



# LOST LAKE

BY DAVID AUBURN



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LOST LAKE  
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LOST LAKE was originally produced by the Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) on November 11, 2014. It was directed by Daniel Sullivan, the scenic designer was J. Michael Griggs, the lighting designer was Robert Perry, the costume designer was Jess Goldstein, the original music and sound design was by Fitz Patton, the production stage manager was David Sugarman, and the stage manager was Jeff Brancato. The cast was as follows:

HOGAN ..... John Hawkes  
VERONICA ..... Tracie Thoms

LOST LAKE was developed during a residency at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Playwrights Conference (Preston Whiteway, Executive Director; Wendy C. Goldberg, Artistic Director) in 2013.

LOST LAKE was produced as part of the inaugural season of the Sullivan Project at Illinois Theatre, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Daniel Sullivan, Artistic Director; Jeffrey Eric Jenkins, Producer) in February 2014.

# **CHARACTERS**

HOGAN

VERONICA

# LOST LAKE

## Scene 1. March.

*The main room of a decrepit cabin on a lake. Veronica, a black woman in her thirties wearing a winter coat, looking around. Hogan, a disheveled white man in his forties/fifties, with her.*

HOGAN. So what do you think?

VERONICA. It looks all right. *(Beat.)*

HOGAN. I know it's cold now. July – August you won't have to worry about that.

VERONICA. Of course.

HOGAN. Though the last couple weeks of August nights can get cool again, you might want to bring some extra blankets for the kids.

VERONICA. Uh-huh. *(Beat.)*

HOGAN. How many kids?

VERONICA. Two. Maybe three — the older one, my girl, wants to bring a friend. I haven't decided about that. It may just be her and her brother.

HOGAN. They identical?

VERONICA. What? No.

HOGAN. They are twins, you said.

VERONICA. No. They're two years apart. Boy and girl.

HOGAN. I don't know why I thought they were twins.

VERONICA. No. They're just ... regular. *(Beat.)*

HOGAN. There's only one bed in the second room.

VERONICA. That's all right. They can double up.

HOGAN. It's pretty small. I might have a trundle I can get for you.

VERONICA. Oh no, that's fine. One of them can sleep with me if we have to.

HOGAN. Your husband won't mind?

VERONICA. It's just me.

HOGAN. Oh. Sorry.

VERONICA. No. But maybe an extra bed would be —

HOGAN. No problem. I can call my brother, see if I can borrow his trundle. But if the third kid comes —

VERONICA. I think I'm gonna have to tell my little girl that isn't happening.

HOGAN. No, it'll still work. You put one in the single, one on the trundle, and one on the couch in a sleeping bag or whatever. You'd have to bring up some extra linens is all.

VERONICA. We'll figure that out.

HOGAN. She wants to bring a friend, let her. They'll have a ball.

VERONICA. We'll see. (*Beat.*)

HOGAN. Pretty gorgeous out there, huh? Even this time of year.

VERONICA. Yes, it is.

HOGAN. The dock will be fixed by June. It's almost done now. We finally got around to it.

VERONICA. The dock?

HOGAN. Yeah.

VERONICA. Is there some kind of boat?

HOGAN. Swimming dock.

VERONICA. Oh. Yes.

HOGAN. See out there?

VERONICA. Yes. It's pretty far out.

HOGAN. Nah. It's an easy swim. There's usually a diving board. That'll get put back on. I'm gonna paint the deck a nice fire-engine red after I get the fifteen years of Canada goose shit scrubbed off. You'll see the geese, they shit on everything.

VERONICA. You're doing the work?

HOGAN. I was the low bid.

VERONICA. I see.

HOGAN. Community association's been putting it off for years. Last summer a woman put her foot through a rotten plank. Had to go to the emergency room to get the splinters out. Finally I said look, give me fifteen hundred bucks, I'll have it ready by Memorial Day. I'm going to put in a second diving platform higher up. It's gonna be great. I made some sketches. It'll just be stationary but you'll still have the springboard on the opposite side. You'll never get your kids off it.

VERONICA. They don't really swim.

HOGAN. Why not?

VERONICA. City kids.

HOGAN. That's not good. They need to learn.

VERONICA. That's one of the reasons we wanted to be up here.

HOGAN. It's a life skill. You should get them lessons at the Y or someplace now. That way when they get up here they're ready.

VERONICA. I don't know if we have time for that.

HOGAN. It's only March. You got four months.

VERONICA. Well, we'll see.

HOGAN. Don't let them go out to the dock unless you're sure they can manage it.

VERONICA. Of course not.

HOGAN. Now there is a canoe I'll get out for you, which will require some bailing but it's more or less seaworthy, and I think two life jackets. But I believe only one paddle. I'll check the garage. If I can't find another one I'll ask my brother. But you'd still need a third life jacket if your little girl brings her friend. Or if you need it. Do you swim?

VERONICA. Yes.

HOGAN. Because some ... city people don't.

VERONICA. I do.

HOGAN. Okay then. Any other questions?

VERONICA. No. I think ... *(Beat. She looks around. Swallows her doubts.)* All right. Let's do it.

HOGAN. Great. You're really gonna enjoy it here.

VERONICA. I hope so.

HOGAN. You will.

