



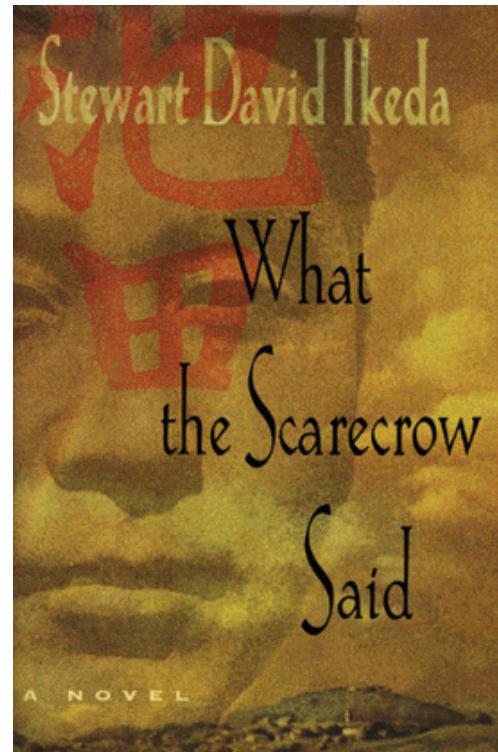
What the Scarecrow Said

by Stewart David Ikeda

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They were married by the Reverend Mitsutaro Tsuji in a bilingual ceremony in Pasadena's Japanese Union Church in 1919, when Fujita as methodically set to learning how to be a husband and lover. He found this more difficult than obtaining dual college degrees. Upon his first sexual experience, it developed that the memory of his parents' vigorous hullabaloo saturated the actual act. The sounds of orgasm would always recall the feeling of wedging himself in the crack beside his childhood bed. The polar opposite of an exhibitionist, the inordinately careful, tightlipped lover made no sound at all, and Mari asked if something was wrong. Was it wrong not to grunt? He didn't really know. And how did *she* know, he wondered. After reassuring her that he was not angry, and that it was pleasurable--it was--he tried, for her sake, to indicate his passion a little more audibly.

Learning to be a husband was harder. At some business function over the years, smoking with the men after dinner, it always surprised him how fellows found deriding their wives a relaxing, comradely pastime, like playing poker or talking of cars. Marriage, these men seemed to say, placed an undue burden on their lives. Miyake believed this, but he'd at least acted on his conviction and remained a bachelor. It perplexed Fujita that a man--usually Caucasian--should begrudge his wife her shopping habits, yet begrudge more her desire to take a job. It *astonished* him that a husband would discuss his marital and extramarital sexual triumphs and tribulations, or if faithful, expect hearty congratulations for not having an affair. Had he missed something? He *liked* his wife; he *needed* her to work at the nursery; he *loved* having sex with her, but he wouldn't discuss it with anyone, however, friendly. And certainly he watched the family spending, but he always *wished* he could buy her more. Was something wrong with him as a husband? He decided he didn't care. Burden me, he thought. Burden me.



In 1923 Mari gave birth to Toshio Ichiro, "Tony", and suddenly their lives were in full bloom. They learned how to be parents, too. They sent him to school; Mari worked and also joined service clubs and ran a women's group at the YWCA; Fujita applied his skill to growing a business and spent time with his family when he could. While there was always room to improve *himself*, he thought his life had become as good as it could get.

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