



F. Scott Fitzgerald

By: Student #1 &
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Background

Biography / Pathway to Fame

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald

Named after the writer of the national anthem

Born on September 24, 1896 in St. Paul, Minnesota (Mizener)

Attended a prep school during 1911 – 1913

Here, he met Father Sigourney Fay, who encouraged his ambitions for personal distinction and achievement (Brucoli).

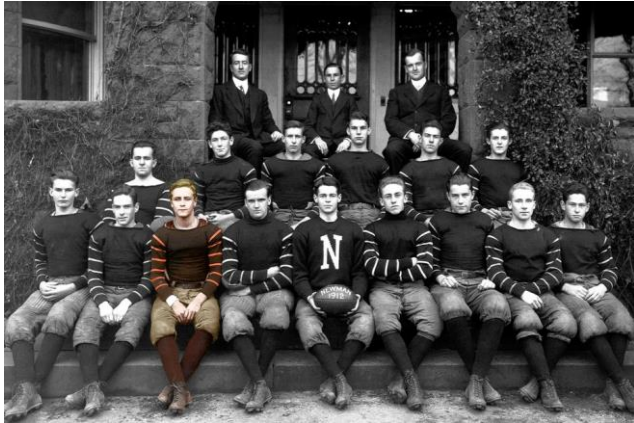
He had a strong imagination and was inspired by American life (Mizener)

His first writing appeared in his school's newspaper at 13

As he attended school, he was encouraged to follow his ambitions ("F. Scott Fitzgerald").

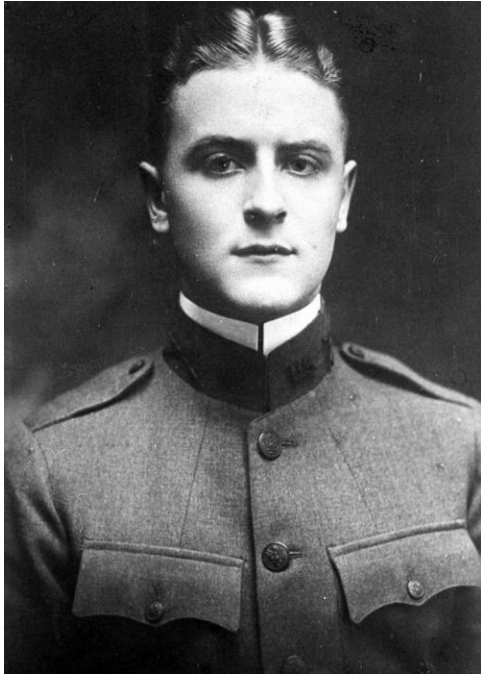


Biography/ Pathway to Fame



- Attended Princeton where neglected his studies and became involved with literary
- Wrote the scripts and lyrics for the Princeton Triangle Club musicals.
- A contributor to the *Princeton Tiger* humor magazine and the *Nassau Literary Magazine* (Bruccoli).

Biography/ Pathway to Fame



- On academic probation and unlikely to graduate, Fitzgerald joined the army in 1917.
- Commissioned a second lieutenant in the infantry.
- Convinced that he would die in the war, he rapidly wrote a novel called The Romantic Egotist.
- The letter of rejection from Charles Scribner's Sons praised the novel's originality and asked that it be resubmitted when revised (Bruccoli).

Biography / Pathway to Fame



- In June 1918 Fitzgerald was assigned to Camp Sheridan, near Montgomery, Alabama.
- There he fell in love with a celebrated belle, eighteen-year-old Zelda Sayre, the youngest daughter of an Alabama Supreme Court judge.
- Left military in 1919 and he went to New York City to seek his fortune in order to marry.
- Fitzgerald succeeded in the advertisement business, but Zelda Sayre broke their engagement.
- Fitzgerald quit his job in July 1919 and returned to St. Paul to rewrite his novel as *This Side of Paradise* ((Brucoli).
- He married Zelda on March 26, 1920, a week after publishing his first novel (Mizener)

Biography / Pathway to Fame

In 1921, their only child, Frances Scott Fitzgerald was born.

After writing The Great Gatsby, he became depressed and alcoholic while Zelda struggled with mental health .

She was later admitted into a mental health clinic.

Fitzgerald began another novel, but died on December 21, 1940 before he could finish it.

His books did not receive the success they do today.

He died believing himself to be a failure (“F. Scott Fitzgerald Biography”).



