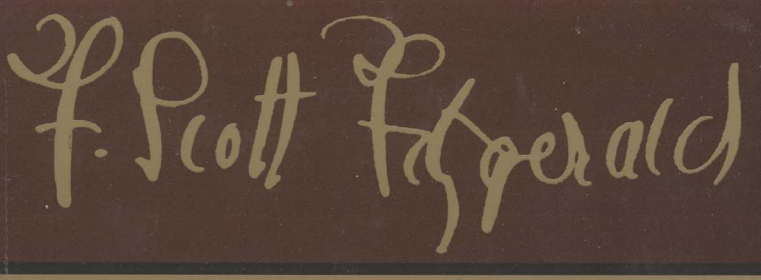
The Cambridge Edition of the Works of

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Edited by James L. W. West III

TALES OF THE JAZZ AGE



TALES OF THE JAZZ AGE

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F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

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Illustrations for this volume are reproduced from the F. Scott Fitzgerald Papers and the Charles Scribner's Sons Archives, Manuscript Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. The early version of the table of contents for *Tales of the Jazz Age*, published in Appendix 1, is preserved in a salesmen's dummy in the Matthew J. and Arlyn Bruccoli Collection of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina.

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J.L.W.W. III

ILLUSTRATIONS

(*Beginning on page 529*)

INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922), though an uneven collection, contains two masterpieces – "May Day" and "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz." Fitzgerald produced the book during a busy period of his career, a time at which he had few uncollected short stories on hand from which to assemble a volume. He had spent much of the preceding two years writing his second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922), rather than producing short fiction for the magazine market. Fitzgerald's choices were therefore limited. His solution was to pull together the best of his recent short fiction, add two items from his days at Princeton, and tie the whole together with a freshly written table of contents featuring droll comments on the stories.

In the early months of 1922, Fitzgerald and his family were living in a rented house at 626 Goodrich Avenue in his home town of St. Paul, Minnesota. In the previous October his wife, Zelda, had given birth to a daughter, whom they called Scottie. Instalments of the serial text of *The Beautiful and Damned* were appearing in *Metropolitan Magazine*, and Fitzgerald was tinkering with the ending of the novel for the book version. He was also thinking about a suitable title for the collection of short stories that he wanted to publish in the fall.

In a letter written toward the end of January, he suggested "Sideshow" to Maxwell Perkins, his editor at Charles Scribner's Sons, but Perkins' reaction was lukewarm. "It does not seem to me to have much life as a title," Perkins said. "It suggests something of secondary importance." Fitzgerald's next idea, sent to Perkins in a 6 February letter, was "In One Reel" – a phrase meant to suggest the one-reel "shorts" that were popular in movie theaters. Perkins liked that title better: "'In One Reel' puts these

stories just where they belong with relation to the novels," he replied four days later.[1]

Fitzgerald decided to arrange his stories in groupings. In the same 6 February letter, he sent Perkins a tentative list of contents. Under the heading "Fantasies" he placed "The Diamond in the Sky" (which became "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz"), "The Russet Witch" (which became "'O Russet Witch!'"), "Tarquin of Cheapside," and "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button." In a group called "My Last Flappers" he included "May Day," "The Camel's Back," and "The Jelly-Bean." Under "Comedies" he placed two one-act dramas, "Mr. Icky" and "Porcelain and Pink," and a parody entitled "Jemina." In a final miscellaneous category called "And So Forth" he included "The Crusts of Love" (published as "The Lees of Happiness") and "Two for a Cent."

Fitzgerald knew that such a collection would show his versatility. "I don't suppose such an assorted bill-of-fare as these eleven stories, novellettes, plays + 1 burlesque has ever been served up in one book before in the history of publishing," he later wrote to Perkins. But Fitzgerald must also have recognized that the volume could easily be seen as a hodgepodge, even with "May Day" and "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" to carry it. Fitzgerald therefore set out to tie the collection together, creating an appearance of unity with an innovative table of contents that would itself be a new piece of writing.

