



# THE WAY WE GET BY

BY NEIL LABUTE



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



THE WAY WE GET BY  
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THE WAY WE GET BY was originally produced by Second Stage Theatre (Carole Rothman, Artistic Director; Casey Reitz, Executive Director), New York City, on April 28, 2015. It was directed by Leigh Silverman, the scenic design was by Neil Patel, the costume design was by Emily Rebholz, the lighting design was by Matt Frey, the sound design was by Bart Fasbender, the production stage manager was David H. Lurie, and the stage manager was Amanda Kosack. The cast was as follows:

BETH ..... Amanda Seyfried  
DOUG ..... Thomas Sadoski

## **CHARACTERS**

BETH

DOUG

A slash (“/”) indicates where the present speaker stops and the next speaker begins.

*“It is never too late to be what you might have been.”*

—George Eliot

*“We were together. I forget the rest.”*

—Walt Whitman

*“I give her all my love, that’s all I do.”*

—The Beatles

# THE WAY WE GET BY

*The beginning.*

*An apartment in New York. A nice one. Someone has been living here for a while now and things are piled up in that way that they get when you're starting to run out of places to put stuff.*

*It all looks good and is very ordered, but it's feeling a bit crowded in the corners.*

*The windows are dark. Nighttime out. The sound of light traffic.*

*After a moment, a guy wanders on in his underwear and a sweatshirt. He's nice-looking in his own way. Pretty fit but doesn't seem to care about it much. This is Doug.*

*He wanders over to the fridge and opens the door. Looks inside. Grabs a bottle of water and opens it. Chugs two or three good gulps out of it and then carries it back into the living area.*

*He plops down onto a couch and spreads out. Feet up on the coffee table. Picks up a book and opens it. Reads a line or two, makes a face, tosses it back onto a stack.*

*He grabs a remote and turns on the TV. The sound of it blasts on loudly. It's on the QVC channel and someone is selling purses or clothes or some damn thing.*

*Doug quickly turns it off and puts down the controller. He glances over his shoulder at the hallway. Waits.*

*After another beat, he seems to relax and picks up one more book.*

*Cracks it open and starts to read. He finds something funny and laughs out loud.*

*Doug reaches over, snaps on a lamp and sits back to do a bit more reading. Takes another sip of water.*

*A young woman appears in the hallway. Looking out. She wears a Star Wars t-shirt but otherwise seems pretty naked. This is Beth.*

*Doug smiles again at something in the book. Laughs out loud. Beth keeps watching him.*

BETH. ... Not great to wake up alone. *(Doug snaps his head around and jumps up. Drops the book on the couch and looks over at Beth.)*

DOUG. Hey. Sorry about that.

BETH. Yeah, no, it's okay. Just weird.

DOUG. I know. Right. That's ... not ...

BETH. I thought maybe you left or something.

DOUG. No! *(Beat.)* Of course not ... no.

BETH. I mean, I see that now but at the time I was just, like — a few seconds ago I'm saying — I got all freaked out ... / Not *super*-freaked, but ... you know ... “ish.” *Freakish.*

DOUG. I understand. / I get it.

BETH. Okay. Good.

DOUG. But that's ... *(He gestures.)* ...

BETH. Sorry?

DOUG. No, nothing ... I just ... I mean, you have my shirt on there ... so ... *(Beth looks down. Stretches out the logo to read it.)*

BETH. Oh.

DOUG. Yeah. I wouldn't leave without that! It's *vintage* ... It's not, like, from *Target* or something. I got it at Comic Con. *(Beat.)* Kenny Baker? The little guy who played the robot? R2-D2? He signed it. *(Points.)* Right there. Above your ... yep.

BETH. I'm ... I didn't realize that. *(He waves her off. Adjusts his underwear a little bit.)*

DOUG. No problem. You're welcome to wear it. *(Beat.)* But that should've been a clue ... no way I'm leaving without that!

BETH. I just ... sorry, no ... I just grabbed the first thing I felt on

the floor and put it on. / Sorry.

