



# IN A FOREST, DARK AND DEEP

BY NEIL LABUTE



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IN A FOREST, DARK AND DEEP  
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World premiere on March 14, 2011 at the Vaudeville Theatre, London  
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IN A FOREST, DARK AND DEEP recieved its American premiere at Profiles Theatre in Chicago, Illinois, on April 23, 2012. It was directed by Joe Jahraus; the set design was by Thad Hallstein; the costume design was by Shawn Quinlan; the lighting design was by John Kohn III and Bekki Lambrecht; the sound design and original music were by Jeffrey Levin; and the stage managers were Jordan Muller and Elisabeth Jackson. The cast was as follows:

BETTY ..... Natasha Lowe  
BOBBY..... Darrell W. Cox

IN A FOREST, DARK AND DEEP recieved its world premiere at The Vaudeville Theatre, London, on March 14, 2011. It was directed by Neil LaBute; the set design was by Soutra Gilmour; the lighting design was by Mark Henderson; and the sound design was by Fergus O'Hare. The cast was as follows:

BETTY ..... Olivia Williams  
BOBBY..... Matthew Fox

## **CHARACTERS**

BETTY

BOBBY

## **NOTE**

A slash (/) in a line of dialogue suggests the point of overlap with the next character's line.

# IN A FOREST, DARK AND DEEP

*Silence. Darkness.*

*We're in a room. It's not the only room in the place, but it seems to be pretty central. Doors and hallways leading off from this rustic space. An obvious front door. A loft up above.*

*Music was blasting before we started but now it's on the radio. Static but still loud. An '80s station.*

*Rain beats down on the windows and skylights. Tree limbs tap at the glass. Lightning flashes and thunder rattles.*

*After a moment, a woman appears above us. She's up in the loft space, moving quickly about as she fills an old box with mostly books. This is Betty.*

*She makes her way down a set of stairs and places the box by the door. Wipes her hands off on her shirt, turns the radio down and then spins to go back up the way she came.*

*The lights flicker and go out for a moment, then back on. Betty looks up, then goes and fires up a few candles.*

*Before she's done, a knock at the door. (By the way, this room and the others are full of stuff and the characters on stage will pack a lot of it up into boxes, bags, etc.)*

*The woman crosses over to the door, peeks out, then tries to open the door but fights the lock. Finally issues in a man — not soaking wet but he's damp. He carries a six-pack of Bud under an arm. This guy is Bobby.*

BETTY. ... I need ... I gotta fix that door. / I owe you one for coming here tonight. *(A quick hug.)* God! Sorry it's so wet out.

BOBBY. Yeah. / No worries.

BETTY. No, seriously, I do, though. Owe you.

BOBBY. Fine. Gimme a towel, then ...

BETTY. Honestly ... *(She throws him one.)* I do.

BOBBY. OK, so you owe me. I'll jot it down on a piece a paper, stick it in the glove-box. See what happens.

BETTY. You do that.

BOBBY. I'm gonna. *(Beat.)* Call you up, some night at half-past nine when it's pissing down and see what's what.

BETTY. I would come.

BOBBY. Maybe.

BETTY. I would! God, that's not true ... *(Hands him some cash.)* Anyway, here ya go.

BOBBY. No, that's ... I don't need any ...

BETTY. ... Yes ... just take it ...

BOBBY. I thought we said that I'd ...

BETTY. Bobby, no, it's not a big — it's only a hundred bucks. Take it.

BOBBY. Fine. Whatever. *(Smiles.)* Anyways, you're just paying me now so you don't owe me anything later. I know you.

BETTY. No, don't say ... no. That's not nice. *(He pockets the cash. Snaps open a beer and takes a drink. Looks at his sister but can't hold her gaze.)*

BOBBY. Doesn't have to be nice as long as it's true. "The truth hurts," haven't you ever heard that one before?

BETTY. No.

BOBBY. What? You're lying ...

BETTY. Not at all — is that a saying, or...?

BOBBY. Jesus, that's the oldest one in the book!

BETTY. Huh, well, I've never heard it.

BOBBY. "Truth hurts, don't it?" You've really never heard that? *(Beat.)* Come on, Dad used to say it. All the time ...

BETTY. ... No ...

BOBBY. Oh, for Chrissakes! Come on! He did so.

BETTY. Then I don't remember it ... "Truth hurts." Hmmmm. No. *(Beat.)* I thought it "set you free" or something ...

BOBBY. That's insane. I mean, we sat at the same dinner table for, what, twenty years or so, off and on, and you don't remember the old man saying that? *(Imitating him.)* "The truth hurts, Bobby. Stings like a bitch. That's why they call it that ... the truth." He must've said it, like, a thousand times! At least that, if not more ...

BETTY. That's a pretty good imitation ...

BOBBY. Fuck that, it's spot-on. Spot. He was always saying that kinda shit to me.

BETTY. Well, then, you must've been a bad boy when you were younger ...

BOBBY. Yeah, right. *(Smiles.)* I did my share ... not a professional like you, but still. *(This makes them both smile. She reaches over and gives a little tussle to his wet hair. She checks her watch.)* You seriously don't know that phrase? "The truth hurts?" I mean, I'm just ...

BETTY. Bobby! Shit! Of course I know it, yes ... of course I do! I mean, please. Everybody knows that one — I was kidding! God! I was pulling your leg.

BOBBY. Really? You were?

BETTY. Yes, obviously. "The truth hurts," that is so old, it's a ... trust me. Yes, I remember him saying that. And not just to you. Others, too. Over the years.

