

SELECTED FITZGERALD WORKING NOTES

F. Scott Fitzgerald accumulated more material than he could incorporate in *The Love of the Last Tycoon*.

The Princeton University Library holds more than two-hundred pages of Fitzgerald's notes covering the gestation and composition of the novel: character lists, character sketches, outlines of action, plot ideas, dialogue, description, strippings from short stories, notes on Irving Thalberg and MGM, background on the movie industry and the Writers Guild, and marked typescripts of posthumously published Hollywood stories ("Last Kiss" and "Director's Special"). Most of the pages are in typescript and were either typed from Fitzgerald's manuscript notes or dictated by him. The pages are undated, and they have been reshuffled whenever a researcher has handled them. The specimen notes have been selected and ordered by the editor: planning memos are followed by work-in-progress or writing notes. The rationale for selection was to include notes that reveal Fitzgerald's thinking about the evolving novel.

Query—where is the man for these 3 weeks. Getting his divorce.

Query—why does Thalia after meeting a man of great power, and falling for him violently so that she sleeps with him then marry another man?

Answer—she actually knows Stahr only a week after she falls in love with him and during that time resolutely considers it as a romance *just as he does*. In fact the letter impells the phone and the seduction is a surprise.

Even so why does she not now stop the other thing? Ans.—Some pure circumstance intervenes—Stahr's moral doubts about her are a factor that let him neglect her at one important moment, his work keeps him from calling her. The moment it is too late he is desperate.

Plant his anonymity—his many plans. Your contributions can't be measured. They have to pay in statue. On his deathbed that haunts him. Maybe a statue.

I must not alienate the reader from her at the beginning, but must give the feeling that "well, I don't like this girl much, but I am going to stick around

a ^{brilliant} ~~big~~ producer, Staler, has everything, but ~~he~~ has lost his wife whom he loved. He meets her image, falls for her, finding in mid-chance that he is breaking up a good marriage.

He leaves her, ^{takes up with another girl and is} ~~and~~ plunged into a growing row in his business which gets worse and finally strikes him down in Washington. On his return his ambitious partner has done some dirty tricks. Staler calls him and in his ^{desperate} ~~frantic~~ throws over the man's daughter, returns to the girl and tries for a divorce.

His enemy strikes ~~by going to the~~ ^{by going to the} jealous husband. Staler takes counter-measures then seeing it makes him as low as what he is fighting he gives up and goes away — with no future that he sees. The plane falls.

Bradogue and Staker are naturally great friends but Bradogue wrecks him out - Schwartz tries to warn him. Staker meets the English wife of a cutter and is haunted by her. He meets her half secretly at the football - everywhere except at his office. There is absolutely no privacy and the seduction finally takes place at Malibu in his unfurnished house.

Cecilia knows all this and it breaks her heart. But nobody knows, including her, who the girl really is. She inadvertently tells her father who discovers who the girl is and immediately sees his chance - he goes to Staker, threatening him in a pleasant way and suggesting he marry Cecilia but Staker counters with what he knows about Bradogue (the affair of the girl's husband murdered - Staker has found it out from his wife's framed nurse when he died). Staker's problem is whether to quit or go on on the face of inevitable discovery. He and Cecilia are taking countless chances. Now the storm breaks and everyone he had counted on turns against him. He plays with the idea of marrying Cecilia as the best way of getting out and is seen everywhere with her. The kids see him as a conservative - Wall Street as a red. He has one last fling with Thalia, tells Cecilia about it - throws her over and goes to Washington where he falls sick with worry.

Meanwhile Bradogue gets the news to the cutter who has long suspected something. Robinson (who is Deery) feels it's the perfect anti-semitic scare gets backing and prepares the bomb.

Knowing nothing of this Staker gets word of the salary cuts and comes west sick. Thalia gets word to him. He goes to work and crushes the whole thing by doing just what Bradogue did - plan to have Robinson killed. The clock has gone around. He leaves Holly wood on an alibi - in the air he decides against it. The plane falls.

Thalia is ruined. She never went west a student.

Characters

- (1) Maurice Stahr
 (3) Major Billy Board
 (5) W. Bronson Smith
 Wyke White
 Mortimer Freshhacker
 David Stahr
 Director Jack Kruccard
 (Cooper - Holden - Wellman)
 Johnny Swanson
 (Harry Cary)
 Manny Schwartz
 Lee Spurgson (Walter Beaton)
 Double Talk, Mike Van Dyke
 Robinson (Covering)
 Rogers - writer.
 Alice Milkhaus, Camera Man
 Washington Doctors.
 Louis Rogovin, actor
 Trocadero Dookman
 The Showers Brothers
 The Campaignist
 The Pilot
 The Williams Boy
 (Wilkinson)
- (2) Thalia Smith
 (4) Cecilia Board
 Maude } Secretaries
 Polly }
 Lois-on-the-head-of-Save?
 Hedda or Phella
 Liz anywhere from another angle.
 Doty in Hollywood
- Chinese Actress
 Sarah } actresses
 Molly }
 Daisy }
- Georges Galtchiel
 Sch (chgd of Notre Dame)

Locations (another Page) ~~no~~ Drug Store, Races, Palomar

MUST REDUCE CHARACTERS

Monroe Stahr	Thalia Smith
Major Pat Brady	Cecelia Brady
W. Bronson Smith	Catherine Doolan, Stahr's
Wylie White	first secretary
Jaques La Borwits (change)	Rose Meloney
Rienmund	Edna
John Broaca - director	Hedda or Louella (guest)
Manny Schwartz	Liz anyhow from another
Boxley	angle (guest)
Johnny Swanson	Dotty in Hollywood (guest)
(Harry Carey)	Birdy Peters)
Pedro Garcia, Camera Man ^{Greek} (new name)	Maude) Brady's
Robinson (Lovering)	Rosemary Schmiel) secretaries
Washington Doctors	Chinese Actress (guest)
Prince Agge - guest (change name)	Sarah
Early fascist	Molly) Actresses (guests)
Mike Van Dyke - Double Talk (guest)	Daisy)
Marquands (writers) guests	<i>Bitch</i>
The Skouras Brothers (new name) guests	
The Communist (quiet kid) guest	
The Pilot (guest)	
The Williams Boy (guest)	
Publicity Man (guest)	
Mort Flieshacker, Company Lawyer (guest) <i>change name.</i>	
Mr. Marous (is Marous Loew dead?) guest	
Leanbaum (Rapf) (guest)	
<i>The Star</i>	
<i>"Red Ridingwood (director)</i>	

The Hollywood producers have not had
 the early advantages which are ^{considered} standard -
 and it is not very kindly nor
 Christian to mock at them. ~~They are~~ ^{But they}
~~low grade men are such~~ ^{deliberate} they are
 determinedly low ~~accept mockery~~
 and hatred as ~~their share and~~ ^{if}
~~no one~~ ^{grows to meanable comes} ~~does not~~ consider them as less than
 less ^{than} people & have never heard a writer or
 playwright or an actor or a novelist
 say a nice thing about a producer ^{except}
~~possibly the one~~ ^{they are} working for ^{at the moment} - from Dorothy
 Parkers exhibit who was "only a
 pony's bottom" - on up. They ^{is too much}
~~be pleasant~~ ^{to ask that they} have pleasant natures
 for it is a filthy job to debauch
 a nation - even though the nation wallows
 in the stew.

~~On~~ their side they have their
 money and their student molds and

They accept mockery and hatred
as their share. They do not mind —
They link it up with the oppressions
wailed upon their parents in
Odessa and Lody — they are
having their moment among the
flesh pots before returning to the
darker and bloodier ghettos that
lie ahead.

and see what she has to say because she has let drop a few things that make me think that given the right circumstances she might have been worthwhile.”