DOUG. That's fine ... / No, it's all good ...

BETH. I wasn't suggesting ... you know. I don't even like *Star Wars* that much ... so I wouldn't *steal* it or anything!

DOUG. Great. (*Smiles.*) *I'll* keep it then.

BETH. Cool!

DOUG. Uh-huh. (*The two of them stand there in silence for a moment. Beth looking around, still waking up.*)

BETH. Did you turn on the TV or something? / Oh. I thought I heard the ...

DOUG. Ummmmmm, no. Not the ... / Uh-uh. (*Pointing toward a book.*) I was just ... reading ...

BETH. Huh. Okay.

DOUG. Yep. (*Beat.*) Not "reading" but *browsing* ... (*Beat.*) TV's just sitting right over there on the shelf thingie. Unused. (*Beat.*) Yep. "Console"? Is that what they call it? Not a *shelf thingie*. "Console," I think ... (*Another moment of quiet. He holds out the water for Beth.*) You want some? I woke up and I was, like, *so* thirsty so I just ... Hope it's alright.

BETH. Sure. (*Looking.*) It doesn't say "Kim" on there, does it?

DOUG. (*Turning it over.*) Nope. It's just ... "Smart Water" is all it says. (*Shows her.*) See?

BETH. Okay, good. (*Beat.*) My roommate writes her name on everything she buys — her food, I mean — she basically buys the same stuff as me and then she ... whatever ... she gets pissed if I use any of it, even if it's mine. So I was just ... you know ... (*Points.*) Curious.

DOUG. No, yeah, that makes sense. (*Looks again.*) This one appears to be yours.

BETH. Good.

DOUG. Sorry again ... I should've asked.

BETH. No, it's totally ... you know ... *community property* or whatever. / I'm fine with it.

DOUG. Thanks. / I would've checked with you first but you were pretty zonked out.

BETH. I understand.

DOUG. That'd be funny, though ... if she did.

BETH. What?

DOUG. Sorry ... I just mean, what you said a second ago ... about your roommate.

BETH. Kim?



DOUG. Yeah. If she did put her name on *all* her stuff ... not just her food, I'm saying ... but, like, the *couch*, or, or, or if she bought that rug there or something ...

BETH. That actually *is* her rug ...

DOUG. Oh. 'Course. (*Doug looks at the rug for a moment, then around the rest of the apartment. Looks back at Beth, who says:*)

BETH. Yep. (*Pointing.*) That lamp there, too. And the coffee table. Shelves, as well. (*Beat.*) Pretty much everything you can see ...

DOUG. Huh.

BETH. (*Looking around.*) That *vase* is mine.

DOUG. Nice! You have *really* good taste ...

BETH. Actually, she bought it for me. / Kim.

DOUG. Oh. / Wow.

BETH. Yeah. I mean, it had flowers and stuff in it at the time — for my birthday — but yes, Kim picked it out.

DOUG. I see.

BETH. I think she got it so it'd match the rest of her things, but ... that's just me ...

DOUG. No, yeah, I bet you're right ... (*He looks around.*) Pretty good match, too!

BETH. *See?*

DOUG. No, I get it. (*Beat.*) Anyhow, that's what I mean. What if she went around and put her name on things, like in these *huge* letters ... everything that was hers...? (*Beat.*) Like, with a *stencil*? (*Doug mimes what he means, pretending to write out the name "Kim" in massive letters on the couch first and then the rug and a few other furnishings.*)

BETH. I wouldn't put it past her! (*Doug stops and smiles at her. They look at each other.*)

DOUG. Sounds like it. (*Beat.*) Wouldn't that be crazy, though? If she did that?

BETH. That'd be funny.

DOUG. Right? "KIM." (*Beat.*) I wonder if anybody has ever done that in, like, the history of roommates? (*Beat.*) You think?

BETH. Probably.

DOUG. Yeah. No doubt.

BETH. I know people have come up with a lot of wild stuff in those situations ... masking tape down the middle of rooms and, like, cutting things in half. / Seriously.