By early April he had decided against "In One Reel" and had changed his title to *Tales of the Jazz Age*. He had also written a first version of the table of contents. For each item in the collection he composed a short paragraph, telling the circumstances under which he had written the story or play and giving his estimate of it. Most of the comments are offhanded and irreverent, emphasizing the facility with which Fitzgerald was able to write. This was a pose, of course – Fitzgerald labored hard on his writing – but it

[1] These letters, and those that follow between Fitzgerald and Perkins, are published in *Dear Scott/Dear Max: The Fitzgerald–Perkins Correspondence*, ed. John Kuehl and Jackson R. Bryer (New York: Scribners, 1971). The originals of Fitzgerald's letters and carbons of Perkins' are in the Scribners archive at Princeton University Library.

was a pose that he often assumed early in his career. He sent this first version of the contents to Perkins, who had it set in type; a proof was mailed to Fitzgerald, who revised and returned it.

No proofs of the first table of contents survive in the Scribners archive at Princeton University Library, but a revised text of that initial table is extant in a dummy copy of *Tales* used by Scribners salesmen to take advance orders from booksellers. This dummy, part of the Fitzgerald collection at the Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina, contains a typed sheet of promotional copy, several pages of trial front matter, the table of contents as it then stood, and a partial text of "The Jelly-Bean." The rest of the volume is filled out with blank pages.

The table of contents from the dummy is reproduced in Appendix 1. It differs considerably from the tables in the 6 February letter and in the published book. Under "My Last Flappers" one finds "The Jelly-Bean," "The Camel's Back," and "May Day." The stories in the "Fantasies" section are "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," "The Russet Witch," "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," and "Tarquin of Cheapside." The category of "Comedies" is gone, and the section entitled "And So Forth" now includes "The Crusts of Love," "Two for a Cent," and "Jemima" (presumably a typo for "Jemina"). The one-act play "Porcelain and Pink," which eventually did appear in *Tales*, is not listed; the order of the titles differs from the order in the published book; and "Two for a Cent" occupies the spot that would eventually go to "Mr. Icky." The descriptions of the stories differ between the dummy and the published book as well. Fitzgerald's letters to Perkins show that he revised these descriptions in subsequent proofs, though the casual, debonair tone remains. For his part, Perkins liked the descriptions but was dissatisfied with the typographical look of the dummy contents list. He therefore had the entire table reset in italics for the published version.

2. SUBMISSION AND REVISION

Fitzgerald was slow in getting the actual stories to Perkins. There were heavy demands on his professional energies that spring: he was revising *The Vegetable*, then called "Gabriel's Trombone," a satirical play which eventually would open (and quickly close) in Atlantic City in November 1923. He had recently finished writing "The Cruise of the Rolling Junk" – a long, humorous account of a motoring trip that he and Zelda had taken to the South – but the manuscript did not sell quickly to a magazine, and Fitzgerald had to spend some time cutting and reworking it. He was writing a movie treatment for David O. Selznick, and he and Zelda were considering an offer to play the leads in a film version of *This Side of Paradise* (1920), his first novel. These projects and possibilities, together with the new demands of fatherhood, kept Fitzgerald from providing copy for Perkins.

Perkins prodded Fitzgerald, asking that the texts of the stories be delivered by 15 May, then by 1 June, but Fitzgerald missed both deadlines. He promised copy for 15 June but was unable to deliver. Eventually he sent the stories, in groups of three or four, during late June and early July. (The correspondence with Perkins does not disclose whether he sent magazine tearsheets or typescripts, or whether he revised the texts before sending them to Perkins for typesetting.) Perkins had texts of all of the stories in hand by 6 July; by the 17th he was forwarding batches of proofs to Fitzgerald, as these proofs came from the Scribner Press. There was some confusion when an office worker sent one set of proofs immediately back to the press rather than to Fitzgerald for checking; Scribners also neglected to send Fitzgerald a proof of "Porcelain and Pink" until *Tales* was almost ready to be printed. Fitzgerald and Perkins stayed in contact by letter and telegram, however, and Fitzgerald eventually was able to read and revise proof for the entire collection.

3. DISAGREEMENTS

Two differences of opinion arose during the production of *Tales of the Jazz Age* – one early, before Fitzgerald had submitted the texts of the stories, and one later, after Perkins had read them. The first problem involved the title of the collection, which the Scribners salesmen did not like. Perkins explained the situation to Fitzgerald in an 8 May letter:

> When we got our selling force together for a conference before they went out on their first selling trip for the fall, there were loud and precipitous criticisms of the title, "Tales of the Jazz Age". They feel that there is an intense reaction against all jazz and that the word whatever implication it actually has, will itself injure the book. . . . Your own instinct has proved so good that you ought not to be overruled by numbers, but give the point consideration.

