



The Best Early Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald

F. Scott Fitzgerald, Bryant Mangum (Editor), Roxana Robinson (Foreword by)

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Edited and with an Introduction by Bryant Mangum
Foreword by Roxana Robinson

Benediction • Head and Shoulders • Bernice Bobs Her Hair • The Ice Palace • The Offshore Pirate • May Day • The Jelly Bean • The Diamond as Big as the Ritz • Winter Dreams • Absolution

In the euphoric months before and after the publication of *This Side of Paradise*, F. Scott Fitzgerald, the flapper's historian and poet laureate of the Jazz Age, wrote the ten stories that appear in this unique collection. Exploring characters and themes that would appear in his later works, such as *The Beautiful and Damned* and *The Great Gatsby*, these early selections are among the very best of Fitzgerald's many short stories.

This Modern Library Paperback Classic includes notes, an appendix of nonfiction essays by Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald and their contemporaries, and vintage magazine illustrations.

The Best Early Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald Details

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From Reader Review The Best Early Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald for online ebook

Mandi Bean says

I love the way Fitzgerald both develops and explores human connections and relationships. I appreciate that his best work seems to be driven more by character development than by plot development. While he can sometimes be pretentious and while some language and societal aspects are antiquated, it is his philosophy on life and how he interprets the opposite sex that are most fascinating.

Most of his female characters within the short stories are decidedly selfish and unlikeable. However, his talent is so great that the reader is still compelled to care for these women and have an honest desire to follow their stories to the conclusion.

While nothing will ever compare to The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald's other writings are just as illuminating and entertaining.

James says

This book was my first experience reading anything non-Gatsby written by Fitzgerald, and the charm of it came from locating the touchstones of Gatsby before it became Gatsby. For example, in the penultimate story of the work, "Winter Dreams," Fitzgerald lifts whole quotations from his own text and recycles them into Gatsby when describing Daisy's house in Chapter 8. The turn of phrase here and there echoes across his work, and although I found the short stories evocative and not compelling, the window into Fitzgerald's world and point of view is enlightening. I think in advance of teaching Gatsby next year I will read This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and The Damned. Since the only person who taught me Gatsby was Mr. Anstett in 10-Honors in 1993, I think the Independent Study must beat on, and the more non-Gatsby I read, the more luminous and unique Gatsby becomes.

Jim says

If you've read The Great Gatsby, don't bother reading these stories, as you'll find the same theme in all of them. Fitzgerald was in his twenties when he wrote most of them and they're all concerned with the feelings of inadequacy young people feel when they start becoming seriously interested in the opposite sex - particularly when they feel they've had fewer advantages than others and don't quite measure up. Many of us go through that, but I wonder how many would want to read about it over and over and over.

Lisa James says

This collection of short stories provides an excellent look into Fitzgerald's talents prior to the publication of Gatsby, which he's best known for. They range from the slightly fantastical Diamond As Big As the Ritz, to the defiant Bernice Bobs Her Hair.

Looking forward to reading more of his work!

Msol says

En realidad me refiero a "Cuentos rebeldes" pero no lo encontré en Goodreads (quizás esté en inglés) por lo tanto anoto mi reseña en este que me parece el más similar.

Personajes a cual más superficial pero que llegan a caer bien. No había leído nada de Fitzgerald y no me disgustó para nada a pesar de que los relatos cortos no me atraen.

Terri says

I haven't actually read that much Fitzgerald (yet), but a thought that occurred to me--one that I haven't subjected to much analysis but that I'll mention anyway--is that Hemingway and Fitzgerald are sort of a Lennon and McCartney for their era. Paul McCartney can grate on me sometimes. He can be too cutesy--sort of like listening to The Boston Pops. McCartney seems to want to ingratiate. Lennon is darker and has more bite. This is all a bit simplistic of course, but overall McCartney paints prettier, but not necessarily better, pictures. In the end I like some McCartney, but prefer Lennon. I think I feel similarly about Hemingway and Fitzgerald (where Hemingway=Lennon and Fitzgerald=McCartney).

Now I'll probably read more from both authors and decide that's crap. Maybe.

Benediction: Unimpressed

Head and Shoulders: Better, but the ending almost feels like bathos to me. Too quaint or something. Too cute.

The Ice Palace: This is far better than the first two stories.

More reaction to come.

Bernice Bobs Her Hair: Catty. The image of Bernice laughing with two long braids in her hands is fun.

The Offshore Pirate: Again, the ending feels a little cute. It's Paul McCartney again!

May Day: This is the longest story in the collection, and as a result many of the characters feel a bit more fleshed out in this one, which I like. The very end feels a little too obvious for me, but there are some good bits here.

The Jelly-Bean: I like when Fitzgerald writes about place. There's some of that in this story. I also like that the ending isn't too heavy handed. That said, this story isn't that meaty.

The Diamond As Big As the Ritz: This one feels a bit like a sci-fi/fantasy tale.

Winter Dreams: This is another favorite. Does it say something about me (or about Fitzgerald) that my favorites in this collection are The Ice Palace and Winter Dreams?

Absolution: I was ready to dislike this story since the other tale of religion in the collection, Benediction, was nothing special. I ended up liking this one a lot more.

