
F. Scott Fitzgerald

This Side of Paradise



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Description

This edition of *This Side of Paradise* presents at last an accurate text based on Fitzgerald's original manuscript. The story of Amory Blaine's moral education and sexual awakening as he journeys from prep school to Princeton to adulthood, it brilliantly captures the rhythms of postwar America and the spirit of a generation dedicated to the pursuit of excitement, sophistication, and success.

Originally published in 1920, *This Side of Paradise* made Fitzgerald famous for the stylish exuberance of his writing -- and infamous for the spelling, grammar, and chronology errors that peppered his text. Meticulously restored with explanatory notes on topical and historical references and a detailed account of the novel's creative and textual history, this volume will be welcomed by long-time fans, as well as those discovering Fitzgerald's magical prose for the very first time.

Insightful reviews

Seth: One of the things I loved about this book was the character development. We first encounter the protagonist Amory Blaine as a privileged young boy and we accompany him on his journey to prep school, university, and early career. Essentially, this is a coming-of-age novel featuring all of the customary rites of passage.

From the beginning, Fitzgerald describes Amory as a romantic egotist. Only in the last chapter does the egotist evolve into a personage, as he achieves self-understanding. One of the most fascinating elements of the maturation process is that Amory, whose first letter is a juvenile response to an invitation to a children's apple bobbing party, gradually becomes more sophisticated in his ability to communicate. Fitzgerald's ability to capture this linguistic evolution in all its subtlety is one of his singular achievements as an author.

Another fascination that the book has for me is its depiction of Princeton University (my alma mater) before, during, and after World War I. In the period of pre-war innocence, Amory was drawn to Princeton "with its atmosphere of bright colors and its alluring reputation as the pleasantest country club in America." Little did he suspect that his classmates would soon be marching in uniform in the gymnasium and shipped off to war in Europe.

The chapter describing his arrival on campus is called "spires and gargoyles." Amory is a dreamy, undisciplined student and social climber who wanders the campus in a daze and eventually pays the price for his lassitude by failing a class in solid geometry. He is still a dreamer upon graduation, but at least one who is better read than when he arrived.

As much as Princeton has changed since Fitzgerald's day, some of the campus traditions described in the book still exist. For example, ambitious students still try out for the Triangle Club (a musical group that tours the country over the holidays), the chairmanship of the Daily Princetonian (the student newspaper known as "the Prince"), and the eating clubs of their choice. Incredibly, reunions were already being held (the author recounts the quiet presence of

a class that graduated shortly after the Civil War). Already back then, previous university president Woodrow Wilson had failed to abolish the eating clubs in an effort to raise Princeton's academic standards. However, Wilson did not entirely fail. He left behind two legacies: an undergraduate senior thesis requirement and discussion classes known as "preceptorials." Nevertheless, as far as traditions and some perceptions are concerned, the cliché still fits: plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

At the end of the book, having hit rock bottom in work and romance, a chastened Amory returns to campus--itself now transformed by the war just ended--because he considers it to be his real home. More than that, it represents a mecca and source of inspiration. Fitzgerald captures Amory's mood:

"Long after midnight the towers and spires of Princeton were visible, with here and there a late-burning light--and suddenly out of the clear darkness the sound of bells. As an endless dream it went on; the spirit of the past brooding over a new generation, the chosen youth from the muddled, unchastened world, still fed romantically on the mistakes and half-forgotten dreams of dead statesmen and poets. Here was a new generation, shouting the old cries, learning the old creeds, through a reverie of long days and nights; destined finally to go out into that dirty gray turmoil to follow love and pride; a new generation dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success; grown up to find all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken..."

Katie: This book was hard. I am probably not intellectually mature enough for this, or, if I try not to be so self-deprecating, it seems like Fitzgerald wraps his ideas in circling words that never quite make their point. I'll concede probably the former and not the latter. In other words - you guys, I don't get it! But it had some pretty moments -

Here's a very relevant one:

" 'Fifty years after Waterloo Napoleon was as much a hero to English school children as Wellington. How do we know our grandchildren won't idolize Von Hindenburg the same way?' 'What brings it about?'

'Time, damn it, and the historian. If we could only learn to look on evil as evil, whether it's clothed in filth or monotony or magnificence' " (p153)

Here's a pretty one:

"There is no more dangerous gift to posterity than a few cleverly turned platitudes" (p162)

Here's a feel-good one:

"No, sir, the girl really worth having won't wait for anybody" (p216)

And here's another relevant one:

"For the first time in his life he rather longed for death to roll over his generation, obliterating their petty fevers and struggles and exultations" (p245)

Let's close with that, since I have naught else to say.