Nevertheless, the first episode must close with something definitely arresting or shocking about herself.

Action is character.

Consider transferring strong scenes to rear.

Cannot the characters express themselves more—I mean psychologically, not didactically.

When he came down out of the sky he saw the Glendale airport below him, bright, warm. The moon was straight ahead above the Pacific that was the lands of the Long Beach Naval Reserves; further down there was Huntington Park and on the right, the great mutual blur of Santa Monica. Stahr loves these clusters of lights as if they were something he had set up himself as an electrician. “And this I shall black-out, and this I will lay my hand on, reluctantly, cruelly, definitely, and squeeze and squeeze, and squeeze, and something dark, something I don’t know—something I may have left behind me in the dark. But these lights, this brightness, these clusters of human hope, of wild desire—I shall take these lights in my fingers. I shall make them bright, and whether they shine or not, it is these fingers that they shall succeed or fail.”

The plane bumped lower, lower; the engines stopped breathing—then round softly and down. It was always very exciting to get there.

Important that he knew the business side first. His submission of a scenario was probably a very quaking venture on his part—very timorous. He must have had no more aesthetic education after finishing secondary school than I did. He had to pick the whole thing up out of the air not even by reading though probably he did some—still in all he probably learned pictures from pictures and naturally got his sense of realities from acute observation and men. He was therefore as unilliterate a man as you can imagine in regard to formative influence.

I want to write scenes that are frightening and inimitable. I don’t want to be as intelligible to my contemporaries as Ernest who as Gertrude Stein

said, is bound for the Museums. I am sure I am far enough ahead to have some small immortality if I can keep well.

Cecelia does not tell the story though I write it as if she does whenever I can get the effect of looking out.

While he was on the make Stahr was as shrewd, ruthless, and opportunistic as the next man, but he arrived quickly after only a short breathless struggle, and once arrived he found it easier to be fair and generous and honorable than not to be. So he granted the premises on which he was founded — he was a better man than most of us, less bruised, less fearful, and less corrupt.

The morale of the studio, Stahr's morale, had survived the expansion, the arrival of sound and, up to this point, the crash and the depression. Other studios had lost identity, changed personnel, changed policies, wavered in subjection to Eastern stockholders, or meekly followed the procession. But Stahr's incalculable prestige had created an optimism only equalled by that of the River Rouge plant in its great days.

Some of the conversation in the long day more sexy in tone. Not too much and in good taste.

Change Garcia to a Greek.

Explain his attitude towards authors and how it was like the attitude of Bernard Shaw's attitude in the preface to "Plays pleasant and unpleasant". That is, he liked them, but to some extent he saw them as a necessary evil. How thereafter, he developed the process of having the author working behind another, practically his invention; his ideas about continuity, how the links of the chain should be very closely knit rather than merely linked.

Tracing Stahr biologically through a day in terms of blood pressure. Did he take coffee? Was it all will? Did he rest well?

Affable for Stahr. Speak soft but carry a big stick.

How popular he was with men from the beginning in a free and easy way. There was never anything priggish or self-superiority in his casual conversation that make men uneasy in the company of other men.

La Borwitz. Joe Mank—pictures smell of rotten bananas.

The idea of a certain great film which Stahr has long planned—a very rough subject or irreligious. An original. And have the censor interfere.

Be sure the solution of the director incident is not too neat. Keep the coat thing but somehow remove the smarty superman element with a little irony.

Firing director seems a small thing to do unless someone else is scared, or director is fierce and brutal.

Profit-sharing contract—Important. Stahr had that sort of contract and yet did the Good Earth.

He was under no illusion about success—the varying components of its make up. For instance he was right a little more often than most men but this was trebly reinforced by his habit of saying things in an utterly assured way, no less forceful for being soft. He knew that the intuitional proportion of superior rightness in his thoughts was simply incalculable importance—he knew also that it might cease at any time but this was something he did not like to think about.

Stahr tells someone a plot half in Yiddish.

What is missing Ridingwood scene is imagination etc. What an extraordinary thing that it should all have been there for Ridingwood and then not there.

Correction: Ridingwood Sceme insert—

Ridinghood followed Stahr back across the stage, again trying to keep up again falling behind. The assistant director spoke to him. "Just hold it," Red said frowning, and six hundred thousand of dollars were immobilized—interest at twenty dollars a minute.

More here.

In the car Stahr had control of his temper. He spoke regretfully. "I'm afraid it's no go, Red. She's putting it over on you. She's loafing. It's not just my opinion."

Correction: Ridingwood Scene—

You didn't want to work with Lewin did you King?

I couldn't stand it Monroe.

You didn't want these scenes rewritten.

If I can have my own man. I don't want some writer like X who doesn't know his ass about pictures sit here and kibitz.

Stahr's face flexed. He reached out suddenly and tore open King's blouse the great buttons bursting off to the floor. (one button?)

If you think there are a lot of attractive young men around Hollywood you are wrong. There are handsome males but even when their names are Brown or Jones or Robinson they seem like the type you can find on any cheap beach in Italy. Like the oranges and lemons they are plentiful and large but they have no taste. That's why I went with Wylie White. He was a southerner and at his worst he had a code to violate. It was fun to watch him doing it.

This will concern itself with Cecelia's love for Stahr and the episode will concern itself with her discovery of her father.

(a) This episode begins with Cecelia taking up the story directly and describing an affair she was having with a young man. Have her describe it just as women do when they feel that they will be more convincing by telling almost everything and leaving out the main thing rather than the second method which, of course, is wiser for women not to mention anything or any incident about which they are not prepared to reveal the whole truth. That is, she tells our listener, our reader, our recorder a lot about this affair which was engrossing her attention at this time, but always casually reassuring him that while there had been a lot of struggling, she had preserved her "virtue" Have her make a great emphasis on this enough so that perhaps the wisest of the readers may think "she does protest too

much". Nevertheless let her in a burst of conventional self-righteousness think that she has convinced the reader that her relations with this under-terminated man are essentially not most extreme. Now at this point, either by an accidental meeting on her way to see her father on the lot or perhaps because Stahr has sent for her thinking she could do something for Thalia—something he has planned for Thalia, perhaps something in the nature of a job or some sort of work that Thalia's interested in.

In the scene that takes place, she, Cecelia the narrator, should realize the depth of her love for this man at its fullest and I would like to do some very strong, quiet writing there to describe her feelings. In the writing, Cecelia should appear at her best and at her most profound. It is rather her feeling about Stahr that I want to describe than an objective picture of Stahr at this particular point. I want to find some new method of describing this. Some method in which everything that surrounds him assumes a magical touch, a magical quality without resorting to any of the old dodges of her touching the objects that he touches. I want her feelings to soar to the highest pitch of which she is capable and I want her in this episode to, for the benefit of the reader, to set away everything tawdry or superficial in her nature. This should be one of the strongest episodes in the book.

Now when the episode with Stahr is over, I want her to leave his office and have outside his office, a tremendous reaction from this exaltation and in this reaction I want her to tell the reader or the recorder the truth about the fact that she had given herself to this other man the night before—whom she has no intention of marrying, perhaps an almost experimental gesture.

I went to the screen actors ball. I shall not describe it. Suffice to say the lights shone over fair women and brave, not very brave men.

Shaken by the flare-up they go back, she still thinking she can withdraw. She could not bear to think. It was tonight. It is a murky rainy dusk, a dreary day (change former time to sunset) They left the hotel a little more than three hours ago but it seemed a long time. Get them there quickly. Odd effect of the place like a set. The mood should be two people—free—He has an overwhelming urge toward the girl who promises to give life back to him—though he has no idea yet of marriage—she is the heart of hope and freshness. *He seduces her because she is slipping away*—she lets herself be seduced because of overwhelming admiration (the phone call). Once settled it is sexual, breathless, immediate. Then gentle and tender for awhile.

