



The Diamond as Big as the Ritz, and Other Stories

F. Scott Fitzgerald

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6 of the Roaring Twenties chronicler's most scintillating short stories, chosen from *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920) and *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922). This inexpensive volume comprises "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," "The Ice Palace," "Bernice Bobs Her Hair," "May Day," "The Jelly-Bean," and "The Offshore Pirate." Publisher's Note.

The Diamond as Big as the Ritz, and Other Stories Details

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From Reader Review The Diamond as Big as the Ritz, and Other Stories for online ebook

Sergio says

Stories as big as life.

Irene Chia says

This is a story about a school boy, John Unger, from a respectable rich family in Hades, a small town on the Mississippi River. The period is early 1920s or thereabouts. At 16, John was sent to St Midas' school in Boston for a New England education which is a necessity for all promising young men.

At the school, he met Percy Washington, a very rich student, even by St Midas' standard, judging by his clothes. However, Percy stayed aloof from everyone and the only person he was slightly friendly with was John. So when Percy invited John to his home during the summer vacation, John agreed readily, being curious about this wealthy enigmatic boy. Hence John embarked on an adventure that is amazing, wonderful, bewildering and ultimately life threatening.

In this short story, Fitzgerald created a Shangri-la or paradise world which seemed to be the obsession of the people during his time. That was the time when Americans were exploring the great wide world outside their towns, believing that there ought to be a land of milk and honey out there, a hidden Eden.

In this story, such a hidden world was painted along with an elaborate history and reasons for its need for secrecy which further cement the people's romantic belief that such a world exists out there in the great unknown.

Reading the story today, you would find it quaint how such a world is portrayed but the story still has its charms and horrors to make it worth spending some minutes on.

Denise Mullins says

In this collection of short stories, the author shows his contempt for those with wealth, power, or pedigree and the havoc they would inflict on Everyman if given the opportunity. The antagonist in "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" is a particularly mean-spirited bitch who surrounds herself with the beautiful young people devoid of any common decency or compassion for an outsider. While she is given her comeuppance, the lengths the title character goes to obtain it is traumatic.

In "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz", callow John Unger learns from his jaded friend Percy just how inhumane and evil some will sink to maintain wealth. In contrast to the Shangri-la in Rand's "Atlas Shrugged", this fantastic hideaway seethes with slavery, torture, and death, and imparts a profound lesson. Although these stories were unique and engaging, the bitter aftertaste left a sense of negativity which may not be something most readers seek from recreational reading.

Olivier Aarieux says

Understand that in life, what results you achieve won't resemble the ends you sought. Wield this understanding in your eye, look at hopeful people with either pity or malice, depending on your assessment of their character, whether they believed in some good or brought bad along their long-drawn plight.

Vit Babenco says

F. Scott Fitzgerald was a brilliant satirist: sharp-eyed and sharp-witted...

John T. Unger came from a family that had been well known in Hades — a small town on the Mississippi River — for several generations. John's father had held the amateur golf championship through many a heated contest; Mrs. Unger was known "from hot-box to hot-bed," as the local phrase went, for her political addresses; and young John T. Unger, who had just turned sixteen, had danced all the latest dances from New York before he put on long trousers. And now, for a certain time, he was to be away from home. That respect for a New England education which is the bane of all provincial places, which drains them yearly of their most promising young men, had seized upon his parents. Nothing would suit them but that he should go to St. Midas's School near Boston — Hades was too small to hold their darling and gifted son.

Hades... St. Midas... Does it ring a bell? Any tale beginning like this can't fail.

"Everybody's youth is a dream, a form of chemical madness." It is probably the most known quote of **F. Scott Fitzgerald**.

Youth and riches are two cherished treasures. And if one can open doors to riches any time, one's youth never can be revisited...

"How pleasant then to be insane!"

"So I'm told," said John gloomily. "I don't know any longer. At any rate, let us love for a while, for a year or so, you and me. That's a form of divine drunkenness that we can all try. There are only diamonds in the whole world, diamonds and perhaps the shabby gift of disillusion.

The young and the rich live in the worlds of their own device.