VERONICA. So how should we — how do you like to do this?

HOGAN. Well we talked about the total on the email, that still works for you?

VERONICA. Yes.

HOGAN. So now I guess maybe just a deposit. To hold the rental.

VERONICA. All right.

HOGAN. What if we say half now and then half when you get here. And add maybe five hundred on to the front end as a damage deposit, that I'll refund at the end if everything's ship-shape.

VERONICA. So you're saying half the total rental plus five hundred now?

HOGAN. Yes. And you'll get the five hundred back at the end of the summer.

VERONICA. Unless there's damage.

HOGAN. There won't be. I'll put away anything fragile. There's nothing much you can hurt around here anyway even with kids.

VERONICA. So maybe we don't need to do the damage deposit? I'm just —

HOGAN. It's pretty standard.

VERONICA. I'm just wondering if maybe — half plus the five hundred now seems like a lot.

HOGAN. Uh-huh.

VERONICA. I mean I could do half and half, but then maybe I'd ask you to waive the damage deposit, given that everything around here already looks pretty ... broken in.

HOGAN. I just thought if something got damaged, I don't even know what —

VERONICA. Uh-huh.

HOGAN. It'd be easier if it's already dealt with, so to speak, rather than negotiate it later —

VERONICA. No, I understand, but maybe then a better way to do the *rent* would be a *third* now, a third I can send you let's say in June, and then a third when we come up.

HOGAN. And we'd still do the damage deposit.

VERONICA. Yes. But maybe spread out over the first two payments.

HOGAN. Two-fifty, two-fifty.

VERONICA. Yes.

HOGAN. Third payment when you get here.

VERONICA. Yes. (*Beat.*)

HOGAN. Deal!

VERONICA. Okay. Thank you.

HOGAN. Thank you. You're a real wily negotiator, huh?

VERONICA. I don't know about that.

HOGAN. No, I like it! So all right. Any other questions?

VERONICA. Do you have internet?

HOGAN. No. That would require a dish and it's just not worth it to me. If I need to check my email I drive into town to the library. Cell phone service is spotty. If you stand by the window and kind of elevate yourself a little bit and hold your phone out at about a forty-five degree angle sometimes a signal can be had — I don't even bother usually, I use the landline for calls at the house and the library for internet, like I said.

VERONICA. I will need to get online a few times for work. How far is the library?



HOGAN. Ten minutes. It's only open three days a week but you don't even have to go in. When it's closed you can park outside with your laptop. People do it all the time. Oh — you'll need a car. I mean once you get up here. But you saw that.

VERONICA. I'll rent a car for the week.

HOGAN. You got that budgeted in.

VERONICA. Yes.

HOGAN. Well great, so everything is settled. What sort of work do you do, you don't mind my asking?

VERONICA. I'm a nurse practitioner.

HOGAN. A nurse, huh?

VERONICA. Practitioner, yes.

HOGAN. Which means what?

VERONICA. I can prescribe certain medications, perform certain procedures.

HOGAN. Turn your head and cough, that kind of thing?

VERONICA. I'm sorry?

HOGAN. Sort of halfway to a doctor in other words.

VERONICA. Sort of.

HOGAN. Well that sounds good. *(Beat.)* So right — if you need to stay in touch with your office or hospital or whatever —

VERONICA. Hospital.

HOGAN. — Just give them this number the week you're here. We did say a week, didn't we?

VERONICA. The third week in August.

HOGAN. The last week's available too. Stay till Labor Day.

VERONICA. I have to work.

HOGAN. You only get one week of vacation?

VERONICA. That's all I've been able to arrange.

HOGAN. Then you really should get those kids swimming before they get up here.

VERONICA. Maybe. We'll see.

HOGAN. They'll spend the whole week watching other kids dive off the dock.

VERONICA. We'll manage.

HOGAN. Well if you change your mind the rest of August is available.

VERONICA. Thank you, but I don't think we'll be able to do that. *(Beat. She looks at an old hockey stick propped against the wall.)*

HOGAN. I'll get all that stuff out of here before you come,

# LOST LAKE

by David Auburn

1M, 1W

The lakeside rental Veronica has managed to afford is a far cry from the idyllic getaway she and her children so desperately need. And the disheveled property owner, Hogan, has problems of his own — problems that Veronica is inevitably — and irrevocably — pulled into. An engrossing and revealing portrait of two strangers bound together by circumstance, *LOST LAKE* is a vivid play about the struggle for connection in an imperfect world.

*"[David Auburn] knows how to parcel out surprising revelations by the teaspoon ... Auburn's shrewdness and craft [give] the story a poignant, painful core."*  
—**The New Yorker**

*"[A] polished example of play craft. ... skilled, lean dialogue, timed-release secrets and symmetrical power shifts."* —**Time Out (New York)**

*"A considerable amount of compassion has gone into parallel character studies of the owner of the cabin and a potential renter ... Hogan may be a beaten-down wreck, but Auburn has a grave affection for the character, gifting him with the kind of shrewd native intelligence that city folk tend to underestimate in their country cousins."*  
—**Variety**

*"[LOST LAKE] is a reminder that people can surprise you and that solace comes in small, unexpected acts of compassion."*  
—**New York Daily News**

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ISBN: 978-0-8222-3296-4