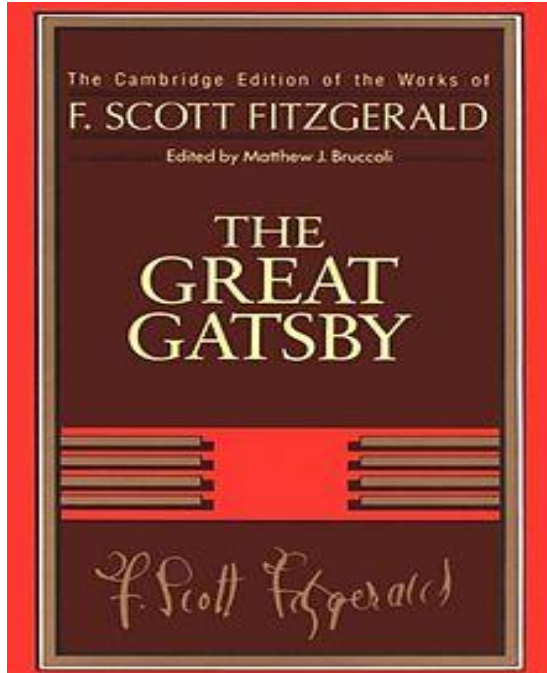
Accomplishments & Contributions

Major Works

- [This Side of Paradise \(1920\)](#)
 - Describes the “Lost Generation” and their new morals of the “Jazz Age”
 - Introduced Fitzgerald to fame
- [The Beautiful and the Damned \(1922\)](#)
 - A couple chooses to put off productive lives and wait for their inheritance (Mizener)



The Great Gatsby: Lasting Legacy



The Great Gatsby (1925)

Most famous work, although it gained popularity in 1960 following Fitzgerald's death

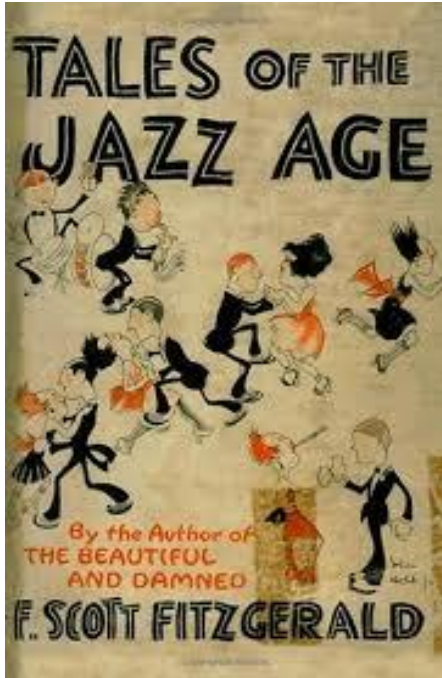
Fitzgerald simultaneously championed and cautioned against the spoils of the jazz age (Hendrickson).

Is usually required reading for American students ("F. Scott Fitzgerald Biography")

The Great Gatsby is the most profoundly American novel of its time.

At its conclusion, Fitzgerald connects Gatsby's dream, his "Platonic conception of himself," with the dream of the discoverers of America (Mizener).

Major Works



Tender is the Night (1934)

A psychiatrist marries one his patients as she slowly recovers but his life to falls apart (Mizener)

The Last Tycoon (unfinished 1941)

A Hollywood screenwriter becomes burnt out at the age of 35 and loses control of his life

Fitzgerald died halfway through writing the novel

Short Stories

Flappers and Philosophers (1920)

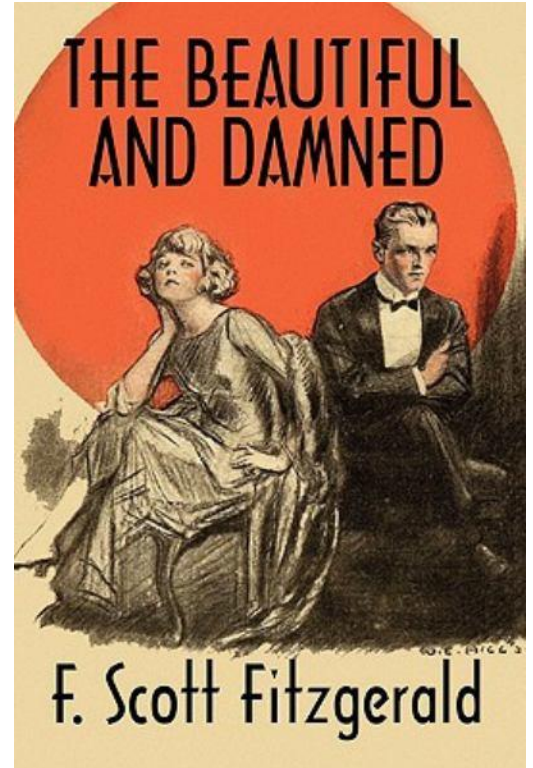
Tales of the Jazz Age (1922)

All the Sad Young Men (1926)

