



# The Far Side Of Paradise: A Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald

*Arthur Mizener*

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When the original edition of the first full-length biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald appeared, a decade after the writer's death, in 1951, it was widely acclaimed as a sensitive, scholarly appraisal of the writer's life and work.

In later years a number of revealing studies of the novelist appeared, including Morey Callaghan's *That Summer in Paris*, Sheila Graham's *Beloved Infidel*, Ernest Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast*, and Andrew Turnbull's biography and selection of Fitzgerald's letters.

Drawing on these, as well as the many letters from friends and the prose and letters of the writer himself, Arthur Mizener thoroughly revised his biography, updating the final two chapters. The result is a definitive portrait of Fitzgerald — the man, his work, and his exciting, globe-trotting life.

Mizener chronicles his time spent at Princeton learning the ways of the privileged classes, which he took as inspiration for his first stories, including his first novel *This Side of Paradise*, where he portrayed Amory Blaine as a young man not unlike Fitzgerald himself.

He married Zelda Sayre, fathered a girl named Scott and continued to enhance his literary reputation with magazine pieces, stories and full-length books, including *The Beautiful and Damned*, which was met with mixed reviews.

Mizener dwells on both *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night*, both inspired by characters in Fitzgerald's life. The biography is full of interesting nuggets of information which illuminate the writer and his times, including his interactions with other writers and communication with his publishers, friends and editors.

After becoming the chronicler of the 'flapper age', in the 1930s Fitzgerald struggled with alcoholism and the committal of Zelda on account of his schizophrenia to a mental hospital. He talked often in his correspondence of money troubles and deadlines to be met, and so brings light to the somewhat difficult role of being a professional writer who wanted to be a great one.

"Fitzgerald's personality is so intriguing and his story so fascinating in itself that you are likely to overlook the skill required for an adequate presentment of him. Mizener's presentment has a delusive air of simplicity. But that is a measure of the discretion and sobriety of the biographer and the rigor with which he has subordinated the author of the book to its subject." — *Yale Review*

"Timely, scholarly but never dull" — Budd Schulberg, *New York Times*

"He [Mizener] tells it in an easy style throughout — with a scrupulous regard for fact that brings out the human values in the story. In the end it isn't the rather commonplace story we had expected to hear, of success in the Golden Twenties and failure in the depression. It is the story of a highly gifted man who ruined himself by pursuing false ideals, who set out to redeem himself by patient effort and who had almost succeeded when he died — not of drinking but of overwork, Fitzgerald's books are better known today than they were in his time, but his life as Mizener presents it is even more impressive than his fiction." —

Malcolm Cowley

Arthur Mizener (1907-1988) was a professor of English at Cornell University. As well as his biography of F Scott Fitzgerald, he also wrote one of writer Ford Madox Ford.

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