

F. Scott Fitzgerald

1896-1940

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Early Failures-And a Smash Hit

- Fitzgerald was born in 1896 in St. Paul, Minn. His father had ties to an aristocratic Maryland family. His mother was a rich Irish immigrant.
- Scott was named for an ancestor-Francis Scott Key the composer of the "Star Spangled Banner"

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- Fitzgerald was a failure at school work and sports, but what he did excel at was--- daydreaming and writing stories and plays.
- He entered Princeton in 1913
- WWI begins in 1917 and Fitzgerald left Princeton for officer's training school
- He was never sent overseas and he wrote his first novel *The Romantic Egoist*-
- Twice turned down by a publishing company

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- While stationed in Alabama he falls deeply in love with Zelda Sayre a high-spirited gorgeous woman whose escapades had scandalized her hometown of Montgomery.
- Zelda had a zest for life like Fitzgerald

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- Out of the army, Fitzgerald's novel is published it was retitled *This Side of Paradise*
- His novel becomes a sensation!
- Fitzgerald writes *The Great Gatsby*. It is published in 1925

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- It won some critical praise, but *Gatsby* was not a financial success. It chronicled the rich in all their seductive luxury and heedlessness, accompanied by an implicit condemnation of their way of life.
- In 1930 Zelda suffered a mental breakdown and spent the rest of her life in and out of asylums.

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- *Gatsby* turned out to be Fitzgerald's epitaph as well. After its publication he struggled with mounting debts, failing health, drinking, and depression.
- Fitzgerald died of heart failure in 1940.

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