This girl had a life—it was very seldom he met anyone whose life did not depend in some way on him or hope to depend on him.

I have had five tumultuous years that were about one part ecstasy to four parts misery and I want to settle down as a good wife and a real person. The man I am going to marry will never be an important man like you. We will not move in your sphere and probably it wouldn't please him to know I had gone out with such a "big shot" before he arrived. The man I am going to marry saved my reason such as it is, took me out of an impossible situation and sent me here to California.

Letter could be a "please-it-means-so-much-to-me-so-little-to-you." Also gratitude motif to man is left out.

Where will the warmth come from in this. Why does he think she's warm. Warmer than the voice in Farewell. My girls were all so warm and full of promise. The sea at night. What can I do to make it honest and different?

Sheilah and Frances hate the letter and both miss more emotion or something about seduction. The talk about Edna seems cold. They would like to develop negro and Stahr's reaction. They do not understand that the girl is not in the market—suspect her of leading him on. But he must not know the truth so perhaps the reader should.

Kathleen is physically attracted. Also playing with idea that she might marry him right away. But her debt makes her dismiss this.

The phone in the workman's shed actually rings and she catches a glimpse of his power which he hadn't intended. It fascinates her. He represents action. He hadn't intended to answer the phone.

This is Celia taking up the story. I should probably explain why I spent so much of the summer hanging around the studio. Well, for one thing I was too big to keep out now and I knew how to do it without bothering people. I had had a difference with Wylie White about who had the say about my

body so there was ———, whom I didn't intend to marry who was playing the man who *almost* got the girl in three pictures at once and had to be on the lot. And thirdly, most important I had nothing else to do. (Finish with description of Hollywood boys.)

The Bradogue character, to be a convincing villain must, like Joe Mank—have some attractive exterior facets. The reason that louses from “Pretty Boy” Floyd all the way down to Whitney, the stockbroker have been able to get away with their chicaneries is that they have had external facets which are very pleasing so Bradogue must be a very handsome man. This attractiveness whatever it is—looks or manners—he has managed to half sell to his daughter. She knows pragmatically and by observation that he is an unscrupulous man, yet the charm must have touched her so that when she comes from Stahr's office in this exalted mood, it is half in her mind to ask her father if he thinks that Stahr will ever marry again. In other words, if she has a chance to get Stahr. (Cecelia is either divorced or motherless or has a stepmother)

Cecelia comes to her father's office full of the idea that perhaps Stahr might marry again, perhaps by some wile, from use of her youth that she could “get him,” full of complete exaltation and wanting to tell her father about it simply because her father is the nearest person to her and because that charm—which I will have to create in Bradogue—has fooled her at times into thinking that he is a decent and sympathetic person and going through the outer offices (which must be very protective and elaborate—something like the entrance to the Stromberg-Hyman bungalow) she notices that one of the outside secretaries (create a minor caricature giving this girl some special characteristic)—look through list of characters—is in a state of agitation. However, it is nothing to what she finds when after pressing the secret catch to her father's office (I must interrupt by saying that the secretary has assured her that her father is not in conference and then contradicts herself and then re-contradicts herself) in which she finds her father, his coat, tie and vest are off and he is perspiring profusely and seems terrifically upset.

Cecelia is so absorbed in her story that on receiving the formal answer that “No, he is not busy, not busy at all”, she launches into her own affairs and only after some moments does she perceive that her father is really in some kind of stew, made sympathetic by her own passion for Stahr, she comes close to him and starts to put her arm on his shoulder and he shrinks away from her. He launches suddenly into a tirade against Stahr which shocks her—the tirade is based perhaps on the quarrel he had with Stahr at luncheon in the commissary about making the expensive picture. In any

case, it is purely a business attack upon what he considers Stahr's bogus idealism and of course has no effect on Cecelia. But the vehemence with which he talks is of the kind that if he had been a drinking man would have made her think he was drinking.

The break between Stahr and Thalia has been of Stahr's making. I may or may not show the scene in which this occurs, but Stahr's motive is roughly: "I am not going to marry this girl. My plans do not include marrying again. She hasn't the particular shine, glamor, poise, cultural background that would make her the fitting match for this high destiny toward which I seem to be going or this position in which I find myself; therefore, I am really indulging myself by cutting her off from Robinson who is obviously a fine fellow, who adores her and would be a good provider and a good husband."

At first, for some hours, *they share an overwhelming joy*. They eat together and make love, cling together at times, each cannot bear to let the other out of his sight. The reunion has been so strong in its emotional implications that it seems to the reader as well as to Stahr and Thalia that it is the prelude to an immediate marriage and almost a fade out and a happy ending. At some point though, during that same evening or perhaps the next morning which would be necessarily then a Sunday, something happens (invent some detail or small instant) which gives Stahr the idea: *After all, this is not what I intended. I didn't intend to marry this girl. It is against the logic of my life*. The premises that I set out for myself when I was young do not include this. The cold part of Stahr has crept in a little, not the cold emotion, but the cold part of his mind and almost at the instant in which he realizes and *shows it perhaps by some flicker of his expression*, Thalia who by now is as close to him as if she had lived with him for fifty years, knows it and makes up her mind what to do.

Final Form for the Brimmer Episode

More indication of Stahr's state. In trouble. Why he went over their heads—realizing the "little bit more" approach. Department of Justice. Sat full of promise.

Junior writers \$300.

Minor poets—\$500. a week.

Broken novelists—\$850.—\$1000.

One play dramatists—\$1500.

Sucks—\$2000. —Wits—\$2500.

In thirty-four and thirty-five the party line crept into everything except the Sears Roebuck Catalogue.

Stahr as a sort of Rimbeau. Precocity and irony which is born young.

Stahr: Those men won't want to make good pictures after I'm gone—

Stahr didn't die of overwork—he died of a certain number of forces allied against him.

Men who have been endowed with unusual powers for work or analysis or ingredients that go to make big personal successes, seem to forget as soon as they are rich that such abilities are not evenly distributed among the other men of their kind. So when the suggestion of a Union springs out of this act of Baird's Stahr seems to reverse his form, join the other side and almost to ally himself with Baird. Note also in the epilogue that I want to show that Stahr left certain harm behind him just as he left good behind him. That some of his reactionary creations such as the Screen Playwrights existed long after his death just as so much of his valuable creative work survived him.

Bradogue who is great on the horses and has long rebelled against what he thinks of as Stahr's idealism and extravagance in the picture business, seeing cuts made in other industries is taking advantage of a special situation. The situation is that Stahr who is in the East has fallen ill and has succumbed to a complete nervous and physical breakdown affecting his heart so that what he thought would be a four or five day trip devoted largely to discussion with certain blocks of stockholders has become a conference around a sickbed. Stahr who has previously been in general good health, though conscious of a growing fatigue, has the natural rebellion of an active man and of what the doctor says and asks for a specialist. The specialist confirms what the doctor said and gives Stahr what amounts to an ultimatum: That is a death sentence unless he stops here and now and rests himself in some quiet way. He suggests a trip around the world or a year off or anything that will divorce him from work.

The idea fills Stahr with a horror that I must write a big scene to bring off. Such a scene as has never been written. The scene that to Stahr is the

equivalent to that of an amorous man being told that he is about to be castrated. In other words, the words of the doctor fill Stahr with a horror that I must be able to convey to the laziest reader—the blow to Stahr and the utter unwillingness to admit that at this point, 35 years old, his body should refuse to serve him and carry on these plans which he has built up like a pyramid of fairy skyscrapers in his imagination.

