The Story of the Gadsby

By

Rudyard Kipling

Preface

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To THE ADDRESS OF

CAPTAIN J. MAFFLIN,

Duke of Derry's (Pink) Hussars.

DEAR MAFFLIN,--You will remember that I wrote this story as an Awful
Warning. None the less you have seen fit to disregard it and have
followed Gadsby's example--as I betted you would. I acknowledge that you
paid the money at once, but you have prejudiced the mind of Mrs. Mafflin
against myself, for though I am almost the only respectable friend
of your bachelor days, she has been darwaza band to me throughout the
season. Further, she caused you to invite me to dinner at the Club,
where you called me "a wild ass of the desert," and went home
at half-past ten, after discoursing for twenty minutes on the
responsibilities of housekeeping. You now drive a mail-phaeton and sit
under a Church of England clergyman. I am not angry, Jack. It is your
kismet, as it was Gaddy's, and his kismet who can avoid? Do not think
that I am moved by a spirit of revenge as I write, thus publicly, that
you and you alone are responsible for this book. In other and more
expansive days, when you could look at a magnum without flushing and
at a cheroot without turning white, you supplied me with most of the
material. Take it back again--would that I could have preserved your
fatherless speech in the telling--take it back, and by your slippered

hearth read it to the late Miss Deercourt. She will not be any the more

willing to receive my cards, but she will admire you immensely, and you,

I feel sure, will love me. You may even invite me to another very bad

dinner--at the Club, which, as you and your wife know, is a safe

neutral ground for the entertainment of wild asses. Then, my very dear

hypocrite, we shall be quits.

Yours always,

RUDYARD KIPLING.

P. S.--On second thoughts I should recommend you to keep the book away

from Mrs. Mafflin.