

SALAD DAYS

by

Brian Scott Mednick

So I tried getting into the bar. Herb was at the door. I said, "Lettuce in." He said, "No, we only have this mushroom. Come back tomato." I asked if Artie was on tonight. He said, "No, artichoke. He go to hospital."

"I guess that's why he didn't turnip," I said.

I desperately needed to pea, but this guy was tough. "I can't let you in just to take a leek," he said. I made him a deal. I let him hold on to my ring – it was two carrots. He let me in but said not to tell anyone – I promised not to spill the beans. When I came out, I asked him if the bartenders made a lot of money in tips. He said not really, but they are all on celery. Some of them have all of their money tied up in escarole.

I really wanted to get in so I decided to try being friendly. "You look familiar," I said.

"I've never seen you before," Herb replied.

"Really?"

"No, but your face rings a bell pepper."

"Do you like sports?" I asked him.

“Yes, I play squash,” he said. I told him I liked baseball – my favorite player was Ty Cobb.

Then my cell phone rang. It was Gene Shallot. He said he had someone with him I should talk to. Then he put some daikon. At first I thought it was Olive, but it turned out to be Pauline Kale. She said that if I kept going to these bars I would wind up a vegetable. They wanted me to join them for a nice evening at home. I was moved. They have hearts of palm.

So I decided to stop pestering Herb – he was probably thinking I was some fruit. I took a cab to Pauline Kale’s place. On my way I passed through Central Park and saw the beautiful lights outside of Tavern on the Mustard Green as some kind of classical music played on the radio - I think it might have been from an opera by Porcini.

When I got to Pauline’s, the door was open and the TV was on. It was the president giving his State of the Onion address. I wasn’t fond of the president – personally, I like Governor Shiitake. I changed the channel and then saw some movie with Okra Winfrey.

I couldn’t find Pauline or Gene, so I went to the bedroom. I opened the door and shouted, “Here I yam!” I was embarrassed – my face turned a radish color. They were dressing. These people have absolutely no morels, I thought. As usual, Gene’s hair was all frisee, but I was shocked to see that he was hung like a horseradish. They were upset and told me to beet it. It was parsley my fault, I guess, since I should have knocked. Just as well. It was getting late and I decided to go home – not that I would have turned into a pumpkin or anything. Once home I decided to kick back with a ginger beer, watch some corn, and play with my Mr. Potatohead. I went to sleep contented – after all, I’ve got the world on a stringbean.