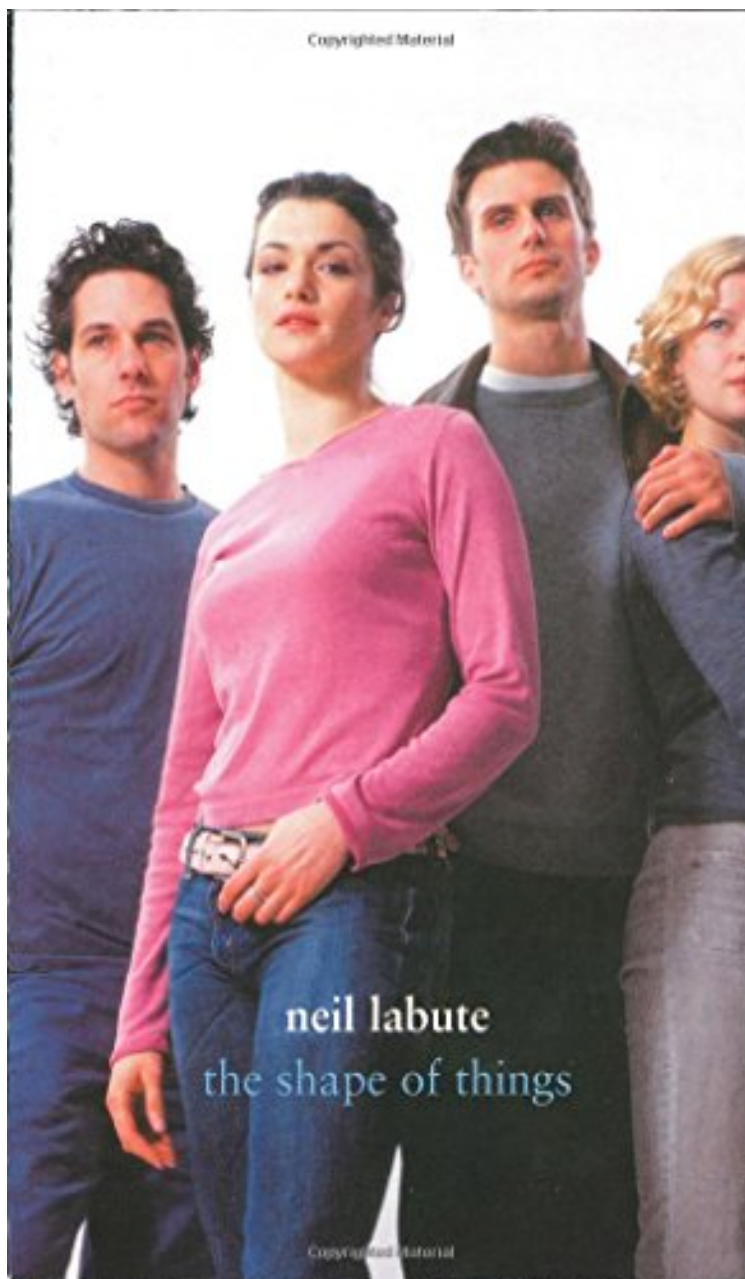


(Ebook pdf) The Shape of Things

The Shape of Things

Neil LaBute

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A startling dissection of cruelty and artistic creation from the author of *In the Company of Men* and *Your Friends and Neighbors*In a modern version of Adam's seduction by Eve, *The Shape of Things* pits gentle, awkward, overweight Adam against experienced, analytical, amoral Evelyn, a graduate student in art. After a chance meeting at a museum, Evelyn and Adam embark on an intense relationship that causes shy and principled Adam to go to extraordinary lengths, including cosmetic surgery, and a betrayal of his best friend, to improve his appearance and character. In the process, Evelyn's subtle and insistent coaching results in a reconstruction of Adam's fundamental moral character. Only in a final and shocking exhibition does Evelyn reveal the nature of her interest in Adam, of her detached artist's perspective and sense of authority--to her, Adam is no more than "flesh.... one of the most perfect materials on earth. Natural, beautiful, and malleable." Labute's latest work is an intense and disturbing study not only of the uses of power within human relationships, but also of the ethics involved in the relationship of art and life. To what extent is an artist licensed to shape and change her medium or to alter the work of another artist? What is acceptable artistic material? At what point does creation become manipulation, and at what point does creation destroy? Or, is the new Adam, handsome and confident if heart broken, an admirable result of the most challenging artistic endeavor? *The Shape of Things* challenges society's most deeply entrenched ideas about art, manipulation, and love.

LaBute meticulously plans that the shocking, climatic revelations should cast dark light upon his apparently average people. Nicholas de Jongh, *The Standard*LaBute's great gift is to live in and to chronicle that murky area of not knowing, which mankind spends much of its waking life denying. John Lahr, *The New Yorker*A piece whose intricate layers of treachery are worthy of David Mamet. Paul Taylor, *The Independent*About the AuthorNeil Labute is the author of *In the Company of Men*, *Your Friends and Neighbours*, and *Bash*.