

# How Houlihan Won Respect



Arthur Hoppe

DEAR PRESIDENT: I, Joe Sikspak, American, take pen in hand to curl your ear. You think you had trouble with those Cambodians? You should of been down to Paddy's Place the other night.

Houlihan comes in with this kind of hang-dog look. Now Houlihan stands six-two and his neck is thicker than his head, which is pretty thick, so nobody much fools with him.

But the word gets around that his Missus, who's a scrawny little thing, has tossed him out of the house. Bodily. You-know-what over teakettle.

Well, you know how it is, we start giving him a bad time. "Can't lick his way out of a box of fudge." Stuff like that.

First, he makes excuses, like he was too much of a gentleman to unleash his Sunday punch on the Missus. And anyway, he was just plain glad to get out of the house. But you can see he's humiliat-ed. And he's getting madder and madder.

Pretty soon, he's standing up, fists clenched, roaring, "My name's Houlihan and I can lick any man in the place!" But we're all laughing so hard we scarcely notice. That's when Highpockets gets in the act.

★ ★ ★

NOW HIGHPOCKETS, if you don't know him, President, used to work for the circus on account of he is hand-some, talented and three feet tall.

Well, Highpockets gets carried away. He climbs up on the bar and swipes Houlihan's cap. "Give it back!" says Houlihan, his face turning red. But Highpockets just dances around, waving the

cap and yelling, "Nyah, Nyah, Nyah!"

Suddenly, Houlihan hauls off and — POW! — he knocks Highpockets clean off the bar and halfway to the door. "That'll learn you to swipe my cap!" he shouts.

"Jeez, I'm sorry, Houlihan," says Highpockets, counting his teeth. "Here, take it back."

Houlihan carefully inspects his cap. Then he pulls back one of his size-14 brogans and — WHAM! — he boots Highpockets right through the doorway, splitting the uprights.

"And that'll learn you," he hollers, "never to do it again!"

He turns around, dusting off his hands, and he's sure beaming. Naturally, it's real quiet. But Houlihan spends the next hour telling us how he showed everybody a thing or three and how he's not a man to be trifled with. He's sure happy.

When he's gone, I ask Paddy what he thinks. "Well, one thing's for sure, Joe," says Paddy. "Houlihan doesn't have to worry any more about being attacked by three-foot midgets."

★ ★ ★

SO YOU can see, President, where Houlihan done what he done to get back the respect of the neighborhood. And it sure worked fine.

Like Paddy says, "If there's one thing you respect more than a 500-pound gorilla, it's a 500-pound gorilla which is off its rocker."

Truly Yours,  
Joe Sikspak, American