

# John + Tackleton

~~EDWARD~~

~~THAT'S~~

~~TACKLETON~~

~~YOUR WEDDING~~

~~EDWARD~~

~~Thank you very much, come to you!~~

~~Tackleton shrugs and sits down, unbidden.~~

TACKLETON

A word with you, John. My wedding's in two days.

JOHN

That's our wedding anniversary.

TACKLETON

I know. So does my fiancée. I guess she thinks that's a lucky day. Come and spend an evening with us, beforehand. You, and – yours.

JOHN

Why?

TACKLETON

That's a new way of receiving an invitation. Why, for pleasure. Sociability, you know, and all that.

JOHN

I thought you were never sociable.

TACKLETON

Tchah. No use to be anything but plain with you. The truth is you have a – a – what tea-drinking people call a sort of comfortable appearance together, you and your wife. We know better, you know, but –

DOT

No, we don't know better, Mr. Tackleton. Would you like some tea?

TACKLETON

No.

*Two chirps from the cricket.*

DOT

Tea, Caleb?

*Caleb nods, because even indoors he's cold. Dot starts making more tea.*

TACKLETON

Well, we don't know better, then. We'll agree that we don't. I mean you two, together, have an appearance that might produce a favorable effect on Mrs-Tackleton-to-be. I know women. There's that spirit of emulation between them. If your wife says to my wife, I'm the happiest woman in the world, and mine's the best husband in the world, and I adore him – mine will think the same, more or less, and half-believe it, too.

JOHN

*Not being sarcastic; just trying to understand this complex proposal.*

And otherwise?

TACKLETON

Otherwise what?

JOHN

Otherwise, your wife won't believe it?

TACKLETON

You dog, you're joking. But – now, look there!

*Points at Dot, who's diligently making tea.*

She honors and obeys, and, since I'm not a man of sentiment, that's enough for me. Who'd say there's anything more to it!

JOHN

I should chuck any man out of a window, who said there wasn't.

*Another quick, concerned look from Dot.*

TACKLETON

To be sure! Yes. Of course you would. So – say you'll come?

JOHN

No. We've arranged to spend Christmas Eve at home.

TACKLETON

What's home? Four walls and a ceiling!

*Two chirps.*

Why don't you kill that cricket? I would. I hate their noise.

~~Dot~~

~~You kill your cricket?~~

~~TACKLETON~~

~~Scrunch from There. Four walls and a ceiling at my house. Come to me!~~

~~JOHN~~

~~No. We're at home during the day, and in the evening we've an engagement.~~

~~TACKLETON~~

~~Engagement? What engagement?~~

*John is silent, but he can't stop his eyes from flickering toward in Caleb's direction. Tackleton notices this, because he notices everything. He also knows Caleb works for him and cannot say no.*

~~Caleb, who says...~~