He has survived the talkies, the depression, carried his company over terrific obstacles and done it all with a growing sense of kingliness—of some essential difference which he could not help feeling between himself and the ordinary run of man and now from the mere accident of one organ of his body refusing to pull its weight, he is incapacitated from continuing. Let him go through every stage of revolt.

Meanwhile, however, the stockholders are meeting around his bed and only by certain things that he lets slip to them does he divulge what is going on inside himself. However, enough has been divulged so that there have been telephone calls to Bradogue and Bradogue himself has gotten in touch with both doctors and in his winning way, posing as Stahr's friend, found out the truth that Stahr is definitely an unwell man. All this Cecelia finds out from her father on her return. Once again, we see Cecelia at her best, not as a very effectual character, but again as a person who under certain circumstances might have been quite a person. She tells the recorder or the reader how she got in touch with Rogers and was rather surprised to find that Rogers had been re-hired before Stahr left (she has heard, of course, about how Stahr found him in his office, in fact she has heard everything that is told in the book). Rogers knows that the whole lot is in a ferment and that various meetings are being called.

We are going to cut at this point to the meeting of camera men (cutters) at which Robinson will be present.

Episode C.

This meeting will be very briefly summarized—these men being only medium salaried and as a rule not very thoughtful men or very articulate men and are very easily bamboozled into taking this 50% cut that Bradogue is going to put over in Stahr's absence. At the end of the meeting, Robinson should be summoned from the meeting or called aside in almost a mysterious way suggesting to the reader that there is some significance in his being called away though this is a fact that will not be explained at this time. We will go from here to what I hope will be a big scene in which Bradogue asks the directors, writers, supervisors to accept a 50% cut which he says he is going to accept himself, using as his argument, to their surprise and rather to their confusion, the specious argument that by accepting this they will save those in the lower salary brackets—the secretaries from \$12.

a week up and the prop boys, etc., to whom the drastic cut would mean a terrible hardship. He gets over his idea for two reasons—one because the amorphous unions—though the name is not used—which are called into being among workers with common interest such as directors and writers are split by jealousies and factual disagreements, certain of them for example, have never even thought of themselves as workers and some are haunted by the old fashioned dream of communism and Bradogue is wise enough to use every stop on the organ including personal ties to increase these differences and to rule by dividing. In any case, he wins his point to the great disgust of those of the writers who are the more politically advanced or the shrewdest and who detect in this a very definite manifestation of a class war reaching Hollywood.

Episode D.

We will go from here, by the very quickest way, to an office where Cecelia is talking to a secretary who happens to be a personal friend who has helped her as a reader and who was called to the office of the chief of secretaries and now we learn that the whole thing has been a frame-up—that a great proportion of the secretaries are going to be laid-off without warning, that extensive cuts are to be made in their pay of 40% instead of 50% but still the very things that he has made his point by promising to avoid, are going to happen. Women with families to support are going to find that they have scarcely enough with which to buy bread and that they are without jobs and no chance to get a job in any other studio for to a certain extent, other studios have waited for this studio to start cutting and then take the same steps.

When Stahr is sick he keeps saying give it back to the directors again. Don't leave it with these men. Give it back. I took it away from etc. (Rearrange)

"No brilliant idea was ever born in a conference room," he assured the Dane. "But a lot of silly ideas have died there," said Stahr.

"We've had that problem before with stage plays," said Stahr, "In 'Tattersall' we took all the hints of what had gone before and even shot two thousand feet of it. Finally we cut it all—that's why it was such a short picture. Sherwood knew when he wanted to start his play and he was right. When you extend a play with a prelude you're asking for it—you're including a lot of situations the playwright has already rejected. That's why he's reduced them to a mention. Why should we take that mention like

one of those dried fish from Iceland and dip in water. You can make it swell but you can't bring it to life."

Stahr had a working of technics but because he had been head man for so long and so many apprentices had grown up during his sway more knowledge was attributed to him than he possessed. He accepted this as the easiest way and was an adept though cautious bluffer. In the dubbing room, which was for sound what the cutting room was for sight he worked by ear alone and was often lost amid the chorus of ever newer terms and slang (get this up). So on the stages. He watched the new processes of faking animated backgrounds. Moving pictures taken against the background of other moving pictures, with a secret child's approval. He could have understood easily enough often he preferred not to preserve a sensual acceptance when he saw the scene unfold in the rushes. There were smart young men about—Rienmund was one—who phrased their remarks to convey the impression that they understood everything about pictures. Not Stahr. When he interfered it was always from his own point of view not from theirs. Thus his function was different from Griffith in the early days who had been all things to every finished frame of film.

I'll pay for passion—so will the public. But it's rare, and it doesn't consist of being born on Grand Street, and sometimes it wears out.

Incident of Stahr calmly telling off an agent he was an overgrown errand boy. Implication, you can get away with it with writers who are soft but not with him. Something like quarrel of Knopf with Swanie.

There is a place for a hint somewhere of a big agent to complete the picture. Myron or Berg though—no mercy for Swanson.

In order to forgive Stahr for what he did that afternoon it should be remembered that he came out of the old Hollywood that was rough and tough and where the wildest bluffs hold. He had manufactured gloss and polish and contour of new Hollywood but occasionally he liked to tear it apart just to see if it was there.

Never wanted his name on pictures—"I don't want my name on the screen because credit is something that should be given to others. If you are in a position to give credit to yourself then you do not need it."

The situation on the big lot was that every producer, director, and scenarist there could adduce proof that he was a money maker. With the phenomenal rise of the industry, the initial distrust of it by business, the stage and literature changing with the weeding out of better men from the needs of speed, with the emphasis as in a mining camp on the lower virtues; then with the growing complication of technique and the exclusiveness it created and finally with the grand consolidation and trashification whose finest flower was block booking—it could be fairly said of all and by all of those who remained that they had made money—despite the fact that most directors had been reduced by the talkies to mere putters on, that not a third of the producers or one twentieth of the writers could have earned their living in the East. That like the Boers army in the 19th century operating against ill-armed savages, scarcely a general, a colonel or a major was not one of these men, no matter how low grade and incompetent a fellow who could not claim to have participated largely in success. This made difficulty in dealing with them.

These blows hit Stahr all at once. But at first he has them in control. It is not till they hit his great picture which should be planted back in 10., that he realizes what they mean. He should quarrel with the writers in such a way as to effect the great pictures.

Paradox about Stahr the artist standing for reaction and corruption and—, and the people who stood for all the good things were horrible.

Some time passes slower for Stahr because of a quick heart and pulse. These seem more crowded days (like after the split)

The day Stahr died everyone on the lot (including the Marx Brothers) were crying and trying to see who was watching them. “Trash”, I could hear him say. “Trash.”

A scene where a communist insults Stahr *intolerably*, belittles his whole life.

These are the picture people. Do not blame them too much. I am sure you would do much better in their place if you had all that money to spend and that strange story of what happened to—to produce. We all have one story. But what would you do after that and that and that day after day after dozens hundreds thousands and ten thousands of time.

Let the glamor show as from far away. Cling to reality, for any departure from a high pitch of reality at which the Jews live leads to farce in which the Christians live. Hollywood is a Jewish holiday, a gentiles tragedy. Stahr should be half Jewish like Hunt. Or is this a compromise. I think it is.

In a strange atmosphere of a mining town in Lotus land.