Mattia Ravasi says

Featured in my Top 20 Books I Read in 2017

Never had I imagined the scope of Fitzgerald's writing powers; not in terms of style - obviously the man writes prose the way Cova makes panettone - but of genre. There's Vernian sci-fi and ghost stories in here,

alongside the more famous Jazz-age tales, and the guy is flawless in everything he tries.

Ivana says

This edition consists of five short stories. They always talk about Fitzgerald as a writer that defined the Jazz Age and etc but for me that is not that important. What draws me to his writing is probably the way he creates his characters, sometimes managing to capture their very essence. I'll give you a fair warning. This is not going to be a short review.

First things first.

The Diamond As Big As The Ritz 5/5

Beautifully written and absolutely unsettling because of its implications. One of them: an extremely wealthy person can get away with anything. True today as ever? Sure and as long as money equals power it will stay that way.

It was quite revolting to read because as the story started it seemed as if the writer was making that absurdly wealthy man (the diamond's owner) without a conscience something of a hero. Fitzgerald certainly had a way of making the filthy rich look ever so glamorous. He does that here as well but only at the surface. There is a dark and pessimistic message that comes out at the end: without the money you cannot be free. However, you cannot be free when you have money because you must fight so desperately to keep it. Either way you're screwed.

Let's face it, almost all the fairytales tell the story of a prince or a princess and there is always money involved. What Fitzgerald does is create a fairytale for the adults. In many ways it even reminded me of dystopian literature. If you've read the good stuff you know that the bad guys almost always get the chance to explain the situation and the necessity of their choices. You almost can feel with them. Almost. Come on, the little demon would whisper to you as well if you ever happened to find the diamond the size of a mountain.

Take a look at this, doesn't it sound like a fairytale:

" Afterwards John remembered that first night as a daze of many colours, of quick sensory impressions, of music soft as a voice in love, and of beauty of things, lights and shadows, and motions and faces. There was a white-haired man who stood drinking a many-hued cordial from a cristal thimble set on a golden stem. There was a girl with a flowery face, dresses as Titania with braided sapphires in her hair. There was a room where the solid, soft gold of the walls yielded to the pressure of his hand, and a room that was like a platonic conception of the ultimate prison--ceiling, floor, and all, it was lined with an unbroken mass of diamonds, diamonds of every size and shape, until, lit with tail violet lamps in the corners, it dazzled the eyes with a whiteness that could be compared only with itself, beyond human wish, or dream.

Through a maze of these rooms the two boys wandered. Sometimes the floor under their feet would flame in brilliant patterns from lighting below, patterns of barbaric clashing colours, of pastel delicacy, of sheer whiteness, or of subtle and intricate mosaic, surely from some mosque on the Adriatic Sea. Sometimes beneath layers of thick crystal he would see blue or green water swirling, inhabited by vivid fish and growths of rainbow foliage. Then they would be treading on furs of every texture and colour or along corridors of palest ivory, unbroken as though carved complete from the gigantic tusks of dinosaurs extinct before the age

of man

Bernice Bobs Her Hair 5/5

What a fantastic story! The protagonist of this story is Bernice as the title would suggest, a young thing that bobs her hair in an effort to become popular.

"As Bernice busied herself with tooth-brush and paste this night she wondered for the hundredth time why she never had any attention when she was away from home. That her family were the wealthiest in Eau Claire; that her mother entertained tremendously, gave little dinners for her daughter before all dances and bought her a car of her own to drive round in, never occurred to her as factors in her home-town social success. Like most girls she had been brought up on the warm milk prepared by Annie Fellows Johnston and on novels in which the female was beloved because of certain mysterious womanly qualities. always mentioned but never displayed."

She turned out the light in her bathroom, and on an impulse decided to go in and chat for a moment with her aunt Josephine, whose light was still on. Her soft slippers bore her noiselessly down the carpeted hall, but hearing voices inside she stopped near the partly opened door. Then she caught her own name, and without any definite intention of eavesdropping lingered--and the thread of the conversation going on inside pierced her consciousness sharply as if it had been drawn through with a needle...

"She's absolutely hopeless!" It was Marjorie's voice. "Oh, I know what you're going to say! So many people have told you how pretty and sweet she is, and how she can cook! What of it? She has a bum time. Men don't like her."