P.S. Fitzgerald wrote this novel when he was 23, and that's how old I am.

Sara: Ho già accennato - nella recensione di Grandi Speranze di Charles Dickens - alla mia predilezione per i romanzi di formazione: e questo è un romanzo di formazione. In più, tale formazione è quella di Amory (che sta per 'Amoral'?) Blaine, il primo di una lunga serie di alter ego dello stesso autore: dunque, siamo davanti al romanzo di formazione di Francis Scott Fitzgerald. La cosa, capirete, si fa dannatamente interessante. Gli amanti del gossip si troveranno svelati tutti i retroscena della gioventù sentimentale del nostro, dal primo fallimentare amore con la ricca Ginevra King - qui chiamata Isabel Non Ricordo Il Resto - fino all'immancabile Zelda - Rosalind - che accettò di sposare il suo amatissimo solo dopo che il romanzo ebbe successo e, pertanto, a conclusione dello stesso, veniamo lasciati col fiato sospeso esattamente come lo fu: Lui. Gli amanti del periodo storico saranno altresì appagati da un'analisi continua, multiforme e del tutto scoperta, di una società in grande mutamento, affiancata in questa edizione da un'altrettanto preziosa introduzione di Fernanda Pivano. Gli appassionati di storia della letteratura troveranno un prezioso compendio delle opinioni di Fitzgerald e della sua cerchia di "compagni d'intelletto" lungo il corso del suo mutamento. Infine, chi, osservando il disastro del mondo moderno, si sia mai ritrovato a domandarsi, come è accaduto a me: "Come diavolo siamo finiti in questo casino?" troverà in questo romanzo tutte le risposte. Da non sottovalutare.

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist": This was once just a little uneven and principally autobiographical, from what I understand. The power used to be there, ready to be developed, yet his organizational talents were not so hot. I enjoyed this passage: "Youth is like having a huge plate of candy. Sentimentalists imagine they need to be within the pure, easy kingdom they have been in ahead of they ate the candy. They don't. They simply wish the joys of consuming all of it over again. The matron does not are looking to repeat her girlhood--she desires to repeat her honeymoon. I do not are looking to repeat my innocence. I need the excitement of wasting it again." We will be able to all relate, and I have by no means heard it stated higher via the other writer.

Kirk: a truly unsuitable novel yet one a lot loved in its day---in fact, Paradise was once FSF's top recognized paintings in the course of his lifetime (not Gatsby). Inevitably, biographers pun on it: THE a long way aspect OF PARADISE, EXILES FROM PARADISE, CHEESEBURGER IN PARADISE---okay, perhaps no longer that final one, yet you get the point. What's best approximately TSOP (as we within the Fitz biz name it) is the recent kind of Bildungsroman it established. Not like Victorian coming-of-age novels (think Dickens), Amory Blaine's tale avoids effortless solution and creates one of many extra lifelike snap shots of adolescent indirection present in twentieth cen lit. I might argue that there'd be no Holden if now not for Amory---which, given the lambasting Catcher within the Rye has taken lately, would possibly not were a nasty thing. There's a lot attraction in here: my very own favourite personality is Eleanor Savage, the daredevil one of the girls character. Rosalind---often regarded as a clear portrait of Zelda---isn't sympathetic at the surface, but when you know her main issue as a teenage woman within the 1910s, you start to think a few empathy for her. There also are exceptional bursts of rhetoric, together with the last oratory on Amory's generation, which has grown as much as locate "all

wars fought" and "all gods dead." On the downside, the most personality himself should be cloying---something that wasn't unavoidably FSF's fault. He was once operating with a personality variety often called the "mooncalf," a teenage boy pining for love, and among speak of petting and donning different men's BVDs (you'll need to try out the "Supercilious" bankruptcy in your own!), he can appear a little bit a woos. Nevertheless, TSOP captured anything as the United States entered the Jazz Age, and the book, for all its faults, is gossamer and unhappy in all of the wonderful methods we predict from Mr. Fitzgerald.

Christine: should you loved the nice Gatsby this would be one to examine out. the most personality isn't really rather like Gatsby: he looks the type that begins out with the white upper-class set, and his quest for a type of "American Dream" is different from Gatsby's upward thrust to riches, yet I felt like Amory's destiny reflected the "downfall" like Gatsby's. The chapters at the romance of Amory and his gals somehow makes me visualize it was once similar to F. Scott (Scotty) Fitzgerald's relationship of Zelda, or when you are now not accustomed to that history, give some thought to Jay Gatsby and his (dopey) Daisy Buchanan.

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