

# TRUTH ON A SPOON

A Collection of Quirky, Compelling Monologues

by  
Dennis Bush



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# TRUTH ON A SPOON

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### Truth on a Spoon

**STEPHEN: Shares the truth.**

I like challenges but I don't like to be challenged. And by that, I mean that I don't like it when anybody disputes what I'm saying. I like to disagree with people but I don't like them to disagree with me. We have to have an understanding, here, between you and me. You have to give me respect and admiration—worship me, even—but you can't expect that from me. Because you won't get it. You treat me like I'm incredibly special and I'll say things to you that are so rude, they'll make your jaw drop. I'll be nice to you, when I want something, but the rest of the time, you can expect a steady diet of contempt and disregard. That's the way it is and that's the way it's got to be. *(pause)* I don't have a lot of friends my own age. People my age don't respect my parameters. They wanna argue. They try to challenge me and I don't like to be challenged that way. I need to be able to share my knowledge and experience with people who take it at face value. Whatever I say is like truth on a spoon for them. It's like I'm the rock star and they're the groupies. They look up to me. They need me. And I need them to need me. *(pause)* I lead them on. I make 'em think they're special to me. . . like they mean something. . . like I care about them. *(pause)* The only thing I care about is how they make me feel. *(pause)* I had a girlfriend. I've had dozens of girlfriends. I'm sure that's no surprise. I mean, look at me. I'm desirable. I make any woman I'm with better than she is alone. There is no disputing that! It's truth on a spoon. But women don't always see it that way. *(pause)* My relationships don't last. *(quick pause)* Not very long, anyway. Just long enough for me to see that they can't follow the rules. They do, at first. They all do.

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**

### Expectations

**RITA: After having a lot to drink, shares the truth.**

I expected more from him. *(pause)* I had expectations. Ex-pec-ta-tions! I expected things. That's the problem with expectations. . . you expect things. *I* expect things. *You* expect things. *(quick pause)* Charles Dickens expected things. *(pause)* He wrote a book about his expectations. He called it *Great Expectations*, which is how you know it's about his expectations. *(quick pause)* And they weren't just good expectations. . . No. . . They were *great* expectations. *(pause)* That is what I have always had. Great expectations. *(quick pause)* So, my boyfriend's recent behavior was a long way from meeting my expectations. *(pause)* I thought we had something. *(quick pause)* Something *special*. Something that would last more than a weekend. When he said my name, there was music in it. It was like his heart was singing out his love for me every time he said my name. And he said my name a lot. He worked my name into almost every sentence the first time we had a conversation. Maybe he was just trying to remember it. Maybe he has a problem with his short term memory. Everybody has problems. *I* have problems. *You* have problems. Mary Todd Lincoln had problems. Imagine going out for a night on the town with your husband and ending up with his head in your lap. *(pause)* Assassination is a downer. It brings you down. Which is why they call it a downer. *(quick pause)* Edward James Olmos is not a downer. No. He stood up and delivered. In that movie... *Stand and Deliver*. He stood and he delivered. *(pause)* It's very hard to deliver anything sitting down, which is why they didn't call the movie *Sit and Deliver*. *(pause)* You can be sitting down and have things

delivered to you—which is exactly what happens when you go to a restaurant. You sit and food is delivered to you. My boyfriend—the man who failed to meet my expectations—is also named Edward. Coincidence. . . maybe.

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**

### **Nothing In Common**

**MASON:** Struggles to have a relationship with his young son.

He's different. *(pause)* Really different. Not like me at all. *(pause)* Fathers and sons are supposed to have things in common. And we have *nothing* in common. Nothing. *(pause)* He hates me. *(quick pause)* My son. *(quick pause)* He's eight and he hates me. His mother—my ex-wife—had something to do with that, I'm sure. And, now, she's got a boyfriend who used to be part of the pit crew for one of the big NASCAR drivers. I don't know which one. My ex-wife told me, but I don't remember. It's not like dropping the name of a NASCAR driver would impress me. Not in this lifetime. *(pause)* Her boyfriend is a big sports fan, too. He's the kind of guy who goes to football games in the middle of winter and sits in the stands with his shirt off. And when his team scores, he stands up and beats his chest like some kind of angry ape. I've seen him do it. My son made me watch a video of the two of them at a game. The two of them standing up, pounding on their chests and shouting some unintelligible exhortation to the team. We had to watch the video clip over and over. I would have given my left arm to have the TV explode so I wouldn't have to watch my son morph into a miniature version of my ex-wife's boyfriend. *(quick pause)* And, somehow, this bare-chested, ex-NASCAR pit-crew guy has become the most important thing in my son's life. They're "buddies." *(quick pause)* My son told me that. "Me and Donny are buddies," he squealed before spitting onto the sidewalk. *(pause)* I don't have buddies. I have friends.