"What's a little cheap popularity?"

Mrs. Harvey sounded annoyed.

"It's everything when you're eighteen," said Marjorie emphatically...

The story itself is about the power struggles between women. He really does capture that passive aggressive side to well behaving young ladies (and social ladies in general).

While it is true that Marjorie is selfish and sometimes cruel, her cousin Bernice had it coming by living without using her head. This is a story without heroes and villains in one sense. Just human beings being human. Women being human beings. Now, that is something you won't find as often in literature as one might aspect.

The Ice Palace 4/5

Another female protagonist with a well developed character. This story is an ode to the South in one way. It is fascinating how we're shaped by the things that surrounds us, even with something that seems as insignificant as climate. Sometimes in life you may get a feeling that you're just a sum up of your surroundings and biology and let me tell you it is a depressive feeling. Still, there is no running from it.

Like the leading lady of this story, I'm cold phobic. I hate snow. Not because when I was a little girl of two up in the mountains I fell into deep snow and was buried for a short time (thought it didn't help) but because where I have grown up it snows once in a blue moon and only for a day or so.

Here is what the southern bell has to say about it:

"I'm sorry; that sounded worse than I meant it. You see I always think of people as feline or canine, irrespective of sex."

"Which are you?"

"I'm feline. So are you. So are most Southern men an' most of these girls here."

"What's Harry?"

"Harry's canine distinctly. All the men I've met to-night seem to be canine."

"What does `canine' imply? A certain conscious masculinity as opposed to subtlety?"

"Reckon so. I never analyzed it-- only I just look at people an' say `canine' or `feline' right off. It's right absurd, I guess."

"Not at all. I'm interested. I used to have a theory about these people. I think they're freezing up."

"What?"

"I think they're growing like Swedes-- Ibsenesque, you know. Very gradually getting gloomy and melancholy. It's these long winters. Ever read any Ibsen?"

May Day 3/5

I liked it but wasn't impressed. My mind wondered as I was reading it. My opinion is that it had too much going on, maybe too much...Too many characters and stories to follow? It feels more like a sketch of a novel. It doesn't feel finished.

The Bowl 3/5

I sure sympathized with Dolly and it was an interesting story. In some ways the protagonist reminded me of myself. However, something seems to be lacking. What? I cannot define it. There is something just too easy about it. I didn't make me feel anything in particular and "feeling" is what I go for in reading I guess.

So that is it. Highly recommended!

Romaissa says

This is my second read for Fitzgerald and i usually prefer novels, but i enjoyed these stories. This edition of the book contains five stories and each one tackles with a different aspect from the American society in the 1920s.

In the first story, "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" Fitzgerald gave us an image about the wealthy people and how they can control everything and everyone with money. Though he always made his rich characters seem fascinating, i sensed a bit of satire behind the lines, like he was criticizing the vice of rich people who think money would get them through anything when in fact, it doesn't last.

The second story which was my favorite "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" i feel like this one would be a good movie. I liked the protagonist Bernice and i had a compassion for her at first, but was proud of her at the end. What i liked also was the foil character Marjorie, even though she was mean and arrogant, she was smart and i think the author was showing the power of female through her.

"The Ice Palace" was not that interesting. I found it as an ordinary story with ordinary characters and it ends up with a moral that parts of what makes people who they are, is their environment and conditions.

"May day" I'm not going to say anything about this one, except that it was kind of stressful of all the mess going on.

The final story "The Bowl" was my second favorite. I liked the narrating and i realized that i also like Fitzgerald much better when he uses the first person point of view. I admired the maturity and self discovery i've seen in the protagonist and the whole story felt like watching a teenage American movie, but i believe the author was dealing with fame and popularity in this one.

Ben says

Jewels are absolutely useless. What purpose do they serve other than to decorate? to pronounce excess? Is there any other possession adorned with such all-consuming envy while simultaneously void of all practical use? Jewels and gold are as intrinsically meaningless in backing wealth as numbers on paper. They have cavernous souls which prey mischievously on Man's affinity for power. They fill the void of there existence by manipulating the weakness and vice of mankind. They are the instigator; and, like men, are desperate to bolster their own self efficacy, which Man is eager to oblige. Its illusory value is measured in the currency of life: murders to keep it, isolation to own it and enslavement to all its begotten circumstances.

