It

a 10-minute comedy
by
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CHARACTERS

CHUCK, thinks he’s macho, thinks he’s a wise guy
MARTY, nerdy, a glad-hander, but not very good at it
RÖZI, a foreigner (male), speaks with an accent
VOICE, disembodied

SETTING

The present. A men’s room.

The only set required is a small shelf on which each actor can place a prop—a bobble-head
doll—beside or directly in front of himself while he is making use of one of the (purely
notional) urinals.
(AT RISE: Chuck enters, takes his place at the end of a row of urinals; Marty hurries in behind him and takes the place adjacent. Each carries a bobble-head doll, which he places on a shelf in front of him.)

Chuck

Excuse me?

Marty

Uh-huh?

Chuck

Protocol?

Marty

Protocol . . .

Chuck

Rule number 1: Maximum separation. Guy sees an empty row, he goes to one end—leaves the field open. Guy sees an open field—that would be you—goes to the other end. Next guy splits the difference. Ek. Cetera. Separation maximized.

Marty

Any old port in a storm.

Chuck

This ain’t rocket science.

Marty

I’d move over, if I could, if it matters to you. I would, but I’m already . . . docked.

Chuck

Somebody comes in here . . . sees two guys . . . not following protocol . . . I mean . . .

Marty

Is there a problem? (Pause. Glances down at Chuck) Not a lot going on down there.

Chuck

Rule 2. Which is so important it could’ve been Rule 1.

Marty

That’s called “hesitation.” Which is nothing to worry about.

Chuck

Rule number 2—

Marty

It’s usually nothing.

Chuck

—Don’t look. Do not look.
“Don’t look!” That’s the tag line for my movie! “ Whatever you do . . . Don’t Look!” Would you go see that?

CHUCK

What the hell are you talking about?

MARTY

This idea I’ve been kicking around. My scifi movie: Aliens take over the U.S. of A., and we cannot tell who they are. Everything about them looks exactly like us, except for one thing: It.

CHUCK

It?

MARTY

Which looks like ours except it’s purple or something, and talks, and has superpowers—change shape, shoot a death ray, yadda yadda. In fact, It’s the real alien. What you usually see—the head, the body, and so forth—that’s like a costume, which is a real strain for them to keep up. So a place like this—the porcelain palace, the temple of truth—is special, the place where they don’t have to pretend.

CHUCK

Some of us earth dudes shoot a pretty fair death ray of our own, if you know what I mean.

MARTY

Some of the aliens are pacifists, so they teach our Special Forces guys how to deflect death rays by focusing mental energy into a Shield of Thought. It’s a special effects picture. I call it . . . “It.”

(Beat)

CHUCK

So . . . alien chicks . . . what do they look like?

MARTY

Hey, it’s a family picture.

(MARTY points to himself.)

Marty.

CHUCK

Two hands! Two hands! Accuracy is an absolute requirement, a rule with no exceptions. FYI, NASA spent millions of dollars building special toilets just so chicks could go in space. Maybe billions. They didn’t have to do that for the guys. At the end of the day, if there’s one thing a man has got, it’s his accuracy.

MARTY

And you are . . . ?

CHUCK

Not on a first-name basis with people I meet here.
(MARTY finishes his business.)

MARTY

C’mon. C’mon c’mon. C’mon [c’mon c’mon . . . ]

CHUCK

Chuck. Don’t think about shaking hands.

(RÖZI enters, also with a bobble-head doll. When he takes the place furthest from the other two, CHUCK nods approval.)

Protocol.

(Beat)

MARTY

Somebody’s been eating asparagus.

CHUCK

He’s not with me! (To MARTY) We call that “commenting.”

MARTY

Rule number . . . ?

CHUCK

It’s Top 10. And you are now “lingering.” What I get for coming to the ballpark when there’s a goddam bobble-head giveaway. Who did I think was gonna show up?

MARTY

“Bobbing,” not “bobble.” “Bobbing-head” is the term preferred by the collectible novelty products community.

(By now, CHUCK has finished his business.)

CHUCK

You sell that shit? To get non-fans—people who do not belong here—into the ballpark? Don’t do me any more favors.

MARTY

“Non-fans” is such a negative stereotype. We call them “undocumented.”

(Humming emerges from, it seems, RÖZI. A short quote from The Impossible Dream, then aimless.)

Listen. Listen to that. Exactly what happens in “It.” Earth people think that’s singing, but it’s really a dynamo firing up to keep the death ray charged.

CHUCK

That’s his johnson?