

MR. WEBB

**GEORGE:**

How is Emily?

**MRS. WEBB:**

She hasn't waked up yet. I haven't heard a sound out of her.

**GEORGE:**Emily's *asleep!!!***MRS. WEBB:**

No wonder! We were up 'til all hours, sewing and packing. Now I'll tell you what I'll do; you set down here a minute with Mr. Webb and drink this cup of coffee; and I'll go upstairs and see she doesn't come down and surprise you. There's some bacon, too; but don't be long about it.

*Exit MRS. WEBB.**Embarrassed silence.**MR. WEBB dunks doughnuts in his coffee.**More silence.***MR. WEBB:***Suddenly and loudly.*

Well, George, how are you?

**GEORGE:***Startled, choking over his coffee.*

Oh, fine, I'm fine.

*Pause.*

Mr. Webb, what sense could there be in a superstition like that?

**MR. WEBB:**

Well, you see,—on her wedding morning a girl's head's apt to be full of . . . clothes and one thing and another. Don't you think that's probably it?

**GEORGE:**

Ye-e-s. I never thought of that.

**MR. WEBB:**

A girl's apt to be a mite nervous on her wedding day.

*Pause.***GEORGE:**

*Start* I wish a fellow could get married without all that marching up and down.

**MR. WEBB:**

Every man that's ever lived has felt that way about it, George; but it hasn't been any use. It's the womenfolk who've built up weddings, my boy. For a while now the women have it all their own. A man looks pretty small at a wedding, George. All those good women standing shoulder to shoulder making sure that the knot's tied in a mighty public way.

**GEORGE:**But . . . you *believe* in it, don't you, Mr. Webb?**MR. WEBB:***With alacrity.*

Oh, yes; *oh, yes*. Don't you misunderstand me, my boy. Marriage is a wonderful thing,—wonderful thing. And don't you forget that, George.

**GEORGE:**

No, sir.—Mr. Webb, how old were you when you got married?

**MR. WEBB:**

Well, you see: I'd been to college and I'd taken a little time to get settled. But Mrs. Webb—she wasn't much older than what Emily is. Oh, age hasn't much to do with it, George,—not compared with . . . uh . . . other things.

**GEORGE:**

What were you going to say, Mr. Webb?

**MR. WEBB:**

Oh, I don't know.—Was I going to say something?

*Pause.*

George, I was thinking the other night of some advice my father gave me when I got married. Charles, he said, Charles, start out early showing who's boss, he said. Best thing to do is to give an order, even if it don't make sense; just so she'll learn to obey. And he said: if anything about your wife irritates you—her conversation, or anything—just get up and leave the house. That'll make it clear to her, he said. And, oh, yes! he said never, *never* let your wife know how much money you have, never.

**GEORGE:**

Well, Mr. Webb . . . I don't think I could . . .

**MR. WEBB:**

So I took the opposite of my father's advice and I've been happy ever since. And let that be a lesson to you, George, never to ask advice on personal matters.—George, are you going to raise chickens on your farm? *em!*

**GEORGE:**

What?

**MR. WEBB:**

Are you going to raise chickens on your farm?

**GEORGE:**

Uncle Luke's never been much interested, but I thought—

**MR. WEBB:**

A book came into my office the other day, George, on the Philo System of raising chickens. I want you to read it. I'm thinking of beginning in a small way in the back yard, and I'm going to put an incubator in the cellar—

*Enter* MRS. WEBB.**MRS. WEBB:**

Charles, are you talking about that old incubator again? I thought you two'd be talking about things worth while.

**MR. WEBB:***Bitingly.*

Well, Myrtle, if you want to give the boy some good advice, I'll go upstairs and leave you alone with him.

**MRS. WEBB:***Pulling* GEORGE *up.*

George, Emily's got to come downstairs and eat her breakfast. She sends you her love but she doesn't want to lay eyes on you. Good-by.

**GEORGE:**

Good-by.