In his most fantastic and exaggerated tale, Fitzgerald knew this. The wealth of this story is in language, artificial serenity, love, suspense, dread and destruction. Its symbolic power cannot be ignored. The family on the mountain adorn the name of America's most famous forefather. The bombastic violence to defend the mountain whispers of warring ideologies. Yet this fantasy, this symbol, is craftily presented alongside believable, though embellished, human behavior; the behavior of the wealthy which is rooted in the false assumption that they can pay a price for moral exemption.

I have a new favorite. And it's becoming clear to me that it will not last long on the throne.

Ivana Books Are Magic says

After reading this one, I must say that Fitzgerald seems to be just as brilliant when it comes to writing short stories. I always thought of him as a novelist, but now I see that is not where his talent ends. The Great Gatsby and Tender Is the Night are, to this day, one of my favourite American novels. He is a great writer, no doubt about that. I will probably attempt to read all of his works, as I usually do, when I really really like

some writer. People always talk about Fitzgerald as a writer that defined the Jazz Age and as much as I'm interested in this particular time period, for me that is not that important. He is brilliant at that, but it is not what makes his works classics. In other words, for me he is so much more than just a writer who managed to capture the Jazz Age. There are many things about his writing that I like, from this subtle sadness and tenderness to the insightful observations about society and human kind. I suppose that what draws me to his writing the most is the way he creates his characters, somehow managing to capture their very essence.

This edition consists of five short stories (the first one is more a novella than a short story but we'll discuss that later): The Diamond As Big As The Ritz, Bernice Bobs Her Hair, The Ice Palace, May Day and The Bowl. Two of these I liked rather than loved (May Day and The Bowl), but the rest (The Diamond as Big as Ritz, Bernice Bobs Her Hair, The Ice Palace) were simply amazing! I can honestly say that I absolutely loved them. I'll give you a fair warning. This is not going to be a short review because I will review the stories separately. They are, after all, quite different one from another. I'm not sure how useful would my general review be and how much I would be able to say in it, so I prefer to write a bit about every one of these stories. First things first.

The Diamond As Big As The Ritz 5/5

Possibly my favourite work in the collection. The Diamond as Big as the Ritz is actually a novella, so it is a bit longer than the other works in this collection. It is surprisingly dark and sinister in tone. Beautifully written and absolutely unsettling because of its implications. One of them: an extremely wealthy person can get away with anything. True today as ever? I suppose it is, and as long as money equals power it will stay that way. The interesting thing about this one is that it seems to, more often than not, cheer for the rich, digging deep into human imagination and myth to bring poetic images of wealth- those that we encounter in fairy tales-only to modernize them and make them seem horribly (and scary) close to our heart and desires.

The novel opens with a young man John T. Unger being invited by his mysterious classmate Percy Washington to visit his home. Once he gets there, John will discover that this family has a secret (incredible wealth) and they will do anything to hide that secret. At times this novella was quite revolting to read. Especially in the beginning, because as the story opened it seemed as if the writer was making Mr. Washington, this absurdly wealthy man (the diamond's owner- the father of Percy) without a conscience something of a hero. I'm pretty sure that only a sociopath wouldn't find some things these people were doing shocking. Needless to say, this family wants to protect what it has. Why have they invited Percy than? Because no matter how much one is wealth, one still needs to share it with someone if only by demonstrating it? Ever since Mr. Washington found the giant diamond, he and his family, have done everything to hide it- even the unthinkable. Yet, he makes you feel like there is a logic behind their action. A sinister logic, but logic nevertheless. He makes this philosophy Of cause justifying the end sound ever so fabulous.