BOBBY. So you did remember? You were just giving me shit about it but you do know?

BETTY. Yeah. 'Fraid so.

BOBBY. Oh.

BETTY. Sorry. *(Smiles.)* Truth hurts, don't it?

BOBBY. ... Ha. Bitch.

BETTY. Nope. Sister. *(He begrudgingly smiles then looks around the place. Takes it all in as he drops the towel on a countertop. Shaking his head. She wanders over to a wine glass, takes a sip.)*

BOBBY. Anyways ... *(Pointing.)* So this is nice. It's very what? Rustic, I guess. Cute. With all the little ... *(Points.)* Whatnots.

BETTY. Yeah. *(Smiles.)* It's good to see you ...

BOBBY. You too. Uh-huh. *(Beat.)* Hey, how'd you fuck up the car there? Your front side panel and all that?

BETTY. Oh, God, that's ... so dumb! I was, this is ridiculous, but

I hit one of those carts at the market. Shopping carts?

BOBBY. Yeah, I know what they are. You did, huh?

BETTY. Uh-huh. Didn't even see it — you know when people leave them out in the lot after unloading, they won't walk it over to the thingie where you're supposed to ...

BOBBY. The cart corral.

BETTY. What?

BOBBY. "Cart corral." That's what they ask you to do — return them to the corral. That's the name for it.

BETTY. Really? I didn't ... huh.

BOBBY. Used to work at Safeway, remember? When I was a kid. *(Beat.)* You used to come in and shoplift ...

BETTY. True. *(Beat.)* Anyway, that's what I did.

BOBBY. Huh. Bet ol' Bruce was pissed ...

BETTY. Not really. *(Beat.)* Pretty quiet about it, like usual. Like he is about most things.

BOBBY. Yeah? I guess so ... he's kind of a pussy about that sorta stuff. Like ... "life."

BETTY. Bobby, don't.

BOBBY. I'm just saying ... *(Smiles.)* That's all.

BETTY. What?

BOBBY. He puts up with a lot of your shit.

BETTY. What does that mean?

BOBBY. Nothing. Just that. Dinging car doors and all your, ya know, conventions and stuff. Shit I'd never let you get away with ...

BETTY. Yeah? You wouldn't?

BOBBY. Fuck no.

BETTY. Well then, I'm glad I didn't marry you!

BOBBY. Ha! *(Laughs.)* I bet you are! You and about a million other girls ...

BETTY. And I don't go to "conventions." I'm not a salesman ... they're conferences. They're a big deal, some of 'em, with people from all over the country speaking. Authors. / They're an important part of my job ...

BOBBY. Yeah, whatever. / Anyways, I'm sure you got a deductible on it. The car.

BETTY. We do. It's not bad, really. A scratch ... Bruce barely did anything when he saw it. I think he said they can "buff it out." *(Bobby nods at this, seemingly satisfied. He glances about the room, taking it all in. Betty watches him.)*



BOBBY. Huh. *(Beat.)* We gotta do all this tonight?

BETTY. I'd like to, yes. We've got people lined up to come see it and so we'd like to get it all ... anyway. *(Beat.)* We call it "semi-furnished" but this is a bit much ...

BOBBY. No shit! *(Beat.)* You shoulda told Hansel and Gretel to clean up after themselves. *(He picks up a book, studies the cover as he finishes his beer. Makes a face and drops the book back down.)*

BETTY. I know! It's a lot, right?

BOBBY. I mean, fuck. Yeah. Kinda.

BETTY. Sorry, but I just ... anyway, not all of it has to go ... most of the furniture can ... I'll show you. Sections. In fact a lot of it can stay, but ...

BOBBY. OK. Just thinking I coulda brought the Ford. Lots more cargo space.

BETTY. True.

BOBBY. You shoulda said something, or ... it's a long way to go back now. In the dark. *(Bobby lifts up a couple of magazines. Snooping. Drops them.)*

BETTY. I KNOW. This just came up. I didn't have anyone to — Bruce had a call he needed to make so he stayed with the boys ... and so I'm — yeah, I'm sorry. It wasn't planned so I didn't think about ...

BOBBY. Doesn't matter now. I'm here.

BETTY. Right.

BOBBY. You asked and I came running so let's ... just ... you know? Do it.

BETTY. True. OK. *(Looking around.)* Let's start in here and move outwards. Do upstairs last.

BOBBY. 'kay.

BETTY. Sound good? *(He nods his head and looks around. What to do first.)*

BOBBY. Fine. Work's work.

BETTY. Another thing the old man used to say ... one of his many "wisdoms."

BOBBY. Yep. *(Beat.)* Thought you might enjoy that — if you could remember it. *(Smiles.)* Idiot.

BETTY. That's me ...

BOBBY. Always doing some stupid thing. Right?

BETTY. ... Hey ...

BOBBY. It's true. When we were kids? That's completely true ... you were a total dumbshit.

# IN A FOREST, DARK AND DEEP

by Neil LaBute

1M, 1W

Betty and Bobby are sister and brother, but they have little in common. She's a college professor with a prim demeanor, and he's a carpenter with a foul mouth and violent streak. Betty has a wild history that Bobby won't let her forget. Yet on the night when Betty urgently needs help to empty her cabin in the woods, she calls on Bobby. In this exhilarating play of secrets and sibling rivalry, LaBute unflinchingly explores the dark territory of "the lies you tell yourself to get by."

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