michael in the rosy dappled sunlight she met him in. She chooses Michael and some of the natural light returns to the scene. It's slightly off, like the off key notes they sing to Frankie (Troubled Mind Reprise). Tom begins to plan his revenge, cyan and sharp angles overtaking the room. The narrator joins in, nearly stepping out from behind her bar, and red joins the cyan (I Love NY Reprise). The scene restores to grey skies still tinted slightly green as Michael and Sara resume their relationship. Tom spies on them (I'll Be There), his acidic neon lights overtaking the room and destroying the natural light, but leaving the dappled texture. This unnatural combination echoing the uneasy meeting of Tom and Michael and ultimate reveal of Sara's unfaithfulness (Prattle 5).

Michael's realization brings in neon magentas and darkens the room (Little by Little Reprise). Haze returns, heavy and foreboding and the flickering shadows grow in intensity and movement, obscuring our characters as they contemplate their next move (You Belong to Me Reprise). As the guitar chords from the opening return, the room darkens further, and the narrator hangs over her candle ready to watch the fight between Michael and Tom.

Michael and Sara separate from Tom pausing at the door, ready to exit when Sara apologizes. As they realize how important they are to each other, they open the door to the very early dawn light and exit into the natural rosy glow (Walk Away/Promises Reprise). With Sara and Michael's exit, the narrator turns to Tom over the flickering candle to listen to his apology. With a loud "I AM NOT ERASABLE" she steps out from behind the bar, filling the room with red neon and the frenzied movement of the candle flames (Club and Diamonds). As she finishes her song, the neon fades and candles blow out. We are left just the jukebox and the bat, in its puddle of light, now bloody for the final few echoing guitar chords. With a final breath, the narrator blows out her candle, plunging the room into darkness. After sitting in darkness, the fluorescents overhead pop on, signaling the bar's closing. The blindingly bright lights illuminate all of the actors and the dingy club. The bat is gone, the jukebox dead, and as the actors sing about the audience's expectations, they are left wondering if they even witnessed anything at all. (Finale).

