



The Web

I guess when you see that title, you might assume that this week's story is about the internet ... the world wide web. But you would be wrong - it's about another kind of web!

Before I tell you about it, I should give you a bit of background. For nearly ten years now, since my daughters left to go to school overseas, I have lived alone. The girls used to make occasional visits back to see their dad, but in recent years these have tapered off, and I have clearly become what the census people call a 'single householder'.

During the years that the girls and I lived together, we shared the household chores between the three of us, and for the most part, we did a good job at maintaining our house in clean order. I had a male viewpoint, but an adult one, and they had a childish viewpoint, but a female one, so all in all, we were able to find a good balance on how much effort to spend on house cleaning.

After they left though, and I became the only person living here, the balance changed. Now don't misunderstand - I'm not going to suggest that because I am a man living alone, my house is a complete disaster! I have heard about TV programs where a crew goes into somebody's apartment to clean it and finds huge mountains of garbage filling every room; I'm sure these programs would not be interested in my place at all. I think I am doing quite well at keeping my place clean!

But the important phrase in that sentence is 'I think'. As we all know, two different people can look at the same thing and 'see' something completely different, and I was reminded of this again just yesterday.

A visitor was here for a while yesterday afternoon - one of the collectors of my prints. When it was time for her to leave, I called the taxi company for a car, and because it was very cold outdoors, we stood in my entranceway chatting while we waited for it to arrive. At one point, she paused in her sentence - she had apparently seen something a bit startling behind me. I turned to see what she was looking at, but just at that moment we heard the sound of the taxi, so I saw her outside and into the car.

When I came back into the entranceway, I looked around to see what she had seen, and immediately found it - just above the door was a neat spider web. This was February, so there wasn't any spider, and indeed, the web itself was powdered with a delicate layer of dust. It had obviously been there for quite some time ...

I had to smile to myself when I noticed this; I can well imagine what she might be thinking, "What an outrageously filthy house!" But do you know - speaking completely honestly to you - I had never seen it hanging there, and I go through that door many times a day.

Now this little story is not a 'confession' story; I am not hanging my head in shame asking for your forgiveness for having such a dirty house. Even after seeing this spider web, I *still* think that my house is in pretty good condition; I do the vacuuming when I notice the floors getting dusty; I wash the windows when I notice them getting cloudy; I wipe down the toilet when I notice it getting grimy ...

I guess you see my point; the magic word in that sentence is 'notice'. I who write this, and you who read this, probably have different ways of noticing things. Before I send out my prints to that collector, I carefully check them, and if I were to notice a problem with a print, I wouldn't send it, even though I might think that she wouldn't notice ...

So if you come and visit me sometime, let's be very polite to each other, and bow down deeply while we are in the entranceway!

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