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з англійської мови**
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Introduction

F. Scott Fitzgerald,

in full **Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald** (born September 24, 1896, St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S. – died December 21, 1940, Hollywood, California), American short-story writer and novelist famous for his depictions of the Jazz Age (the 1920s), his most brilliant novel being *The Great Gatsby* (1925). His private life, with his wife, Zelda, in both America and France, became almost as celebrated as his novels.

Fitzgerald was the only son of an unsuccessful, aristocratic father and an energetic, provincial mother. Half the time he thought of himself as the heir of his father's tradition, which included the author of "The Star-Spangled Banner," Francis Scott Key, after whom he was named, and half the time as "straight 1850 potato-famine Irish." As a result he had typically ambivalent American feelings about American life, which seemed to him at once vulgar and dazzlingly promising.

He also had an intensely romantic imagination, what he once called "a heightened sensitivity to the promises of life," and he charged into experience determined to realize those promises. At both St. Paul Academy (1908 – 10) and Newman School (1911 – 13) he tried too hard and made himself unpopular, but at Princeton he came close to realizing his dream of a brilliant success. He became a prominent figure in the literary life of the university and made lifelong friendships with Edmund Wilson and John Peale Bishop. He became a leading figure in the socially important Triangle Club, a dramatic society, and was elected to one of the leading clubs of the university; he fell in love with Ginevra King, one of the beauties of her generation. Then he lost Ginevra and flunked out of Princeton.

He returned to Princeton the next fall, but he had now lost all the positions he coveted, and in November 1917 he left to join the army. In July 1918, while he was stationed near Montgomery, Alabama, he met Zelda Sayre, the daughter of an Alabama Supreme Court judge. They fell deeply in love, and, as soon as he could, Fitzgerald headed for New York determined to

achieve instant success and to marry Zelda. What he achieved was an advertising job at \$90 a month. Zelda broke their engagement, and, after an epic drunk, Fitzgerald retired to St. Paul to rewrite for the second time a novel he had begun at Princeton. In the spring of 1920 it was published, he married Zelda, and *This Side of Paradise* was a revelation of the new morality of the young; it made Fitzgerald famous. This fame opened to him magazines of literary prestige, such as *Scribner's*, and high-paying popular ones, such as *The Saturday Evening Post*. This sudden prosperity made it possible for him and Zelda to play the roles they were so beautifully equipped for, and Ring Lardner called them the prince and princess of their generation. Though they loved these roles, they were frightened by them, too, as the ending of Fitzgerald's second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922), shows. *The Beautiful and Damned* describes a handsome young man and his beautiful wife, who gradually degenerate into a shopworn middle age while they wait for the young man to inherit a large fortune. Ironically, they finally get it, when there is nothing of them left worth preserving.

To escape the life that they feared might bring them to this end, the Fitzgeralds (together with their daughter, Frances, called "Scottie," born in 1921) moved in 1924 to the Riviera, where they found themselves a part of a group of American expatriates whose style was largely set by Gerald and Sara Murphy; Fitzgerald described this society in his last completed novel, *Tender Is the Night*, and modeled its hero on Gerald Murphy. Shortly after their arrival in France, Fitzgerald completed his most brilliant novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1925). All of his divided nature is in this novel, the naive Midwesterner afire with the possibilities of the "American Dream" in its hero, Jay Gatsby, and the compassionate Yale gentleman in its narrator, Nick Carraway. *The Great Gatsby* is the most profoundly American novel of its time; at its conclusion, Fitzgerald connects Gatsby's dream, his "Platonic conception of himself," with the dream of the discoverers of America. Some of Fitzgerald's finest short stories appeared in *All the Sad Young Men* (1926), particularly "The Rich Boy" and "Absolution," but it was not until eight years later that another novel appeared.

The next decade of the Fitzgeralds' lives was disorderly and unhappy. Fitzgerald began to drink too much, and Zelda suddenly, ominously, began to practice ballet dancing night and day. In 1930 she had a mental breakdown and in 1932 another, from which she never fully recovered. Through the 1930s they fought to save their life together, and, when the battle was lost, Fitzgerald said, "I left my capacity for hoping on the little roads that led to Zelda's sanitarium." He did not finish his next novel, *Tender Is the Night*, until 1934. It is the story of a psychiatrist who marries one of his patients, who, as she slowly recovers, exhausts his vitality until he is, in Fitzgerald's words, *un homme épuisé* ("a man used up"). This is Fitzgerald's most moving book, though it was commercially unsuccessful.

With its failure and his despair over Zelda, Fitzgerald was close to becoming an incurable alcoholic. By 1937, however, he had come back far enough to become a scriptwriter in Hollywood, and there he met and fell in love with Sheilah Graham, a famous Hollywood gossip columnist. For the rest of his life – except for occasional drunken spells when he became bitter and violent – Fitzgerald lived quietly with her. (Occasionally he went east to visit Zelda or his daughter Scottie, who entered Vassar College in 1938.) In October 1939 he began a novel about Hollywood, *The Last Tycoon*. The career of its hero, Monroe Stahr, is based on that of the producer Irving Thalberg. This is Fitzgerald's final attempt to create his dream of the promises of American life and of the kind of man who could realize them. In the intensity with which it is imagined and in the brilliance of its expression, it is the equal of anything Fitzgerald ever wrote, and it is typical of his luck that he died of a heart attack with his novel only half-finished. He was 44 years old.