Fitzgerald answered at length on 11 May, arguing that the title was indeed appropriate for the collection. "It will be bought by *my own personal public*, that is by the countless flappers and college kids who think I am a sort of oracle," he said. "It is better to have a title + a title-connection that is a has-been than one that is a never-will-be. The splash of the flapper movement was too big to have quite died down—the outer rings are still moving." To amuse Perkins he added: "I might possibly call my book *Nine Humans and Fourteen Dummies* if you'd permit such a long title (in this case I'd have to figure out how many humans + how many dummies there are in the collection)." Perkins was convinced, and the title was not changed.

Perkins mounted more serious objections to "Tarquin of Cheapside," a story which Fitzgerald had originally composed at Princeton and published in the *Nassau Literary Magazine* in April 1917. He had revised and expanded the story and had republished it in the *Smart Set* for February 1921. The narrative is an imagined rendering of the genesis of William Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*; the story suggests that the Bard was himself a rapist (a seducer, really) and that his act inspired him to write the poem. On 2 August, as the stories were being typeset, Perkins sent these comments on "Tarquin" to Fitzgerald:

I think it would shock many people not because of the particular crime recorded, but because of the identity of the man accused of it. The crime is a peculiarly repugnant one for it involves violence, generally requires unconsciousness, is associated with negroes. All this would make no difference, or little, if the story were artistically convincing: I don't think it is. The narrative is not adequate to the ending. The poem, with its philosophical beginning and all, does not suggest (I think) the psychology of an author in the situation you present. Anyhow, this is my view, – for your consideration, if you will give it.

Fitzgerald spent a week correcting and revising the proofs and thinking about Perkins' objections to "Tarquin." In his return letter he defended the story, citing authorities:

It first appeared in the Nassau Literary Magazine at Princeton and Katherine Fullerton Gerould reviewing the issue for the Daily Princetonian gave it high praise, called it "beautifully written" and tickled me with the first public praise my writing has ever had. When Mencken printed it in The Smart Set it drew letters of praise from George O'Niell, the poet and Zoe Akins. Structurally it is almost perfect and next to *The Off-Shore Pirate* I like it better than any story I have ever written.

If you insist I will cut it out though very much against my better judgement and Zelda's. It was even starred by O'Brien in his year book of the short story and mentioned by Blanche Cotton Williams in the preface to the last O Henry Memorial collection. Please tell me what you think.

Perkins conceded. "As for 'Tarquin', I have left it in," he wrote on 15 August. "My objections . . . arise from the fact that people have a sort of reverence for Shakespeare, although of course they know that he was none too well behaved."

4. DESIGN

Fitzgerald also worked with Perkins that spring to give *Tales of the Jazz Age* an appearance markedly different from that of his first three books. He paid attention to the typography, casing, and dust jacket of the volume, exerting as much control as he could over the physical look of the final product. Early in April, Fitzgerald sent this request to Perkins: "For jacket I should suggest something like cover of last Smart Set with girls + men instead of drunks. You

know like a Vanity Fair cover." Fitzgerald had disliked the dust-jacket illustration on *The Beautiful and Damned*, a two-color drawing by the artist W. E. Hill showing a man and woman who looked very much like Fitzgerald and Zelda. "The girl is excellent of course," Fitzgerald had written to Perkins in January, but the man, he thought, was "a debauched edition of me." "He looks like a sawed-off young tough in his first dinner-coat," the author added. Fitzgerald wanted a different illustrator for *Tales of the Jazz Age*.

