

DUELING DOORMEN

By John C. Havens

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At Rise: Tony, the doorman, addresses a tenant. Throughout the piece HE addresses the audience and spins to become the other characters.

(in thick New Jersey accent) How youse doin'? I'm Tony, the doorman. You new to the building? Great. ***(pointing)*** Mailboxes are here, newspapers delivered here. You get any bottled watah? Yeah? 'Kay, that goes there. You got any questions? ***(listening)***

No, I don't get your car for youse in the morning. I'm a doorman. Door-man. Any issues involved in the door, I'm yer guy. Door opening, closing, occasional cleaning or maintenance, you call me. You got car issues, call a mechanic or somethin'. ***(nodding; a bit peeved)*** Yeah, youse have a good day, too.

(watches the person leave, then addresses the audience) Didja get the nerve a' that chucklehead? "Can you get my car now, please?" Where does he think he is? This is Hoboken, New Jersey. Hoe-bow-can. Do I look like I'm wearin' gold epaulettes on my shoulders, buddy? You see me sportin' some weenie lid on my noggin? No, I'm a doorman. Good, old fashioned, lean forward, give ya a "how youse doin'" and make sure the door doesn't smack ya in the tailpipe" doorman. Please. ***(looks at audience)*** Ya don't know from Hoboken? I'm truly sorry for ya. Sit-e-ated west of the small village known as Manhattan. 'Boken, as we like to call it, is west of the Big Apple, cross the mighty Hudson, or the Lincoln tunnel - whichever you prefer. 'Boken, or the Mile Square City, as they call it, although it's actually not a full square mile in diam-etuh, has three things that make it famous: ***(counts on fingers)***

One, it's the birthplace a' baseball. I don't care what those chumps say in Indiana or wherever that freakin' hall a' freakin' fame is or whatever. Baseball started not seven blocks from where I'm

standin' at what used to be known as Elysian Fields here in 'Boken. It's true. Look it up. Hey, **(grabbing his shirt)** why do you think they call them baseball JERSEYs?

Second thing makes us famous, ol' blue eyes himself. That's right. Frank Sinatra is from 'Boken. King a' the Rat Pack hails from my hometown. Any self-respectin' deli in 'Boken bettuh have a wall dedicated to Frankie or they're nothin' but freakin' New York City wannabees and any self-respectin' Hobokenian'll never darken their freakin' doorstep.

Okay, third thing makes 'Boken famous, more bahs per square mile than any other city in America. Ya can't walk ten feet without seein' a pub, gin joint, saloon, beer house, keg lounge, martini café, ginmill, taproom, pot house, public house or swill shop.

Anyhoo, bys and large I enjoy bein' a doorman 'cept when some freakin' yahoo like dat guy thinks he's bettuh dan me and wants me to fetch his car or whatevuh. See, ya don't want to mess with a Hobokenian. Youse get raised in these parts, you freakin' know what's what. You know what I'm sayin'? You also don't want to mess with your doorman. **(cracking knuckles)** Wouldn't want to one day discover that yer mail was missin', would ya? Or maybe dat yer *New York Times* appears to have mysteriously up and vanished? **(looks up, sees his friend, Jeanie)** Isn't that right, Jeanie? Don't mess with someone from 'Boken, right? Especially yer doorman.

(Turns around and becomes Jeanie, a maintenance woman for the building. Jeanie has a thick raspy voice and coughs a lot as she is a chain smoker.)

(coughs) Dat's right, Tone. Ju tell 'em we gave birth to baseball, bars and blue eyes? **(waits)** Dat's good. Yeah, folks, don't mess with yer doorman, but 'specially **(hacks)** don't mess with yer maintenance woman. **(has a huge hacking fit)** I got class, ya see. Don't mean no never mind I wear a T-shirt and overalls and carry a plunghah. Yeah, I got my arms elbow deep in excrement most of the day, but I still know

what's what, if you know what I mean. Ya see, youse learn a lot about a person by the way they clean their apartment. You may be on the fast track at Wall Street wearin' yer freakin' 2K Armani suits and all, but what would yer trader buddies think of youse knowin' the state of yer apartment? Hello - the outer appearance reflects the inner being! Youse never heard of Feng Shui? Youse (**coughs**) gotta (**hacks**) take care of (**hacks, coughs**) the outside as well as (**hacks, clears throat, lights invisible cigarette and inhales long and deep**) de inside. Otherwise, life is meaningless.

(listens to Tony) Yeah, I guess I can be pretty deep sometimes. Youse know the other thing I noticed, Tony? People who put the toilet paper so it rolls from bottom to top instead of top to bottom? Youse know what I mean - like ya gotta reach under the roll to get the roll movin'? Every one of those people I meet in this buildin' that do that are unhappy. I kid youse not. Toilet paper's better'n tea leaves in tellin' somethin' about a person. I don't need tarot cards to tell the future. Give me a roll a' Charmin and I'll tell youse more about yerself than yer ma and Santa Claus combined. Anyway, I gotta' go. Mrs. Wegman on da third floor ordered takeout Mexican last night so I figure I'll get up there early for a little damage control. See ya, Tone.

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