Overall, a mixed bag. There are some good stories and some good parts of stories, definitely, but at times it felt like reading for school, like I had to force myself to get through--a sensation I haven't had in a long, long time.

Wynne Kontos says

I recently read F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story (or novella) "May Day," published by Art of the Novella, which makes beautiful graphically designed books. I'm adding this book cover since it doesn't exist as a single title.

I read it alongside "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," which I am about 20 pgs. away from finishing.

"May Day" was unlike other Fitzgerald I'd read. First, the language was very simple to understand. It follows four characters who interact with each other over the period of single afternoon and evening. There's down on his luck Garret (I think), beautiful but finicky Edith, and soldiers Kay and Rose. In typical Fitzgerald style, all are generally unlikeable. Edith looks at herself in the mirror while she tells herself she's pretty and ready for love, the soldiers are slimy guys hell bent on scoring some booze, and the story opens on Garret begging money off of a friend because he's caught in a toxic relationship with a woman named Jewel.

Not much happens other than watching the characters maneuver through as the night deteriorates. But it's still beautiful. The novella I had included a single quote on the back: "All crowds need to howl." What a great line...

I've read a couple places that Scott took credit for a few short stories that Zelda wrote. It just so happened I read that while I was reading this and it made me wonder (since the language seemed so different) but who cares who wrote it? It's still great.

Sarah Wolfe says

I didn't know Fitzgerald wrote such fantastic short stories; I've only ever read The Great Gatsby. I can't believe we didn't study these in my Short Narrative courses in college! He writes such vivid characters and in such phenomenal visual detail. The plots can be thin or unlikely, but it doesn't even matter because the writing is so good.

Beth says

I really enjoyed these short stories. The first story in the collection, "Benediction," was my least favorite - the motivations of the characters were a little too opaque. I'm glad I continued reading, however, since there were a number of great stories in this book. I particularly enjoyed two stories for their humor: "Head and Shoulders" (light and amusing) and "May Day" (dark, but with a very funny - and true - sequence involving two drunk young men). "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" was also very funny and a wonderful character study. I didn't particularly enjoy "Winter Dreams," but it was interesting to read the story as a sort of proto-Gatsby tale. Also, "The Ice Palace" should be required reading for anyone who wants to move to the Upper Midwest - Fitzgerald knew his people very well!

Overall a very strong short story collection.

Michaux Dempster says

Deep into this book in the middle of a rainy summer night, and just found the best sentence yet: "...it is well

known among ladies over thirty-five that when the younger set dance in the summer-time it is with the very worst intentions in the world, and if they are not bombarded with stony eyes stray couples will dance weird barbaric interludes in the corners, and the more popular, more dangerous girls will sometimes be kissed in the parked limousines of unsuspecting dowagers."

Johnmichael says

I will quote James Cozzens here on F. Scott Fitzgerald gift for writing:

" a talent for saying not merely the right, the apt, the vivid, or moving thing, but the thing which, having all those qualities, so far transcends your reasonable expectation that you see that it couldn't have been done merely by intelligence, or training, or hard trying, and must simply have been born in a sort of triumphant flash outside the ordinary process of thought".

Christine Otis says

His stories take me back to a much different place and time when men courted woman with marriage being the ideal. I like the language, the motion of the characters, the spunk of the women; they have something to say and are willing to take risks.

His stories make me look up the time period to have a better understanding of life and the language flappers used.

And the hair, oh the hair, from when it was long, to chop, chop, now it is gone.

Such rebels these girls were...

Annabelle says

Done with most some of the stories here, as they were in Flappers and Philosophers. Methinks the Fitzgeralds (Yes--Zelda too, as indicated in an essay she contributes toward the end of this book) are overdoing this focus on the flapper as a curiosity unique to that particular era (to be replaced by the vapid Valley Girl of today?). Anyhow, as with Flappers and Philosophers, two stories stand out here: the hilarious Head and Shoulders, and Bernice Bobs Her Hair (I applaud the ending--brava, Bernice!). And dated as the plot may be by today's standards, Benediction stands out for its disturbing end--we WANT to know if Lois kept her tryst with her lover!

Tom says

A really interesting collection to compare to his novels. Some feel very familiar and thematically similar, like Winter Dreams - the best story in the group, with a lot in common with Gatsby. Others are of a completely different more fantastical tone, like The Diamond as Big as the Ritz and The Offshore Pirate.

They're all about men trying to woo beautiful young women with money and status, but in very different ways. He's a good writer.

jamie says

"The Diamond as Big as a Ritz" and the pirate story were the most memorable stories. the others ones were forgettable. After reading the diamond story, i didn't want to read his other stories because i wanted this one to go on and on. It reminded me of a Roald Dahl's story because of the wonderful imagery and imagination. It's interesting to note that this story only sold for \$400 while others which were not nearly as good sold for much more. the story's main theme is how much wealth corrupts - even to the point of murder.

I'm not very impressed by fitzgerald's characters. i know that it's harder to portray a three dimensional character in a short span of a story, but even his characters in his novels lack depth and vulnerability. His use of language is superb:

"The Montana sunset lay between two mountains like a gigantic bruise from which dark arteries spread themselves over a poisoned sky."

beautiful. just beautiful. reading Fitzgerald for me is like listening to a concert pianist play Chopin. i'd give anything to write like that.