Fitzgerald was undecided about having the plane wreckage looted by the children in the last chapter. This action was described in the synopsis sent to Littauer (pp. xii–xiii), but it is not stipulated in the outline. Fitzgerald explicated the thematic function of the looting material in a working note:

It is important that I begin this chapter with a delicate transition because I am not going to describe the Fall of the Plane but simply give a last picture of Stahr as the plane takes off and describe very briefly in the airport the people who are on board. The plane, therefore, has left for New York and when the reader turns to Chapter X, I must be sure that he isn't confused by the sudden change in scene and situation. Here I can make the best transition by an opening paragraph in which I tell the reader that Cecelia's story ends here and that what is now told was a situation discovered by the writer himself and pieced together from what he learned in a small town in Oklahoma, from a municipal judge. That the incidents occurred one month after the plane fell and plunged Stahr and all its occupants into a white darkness. Tell how the snow hid the wreck and that inspite of searching parties that the plane was considered lost and that will resume the narrative—that a curtain first went up during an early thaw the following March. (I have to go over all the chapters and get the time element to shape up so that Stahr's second trip to New York, the one on which he is killed, takes place when the first snow has fallen on the Rockies.* I want

*The Rocky Mountains are not in Oklahoma. Fitzgerald's reference below to "that particular atmosphere of Oklahoma when the long winter breaks" suggests that he had another locale in mind. *Editor*.

this plane to be like that plane that was lost for fully two months before they found the plane and the survivors). Consider carefully whether if possible by some technical trick, it might not be advisable to conceal from the reader that the plane fell until the moment when the children find it. The problem is that the reader must not turn to Chapter X and be confused, but on the other hand, the dramatic effect, even if the reader felt lost for a few minutes, might be more effective if he did not find at the beginning of the chapter that the plane fell. In fact, almost certainly that is the way to handle it and I must find a method of handling it in that fashion. There must be an intervening paragraph to begin Chapter X which will reassure the reader that he is following the same story, but it can be evasive and confine itself to leading the reader astray thinking that the paragraph is merely to explain that Cecelia is not telling this next part of the story without telling the reader that the plane ran into a mountain top and disappeared from human knowledge for several months.

When I have given the reader some sense of the transition and prepared him for a change in scene and situation, break the narrative with a space or so and begin the following story. That a group of children are starting off on a hike. That there is an early spring thaw in this mountain state. Pick out of the group of children three who we will call Jim, Frances and Dan. That atmosphere is that particular atmosphere of Oklahoma when the long winter breaks. The atmosphere must be an all cold climate where the winter breaks very suddenly with almost a violence—the snow seems to part as if very unwillingly in great convulsive movements like the break-up of an ice flow. There's a bright sun. The three children get separated from the teacher or scoutmaster or whoever is in charge of the expedition and the girl, Frances, comes upon a part of the engine and fly-wheel of a broken airplane. She has no idea what it is. She is rather puzzled by it and at the moment is engaged rather in a flirtation with both Jim and Dan. However, she is an intelligent child of 13 or 14 and while she doesn't identify it as part of an airplane she knows it is an odd piece of machinery to be found in the mountains. First she thinks it is the remains of some particular mining machinery. She calls Dan and then Jim and they forget whatever small juvenile intrigue they were embarking on in their discovery of other debris from the fall of the plane. Their first general instinct is to call the other members of the party because Jim who is the smartest of the children (both the boys ages about 15) recognizes that it is a fallen plane—though he doesn't connect it with the plane that disappeared the previous November) when Frances comes upon a purse and an open traveling case which belonged to

the Lola Lane* actress. It contains the things that to her present undreamt of luxuries. In it there's a jewel box. It has been unharmed—it has fallen through the branches of a tree. There are flasks of perfume that would never appear in the town where she lives, perhaps a negligee or anything I can think of that an actress might be carrying which was absolutely the last word in film elegance. She is utterly fascinated.

Simultaneously Jim has found Stahr's briefcase. A briefcase is what he has always wanted and Stahr's briefcase is an excellent piece of leather and some other traveling appurtenances of Stahr's. Things that are notably possessions of wealthy men. I have no special ideas at present, but think what a very wealthy, well-equipped man might be liable to have with him on such an expedition and then Dan makes the suggestion of "Why do we have to tell about this? We can all come up here later and there is probably a lot more of this stuff here and there's probably money and everything." These people are dead—they will never need it again, then we can say about the plane or let other people find it. Nobody will know we have been up here."

Dan bears, in some form of speech, a faint resemblance to Bradogue.† This must be subtly done and not look too much like a parable or moral lesson, still the impression must be conveyed, but be careful to convey it once and rub it in. If the reader misses it, let it go—don't repeat. Show Frances as malleable and amoral in the situation, but show a definite doubt on Jim's part, even from the first, as to whether this is fair dealing even towards the dead. Close this episode with the children rejoining the party.

Several weeks later the children have now made several trips to the mountain and have rifled the place of everything that is of any value. Dan is especially proud of his find which includes some rather disreputable possessions of Ronciman.‡ Frances is worried and definitely afraid and tending to side with Jim who is now in an absolutely wretched mood about the whole affair. He knows that searching parties have been on a neighboring mountain—that the plane has been traced and that with the full flowering of spring the secret will come out and that each trip up, he feels that the danger is more and more. However, let that be Frances' feeling because Jim has, by this time, read the contents of Stahr's briefcase and late at night, taking it from the woodshed where he has concealed it has

*Lola Lane (1909–81) had leading roles in the movies during the Thirties. *Editor.*

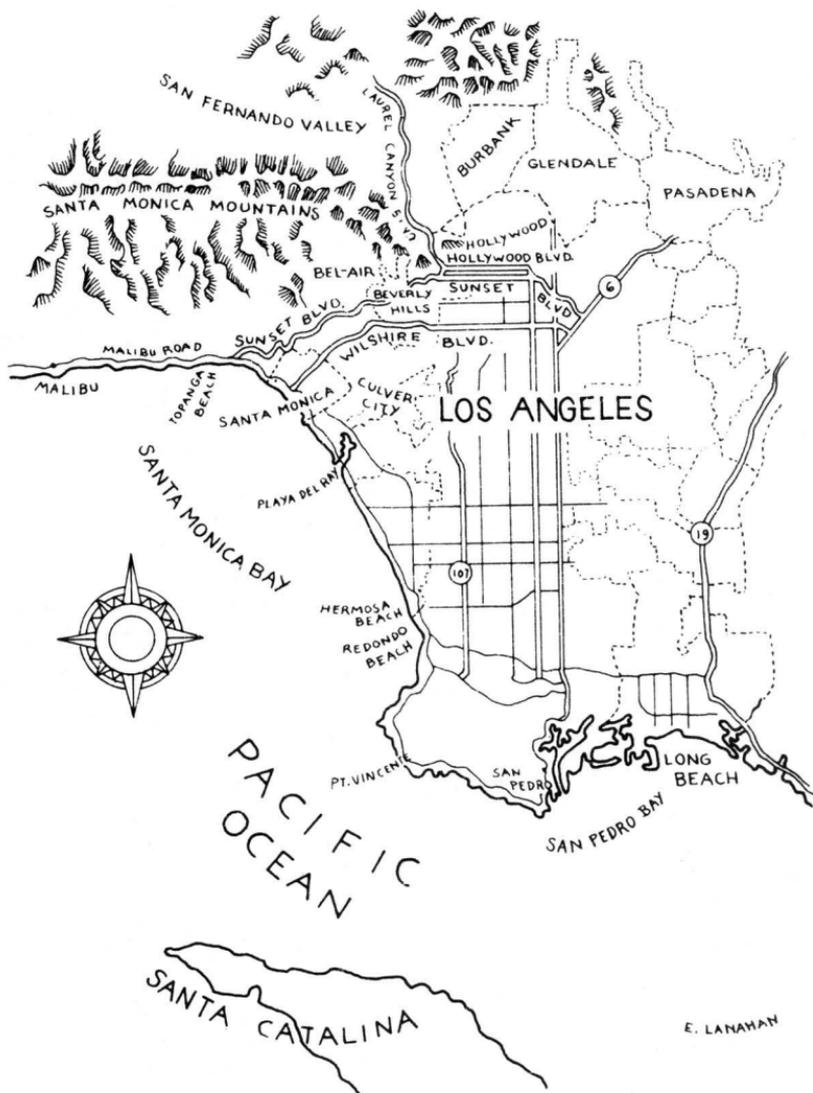
†The name *Bradogue* and references to Chapter X confirm that this was an early memo-note. *Editor.*

‡One of the passengers, a shady movie producer. *Editor.*

gotten an admiration for the man. Naturally, by the time of this episode all three children are aware of what plane it was and who was in it and whose possessions they have.

