

Plays by Neil Labute

ALL THE WAYS TO SAY I LOVE YOU

ACTORS: 1 female

Mrs. Johnson is a high school English teacher and guidance counselor in a loving marriage. As she recounts her experiences with a favored student from her past, she slowly reveals the truth that is hidden just beneath the surface details of her life. *ALL THE WAYS TO SAY I LOVE YOU* is a solo play about love, hard choices, and the cost of fulfilling an all-consuming desire.

APPOMATTOX – *Short play*

ACTORS: 2 male

It's a perfect day in a big park near a big city and two friends get together for lunch and to play catch. Instead, they begin a discussion about life and history and soon find themselves in a conversational minefield from which they may never return.

BASH – LATTERDAY PLAYS

This a collection of three dark one-act plays. Each play is an exploration of the complexities of evil in everyday life. They include: *IPHIGENIA IN OREM*: the eponymous Iphigenia of the play is a baby girl who is suffocated by her father while she is asleep in her parents' bed. The play is a monologue done by the baby's father years after her death; *A GAGGLE OF SAINTS*: in which two attractive college-age adults, John and Sue, alternately address the audience, relating the superficial details of a party in New York City which ends with the brutal assault of a middle-aged gay couple by John and his friends; and *MEDEA REDUX*: in which a woman retells how she has murdered her son to spite his father, a former teacher of hers who impregnated her at age thirteen.

THE BREAK OF NOON

ACTORS: 2 male, 2 female

Amidst the chaos and horror of the worst office shooting in American history, John Smith sees the face of God. His modern-day revelation creates a maelstrom of disbelief among everyone he knows. A newcomer to faith, John urgently searches for a modern response to the age-old question: at what cost salvation?

THE DISTANCE FROM HERE

ACTORS: 5 male, 4 female

With little to occupy their time other than finding a decent place to hang out—the zoo, the mall, the school parking lot—Darrell and Tim are two suburban American teenagers who lack any direction or purpose in their lives. When Darrell's suspicion about the faithlessness of his girlfriend is confirmed and Tim comes to her defense, there is nothing to brake their momentum as all three speed toward disaster.

FALLING IN LIKE – *Short play*

ACTORS: 1 female

A woman waits at a table. She's very sure he's going to show up. He's a little late, but he always shows up. It's their anniversary after all. All right, once or twice maybe he didn't show up. Perhaps she'll wait just a few more minutes, because he will show up.

FAT PIG

ACTORS: 2 male, 2 female

Cow. Slob. Pig. How many insults can you hear before you have to stand up and defend the woman you love? Tom faces just that question when he falls for Helen, a bright, funny, sexy young woman who happens to be plus sized-and then some. Forced to explain his new relationship to his shallow (although shockingly funny) friends, finally he comes to terms with his own preconceptions of the importance of conventional good looks.

FILTHY TALK FOR TROUBLED TIMES – *Short play*

ACTORS: 5 male, 2 female

A downbeat night at a topless bar exposes the gulf between the twitchy clientele and the waitresses who serve but despise them.

THE FOURTH REICH

ACTORS: 1 male

This play is a monologue, launched with a simple fact of history, that “Hitler lost”—followed by the rather more subjective assertion that Der Führer consequently became “one of the most maligned people in the world.” A beat later, the speaker, Karl, asks, “Am I wrong about that or not? If I am, please, speak up.” – *New York Stage Review*

THE FURIES – *Short play*

ACTORS: 2 male, 1 female

A one-act dark comedy rooted in Greek mythology illustrating that breaking up is, in fact, very hard to do. Barry tries to break up with his younger lover, Jimmy, but Jimmy brings along his sister, Jamie “for backup,” he explains.

GOOD LUCK (IN FARSI) – *Short play*

ACTORS: 3 female

Two ferociously competitive and insecure actresses are waiting to be called for an audition for a major television role, and use the time to ply their advantages and disadvantages to maximum subversive effect. – *Chicago Sun Times*

THE GREAT WAR – *Short play*

ACTORS: 1 male, 1 female

Neil LaBute's surprising "The Great War," takes the "divvying-up-the-goods" battle between a divorcing couple and renders it shocking, funny, penetrating, vivid and meaningful. – *Curtain Up*

HELTER SKELTER

ACTORS: 1 male, 1 female

Man and pregnant Woman take a break from their separate Christmas-shopping expeditions to meet at a restaurant. The wife's seemingly routine request to borrow her husband's cell phone takes on considerable significance when he desperately tries to prevent her from using it. He's ultimately cornered into confessing to a longtime adulterous affair with her sister. – *Hollywood Reporter*

HOW TO FIGHT LONELINESS

ACTORS: 2 male, 1 female

Brad and Jodie are at a life-changing crossroads and struggling to make a monumental decision about their life and love, and Tate—just maybe—has been there before. In this timely, dark, and dazzling new play, Neil LaBute takes a penetrating, point-blank look at a couple confronting the hardest decision of their lives and the aftermath of that decision.

