



The Facts Of Life

Somerset Maugham



Facts about the story

The Facts Of Life by Somerset Maugham was published in International Magazine in April 1939.

This story is included in the sequel The Quartet, and was further filmed in 1948, directed by Ralph Smart.



Plot in brief

18-year-old Nicholas Garnet prepares for a tennis tournament in Monte Carlo and listens to 3 pieces of advice from his worried father: never gamble; do not lend money to anyone; stay away from women. A young man plays in a casino and wins. He lends money to a young woman, and she invites him to her place. Since the hour is already late, he goes to sleep on the couch. While he sleeps, a female adventurer steals money from him and hides it in a flower pot. But the young man did not sleep: he silently gets up from the sofa to collect the money. The next day, he notices that he took not only his money, but all the girl's savings. He returns to London with a small fortune. The father is angry because he made an old fool of himself in front of his son and lets out his anger by telling this story to his friends at the club.



Quotes

“I’m in a damned awkward position. The boy looked up to me, he took whatever I said as gospel truth, and now, I saw it in his eyes, he just looks upon me as driveling old fool....He doesn’t see that it was just a fluke, he thinks the whole thing was due to his own cleverness”

“It’s idiotic to leave Monte without having tried you luck”

“It’s so dashed unfair. Fate has no right to play one tricks like that. After all, you must admit that my advice was good”

“You know, father, I can’t help thinking there was something wrong about the advice you gave me. You said, don’t gamble; well, I did, and I made a packet; you said, don’t lend money; well, I did, and I got it back; and you said, don’t have anything to do with women; well, I did, and made six thousand francs on the deal”

Vocabulary

Vexation – досада

Odious – отвратительный

Blush scarlet – залиться румянцем, покраснеть

Be apt to do smth – быть склонным сделать что-то

Scrape acquaintance with smb – набиваться в друзья/знакомые, навязываться

Ajar – приоткрытый

Indignant – возмущенный, негодующий

Infuriate – разозлить, раздражать, приводить в ярость

Fluke – случайность, счастливое стечение обстоятельств

Gospel truth – чистая правда (идиома: евангельская истина)

Dashed unfair – чертовски несправедливо



Discussion Questions

- **What is the meaning of the title of the story?**
- **Why did Nicky decide not to listen to his father?**
- **Did the father expect his son to do the opposite of his advice?**
- **Did the father do the right thing by telling the story of his inexperienced son, who survived the incident with the adventurer in Monte Carlo?**
- **What conclusions did Nicky draw, and did he do it at all?**
- **I had the feeling that Maugham was doing a spoof on the superficiality of the upper-class, do you agree or not, and why?**
- **What do you feel when you also leave somewhere far away from your parents, do you feel free and want to do everything that was forbidden to you before, or do you do everything right so that your parents are not disappointed in you?**
- **How would you react if your child disobeyed you?**

Message

The fate is such that luck can play a cruel joke and at the same time make a person happy, so you don't know what to expect.

Parents give us good advice because they have met with different circumstances in their lives, sometimes it is worth listening to what they say.

Even if you make a mistake, you need to be able to analyze and learn from mistakes and not repeat them.