Watch*The Great Gatsby (2013 film)*, co-written and directed by Baz Luhrmann and Leonardo DiCaprio, and provide a list of discrepancies between the book and the movie.

Read *The Great Gatsby review by The Guardian* and expand on it.

The Great Gatsby by F Scott Fitzgerald – review*

'The Great Gatsby is in many ways similar to Romeo and Juliet yet it is so much more than a love story'

There are many novels which claim that they are the greatest love story of all time. It is only in the case of this novel that that statement can be applied and be true.

The novel is set during the roaring 20s in America, narrated by Nick Carraway, a man from a well-to-do family just out of fighting the war and looking to sell bonds. He moves to East Egg, the slightly less grand area in comparison to West Egg, right opposite Gatsby's mansion. Gatsby is rich, mega-rich, and throws magnificent parties every weekend which the whole town attend. However the host is never seen during these parties, and is never completely known by any one person. Gatsby holds a dark secret about his past and how he became so great, a deep lust that will eventually lead to his demise.

The Great Gatsby is in many ways similar to Romeo and Juliet, yet I believe that it is so much more than just a love story. It is also a reflection on the hollowness of a life of leisure. Both stories are obsessed with controlling time: Juliet wants to extend her present, as her future prospects with Romeo are bleak and Gatsby wants to create a beautiful future by restoring the past. This is what leads Gatsby to say his most famous line "Can't change the past? Why, of course you can." I could very much relate to this - there have been many moments where I've wished that I could go back to the past and just remain there, for it was a better place.

* <https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2013/sep/12/review-great-gatsby-f-scott-fitzgerald>

Similarly to Romeo and Juliet, Fitzgerald's writing is almost like a work of poetry, with waves of literary brilliance creating a rich and lush rhythm which you can almost tap your foot to. The descriptions are jarringly, magnificently beautiful so that it almost made my heart ache.

However, unlike in Romeo and Juliet, the characters in The Great Gatsby are in themselves very flawed and very hard to sympathise with. But that is the beauty of the book. Of course you hate Daisy Buchanan! Of course you hate Tom! You even begin to slightly dislike Gatsby, to whom it is not enough for Daisy to say that she loved him, but requires her to state that she never in her five year marriage loved her husband Tom. But Gatsby, to me, remains Great right until the end of this book.

It is ironic that only the idle rich survive this novel, and Fitzgerald through this further enrages the reader about the cruelty and the injustice of the world. The rich are allowed to continue to be careless, for that is the dream, is it not? To live a carefree life? Yet Fitzgerald highlights the horrors of being a careless person: "They smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money and vast carelessness." What's amazing in this line is that Tom and Daisy aren't careless to be malicious - that is just their nature. And that in itself is a very sad thing. They do not care for their daughter, for Myrtle, for Gatsby nor even each other. Their inability to care is what makes The Great Gatsby the stark opposite to Romeo and Juliet where the lovers are sacrificed and Verona is healed. In Fitzgerald's masterpiece nothing is made whole by this tragedy.

Many consider The Great Gatsby to be depressing because, in the end, those who dream do not achieve their aspirations. However, the main message that Fitzgerald sends to us isn't that dreaming will lead to despair, but that chasing an unworthy dream will lead to tragedy.

Home Reading Examination Topics

- 1) What marks the climax of *The Great Gatsby*. Why?
- 2) What does the weather – the oppressive heat – symbolize in Chapter 7?
- 3) What do the “watching eyes” of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg symbolize? What do they witness?
- 4) What does Nick imply when he characterizes the change in Tom’s behaviour as a “transition from libertine to prig”? Give examples to support your arguments.
- 5) The image of Tom and Daisy holding hands, while discussing how to flee after Daisy kills Myrtle, is the crux of their relationship. They are willing to forgive each other everything. Are they secretly the most romantic couple in the book?
- 6) How appropriate do you think it is to label *The Great Gatsby* “a rags to riches story”?
- 7) What do you think of the view that obsession with money and the consumer culture of the 1920s dominates human thinking and behaviour in *The Great Gatsby*?
- 8) What do you think about the view that there are no women in *The Great Gatsby* who the reader can sympathise with?
- 9) Nick Carraway says, “They were careless people, Tom and Daisy - they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together.” In the light of Nick’s comment, explore the role and significance of Tom and Daisy in the novel.
- 10) “Nick is careful to record the different points of view of Gatsby’s various admirers and detractors.” In the light of this quotation, discuss ways in which Gatsby is presented in the novel.
- 11) ‘What’ll we do with ourselves this afternoon? ... and the day after that and the next thirty years?’ Examine Fitzgerald’s presentation of aimless existence in *The Great Gatsby*.
- 12) ‘Can’t repeat the past?’ he cried incredulously. ‘Why of course you can!’ In the light of Gatsby’s comment, explore the importance of the past in *The Great Gatsby*.
- 13) ‘All the major characters are victims of the society in which the novel is set.’ How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *The Great Gatsby*?
- 14) The novel’s title is deeply ironic – there is nothing ‘Great’ about Gatsby. How far and in what ways would you agree?