IN A DARK, DARK HOUSE

ACTORS: 2 male, 1 female

Two brothers meet on the grounds of a private psychiatric facility. Drew, has been court-confined for observation and has called his older brother, Terry, to corroborate his claim of childhood sexual abuse by a young man from many summers ago. Drew's request releases barely-hidden animosities between the two: Is he using these repressed memories to save himself while smearing the name of his brother's friend? Through pain and acknowledged betrayal, the brothers come to grips with and begin to understand the legacy of abuse, both inside and outside their family home.

IN A FOREST DARK AND DEEP

ACTORS: 1 male, 1 female

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."

IN THE BEGINNING

ACTORS: 2 male

This is a two-person play in which a skeptical parent and an idealistic child debate the Occupy movement.

IN THE COMPANY OF MEN

ACTORS: 2 male, 1 female

Two business executives—one an avowed misogynist, the other recently emotionally wounded by his love interest—set out to exact revenge on the female gender by seeking out the most innocent girl they can find and ruining her life. What begins as a cat-and-mouse game of one-upmanship quickly escalates into full-scale psychological warfare.

LAND OF THE DEAD – *Short play*

ACTORS: 1 female, 1 male

A New York couple part on 9/11. He goes to the office, she to a clinic. As events unfold, it becomes clear that this is very far from an ordinary day.

LEPERS – *Short plays*

ACTORS: 3 male, 3 female

Three attractive men and three attractive women all have one thing on their mind: the perfect sexual experience. As the play witnesses the characters' brief and surface relationships, their disappointments and loneliness, it comes to the conclusion that young people are becoming the emotional lepers of our time, untouchable and isolated.

LIAR'S CLUB – *Short play*

ACTORS: 2 male, 2 female

A group of actors addresses the audience. Are they performing a script or sharing personal stories?

LOVELY HEAD – *Short play*

ACTORS:

A bizarre, contemporary love affair that rivetingly explores the relationship between a nervous older man and a glib young prostitute, as their evening together drives toward a startling conclusion.

THE MERCY SEAT

ACTORS: 1 male, 1 female

In a time of national tragedy, the world changes overnight. A man and a woman explore the choices now available to them in an existence different from the one they had lived just the day before. Can one be opportunistic in a time of universal selflessness?

MERGE – *Short play*

ACTORS: 1 male, 1 female

A husband drives his wife home from the airport. At the conference she's just attended, she may have done some things, drank too much, flirted, participated in an orgy.

THE MONEY SHOT

ACTORS: 1 male, 3 female

Karen and Steve are glamorous movie stars with one thing in common: desperation. It's been years since either one's had a hit, but a hot-shot European director could change that with his latest movie. The night before filming a big scene that will undoubtedly bring them back onto the pop culture radar, Karen and her partner, Bev, meet with Steve and his aspiring actress wife, Missy, in order to make an important decision. How far will they let themselves go to keep from slipping further down the Hollywood food chain? *THE MONEY SHOT* is a hilarious and insightful comedy about ambition, art, status, and sex in an era—and an industry—where very little is sacred and almost nothing is taboo.

PICK ONE – *Short play*

ACTORS: 3 male

In this play, written for Young Vic's Theatre Uncut project, three white guys come up with a way to solve America's problems.

THE POSSIBLE – *Short play*

ACTORS: 2 female

This is the story of a woman who breaks up a relationship so that she can hopefully end up with one of the people from that relationship.

REASONS TO BE HAPPY

ACTORS: 2 male, 2 female

Three years after a contentious break-up, Steph and Greg are wondering if they can make a fresh go of it. Trouble is, she's married to someone else and he's just embarked on a relationship with Steph's best friend, Carly, a single mom whose jealous ex-husband, Kent, has trouble articulating his feelings. Navigating the rocky landscape of conflicting agendas and exploding emotions isn't going to be easy for any of them. *REASONS TO BE HAPPY* is a funny, surprising, and poignant play about the choices and sacrifices we are willing to make in the pursuit of that often elusive ideal: happiness.

