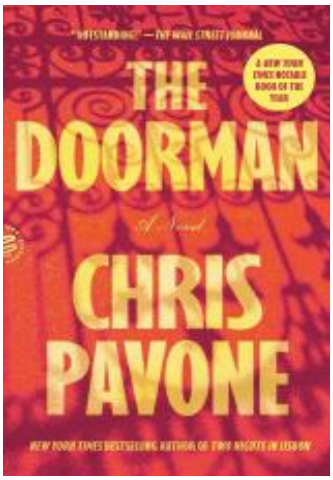
The Doorman

by Chris Pavone



About the Book

A pulse-pounding novel of class, privilege, sex and murder, from the *New York Times* bestselling author of TWO NIGHTS IN LISBON and THE EXPATS.

Chicky Diaz is everyone?s favorite doorman at the Bohemia, the most famous apartment house in the world, home of celebrities, financiers and New York?s cultural elite.

Up in the penthouse, Emily Longworth has the perfect-looking everything, all except her husband, whom she?d quietly loathed even before the recent revelations about where all the money comes from. But his wealth is immense, their prenup is iron-clad, and Emily can?t bring herself to leave him. Yet.

And downstairs in 2A, Julian Sonnenberg --- who has carved himself a successful niche in the art world and led a good half-century of a full and satisfying, cosmopolitan life --- has just received a devastating phone call that does nothing at all to alleviate his sense that, probably for better and worse, he has aged out and is just not that useful to anyone any more.

Meanwhile, gathered in the Bohemia?s bowels, the building's almost entirely Black and Hispanic working-class staff is taking in the news that that just a few miles uptown, a Black man has been killed by the police, leading to a demonstration, a counterdemonstration, and a long night of violence across the tinderbox city.

As Chicky changes into his uniform for tonight?s shift, he finds himself breaking a cardinal rule of the job: tonight, he?ll be carrying a gun, bought only hours earlier, but before he knew of the pandemonium taking over the city. Chicky knows that there?s more going on in his patch of sidewalk in front of the Bohemia than anyone is aware of. Tonight in the city, enemies will clash, loyalties will be tested, secrets will be revealed --- and lives will be lost.

Discussion Guide

1. Why do you think Chris Pavone chose to title his novel THE DOORMAN? What did you think of Chicky Diaz? Were you surprised to learn the details of his life?

2. Chicky and his fellow doormen are privy to the secrets of the residents of the Bohemia. Were there any you found particularly shocking?

3. Stephen King praised THE DOORMAN, saying, ?Cynical, tender, sharp, dense, funny, and loaded with inside dope about how New York works (and how it doesn?t). THE DOORMAN is a BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES for the twenty-first century. He gives it to both sides of the culture wars, and with both smoking barrels.? What culture war issues present themselves in THE DOORMAN, and which sides do each of the characters fall on? Did any of their viewpoints surprise you? If so, which ones and why?

4. How does Pavone showcase the world of the staff of the Bohemia? Describe them, in particular Zaire and Olek. Why does Zaire continue to work at the Bohemia despite being ?so sick of these f---ing people? (p. 228)?

5. In defending a decision, Roland mentions intersectionality to Emily, saying, ?Everything has to do with everything else, Emily, and it all has to do with everyone. Any instance of injustice is a call to arms for every sort of justice. And today the calls are very, very loud? (p. 147). What decision has Roland come to, and why? Explain how intersectionality factors into his decision.

6. Julian makes it a point to take public transportation to his black-tie events. Why? What did you think about Julian? In what ways is he like the other tenants of the Bohemia? Are there any differences?

7. In THE DOORMAN, Pavone provides glimpses into a variety of marriages: Emily and Whit, Julian and Jennifer, Chicky and Tiffani. Describe each of the marriages. Of Emily, Pavone writes, ?[She] had accepted that she was making a deal, a compromise. But then she?d been bait-and-switched? (p. 196). What kind of compromises do Emily and the other people within the couples make? Why might they make these choices? Do you think the members of the couples mentioned love each other?

8. What do you think about the way Whit?s company has made its profits? Why might it be seen as controversial? What do you think Emily knows?

9. Who is Justin Pugh? Describe his relationship with Whit and Emily. What are Emily?s true feelings toward Justin, and why? Do you think she?s justified in feeling the way she does?

10. At a contentious board meeting, various residents debate whether or not they need to hire extra security in light of upcoming demonstrations. What are the arguments for and against? How does the staff feel about this discussion? Why?

11. While Emily tries to empathize with the clients from her volunteer work, ?[she] never succeeded in putting herself in those shoes.... Maybe a better person might succeed, a more genuinely generous person. But failing was okay, she thought, or hoped. It was trying that really mattered? (p. 121). Describe Emily?s volunteer work. Why do you think she has chosen this way to spend her free time? What does Whit think about it? Do you agree with Emily that trying is what

really matters?

12. Who is Hailey? Describe her encounter with Chicky. Were you surprised by what you learned? What conflict does the discovery create for Chicky? How does he handle it?

Author Bio

Chris Pavone is the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE DOORMAN, THE PARIS DIVERSION, THE TRAVELERS, THE ACCIDENT and THE EXPATS, winner of the Edgar and Anthony Awards for best first novel. He was a book editor for nearly two decades and lives in New York City with his family.

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