

# Biography of f. scott fitzgerald

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Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born on September 24th, 1896, to an Irish Catholic upper middle class family living in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was named after Francis Scott Key, his second cousin three times removed on his father's side, who was the writer of the Star-Spangled Banner (the United States' national anthem).

Fitzgerald's mother's family had made a small fortune as wholesale grocers in Minnesota, bringing in much of their money through his mother's inheritance. Fitzgerald's father, Edward Fitzgerald, opened a wicker furniture business that soon failed, resulting in him switching his career to Procter & Gamble. This company required Fitzgerald's family to move back and forth from Buffalo and Syracuse in upstate New York all during the first decade of his life. Once Fitzgerald reached the age of 12, his father was fired from his job at Procter & Gamble and the family ended up moving back to St. Paul in 1908 where they lived off of his mother's inheritance.

This is directly relatable to Fitzgerald's famous novel, *The Great Gatsby*, where Gatsby is unable to support his lover due to his lack of funds while she remains wealthy due to her family. Fitzgerald attended the St. Paul Academy as a child, and when he was 13 he had already seen his first piece of literary work published; a detective story, published in the school's student paper. Fitzgerald was a bright young man, and was already leaning towards the literary arts as a youngling. Two years later, when Fitzgerald was 15 years old, his parents sent him to the Newman School. The Newman School was a prestigious Catholic prep school in New Jersey; there he met Father Sigourney Fay.

Father Fay noticed Fitzgerald's skills with writing and his creative talents, and encouraged the boy to progress towards a literary-related career. Fitzgerald had many ambitions related to writing, and with this information in mind he began his path towards his famous novels. In 1913, Fitzgerald graduated from the Newman School. Instead of returning home, Fitzgerald decided to stay in New Jersey and pursue his artistic development at Princeton University. His writing excelled at Princeton; Fitzgerald wrote scripts for the famous Princeton Triangle Club musicals, articles for the Princeton Tiger humour magazine and stories for Nassau Literary Magazine.

Unfortunately, as Fitzgerald's writing abilities grew, his attention to schoolwork shrank. Fitzgerald was placed on academic probation, and in 1917 he left school to join the US Army. After joining the army, Fitzgerald officially became part of the "Lost Generation" that was battered in World War I; however, it should be noted that Fitzgerald was never actually deployed into any battles – the war was over before Fitzgerald had a chance to fight. Gatsby, from the book similarly named, also attended World War I and was part of this Lost Generation. Fitzgerald also met his future wife during the war, Zelda, similar to Gatsby finding Daisy during his fictional experience of the war. Before Fitzgerald actually participated in the war, he was afraid that he would be killed and would never have a chance to create a name for himself as a novelist.

With that thought in his mind and Father Fay's words behind him, Fitzgerald hastily created his first novel, "The Romantic Egotist." Unfortunately, Fitzgerald's rushed book was rejected, but the publisher (Charles Scribner's Sons) mentioned that Fitzgerald's work was good and that he should try <https://assignbuster.com/biography-of-f-scott-fitzgerald/>

publishing a novel again in the future. After the war, Fitzgerald moved to New York and attempted to start up a career in advertising that would be successful enough to convince Zelda to be his wife. Only a few months passed under this occupation before Fitzgerald quit, however, and moved back to St. Paul to rewrite his novel.

Fitzgerald attempted to publish the book again under a new title, “ This Side of Paradise,” and was successful. At the age of 24 and in almost a single night, Fitzgerald’s novel made him one of the most promising young writers in America. About a week later, Fitzgerald married Zelda in New York. This story of a man needing to find material gain before being able to court a woman into marriage also shows itself in *The Great Gatsby*. Fitzgerald and Zelda had one daughter named Frances Scott Fitzgerald in 1921; she would be Fitzgerald’s only child.

Fitzgerald harnessed his popularity into a new kind of reputation – he became known as a somewhat eccentric playboy, and it was hard for people to consider him a serious literary artist. He launched himself into an extravagant way of living, and funded his ways through writing many short stories for publications such as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Esquire*. In 1922, Fitzgerald published his second novel, *The Beautiful and the Damned* – a story about a troubled marriage. This novel helped to create a foundation for Fitzgerald as a serious writer and many looked at it as a great reference to the “ Jazz Age.” In 1924, Fitzgerald had fallen into a literary rut, suffering in his battle against writer’s block.

To spark his creativity, Fitzgerald moved to France; there he began work on what was later considered to be his greatest novel as well as the greatest novel of the 20th century in general – *The Great Gatsby*. A story told through the eyes of a Midwesterner named Nick, this novel made a strong connection to the irony of impossible goals made by many people in the Roaring Twenties, specifically young adults from the “Lost Generation,” and illustrated the extravagance and traps that come with mass consumerism. The novel has been recreated in several movies and is often said to be an incredibly artistic and symbolic piece of literary work. Although *The Great Gatsby* was published in 1925 and immediately well received, it didn’t become the significant portrait of the Roaring Twenties until the 1950’s and 1960’s. *The Great Gatsby* also held many symbolic references to Fitzgerald’s own life and opinions, sometimes even taking direct quotes from his experiences and using them in character’s dialogue.

Unfortunately, after Fitzgerald completed *The Great Gatsby*, his life began to take a turn for the worse. Fitzgerald was a heavy alcoholic and began to suffer from extreme writer’s block. His wife, Zelda, suffered from mental health issues and was even taken into a mental-health clinic in 1930. She suffered another breakdown in 1931, adding even more strain to Fitzgerald’s life. Finally, in 1934, Fitzgerald was able to publish his fourth novel named *Tender is the Night*, a story about a psychiatrist and his fraying marriage to a troubled patient.

This book was initially received poorly due to its jumbled structure, and didn’t help with Fitzgerald’s stresses. After another two years of alcoholism and depression, Fitzgerald tried to reignite his career as a screenwriter and <https://assignbuster.com/biography-of-f-scott-fitzgerald/>

freelance storywriter in Hollywood. Unfortunately, this brought in modest financial success at best. Fitzgerald began one final attempt at writing a novel, but died of a heart attack when halfway through the manuscript. Fitzgerald died, believing he was a failure, on December 21, 1940; he was 44 years old. Fitzgerald's real literary fame didn't come to him until years later, and he is now recognized as one of the greatest authors of all time; he has had an effect on more readers than he could have ever imagined in his cut-short life.