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**

### **Ripe**

**NOELLE:** Clears the air.

Bodies have odor. *(almost whispered; not a secret, but not an announcement)* They have body odor. *(with an increasing edge)* That's why they call it body odor—because it's *odor* on the *body*. I, personally, don't have body odor, but people around me do. It's often very pungent—their body odor. *(increasingly intense)* Sometimes, inhaling their body odor burns my nose. It's like toxic fumes. *(pause; regaining her composure)* I use antibacterial body wash in the shower. It's actually antibacterial hand soap that I've put into the body wash container. Bacteria is what causes body odor. So, if there's no bacteria, there's no odor. I had a sociology professor who would sweat through his shirt during class. *(Gradually building in volume, as the revulsion overtakes her)*

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**

### **Fortune Cookie Destiny**

**CONNIE:** Is going to have an adventure. Soon.

Fortune cookies are more reliable than horoscopes. Anybody can read their horoscope in the newspaper, but a fortune cookie is just for you. Through a complex combination of choices and coincidences, a particular fortune cookie ends up in your hands. *(pause)* It's yours. It's not your

boyfriend's. He got his own. The fortune in the cookie you picked or in the cookie that ended up on your plate is yours by destiny. Of course, you can increase your odds of getting a good fortune by taking a couple extra cookies. A couple or a few. Or seven. Seven's a lucky number. Taking seven fortune cookies pretty much guarantees you at least one really good fortune. *(quick pause)* At least one fortune you can believe in. *(quick pause)* At least one fortune you can really get behind. Having confidence in your fortune cookie fortune is crucial to having your fortune come true. It's essential. I keep my fortunes. I group them according to when I got them. I put them on a sheet of paper and rank them according to the quality of the fortune. Some groups of fortunes aren't worth keeping. The fortunes that aren't really fortunes, even though they came in fortune cookies, aren't worth keeping. Like, "The sun can shine on a cloudy heart." Yeah, OK, that may be true, but it's not a fortune!" I also don't like them when they're too vague. "You will be in the best position." *(pause)*

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**

### **Opposites Attract**

**LINDA:** Tries to understand her boyfriend.

I killed another one. *(pause)* Another stress ball. *(quick pause)* I've gone through three of them, this week. *(a simple truth)* I have a lot of stress. The balls just kind of crumble in my hand after a couple days. My palms sweat a lot, from the stress. That might be making the balls disintegrate more quickly. *(quick pause, an idea)* Or they could just be really cheaply made. *(pause)* A pair of disintegrated balls could easily be attributed to extra use and sweaty palms but three—three crumbling balls definitely seems to be the result of shoddy fabrication or cheap materials. *(pause)* I blame my boyfriend for the stress. You've met him. He's needy. He's high maintenance, emotionally speaking. *(not wanting to seem harsh)* I love him—even with all the stress. Everything seems to be going along pretty well but, to be honest, being in a relationship with my boyfriend is like riding in a convertible behind a big dump truck on the highway. You never know when something is going to fly back and hit you in the face. It's always expecting the unexpected. *(pause)* He's into that ultimate fighting thing. *(SHE laughs)* I know. You would never expect that from him. I mean, you've seen him. Picture him in the ring fighting some guy twice his size. It's ludicrous. His opponents beat the crap out of him. And he gets up and goes back for more. He's a masochist. *(quick pause)* If it wasn't so scary, it would be funny. *(SHE laughs, again)* I really shouldn't laugh. *(SHE continues to laugh)* I shouldn't. But it is funny. Part of me really enjoys watching him get beat up. I don't mean that how it sounds. Well, actually, I guess I do but I don't want you to think I'm some kind of boyfriend beater. I've never hit him and he's never hit me. *(quick pause)* And he loves it. *(quick pause)* The fighting. And you'd never expect that. It's just like I said.