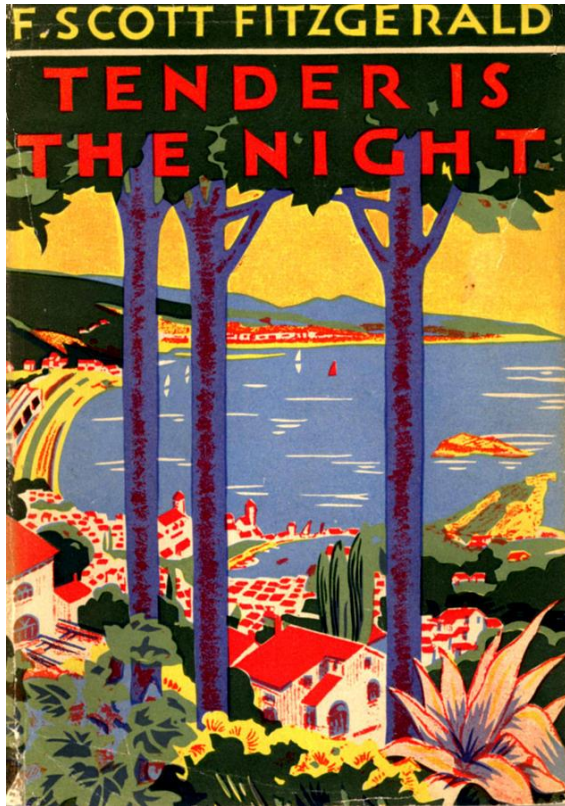
Taps at Reveille (1935)

Contributions to the Roaring Twenties

- Short works of fiction in *The Saturday Evening Post*
 - They primarily revolved around the image of the “flapper”
- *The Beautiful and the Damned*
 - Portrayed the lives of “socialites”
 - Excesses of the Roaring Twenties
 - The Fitzgerald family lived a very extravagant lifestyle filled with travel and other luxuries
 - This eventually led to Fitzgerald’s alcoholism and his wife’s mental illness (Willett).



Contributions to the Roaring Twenties



- *Tender is the Night*
 - Fitzgerald's fourth novel
 - Focused on his wife's struggle with mental illness
 - Demonstrated to the world the toll that an extravagant lifestyle took on people
 - There was no escape from constant travel and massive fame
 - Their family became to be known as drunks living a life of luxury as a result of the massive excesses held by the wealthy during the time period
 - Fitzgerald's work didn't earn the credibility that it holds today until many years after his death (Mizener).

Conclusion

The Great Gatsby Reflects 1920s America



- Fitzgerald illustrates the negative effects of 1920s American prosperity in *The Great Gatsby*.
- He portrays its negative effects – the greed, lies, and deceit the characters possess - in order to satirize the selfish way many were choosing to live.
- The characters represent distinct social groups who ultimately face their own struggles.
- This demonstrates how uncertain the culture of the 1920s really was (Hartsell).

The Great Gatsby Reflects 1920s America



- Fitzgerald wrote *The Great Gatsby* as a reflection of America's culture in the early 20th century by highlighting the culture's successes and failures.
- Fitzgerald uses the characters in the novel to personify the American Dream
 - He juxtaposes western and eastern America cultures.
 - Incorporates examples of law breaking under Prohibition
 - Depicts the corruption of the wealthy (Hartseil).

Effects on America as a Whole



- Fitzgerald's works portrayed the issues people faced during the 1920s and examined the time period
 - After WWI, Harding's administration targeted business as a means of rebuilding the nation's economy (Zietz).
 - Tax legislation
 - Benefitted the wealthy more than any other group
 - Administrative policy decisions in mining, textile production, and agriculture
 - These industries suffered greatly
 - People flocked to cities in order to make a living ("Warren G. Harding").

Effects on America as a Whole

- Fitzgerald also used characters and plot of *The Great Gatsby* to show what was going on in America during the 1920s.
- Many people moved to urban areas in search of a better life, but were unable to attain it
 - George and Myrtle Wilson in the Valley of Ashes
 - Live in poverty despite George's hard work as mechanic
 - Jay Gatsby
 - Moved to New York from the Midwest
 - Financially successful
 - He still failed to fulfill the "American Dream" because he couldn't win back Daisy (Wulick).



F. Scott Fitzgerald - His Literary Legacy



- F. Scott Fitzgerald's literary legacy has gained strength over the years.
- Many modern writers admire his greatness as a writer.
- Authors Joseph Heller, Tobias Wolff, Garrison Keillor and Jane Smalley praise
 - 1) his accessibility to readers
 - 2) his confidence in his own talents
 - 3) his insights into the dreams of everyday people (“F. Scott Fitzgerald - His Literary Legacy”).

Influence Upon Modern Artists

- Many famous authors also examined social commentary
 - 1984 by George Orwell (1949)
 - Reaction to increasingly dangerous government of the USSR during the Cold War
 - *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding (1954)
 - Cold-war era political commentary about democracy and how dictators rise to power
 - *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (1960)
 - Analysis of racial inequality in American society