One day also they have found the bodies, though I do not want to go into this scene in any gruesome manner, of the six or seven victims still half concealed by the snow. In any case, something in one of Stahr's letters that Jim reads late at night decides him to go to Judge —— and tell the whole story which he does against the threats of Dan who is bigger than he is and could lick him physically. We leave the children there with the idea that they are in good hands, that they are not going to be punished, that having made full restoration and the fact that, after all they could plead in court that they did not know anything more about the situation than "finder's keeper's." There will be no punishment of any kind for any of the three children. Give the impression that Jim is all right—that Frances is faintly corrupted and may possibly go off in a year or so in search of adventure and may turn into anything from a gold digger to a prostitute and that Dan has been completely corrupted and will spend the rest of his life looking for a chance to get something for nothing.

I cannot be too careful not to rub this in or give it the substance or feeling of a moral tale. I should very pointedly that that Jim is all right and end perhaps with Frances and let the readers hope that Frances is going to be all right and then take that hope away by showing the last glimpse of Frances with that lingering conviction that luxury is over the next valley, therefore giving a bitter and acrid finish to the incident to take away any possible sentimental and moral stuff that may have crept into it. Certainly end the incident with Frances.



The geography of *The Love of the Last Tycoon* (map by Eleanor Lanahan).

EXPLANATORY NOTES

These notes are selected and revised from the comprehensive explanatory material in the Cambridge University Press edition of *The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western*.

3.8 Lolly Parsons

Louella Parsons (1880–1972), writer of an influential movie gossip column for the Hearst newspapers. (see also 129.34).

4.12, 24 turn in . . . berth

In 1936 the American Airlines Mercury Flight left Newark, New Jersey, at 6:10 P.M. for Los Angeles with stops at Memphis, Tennessee; Dallas, Texas; and Tucson, Arizona. The trip took seventeen hours and forty-one minutes. By August 1937 the schedule was changed to substitute a Nashville, Tennessee, stop for Memphis.

5.7–8 the very lowest time of the Depression

The synopsis that Fitzgerald prepared for Kenneth Littauer in 1939 stipulates: “The Story occurs during four or five months in the year 1935”; and “I have set it safely in a period of five years ago to obtain detachment . . .” Sheilah Graham informed editor Maxwell Perkins in 1941 that “the time of the book’s setting was most important to Scott . . . he wanted it to be as of five years ago. He places the period with the songs of 1934–5 . . .” Yet the chronological details in the draft episodes range from 1933 to 1938, possibly because Fitzgerald began planning the novel and assembling material in 1938 and wrote the episodes during late 1939 and 1940—so that the time of the novel changed during the course of composition.

The first time signal appears on p. 5 where “the very lowest time of the Depression” (which began after the October 1929 stock market crash) is placed “two years before” the present time of the novel—that is, any year from 1933 to 1935. On p. 8 Cecelia refers to the 1935 songs “Top Hat” and “Cheek to Cheek” as having been popular when she was a freshman;

since she is a junior at the time of the novel (although it is not clear whether she has completed her junior year or is a rising junior), the year would be 1937 or 1938. On p. 27 there is a reference to “the three years of Depression”—which places the action in 1932 or 1933. Other songs—“Lost” and “Gone”—were published in 1936. The reference to Wallis Warfield Simpson on p. 116 establishes the time as later; Edward VIII abdicated in 1936 and as the Duke of Windsor married Mrs. Simpson in June 1937. The latest datable detail in the novel is the reference to Superman on p. 124. This cartoon character was introduced in *Action Comics* in spring 1938, and the first *Superman* comic book appeared in 1939.

The year in which the events of the novel transpire cannot be established. Disregarding the references to Superman and to Mrs. Simpson, *The Love of the Last Tycoon* can be conveniently thought of as taking place during the summer of 1936. On p. 12 Cecelia states that she is reporting events that occurred “five years ago”; since Fitzgerald expected to publish his novel in 1941, the year 1936 fits the interior time scheme.

5.21-3 bonus army

In 1932 thousands of World War I veterans came to Washington, D.C., and demanded early payment of their veterans' bonuses; they were dispersed by troops.

11.20 lotus land

A place of luxury and voluptuous idleness; eating the lotus induced forgetfulness of home in the *Odyssey*.

12.17-19 Old Hickory . . . New Orleans . . . National Bank . . . Spoils System

Andrew Jackson (1767-1845), popularly known as Old Hickory, defeated the British at the Battle of New Orleans (1815); during his presidency (1828-36) the Bank of the United States was terminated, and his political supporters were rewarded with government jobs.

14.4 iron maidens

Coffin-shaped torture instruments that drove spikes through the victims.

16.4 the Bronx

The Bronx at the time of Stahr's boyhood, before World War I, was largely populated by lower-middle-class families—including many Jews who had left Manhattan's Lower East Side. A passage on p. 115 indicates that Stahr's early boyhood was spent in Erie, Pennsylvania.

20.29—30 all the kingdoms

Echo of Luke 4:15: "And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time" (King James version).

21.18 John Swanson

Based on cowboy actor Harry Carey (1878–1947), a star of the silent movies who became a character actor in sound movies.

26.6 god Siva

The third person in the Hindu triad, with Brahma and Vishnu, Siva represents the principle of destruction and reconstruction; he is also the god of the arts. Fitzgerald's drafts refer to Siva as a goddess.

27.24 Emperor . . . Old Guard

The most honored regiment of Napoleon's Imperial Guard, formed between 1800 and 1806 and made up of veterans; Fitzgerald may be referring to Horace Vernet's painting, "Napoleon's Farewell at Fontainebleau."

28.11 drummer's sense of story

Drummers—traveling salesmen—were identified with vulgar anecdotes of seduction.

29.5 gone to pot

Undergone a process of deterioration; the use of *pot* as slang for marijuana was not yet current.

29.35–6 *Tout passe.—L'art robuste / Seul a l'éternité.*

From Théophile Gautier's poem "L'Art" (1858): "Everything perishes. Only strong art endures."

35.17 Claris

Presumably the name of a brothel or a madame.

41.2 Hays office

Will H. Hays (1879–1954), president 1922–45 of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, the industry's self-censorship office; he compiled its 1930 Production Code.

43.3 Joe Breen

Joseph Breen (1890–1965) was associated with Will Hays at the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association of America.

44.29 Prince Agge

Prince Aage of Denmark (d. 1940) was the cousin of King Christian and the nephew of Queen Alexandra of England; he renounced his rights to the throne of Denmark in 1914. Prince Aage wrote *A Royal Adventurer in the Foreign Legion* (1927) and *Fire by Day and Flame by Night* (1937). During 1934–38 Count Sigvard Bernadotte of Sweden was an assistant director at M-G-M. As Fitzgerald's reference to the House of Bernadotte (the royal house of Sweden) suggests, he probably conflated Prince Aage with Count Bernadotte of Sweden.