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**

### **Umpire of Love**

**BRETT:** Recounts a camping trip that turned ugly.

I took this girl I was dating on a camping trip. *(pause)* Mistake. *(quick pause)* Big mistake. *(quick pause)* Giant mistake. *(pause)* She was out of her element and, just between you and me, so was I. See, I'm the Umpire of Love. If it's not working with a woman, I just say, "You're outta here" and either she goes or I go. But somebody definitely leaves the area where we were previously involved in an attempt at a relationship. *(pause)* When you're camping, usually you're out in the woods or somewhere in a national park. And civilization isn't right around the corner. In the case of the girl I

was tellin' you about, the two of us were in a secluded spot way up in the mountains. We pitched a tent, we dug a hole for the bathroom. This wasn't the kind of let's-pretend camping that some people do. *(quick pause)* You know, with an RV or a trailer that pops up into a little tent with a mattress and storage space for the girl's make up and six pairs of shoes. *(quick pause)* That's not who I am. That's not the way I roll and it's not the way I camp. *(pause)* So, there we were, me and the girl. . . a very nice woman who would turn a lot of heads. *(quick pause)* I don't date anyone who my buddies would bark at or ask me if I got her at the pound. No way. I date hot ladies and I return the favor by giving them a top-draft-pick kind of a guy like me to be with. I am right up front with the ladies. The Umpire of Love is in it to win it. So, I let 'em know, right up front, that just like a batter in a baseball game, all they get is three strikes. Three strikes and they're out. So, they gotta step up and show me what they got and don't do anything to tick me off or they'll be thrown out of the game like a coach who freaks out about a bad call. *(pause; returning to his story)* So, this woman tells me that she doesn't like camping and that she's not comfortable using a hole in the ground for a bathroom and she's not sure she can sleep on the ground and doesn't really like red meat which means that she isn't getting any dinner because all I brought to cook over the open fire is two steaks. *(quick pause)* And, anyway, where was all that information when I asked her if she wanted to go camping with me for the weekend? *(imitating her)* "Oh, that sounds romantic. I'd love to go camping with you!" *(pause)* She discovered pretty quick that there's not a lot of romance in using a hole in the ground for a bathroom. *(pause)* "What did you think camping meant?" I asked her, while she was sitting on a rock crying like a whiny baby. *(pause; stating a fact)* Women who cry are not attractive. It's not like in the movies when they have those pretty tears that run down their cheeks. In real life, they have snot running out their nose and their eyes get puffy and the sound they make is like a deer after you shoot it but before you shoot it again to put it out of its misery. *(pause)* I swear, if I had my shotgun with me, I'd have put *her* out of her misery.

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**

## **Keeping Secrets**

**KATHY: Teaches her daughter a lesson.**

Sometimes, my daughter just sits in her room and cries. For hours at a time. I don't understand it. I was never like that, when I was her age. I was always so happy. I was a bundle of joy. I could amuse myself. I think that's an important skill to have. If you can't amuse yourself, how can you amuse other people? We have to look for the silver lining in the clouds. We have to have a positive outlook. We just need to walk on the sunny side of the street. That's the only way to go through life. It really is. For every smile we give, we get a dozen back. It's true. It really is. But my daughter doesn't understand that. She doesn't appreciate the value of a positive outlook. She doesn't grasp the importance of smiling. She is the unhappiest child I have ever met. The sadness is fairly recent. It started about two years ago. It just came over her with no warning at all. Before that, she was fine. She wasn't exactly a laugh riot, but she wasn't so morose. She used to play with other children. *(quick pause)* Well, she played *near* them more than actually playing *with* them, but proximity counts for something. *(pause)* Everything was fine. I'd see her almost smiling and I'd think, "My little girl is happy. Just like me." I think a daughter is a reflection of her mother. There is no closer bond than the one between a mother and daughter.

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**

## Nobody Expects That

**BRETT:** Shares the secrets of being classy.

I've been incarcerated. I don't say "in jail" or "in prison." Incarcerated sounds classier. And you gotta be classy when you've been incarcerated. Nobody expects that. Once people find out you've been on the losing end of the judicial system, they expect that you're gonna be some low life. I refuse to be who or what they expect. *(pause)* The judicial system is all a big game. When I was incarcerated, I made it my business to learn how to play the game and play it well. I got out early for good behavior. I've got a lady parole officer. She's like Playdoh in my hands. She flirts with me sometimes. I encourage it.