Fitzgerald certainly had a way of making the filthy rich look ever so glamorous. He does that here as well but only at the beginning. As soon as you scratch the surface, you'll see it is not the way it seems. Once Fitzgerald gets you thinking you certainly see things differently- and you realize that money is just another trap. I would say that this particular novella is probably the darkest thing by him that I have read so far. It plays on the emotions of the reader brilliantly. The plot is fairly simple, but well developed and the ending of this novella is quite potent. There is a dark and pessimistic message that comes out at the end: without the money, you cannot be free. However, you cannot be free even when you have money because you must fight

so desperately to keep it. Either way you're basically sentenced to a desperate fight – otherwise known as life. Fitzgerald had examined fairy tales and myths in this one, and he had done it brilliantly.

Wealth is the great motivator in many fairy tales. Let's face it, almost all the fairy tales tell the story of a prince or a princess and there is always money involved. What Fitzgerald does is create a fairy tale for the adults. In many ways it even reminded me of dystopian literature. If you've read the good stuff you know that the bad guys almost always get the chance to explain the situation and the necessity of their choices. You almost can feel with them. Almost. That's how what wonderful literature does, it opens those parts of your soul you're afraid to examine, it takes the personal emotional weight of your shoulders by allowing you to distance yourself from it by focusing and feeling (i.e. catharsis) for some other (imaginary) individual. That is – perhaps – what all great human storytelling is all about. The pursuit of truth masked as entertainment. As revolted as I felt by the actions of the diamond owner, I could understand it – not justify it but understand it. Come on, the little demon would whisper in your ear as well if you ever happened to find the diamond the size of a mountain.

You might say that is not very probable, someone discovering a massive diamond and becoming incredibly rich in the process, but crazier things were known to happen. I don't think the plausibility of such an event is not really important for the context of the story. It is not entirely fantastical, but it isn't exactly probable and perhaps the writer had wanted it to be that way to further connect it to the fairy tale sensation that he created. Take a look at this passage, doesn't it sound like a fairy tale:

" Afterwards John remembered that first night as a daze of many colours, of quick sensory impressions, of music soft as a voice in love, and of beauty of things, lights and shadows, and motions and faces. There was a white-haired man who stood drinking a many-hued cordial from a crystal thimble set on a golden stem. There was a girl with a flowery face, dressed as Titania with braided sapphires in her hair. There was a room where the solid, soft gold of the walls yielded to the pressure of his hand, and a room that was like a platonic conception of the ultimate prison--ceiling, floor, and all, it was lined with an unbroken mass of diamonds, diamonds of every size and shape, until, lit with tall violet lamps in the corners, it dazzled the eyes with a whiteness that could be compared only with itself, beyond human wish, or dream.

Through a maze of these rooms the two boys wandered. Sometimes the floor under their feet would flame in brilliant patterns from lighting below, patterns of barbaric clashing colours, of pastel delicacy, of sheer whiteness, or of subtle and intricate mosaic, surely from some mosque on the Adriatic Sea. Sometimes beneath layers of thick crystal he would see blue or green water swirling, inhabited by vivid fish and growths of rainbow foliage. Then they would be treading on furs of every texture and colour or along corridors of palest ivory, unbroken as though carved complete from the gigantic tusks of dinosaurs extinct before the age of man"

To conclude, this novella is wonderfully imaginative, it is poetically written, but it is also very meaningful and it comes with a strong message.

Bernice Bobs Her Hair 5/5

What a fantastic story! This one was such a pleasant surprise. It kind of reminded me of The Cat Eye by Margaret Atwood in its exploration of teenage bullying. It showcases passive aggressive tactics of revenge. It is a story about power balance between two young ladies. The protagonist of this story is Bernice as the title would suggest, a young lady that bobs her hair. The question is why she does it? She does it in an effort to become popular. When she arrives to visit her cuisine, she is surprised by the fact that she hardly attracts any

attention. Bernice is not talkative and she doesn't understand the art of popularity. It never occurred to her that the reasons for her popularity in her home town didn't have anything to do with her social skills.

"As Bernice busied herself with tooth-brush and paste this night she wondered for the hundredth time why she never had any attention when she was away from home. That her family were the wealthiest in Eau Claire; that her mother entertained tremendously, gave little dinners for her daughter before all dances and bought her a car of her own to drive round in, never occurred to her as factors in her home-town social success. Like most girls she had been brought up on the warm milk prepared by Annie Fellows Johnston and on novels in which the female was beloved because of certain mysterious womanly qualities. always mentioned but never displayed."

