

The Doorman

by Chris Pavone

1. Pavone structures much of the novel around a single tumultuous night in New York, with the doorman's perspective as the central lens. How does this ticking-clock, confined-setting approach (reminiscent of high-rise thrillers or *Die Hard*-style escalation) build suspense, and what craft choices allow the story to feel expansive despite the limited timeframe and location?
2. The narrative employs a mix of "showing" and "telling," with dense early exposition on characters' backstories, preferences, and social contexts. How does this deliberate style (which some readers note bucks the common "show, don't tell" rule) serve the book's satirical tone and social commentary? Does it enhance immersion in New York's class divides, or does it risk overwhelming the reader?
3. Pavone draws inspiration from real life (e.g., his own building's doorman and personal loss) but transforms it into fiction. How effectively does he balance authenticity with dramatic invention? What craft decisions help the protagonist Chicky feel grounded and relatable amid exaggerated elite characters?
4. The book blends thriller pacing with literary elements like sharp social satire, cultural war critiques, and compassionate portraits of grief/humanity. How does Pavone maintain tension while weaving in these broader observations? Discuss his use of irony, humor, and multiple viewpoints to skewer both sides of societal issues without feeling preachy.
5. Comparisons to *The Bonfire of the Vanities* abound—Pavone has acknowledged aiming for a modern update. What craft parallels or differences stand out (e.g., voice, ensemble cast, handling of race/class)? How does Pavone's third-person narration and doorman POV update Wolfe's style for the post-COVID, social-media era?
6. Pavone explores marriages, power imbalances, and personal compromises across classes (e.g., the Longworths, Sonnenbergs, and Chicky's own). How does his character development and dialogue reveal these dynamics subtly through actions and observations rather than overt exposition?
7. The ending delivers twists and resolutions tied to themes of agency, redemption, and mortality. From a craft perspective, how does Pavone foreshadow and pay off these elements? Does the resolution feel earned, and how does it reflect his goal of a "wise, wry, and perceptive" state-of-the-city novel?