END OF FREE PREVIEW

## A Substitute for Love

**DARCY:** Comes out of the shadow of her twin sister.

Identical doesn't always mean exactly the same. It doesn't. Especially not with people. My sister and I are identical twins but we're as different as night and day. Even as little babies we were different. I cried a lot and was afraid of the dark. She slept all through the night. My first word was "food." Hers was "mama." Is it any surprise that my parents liked her better? They did. They still do. If you asked my mother, she'd say that she loves both her girls equally, but that's just what she says, not how she really feels. *(pause)* I was born first—by almost three minutes. I'm supposed to be the dominant twin. I'm supposed to be the leader and she's supposed to be the follower. Somehow, that information never got genetically encoded in my sister. She's always behaved like she was an only child and I was just some kind of shadow of her. Not a real person at all. Just a shadow. *(quick pause)* I am not a shadow. I'm not. And just because Marcy doesn't acknowledge my existence doesn't mean I don't exist. *(quick pause)* And other thing: Ice cream is not a substitute for love. At least, not after the first couple spoonfuls. *(pause)* I've tried talking to my mom about how I feel—about the way Marcy treats me, not about the ice cream—and she says, "Just because you and your sister are different, doesn't mean you can't still be close. You should be best friends. That's why God makes twins—so they'll always have a best friend." That's not advice. It's a greeting card. *(pause)* Marcy doesn't spend much time at home. She's always out with friends or, lately, with her boyfriend, Wayne. Last Saturday night, she came home at 4:30 in the morning. My parents didn't even yell. Marcy told 'em that Wayne had "car trouble" on the other side of town and they believed her, even though she was standing there looking like a total mess. *(pause)* But my parents didn't say anything. *(quick pause)* No follow up questions. No, "You should have called. We were worried." Nothing! *(pause)* Two pints of mint chocolate chip later, I was seeing things very clearly. Ice cream may not be a substitute for love, but it does cool down your head so you can think. *(pause)* I wanted a life. The question was how to go about getting one, since I hadn't really laid the groundwork. I didn't have a support structure. I only have a couple friends and they're mostly outcasts like me. Nobody I confide in. No real special skills to set me apart. I needed an example. . . a guidebook. And, then, it hit me:

END OF FREE PREVIEW

## Winning the Game

**SHARON:** Shares her strategy for handling difficult situations.

It's not enough to win the game. You have to win the set and the match, too. Otherwise, you haven't

really won. Winning the game is a temporary victory. And temporary victories are hollow. They're useless. *(pause; her thesis statement)* Tennis is exactly like life. Sometimes, you're dealing with things that are close to you. . . in your space. . . like when you play up at the net. And, other times, big problems plop down in your lap and you have to scramble to figure out how to handle them. They're like lobs that land in the back court, when you've just been up at the net. *(a beat)* I prefer to play singles, though doubles works with my tennis-equals-life theory, too. With doubles, it's like that you-and-me-against-whatever-life-throws-at-us feeling you get when you're married. When it's a good marriage. When your husband isn't off cheating on you with someone in a shorter tennis skirt. *(pause)* Even when your partner is really good, you can't always count on them to get the shots they should. Sometimes, they're tired. . . or lazy. . . or just not as passionate about the game as you are. And every conflict in life really comes down to one-on-one, anyway. *(quick pause)* Mano-a-mano.

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**

### **How Ya Doin' Today?**

**CASSIE: Gets a little aggressive.**

I say, "Hey, how ya doin', today?" It's kind of a statement-and-question combination. Starting with "hey" sets the tone. It's more edgy than "hi" or "hello." And I always say "ya," not "you" and "doin'" not "doing." And "how ya doin'" not "How are you doing?" Adding the "today" makes it more specific, so it's not just how ya doin' in general or how ya doin' in the grand scheme of things, but how ya doing, *today*. How ya doin', *now*. . . It's a little casual and a little aggressive, all at the same time. I love that. . . that mix of, yeah, I'm laid back but I'm also getting in your business. I'm not all up in your face but I could be. . . I might be. . . I kinda wanna be. *(pause)* So, I slow down, when I'm getting ready to pass somebody whose walking toward me. You know, like we're going in opposite directions. I'm going this way and the other person is going the opposite way but we're heading toward each other—almost like playing chicken. Usually, if I slow down, so do they. It's instinctive. It must be rooted in animal behavior. I slow down and when we're at that moment of making eye contact just before we pass each other, I say, "Hey, how ya doin', today?" *(pause)* Some people answer. Those are my kind of people. They're playing the game. They're not afraid to put themselves out there. "I'm good. How *you* doin'?" That's what a guy in New York said to me. With the accent and everything. I loved it.

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**

### **Being Profound**

**HOPE: Makes an effort.**

I make lists. Things I need to do. . . things I should have done. . . things I want to do but don't think I ever will. *(quick pause)* And not just for myself. I keep to-do lists for other people. Lists of things *they* should do. And say. When I'm talking to somebody, I'm thinking about what I think they should say back to me. In my head, I'm writing the script for our conversation, only they don't get a copy of it. It's a shame they don't, because they're always more articulate in my head than they are in real life. If they'd stick to the script in my head, they'd say really lovely things. Memorable things. People don't think enough about what they're saying or how they say it. Our communication skills are what separates us from the animals. We should strive for a higher quality of conversation. *(pause)* Nobody tries to be profound.

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**