So, poor Bernice gets quite a shock when she over hears her popular cousin making fun of her in front of her mother:

She turned out the light in her bathroom, and on an impulse decided to go in and chat for a moment with her aunt Josephine, whose light was still on. Her soft slippers bore her noiselessly down the carpeted hall, but hearing voices inside she stopped near the partly opened door. Then she caught her own name, and without any definite intention of eavesdropping lingered--and the thread of the conversation going on inside pierced her consciousness sharply as if it had been drawn through with a needle...

"She's absolutely hopeless!" It was Marjorie's voice. "Oh, I know what you're going to say! So many people have told you how pretty and sweet she is, and how she can cook! What of it? She has a bum time. Men don't like her."

"What's a little cheap popularity?"

Mrs. Harvey sounded annoyed.

"It's everything when you're eighteen," said Marjorie emphatically...

Isn't that so? Isn't popularity something everything when you're a teenager? Very insightful short story, I might add. The plot is wonderful and the ending both funny- and somehow just. You even see some character development on part of Bernice, which is lovely considering that this is a story and not a novel. I quite liked this one. It is a fairly simple story, one of teaching someone a lesson- one might say, but is it well developed. As I said, this story itself is about the power struggles between women. He really does capture that passive aggressive side to well behaving young ladies (and social ladies in general). While it is true that Marjorie is selfish and sometimes cruel toward Bernice, her cousin Bernice had it coming by living without using her head. I liked how Bernice seems to be a bit wiser at the end of the story. This is a story without heroes and villains in one sense. Just human beings being human. Women being human beings. Young ladies being human beings. Now, that is something you won't find as often in literature as one might aspect. Confrontation between women are often like this. Never in the open, most people can't even notice them. The wounds that women inflict to each other, they're quite subtle, but inflicting serious harm. This particular story is quite light in tone, but it does show the great potential for harm of this kind of hidden abusive behaviour.

The Ice Palace 4/5

The Ice Palace was more entertaining than profound, but I still rather liked it. It reminded me of Tennessee

Williams, probably because the protagonist is a memorable Southern lady. So, just like in the previous story, here we have another female protagonist with a well-developed character. This story is an ode to the South in one way. It is fascinating how we're shaped by the things that surrounds us, even with something that seems as insignificant as climate. Sometimes in life we all may get a feeling that you're just a sum up of your surroundings and biology and it can be a depressive feeling- or instructive experience, depends on how we take it. We are all influenced by our surroundings and when we examine those links, it can feel odd, seeing how deep those influences go. It makes one feel like we don't matter, that we're just a sum of our surroundings. Not that I believe it- but still, there is no running from it- sometimes it is true.

Like the leading lady of this story, I'm cold phobic. I dislike snow on principle and I feel the same way about the cold. Anyhow, supposedly our characters can be influenced by the weather. Here is what this southern bell has to say about it:

"I'm sorry; that sounded worse than I meant it. You see I always think of people as feline or canine, irrespective of sex."

"Which are you?"

"I'm feline. So are you. So are most Southern men an' most of these girls here."

"What's Harry?"

"Harry's canine distinctly. All the men I've met to-night seem to be canine."

"What does 'canine' imply? A certain conscious masculinity as opposed to subtlety?"

"Reckon so. I never analysed it-- only I just look at people an' say 'canine' or 'feline' right off. It's right absurd, I guess."

"Not at all. I'm interested. I used to have a theory about these people. I think they're freezing up."

"What?"

"I think they're growing like Swedes-- Ibsenesque, you know. Very gradually getting gloomy and melancholy. It's these long winters. Ever read any Ibsen?"

May Day 3/5

I liked it but wasn't impressed. My mind wondered as I was reading it and that didn't happen with the other stories. It was interesting, but somehow hard to follow. My opinion is that it had too much going on, maybe too much...Too many characters and stories to follow? It feels more like a sketch of a novel than a short story. It doesn't feel finished. I'm glad I read it and I enjoyed reading it, but I probably won't reread it.