REASONS TO BE PRETTY

ACTORS: 2 male, 2 female

A love story about the impossibility of love, *REASONS TO BE PRETTY* introduces us to Greg, who really, truly adores his girlfriend, Steph. Unfortunately, he also thinks she has a few physical imperfections, and when he casually mentions them, all hell breaks loose.

REASONS TO BE PRETTY HAPPY

ACTORS: 2 male, 2 female

After five years in New York City, Greg and Steph return to their hometown for their 20th high school reunion and to a dramatic encounter with Kent and Carly, the friends they left behind. Old secrets and new lies become increasingly difficult to hide as the evening (and the drinking) goes

on. With *Reasons To Be Pretty Happy*, Neil LaBute revisits the characters first introduced in *Reasons To Be Pretty* (2009 Tony Award-nominated Best Play) and *Reasons To Be Happy* as they grapple with that eternal question: Have I become the person I wanted to be?

ROAD TRIP – *Short play*

ACTORS: 1 male, 1 female

An older man takes a very young woman on a little road trip. He's promised burgers and a cozy cabin. As the nature of their relationship unfolds, the disturbing events that led to this moment are revealed and, even more disturbing, so is what will happen next.

A SECOND OF PLEASURE – *Short play*

ACTORS: 1 male, 1 female

Kurt and Jess are waiting to board a train at Grand Central, when Jess says she doesn't really want to go away for the weekend. Kurt is annoyed. Jess agreed to the trip weeks ago. Why did she wait until now to say something? Finally, Jess admits that it has something to do with her husband.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS

ACTORS: 2 male, 2 female

How far would you go for love? For art? What would you be willing to change? What price might you pay? Such are the painful questions explored by Neil LaBute in *THE SHAPE OF THINGS*. A young student drifts into an ever-changing relationship with an art major while his best friends' engagement crumbles, so unleashing a drama that peels back the skin of two modern-day relationships.

SOME GIRL(S)

ACTORS: 1 male, 4 female

Your career as a writer is blossoming, your beautiful, young fiancée is waiting to get married and rush off to Cancún by your side — so what is your natural reaction? Well, if you're a man, it's probably to get nervous and start calling up old girlfriends. And so begins a single man's odyssey through four hotel rooms, as he flies across the country in search of the perfect woman (whom he's already broken up with). In grand LaBute fashion, this is by turns an outrageously funny and deadly serious portrait of the artist as a young seducer, and casts a truthful, hilarious light on a typical young American male as he wanders through the heart of darkness that is himself.

SOME VELVET MORNING

ACTORS: 1 male, 1 female

Set entirely inside a rowhouse located in Brooklyn, New York City, a middle-aged lawyer named Fred surprises his beautiful young mistress Velvet by arriving at her doorstep after four years, claiming to have finally left his wife. After she rejects his attempts to rekindle their romance, his persistence evolves into obsession.

STANDING ON CEREMONY: THE GAY MARRIAGE

PLAYS by Mo Gaffney, Jordan Harrison, Moisés Kaufman, Neil LaBute, Wendy MacLeod, José Rivera, Paul Rudnick, and Doug Wright, conceived by Brian Shnipper

ACTORS: 3 male, 3 female (doubling, flexible casting)

Two little words, and suddenly your whole world changes. An A-list lineup of writers offers unique takes on the moments before, during, and after “I do.” Witty, warm, and occasionally wacky, these plays are vows to the blessings of equality, the universal challenges of relationships, and the often hilarious power of love.

THIS IS HOW IT GOES

ACTORS: 2 male, 2 female

Belinda and Cody Phipps appear to be a typical Midwestern couple: teenage sweethearts, children, luxurious home. Typical except that Cody is black — “rich, black, and different,” in the words of Belinda, who finds herself attracted to a former (white) classmate. As the battle for her affections is waged, Belinda and Cody frankly doubt the foundation of their initial attraction, opening the door wide to a swath of bigotry and betrayal. Staged on continually shifting moral ground that challenges our received notions about gender, ethnicity, and even love itself, **THIS IS HOW IT GOES** unblinkingly explores the myriad ways in which the wild card of race is played by both black and white in America.

TOTALLY

ACTORS: 1 female

A young woman’s sexual revenge monologue.

THE WAY WE GET BY

ACTORS: 1 male, 1 female

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.