DOUG. True. / Yeah. (*Beat.*) Probably not masking tape, though.

BETH. Excuse me.

DOUG. Oh, nothing, no ... just ... I'm saying it's probably not *masking* tape they use, in a case like that. *(Beat.)* Wouldn't stick so good ...

BETH. No?

DOUG. I don't think so.

BETH. Oh.

DOUG. Probably more like duct tape.

BETH. "Duck" tape?

DOUG. Yeah. "Duct." With a "t." / "Duct."

BETH. Oh. Okay. / Got it. "Duct."

DOUG. You know what that is ... the silver kind?

BETH. I guess.

DOUG. No, you've seen it before. Now they have all kinds — different colors, I'm saying, or zebra stripes — but it used to be just silver and it was for big jobs. Plumbing and that type of thing. Construction. Or packing boxes. *(Beat.)* You know? *Silver ...*

BETH. I think so. Yeah. I've seen it before ... I feel like we have some around here. The silvery kind. Or gray. Ish. *Grayish.* *(Beat.)* Right? *(Doug shrugs and nods. Thinking about it for a moment.)*

DOUG. Yeah. Anyway, it was probably from all of the ... like ... wine or maybe the ... We did some whiskey, too, didn't we? I remember doing something ... Was it *whiskey*?

BETH. What're you ... I'm not sure what you mean now?

DOUG. Oh, sorry! Yeah, I jump around a lot of the time ... my mind does ... that's a little bit of a problem with me these days.

BETH. Oh.

DOUG. It wasn't always when I was younger but it is now. Not a *problem* ... but ... a thing I do. / My brain does. Whatever.

BETH. Huh. / I see.

DOUG. Yep. *(Beat.)* I went back to the thing from before ... reason that you fell asleep last night so quick. *(Beat.)* After we ... *(Beat.)* You know ... *(Beat.)* Yeah. *(Beat.)* Yep.

BETH. Got it.

DOUG. Good.

BETH. I see.

DOUG. Yeah. That's what I meant. That you had a lot to drink — no judgement, we both did — and that's why you were sleeping that way before. So soundly.

BETH. ... Maybe so ...

DOUG. Anyway, you were asleep, you were really out of it and I

# THE WAY WE GET BY

by Neil LaBute

1M, 1W

Meet Beth and Doug, two people who have no problems getting dates with their partners of choice. After a drunken party and a hot night, they wake up to a blurry morning where the rules of attraction, sex, and society are waiting for them before their first cup of coffee. It's very awkward — and it also leads the pair to ponder how much they really know about each other, and how much they really care about what other people think. *THE WAY WE GET BY* is a play about love and lust and the whole damn thing.

*"[LaBute] has done something unique to his brand of well-established playwriting genre; that is of the darkly cynical variety. THE WAY WE GET BY is a good play with an important conundrum (which I won't ruin for you), with a positive and hopeful ending, (that much I will ruin for you). It actually feels good in our ever wary world to see that problems, no matter how challenging, can be worked out and realized without the usual, 'Maybe I should have slit my wrists long ago,' attitudes of characters with complex lives. After all, everything is complex these days."* —**The Huffington Post**

*"... sexy ... [LaBute] relishes the art of thwarting expectations."*  
—**The New York Times**

*"One-night stands often produce repercussions, but few are as emotionally fraught as the one depicted in Neil LaBute's [THE WAY WE GET BY]. ... the playwright's gift for amusing banter is very much on display."*  
—**The Hollywood Reporter**

*"[LaBute's] sometimes brutal wit has long been accompanied by an equally fierce moral curiosity ... if we see Doug and Beth's struggle in the context of a world where everyone can seem to be in everyone else's business — especially when it's trivial — the focus is on two individuals trying to assess their own capacity for courage."* —**USA Today**

**Also by Neil LaBute**

THE BREAK OF NOON  
REASONS TO BE HAPPY  
REASONS TO BE PRETTY  
and others

**DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.**

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