



The Perfect Hour: The Romance of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ginevra King, His First Love

James L.W. Iii West

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F. Scott Fitzgerald was a handsome, ambitious sophomore at Princeton when he fell in love for the first time. Ginevra King, though only sixteen, was beautiful, socially poised, and blessed with the confidence that considerable wealth can bring.

Their romance began instantly, flourished in heartfelt letters, and quickly ran its course—but Scott never forgot it. Now, for the first time, scholar and biographer James L. W. West III tells the story of the youthful passion that shaped Scott Fitzgerald's life as a writer.

When Scott and Ginevra met in January 1915, the rest of the world was at war, but America remained a haven for young people who could afford to have a good time. Privileged and mildly rebellious, the two were swept together in a whirl of dances, parties, campus weekends, and chaperoned visits to New York.

“For heaven’s sake *don’t* idealize me!” Ginevra warned in one of the many letters she sent to Scott, but of course that’s just what he did—for the next two decades. Though he fell in love with Zelda Sayre soon after learning of Ginevra’s engagement to a well-to-do midwesterner, Scott drew on memories of Ginevra for his most unforgettable female characters—Isabelle Borgé and Rosalind Connage in *This Side of Paradise*, Judy Jones in “Winter Dreams,” and above all Daisy Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby*. Transformed by Scott’s art, Ginevra became a new American heroine who inspired an entire generation.

From the Hardcover edition.



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