

MR. WEBB

(Embarrassed silence. **GEORGE** sits at table, uses sugar, stirs, steals look at **MR. WEBB**.)

(**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. Earnestly.) 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? (dunks and eats)

GEORGE. Ye-es. I never thought of that.

MR. WEBB. A girl's apt to be a mite nervous on her wedding day. (pause)

GEORGE. (stirring coffee) 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. (cuts food and eats)

GEORGE. But...you believe in it, don't you, Mr. Webb?

MR. WEBB. (With alacrity. Suddenly looking at **GEORGE**.) 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. (pause) 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. (stirring coffee) Oh, age hasn't much to do with it, George – not compared with...uh...other things. (drinks)

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.