The Bowl 3/5

I sympathized with Dolly and The Bowl was, in many ways, a fascinating interesting story. Once again, the

protagonist caught my full attention. In some ways the protagonist reminded me of myself. However, something seems to be lacking. What? I cannot define it. There is something just too easy about it. I didn't make me feel anything in particular and "feeling" is what I go for in reading I guess.

" Between quarters I watched Dolly. He walked around panting and sucking a water bottle and still wearing that strained stunned expression. Afterward he told me he was saying over and over to himself: "I'll speak to Roper. I'll tell him between halves. I'll tell him I can't go through this any more." Several times already he had felt an almost irresistible impulse to shrug his shoulders and trot off the field, for it was not only this unexpected complex about the Bowl; the truth was that Dolly fiercely and bitterly hated the game.

He hated the long, dull period of training, the element of personal conflict, the demand on his time, the monotony of the routine and the nervous apprehension of disaster just before the end. Sometimes he imagined that all the others detested it as much as he did, and fought down their aversion as he did and carried it around inside them like a cancer that they were afraid to recognize. Sometimes he imagined that a man here and there was about to tear off the mask and say, "Dolly, do you hate this lousy business as much as I do?"

So, that would be it. Five stories, some of them brilliant, others not perfect but still worth a read. I quite enjoyed it and I'm looking forward to reading more stories by Fitzgerald. Highly recommended!

Nicholas says

F Scott never fails to amaze me. Absolutely brilliant stories. Definitely an instant favourite.

Laura says

edit Someone checked it out today, and I told him I liked Fitzgerald's writing, mentioning Great Gatsby. He was like, 'Great Gatsby? Couldn't get into it.' Are you serious?? Well, if you didn't like that one, it's pretty much guaranteed you won't be into this, either! F. Scott's characterizations are all pretty much interchangeable, and the stories are shallow fluff, but it all represents the opulent 20's before the Great Depression-as it were. Take it or leave it!

F. Scott Fitzgerald is great reading on those lazy days when you have free-time to just lounge and imagine the time period of which he wrote, the opulent, swinging twenties. I think it's really great, classic American literature. These short stories are original, not as good as Gatsby, but good.

Having written this, I am just going to add that I understand why F. Scott's writing might not appeal to everyone-characters are often players-wealthy, careless, and inherently selfish. It's difficult to not resent them, just a little bit...and I'm going to stop there, because you can totally tell I'm in a much different mood then when I wrote the above paragraph. Have to be in the right frame of mind to read this stuff...

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Ghost of the Library says

This was actually a revisiting of an old dear friend - and i so am glad i did it!

Everyone always talks, raves, pens essays, articles and books about F. Scott's Great Gatsby or Tender is the Night...yet somehow his short stories are always "forgotten", even by those that are fans of him.

True, Fitzgerald didn't think of himself as a good writer of short stories, and admitted to doing them for the money...and yet, in most of them you will find, in a more youthful less bitter manner, the many features that make you love the man and his work.

Over the years - either by work related reasons or simply personal pleasure - i have lost count of the number of short stories i read and, quite frankly, forgot 5m after..oh well 15 in some cases ;)

Very rarely does a short story cause such an impact in me that, almost 20 years later i still remember it vividly...the one other example i can think of is "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. In here you will find perhaps the most famous of his short stories - "The diamond..."(along with a few others),.

In it, a small town boy, John T. Unger, attends a wealthy boarding school in the East, where he meets a fellow student, Percy Washington, who tells him his father is the richest person in the world and has "a diamond as big as the Ritz- Carlton Hotel." .

The two boys become "buddies" and John is invited to go to Percy's home for the summer, which turns out to be on a mountaintop in Montana...and i wont tell the rest...spoilers!

Suffice to say the purpose of the story was to show how great wealth corrupted/corrupts people.

The Cut-Glass Bowl tells the tale of a gift given to a recently married woman, Evelyn Piper, by a former lover with the note that "I'm going to give you a present that's as hard as you are and as beautiful and as empty and as easy to see through." As the story progresses, the bowl is involved in various tragic incidents in her life.

The general tone of this collection may depress you somewhat but if you are a fan of F.Scott then this is mandatory reading!

If you have never tried him...start here, see what you make of him, then by all means proceed to the books with lots and lots of pages :)

happy readings!