48.31 Nicolay's biography

John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History* (New York: Century, 1890), an admiring biography by men who knew Lincoln.

51.11 Miss Foodstuffs

A phrase used by Stahr to indicate the blandness of the actress's filmed performance.

53.17 *coureur du bois*

A French fur trader in Canada.

61.10–11 Diogenes . . . Asclepius . . . Menander

Fitzgerald's latest draft reads "Diocenes . . . Esculpias . . . Minanorus." Diogenes (fourth century B.C.) was a Greek Cynic philosopher; Asclepius was the Greek god of medicine; Minanorus has not been identified, but Fitzgerald was probably referring to the Greek comic dramatist Menander (third century B.C.). Wilson altered Fitzgerald's readings to "Euripides . . . Aristophanes . . . Menander."

61.20–1 Eleusinian mysteries

Forms of worship celebrated in ancient Greece at Eleusis in Attica in honor of Demeter, Persephone, and Dionysius. Zavras's ironic hyperbole identifies the studio administration with gods.

66.13 reefer

British term for a close-fitting jacket of heavy cloth.

68.27 last man tapped for Bones

Skull and Bones is a senior society or "secret society" at Yale University that elects fifteen undergraduates each year at a ritual known as Tap Day. Election to Bones was regarded as the highest social distinction at Yale, and it was a particular honor to be the fifteenth man tapped.

74.10–11 Grand Street . . . Loudoun County

Street in the Lower East Side of Manhattan and at that time a poor Jewish neighborhood; county in rural northern Virginia, near the Maryland line. These locations indicate the variety of backgrounds of the movie people.

74.31 dancing with the Prince of Wales

When Edward VIII (1894–1972) was the bachelor Prince of Wales (1911–36), dancing with him was a coveted experience and inspired the 1928 song “I’ve Danced With a Man, Who Danced With a Girl, Who Danced With the Prince of Wales”—music by Herbert Farjeon, lyrics by Harold Scott.

81.24 cheaters

Slang for sunglasses.

91.13 Venus on the half shell

The painting “The Birth of Venus” by Italian artist Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510) depicts Venus on a large scallop shell, and it is jocularly referred to as “Venus on the half shell” in reference to menu terminology.

91.31 Spengler

Oswald Spengler (1880–1936), author of *The Decline of the West* (translated into English 1926–28), an erudite work of history and philosophy that influenced Fitzgerald.

92.4 shuls

Yiddish word that means schools and synagogues.

100.27–8 In disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes

From Shakespeare’s Sonnet 29.

103.4 skivies and biddies

Skivies (skivvies) are scullery maids; biddies are chambermaids.

107.4 Lord Charnwood

Godfrey Rathbone Benson, Lord Charnwood (1864–1945), author of *Abraham Lincoln* (London: Constable, 1916).

107.8 “A productions”

High-budget movies, as differentiated from cheaper B productions.

113.17 Black and Tans

Special constables recruited in England in 1920 to suppress the Irish rebellion; their uniforms were khaki trousers and black tunics, or vice versa. They became notorious for their reprisals against the Irish Republican Army.

114.14 syndicalist

Member of a radical movement that seeks to gain worker control over production.

117.35 Jews were dead miserably

Victims of the violent anti-Semitism that accompanied Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and escalated thereafter, being legitimized by the anti-Jewish “Nuremberg Laws” adopted in September 1935. Fitzgerald is not referring to the “Final Solution”; he had been dead seven months when in July 1941 the extermination of the Jews became official Nazi policy.

118.15 Harry Bridges

Australian-born American labor leader (1901–90), head of the West-coast International Longshoremen's Association and later of the International

Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union; he denied Communist Party membership but supported its positions.

118.22 "I AM" cult

An occult faith founded in California in 1929; the term "I AM" designates the Primal Light or the energy of God, the basis for all manifested form.

119.1 Writers Guild

The first Screen Writers Guild was established in 1920; it was reorganized in 1933 as an organization that would give writers more control over story material. The leftist contingent in the Screen Writers Guild pushed for amalgamation with other writers' unions—the Authors' League, the Dramatists' Guild, the Newspaper Guild, and the Radio Writers Guild. Irving Thalberg opposed the Screen Writers Guild.

123.5 Company Tec

Private detective or policeman on the company payroll.

123.27 Frankenstein

Richard Frankenstein (1907–) and Walter Reuther, United Auto Workers union officials, were beaten by Ford strikebreakers in the May 1937 Detroit "Battle of the Overpass." Although described in the novel as "this big Jew," Frankenstein is an Episcopalian.

125.19 Legion of Decency

Roman Catholic board organized in 1934 to combat immorality in movies; the organization prepared lists of movies unfit for Catholics.

126.22 Fitts

Buron Fitts, District Attorney for Los Angeles County in the Thirties, was allegedly in the pay of the studios.

FURTHER READING

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A BRIEF LIFE OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

The compensation of a very early success is a conviction that life is a romantic matter.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald

The dominant influences on F. Scott Fitzgerald were aspiration, literature, Princeton, Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald, and alcohol.

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on September 24, 1896, the namesake and second cousin three times removed of the author of the National Anthem. Fitzgerald's given names indicate his parents' pride in his father's ancestry. His father, Edward, was from Maryland, with an allegiance to the old South and its values. Fitzgerald's mother, Mary (Mollie) McQuillan, was the daughter of an Irish immigrant who became wealthy as a wholesale grocer in St. Paul. Both were Catholics.

Edward Fitzgerald failed as a manufacturer of wicker furniture in St. Paul, and he became a salesman for Procter & Gamble in upstate New York. After he was dismissed in 1908, when his son was twelve, the family returned to St. Paul and lived comfortably on Mollie Fitzgerald's inheritance. Fitzgerald attended the St. Paul Academy; his first writing to appear in print was a detective story in the school newspaper when he was thirteen.

During 1911-13 he attended the Newman School, a Catholic prep school in New Jersey, where he met Father Sigourney Fay, who encouraged his ambitions for personal distinction and achievement. As a member of the Princeton Class of 1917, Fitzgerald neglected his studies for his literary apprenticeship. He wrote the scripts and lyrics for the Princeton Triangle Club musicals and was a contributor to the *Princeton Tiger* humor magazine and the *Nassau Literary Magazine*. His college friends included Edmund Wilson and John Peale Bishop. On academic probation and unlikely to graduate, Fitzgerald joined the army in 1917 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the infantry. Convinced that he would die in the war, he rapidly wrote a novel, "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.

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. The romance intensified Fitzgerald's hopes for the success of his novel, but after revision it was rejected by Scribners a second time. The

war ended just before he was to be sent overseas; after his discharge in 1919 he went to New York City to seek his fortune in order to marry. Unwilling to wait while Fitzgerald succeeded in the advertisement business and unwilling to live on his small salary, Zelda broke their engagement.

In July 1919 Fitzgerald quit his job and returned to St. Paul to rewrite his novel as *This Side of Paradise*; it was accepted by editor Maxwell Perkins of Scribners in September. Set mainly at Princeton and described by its author as "a quest novel," *This Side of Paradise* traces the career aspirations and love disappointments of Amory Blaine.