The style of artwork that Fitzgerald suggested for *Tales* was light and amusing, of a piece with his descriptions in the table of contents. The magazine covers he mentions, for *Smart Set* and *Vanity Fair*, were illustrated with mildly satirical drawings of sophisticated, well-dressed young men and women.[2] Fitzgerald does not mention him by name, but the illustrator most closely associated with this style of artwork during the 1920s was John Held, Jr. (1889–1958), a cartoonist and writer whose drawings were featured in magazines and on book jackets and posters throughout the Jazz Age.[3] Scribners did engage Held to provide the jacket art for *Tales of the Jazz Age* – and for the book text of Fitzgerald's play *The Vegetable* in 1923. Held produced an assortment of energetic flapper figures for *Tales*, including a drummer, a saxophonist, and several dancing couples. Certainly Held's figures caught the spirit of the lighter stories and plays in the collection, though they hardly fit the tone of the better narratives – especially of "Diamond" and "May Day." Fitzgerald, though, was pleased with Held's work: "The jacket is wonderful," he wrote to Perkins, who had sent him a trial proof – "the best yet and exactly what I wanted."

[2] For a good example see Held's cover for the April 1921 issue of *Vanity Fair*. The figures are quite similar to those on the dust jacket of *Tales of the Jazz Age*.

[3] See Shelley Armitage, *John Held, Jr.: Illustrator of the Jazz Age* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987).

5. FINAL CHOICES

Fitzgerald had by now settled on which stories he wished to include. In the published edition of *Tales of the Jazz Age* they are as follows: "The Jelly-Bean," *Metropolitan Magazine* 52 (October 1920); "The Camel's Back," *Saturday Evening Post* 192 (24 April 1920); "May Day," *Smart Set* 62 (July 1920); "Porcelain and Pink," *Smart Set* 61 (January 1920); "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," *Smart Set* 68 (June 1922); "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," *Collier's* 69 (27 May 1922); "Tarquin of Cheapside," *Nassau Literary Magazine* 73 (April 1917) and *Smart Set* 64 (February 1921); "'O Russet Witch!'" *Metropolitan Magazine* 53 (February 1921); "The Lees of Happiness," *Chicago Sunday Tribune* (12 December 1920); "Mr. Icky," *Smart Set* 61 (March 1920); and "Jemina," *Nassau Literary Magazine* 72 (December 1916) and *Vanity Fair* 15 (January 1921).

Tales of the Jazz Age was published on 22 September 1922 in a first printing of 8,000 copies and priced at $1.75. The collection had a good initial sale; two more impressions, each of 3,000 copies, were issued in October. Most of the notices were positive or at least neutral, though surprisingly few reviewers singled out "May Day" and "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" for special praise. Many book critics took their cues from the playful appearance of the jacket and the irreverent tone of the table of contents. An anonymous reviewer in the 28 October *Baltimore Evening Sun*, for example, found the stories "tossed off in rather debonair manner to show how easy it all is," and the unnamed reviewer for the 8 October *San Francisco Chronicle* called them "pictures of fast, frivolous and futile life." Stephen Vincent Benét, writing for the 18 November *Literary Review of the New York Evening Post*, felt that the collection left Fitzgerald "in every sense where he was before." Fanny Butcher, in the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* for 31 December, called the narratives "charming" and "amusing," and John Farrar, writing in the 8 October *New York Herald*, complimented Fitzgerald's "youthful verve and his virtuosity." H. L. Mencken, who had admired *This Side of Paradise*, found *Tales* to be disappointing: "The spread between Fitzgerald's best work and

his worst is extraordinarily wide," he noted in the July 1923 *Smart Set*. The most discerning review came from Fitzgerald's Princeton friend Edmund Wilson in the November 1922 *Vanity Fair*: the stories presented "the Fitzgerald harlequinade with a minimum of magazine hokum," wrote Wilson, though he was contemptuous of "The Lees of Happiness," calling it an exploration of "the nuances of the ridiculous." The press in Fitzgerald's home town was favorable, typified by Woodward Boyd's "The Fitzgerald Legend," a long and blandly sympathetic profile of the author published in the 10 December *St. Paul Daily News*. Fitzgerald's presentation of his stories reminded Boyd of a "happy father exhibiting his children." The book was "well-constructed," and the stories showed "vitality" and "humor."

6. EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

The selections in this Cambridge edition can be divided editorially into two groups: the stories and one-act plays published by Fitzgerald in the original 1922 Scribners edition of *Tales of the Jazz Age*, and the seven additional stories, which appeared before the formal publication of *The Great Gatsby*, his next novel, on 10 April 1925, and which were never included by Fitzgerald in one of his own short-fiction collections. These two groups will be discussed separately in the textual commentary that follows.