Anne (Booklady) Molinarolo says

I prefer Ernest Hemingway over F. Scott Fitzgerald, and still do. However, this gem of short stories will have me reading more novels by Fitzgerald. It may be my own prejudice that has kept me from reading a lot of Fitzgerald, since Hemingway thought he was a drunken hack.

What I saw in these short stories, shows me that my favorite author may have been wrong. Don't look for any happy endings in any of the stories here; there aren't any. **Bernice Bobs Her Hair** has the most satisfying ending. Hell has no fury as woman mocked, publicly. **Ice Palace** also ends satisfactorily. **The Diamond as Big as the Ritz** reads like a horror story with a dash of Sci-fi here and there, at least to me.

André says

Não me apressei a ler este livro, antes preferi saboreá-lo moderadamente, a passo e passo. Afinal é uma colectânea e tal oferece-nos a vantagem de podermos ler um conto hoje e iniciar a leitura de outro na semana que se segue sem perder o fio à meada, o que o torna realmente agradável.

As histórias são muito boas. Nem todas são extraordinárias, mas fiquei com vontade de ver pelo menos três delas transformadas em narrativas mais densas ou mesmo em novelas acabadas. Depois de ler *The Great Gatsby*, qualquer um fica com vontade de devorar F. Scott Fitzgerald até se esgotar o leque de opções e ter de se conformar com a efemeridade artística de cada autor, o que é dificílimo de aceitar quando se é confrontado com uma genialidade destas. Felizmente, e para meu alívio, ainda tenho muito que ler dele até chegar a esse ponto, por isso reservo os dramas para mais tarde.

Diria que os meus contos preferidos foram *O 1º de Maio*, *Um Diamante do Tamanho do Ritz* e *Os Ventos da Felicidade*. Um aspecto muito interessante é o facto de algumas histórias partilharem o mesmo espaço físico e temporal sem chegarem, no entanto, a cruzar-se entre si. É fantástico apercebermo-nos da intencionalidade com que o autor faz isso enquanto as lemos e como esse pormenor torna tudo mais excitante.

Em resumo, um óptimo «aperitivo» que só veio aguçar ainda mais a minha admiração e curiosidade em relação a este génio da literatura!

Jeffrey says

The Diamond as Big as the Ritz to me is the marquee story of the 20's. The language and prose is crisp and clear, and you can image the descriptions as art direction for a tux-and-flapper-dress movie or a series of art deco murals. The story is a great blend of high adventure as well as exploitative campiness. While the other stories still have that distinct art deco elegance, the Diamond story is just so over the top, like a Hollywood blockbuster.

Chinchilla_clouds says

The reality of Fitzgerald's often unusual stories!

Personal favorites "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" for its dazzling descriptions and "Bernice Bobs Her Hair", which seemed to me as one of the most intense psychographies in literature I have ever read.

Brendan Brady says

you get the usual Fitzgerald jazz age stories drifting rich whites longing for more than their material wealth provides (a little over these), but you also get some seriously imaginative stories, the titular story of this collection being an extremely fun adventure story! all written in that decadent Fitzgerald prose style, with paragraphs exploding off of the page into a luxurious warmth that simultaneously takes your breath away.

one major complaint i have, and this honestly pertains to most high modernist authors (i suppose its a problem of the era rather than with Fitzgerald himself), is that the ideas portrayed regarding masculinity, gender roles, and racial/ethnic dynamics are all painfully antiquated and rather distracting.

A. Dawes says

Fitzgerald is one of my favourite writers and his short work is every bit equal to his longer length novels. The Diamond as Big as the Ritz takes Fitzgerald into the realms of the fantastic, with a rich, supercilious dynasty, in an opulent hideaway. Their vast wealth means that they are aloof and precluded from a world that they've exploited through their greedy and bullish capitalist ideals. That is until all Hell breaks loose. This is a wonderful novella with a scathing attack on capitalism, class inequality and exploitation of the poorer socio-economic classes. Plus it has Fitzgerald's wonderful turn of phrase - the metaphor of the valley and a vagina exemplifies Fitzgerald's courageous mastery.