In the fall-winter of 1919 Fitzgerald commenced his career as a writer of stories for the mass-circulation magazines. Working through agent Harold Ober, Fitzgerald interrupted work on his novels to write money-making popular fiction for the rest of his life. *The Saturday Evening Post* became Fitzgerald's best story market, and he was regarded as a "Post writer." His early commercial stories about young love introduced a fresh character: the independent, determined young American woman who appeared in "The Offshore Pirate" and "Bernice Bobs Her Hair." Fitzgerald's more ambitious stories, such as "May Day" and "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," were published in *The Smart Set*, which had a small circulation.

The publication of *This Side of Paradise* on March 26, 1920, made the twenty-four-year-old Fitzgerald famous almost overnight, and a week later he married Zelda in New York. They embarked on an extravagant life as young celebrities. Fitzgerald endeavored to earn a solid literary reputation, but his playboy image impeded the proper assessment of his work.

After a riotous summer in Westport, Connecticut, the Fitzgeralds took an apartment in New York City; there he wrote his second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*, a naturalistic chronicle of the dissipation of Anthony and Gloria Patch. When Zelda became pregnant they took their first trip to Europe in 1921 and then settled in St. Paul for the birth of their only child; Frances Scott (Scottie) Fitzgerald was born in October 1921.

Fitzgerald expected to become affluent from his play, *The Vegetable*; in the fall of 1922 they moved to Great Neck, Long Island, in order to be near Broadway. The political satire—subtitled "From President to Postman"—failed at its tryout in November 1923, and Fitzgerald wrote his way out of debt with short stories. The distractions of Great Neck and New York prevented Fitzgerald from making progress on his third novel. During this time his drinking increased. Fitzgerald was an alcoholic, but he wrote sober. Zelda regularly got "tight," but she was not an alcoholic. There were frequent domestic rows, usually triggered by drinking bouts.

Literary opinion-makers were reluctant to accord Fitzgerald full marks as a serious craftsman. His reputation as a drinker inspired the myth that he was an irresponsible writer; yet he was a painstaking reviser whose fiction went through layers of drafts. Fitzgerald's clear, lyrical, colorful, witty style evoked the emotions associated with time and place. When

critics objected to Fitzgerald's concern with love and success, his response was: "But, my God! it was my material, and it was all I had to deal with." The chief theme of Fitzgerald's work is aspiration—the idealism he regarded as defining American character. Another major theme was mutability or loss. As a social historian Fitzgerald became identified with "The Jazz Age": "It was an age of miracles, it was an age of art, it was an age of excess, and it was an age of satire."

The Fitzgeralds went to France in the spring of 1924 seeking tranquility for his work. He wrote *The Great Gatsby* during the summer and fall in Valescure near St. Raphael, but the marriage was damaged by Zelda's involvement with a French naval aviator. The extent of the affair—if it was in fact consummated—is not known. On the Riviera the Fitzgeralds formed a close friendship with Gerald and Sara Murphy.

The Fitzgeralds spent the winter of 1924–25 in Rome, where he revised *The Great Gatsby*; they were en route to Paris when the novel was published in April. *The Great Gatsby* marked a striking advance in Fitzgerald's technique, utilizing a complex structure and a controlled narrative point of view. Fitzgerald's achievement received critical praise, but sales of *Gatsby* were disappointing, though the stage and movie rights brought additional income.

In Paris Fitzgerald met Ernest Hemingway—then unknown outside the expatriate literary circle—with whom he formed a friendship based largely on his admiration for Hemingway's personality and genius. The Fitzgeralds remained in France until the end of 1926, alternating between Paris and the Riviera.

Fitzgerald made little progress on his fourth novel, a study of American expatriates in France provisionally titled "The Boy Who Killed His Mother," "Our Type," and "The World's Fair." During these years Zelda's unconventional behavior became increasingly eccentric.

The Fitzgeralds returned to America to escape the distractions of France. After a short, unsuccessful stint of screen writing in Hollywood, Fitzgerald rented "Ellerslie," a mansion near Wilmington, Delaware, in the spring of 1927. The family remained at "Ellerslie" for two years interrupted by a visit to Paris in the summer of 1928, but Fitzgerald was still unable to make significant progress on his novel. At this time Zelda commenced ballet training, intending to become a professional dancer. The Fitzgeralds returned to France in the spring of 1929, where Zelda's intense ballet work damaged her health and estranged them. In April 1930 she suffered her first breakdown. Zelda was treated at Prangins clinic in Switzerland until September 1931, while Fitzgerald lived in Swiss hotels. Work on the novel was again suspended as he wrote short stories to pay for psychiatric treatment.

Fitzgerald's peak story fee of \$4,000 from *The Saturday Evening Post* may have had in 1929 the purchasing power of \$40,000 in 1994 dollars.

Nonetheless, the general view of his affluence is distorted. Fitzgerald was not among the highest-paid writers of his time; his novels earned comparatively little, and most of his income came from 160 magazine stories. During the 1920s his income from all sources averaged under \$25,000 a year—good money at a time when a schoolteacher's average annual salary was \$1,299, but not a fortune. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald did spend money faster than he earned it; the author who wrote so eloquently about the effects of money on character was unable to manage his own finances.

The Fitzgeralds returned to America in the fall of 1931 and rented a house in Montgomery. Fitzgerald made a second unsuccessful trip to Hollywood in 1931. Zelda suffered a relapse in February 1932 and entered Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. She spent the rest of her life as a resident or outpatient of sanitariums.

In 1932, while a patient at Johns Hopkins, Zelda rapidly wrote *Save Me the Waltz*. Her autobiographical novel generated considerable bitterness between the Fitzgeralds, for he regarded it as pre-empting the material that he was using in his novel-in-progress. Fitzgerald rented "La Paix," a house outside Baltimore, where he completed his fourth novel, *Tender Is the Night*. Published in 1934, his most ambitious novel was a commercial failure, and its merits were matters of critical dispute. Set in France during the 1920s, *Tender Is the Night* examines the deterioration of Dick Diver, a brilliant American psychiatrist, during the course of his marriage to a wealthy mental patient.

The 1935–37 period is known as "the crack-up" from the title of an essay Fitzgerald wrote in 1936. Ill, drunk, in debt, and unable to write commercial stories, he lived in hotels in the region near Asheville, North Carolina, where in 1936 Zelda entered Highland Hospital. After Baltimore Fitzgerald did not maintain a home for Scottie. When she was fourteen she went to boarding school, and the Obers became her surrogate family. Nonetheless, Fitzgerald functioned as a concerned father by mail, attempting to supervise Scottie's education and to shape her social values.

Fitzgerald went to Hollywood alone in the summer of 1937 with a six-month Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer contract at \$1,000 a week. He received his only screen credit for adapting *Three Comrades* (1938), and his contract was renewed for a year at \$1,250 a week. This \$91,000 from M-G-M was a great deal of money during the late Depression years when a new Chevrolet coupé cost \$619, but, although Fitzgerald paid off his debts, he was unable to save. His trips East to visit Zelda were disastrous. In California Fitzgerald fell in love with movie columnist Sheilah Graham. Their relationship endured despite his benders. After M-G-M dropped his option at the end of 1938, Fitzgerald worked as a freelance script writer and wrote short-short stories for *Esquire*. He began his Hollywood novel, *The Love of the Last Tycoon*, in 1939 and had written more than half of a working draft when he died of a heart attack in Graham's apartment on December

21, 1940. Zelda Fitzgerald perished in a fire in Highland Hospital in 1948.

F. Scott Fitzgerald died believing himself a failure. The obituaries were condescending, and he seemed destined for literary obscurity. The first phase of the Fitzgerald resurrection—"revival" does not properly describe the process—occurred between 1945 and 1950. By 1960 he had achieved a secure place among America's enduring writers: *The Great Gatsby*, a work that seriously examines the theme of aspiration in an American setting, defines the classic American novel.

M.J.B.