Texts from the 1922 edition:

Ten of the eleven items in the original edition of *Tales* have a relatively simple textual history. No prepublication materials – manuscripts, typescripts, or proofs – appear to survive for any of these items. (The exception is "The Lees of Happiness," discussed below.) To establish the texts for the ten stories and plays one must work with the serial versions and with the texts published in the 1922 Scribners edition. The serial texts have been collated against the collected texts, and the numerous variants noted – substantive and accidental. No copy-text has been formally declared. Instead

the procedure followed is that outlined in G. Thomas Tanselle's seminal article "Editing without a Copy-Text" (*Studies in Bibliography* 47 [1994]: 1–22).[4]

For editorial purposes, equal authority is vested in the serial and collected versions. When variants are present, the editor has chosen the readings judged authorial and has recorded the decisions in the apparatus. Substantive variants present almost no problems; the differences between serial and book versions appear, without exception, to be authorial; there is no evidence of editorial tampering or of unwarranted "improvements" by copy-editors or compositors. This is not a surprising circumstance, since Maxwell Perkins was not an intrusive line editor, nor were the Scribners copy-editors heavyhanded with Fitzgerald's prose. There were no readings in the stories that might have invited bowdlerization.

As for post-publication alterations, Fitzgerald asked for only one change in the printed plates; at 232.6, the word "and" was altered to "an" – a change accepted for the Cambridge text and recorded in the apparatus.

Fitzgerald made significant revisions to the serial text of each story that he included in *Tales of the Jazz Age*. These revisions, recorded in the apparatus of this volume, will repay close study by the scholar and critic. They show the author at work, polishing language and dialogue and sharpening characterization. The variants for "The Camel's Back" and "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" are especially revealing of Fitzgerald's habits of revision.[5] Other changes are even more significant: at the end of the *Smart Set* version of "May Day," for instance, Fitzgerald only hinted at Gordon's suicide; for *Tales* he made the suicide explicit. He revised a passage in the same story (at 66.22 of this volume) to attribute Gordon's problems both to alcohol and to a general failure of will; in the serial text Gordon's difficulties had been blamed only on

[4] For elaboration and discussion of the applicability of Tanselle's method to Fitzgerald's texts, see the Cambridge edition of *This Side of Paradise*, ed. James L. W. West III (1995): xl–xliv.

[5] David J. F. Kelley, "The Polishing of 'Diamond,'" *Fitzgerald Newsletter*, no. 40 (Winter 1968).

drinking.[6] A final example: Fitzgerald pointed the moral more strongly at the end of the *Tales* text of "'O Russet Witch!'" than he had in the magazine version. The rejected serial readings for all of these passages can be found in the apparatus.

The single story in this volume for which pre-publication material survives is "The Lees of Happiness." An unmarked carbon typescript of an early version of "Lees" is preserved among Fitzgerald's papers at Princeton. Collation of this text with the two published texts (serial and first edition) reveals that Fitzgerald made heavy revisions, probably on the lost ribbon copy, and then likely had a fresh typescript prepared for the compositors at the *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, where the story first appeared. The collation has uncovered no evidence of editorial meddling or bowdlerization between the carbon typescript text and the *Tribune* or the first-edition texts. The revisions to the typescript text were so extensive, though, that it effectively constitutes a separate version of the story. The substantive variants between this early carbon and later forms of the text are included in a separate table in the apparatus. The carbon has been useful as a source of accidental emendations, since its punctuation and word division are closer to Fitzgerald's hand than either the newspaper or first-edition texts.

The dummy of *Tales*, mentioned above, provides an early printed text of several pages of "The Jelly-Bean." Scribners had approximately the first 2,200 words of the story typeset and printed off for the dummy so that bookshop owners could see the type face in which the published text would appear. Collation of this dummy text with the corresponding text of the first edition reveals that Scribners set the dummy section from a copy of the serial text of "The Jelly-Bean," from *Metropolitan Magazine*, October 1920. These dummy variants are marked with the siglum D in the apparatus; they provide no source of new readings for the Cambridge text, since all of them match variants in the serial text.

[6] Colin S. Cass, "Fitzgerald's Second Thoughts about 'May Day': A Collation and Study," *Fitzgerald/Hemingway Annual 1970*: 69–95.