

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of the Liberal Arts

**TEMPORARILY DEVOTEDLY YOURS:**

**THE LETTERS OF GINEVRA KING TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD**

A Dissertation in

English

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

December 2008

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## ABSTRACT

When Ginevra King met F. Scott Fitzgerald in St. Paul, Minnesota on January 4, 1915 there was instant chemistry between them. That night in her diary, Ginevra exclaimed, “Scott perfectly darling am dipped about.” For his part, Scott was equally smitten with Ginevra; although he was due back in Princeton immediately, Scott stayed over an extra day to spend more time with the brunette debutante from Chicago. Upon his return to Princeton, Scott immediately sent Ginevra a special delivery letter; according to the customs of the time, such a letter constituted Scott’s formal declaration that he was interested in pursuing a correspondence with Ginevra. A vivacious and fun-loving girl, Ginevra was no stranger to the importance of a “special delie” and the epistolary game was afoot. For the next two years, Ginevra and Scott carried on an postal romance filled with exuberance, idealism, misunderstanding and remarkable candor. In the end, their letters could not bridge the distance: social, economic, and physical, that separated Ginevra’s background from Scott’s, but from the beginning of their relationship both Ginevra and Scott devoted considerable energy and time those ends. Although Ginevra destroyed Scott’s letters, at his request, in 1917 he carried copies of her letters with him for the rest of his life. In more than 65 letters, Ginevra reveals both parties in ways that no previous biographer has fully understood. Always complex and reflective, often funny and clever, Ginevra’s letters to Scott offer readers a glimpse of teenage romance in the last days of letter-writing, a peek into the world of wealth and privilege depicted in Fitzgerald’s writings, and the remarkable story of Ginevra’s attempt to balance her desire for independence with the restrictions of the circles that circumscribed her life. For more than 50 years, Ginevra King’s existence has been little more than a

footnote to Fitzgerald's biography and a point of speculation with respect to Fitzgerald's fiction. Using a wealth of unpublished archival records and contemporary editorial methods, this project offers scholars the opportunity to experience Ginevra King's letters to Fitzgerald in a way that has been impossible until now.

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## Acknowledgments

Ginevra King's daughter, Ginevra Hunter, graciously granted permission for me to edit and publish her mother's letters to F. Scott Fitzgerald. Without her kindness and the support of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society, this project could not have gone forward.

James L. W. West III and Christopher Clausen have been patient teachers, wise counselors, generous critics, and demanding editors since my first days at Penn State. They have helped me to develop and clarify my thoughts, and they have encouraged me to refine my prose. I am a better scholar for their efforts.

Mark Morrisson, Robin Schulze, and Bill Joyce have all provided astute advice and counsel over the last several years—often on a moment's notice. I thank them for their assistance.

Jeanne Alexander, editorial assistant to the Cambridge Edition of the F. Scott Fitzgerald's Works, carefully and thoroughly proofread the texts of the letters. Every editor can use an extra set of eyes and Jeanne was there when I needed her.

My time at Penn State has been made richer by the friendship and support of Joyce Wilusz, Gregg and Liz Baptista, Steve Bertolino, and Rochelle Zuck. Matt Jachim and Steve Smith encouraged me from afar.

Robert Baker is my model as a teacher and he has blessed me with his friendship.

My parents, Robert and Linda Bleil, have provided emotional and practical support at every turn. I am grateful to them for so many things, but most of all for placing great emphasis on education. They were my first teachers.

Finally, Heather Murray has been my partner at home and in the office for these many years. Her gifts are too numerous to mention.

With all his honours on, he sighed for one  
Who, say astonished critics, lived at home;  
Did little jobs about the house with skill  
And nothing else; could whistle; would sit still  
Or potter round the garden; answered some  
Of his long marvellous letters but kept none.

—W. H. Auden, *from* “Who’s Who”

For  
G.B.B.  
1910-1988



## Editorial Introduction

Ginevra King, Zelda Sayre, and Sheilah Graham played uniquely assigned roles in F. Scott Fitzgerald's life. They were his muses and his fates, inspiring his art and inhabiting his world. By studying them we can learn much about Fitzgerald and his literary works, but until recently Ginevra King has remained in the shadows. With the publication of her letters to Fitzgerald we can now more fully and accurately understand her place in his life and fiction. If it were not for the generosity of her daughter and granddaughters, however, her letters might have been lost forever.

In the spring of 2003, Ginevra King's granddaughter, Ginevra (Giny) Chandler, was emptying a box of family papers when she rediscovered her grandmother's teenage diary, together with typewritten copies of her letters to Fitzgerald. This was not the first time that Giny Chandler had seen the documents and recognized their value; she had first seen them as a teenager, but had not been allowed to read them. During her lifetime, Ginevra King Pirie had allowed only a few people to read her letters to Fitzgerald and, when she died in December 1980 she left no instructions with respect to her diary or the copies of the letters. Twenty-three years after Ginevra King's death, her daughter, Ginevra Hunter, and her granddaughters, Giny Chandler and Cynthia Hunter, donated the items to Princeton University Library in the summer of 2003. In the five years since then, fewer than a dozen persons have read the letters. With the publication of this volume, they are available to scholars, students, and the curious public for the first time. Before we can proceed to the letters, however, we must give careful consideration to the form and to the substance of the surviving documents. A careful understanding of both

the physical documents and the intellectual content is essential. The letters restore Ginevra King to her rightful place alongside Zelda Sayre and Sheilah Graham in Fitzgerald's biography; they also illuminate Fitzgerald's apprentice fiction, written during his time at Princeton, and create a space in which Ginevra King can speak for herself.

### ***Editorial Theory and Editions of Letters***

Unlike the rules for editing many types of public documents (e.g., public records, literary texts, speeches, essays, and drama), the rules, such as they are, for editing personal letters have developed *ad hoc* over the last two hundred years. Whereas the editor of public works generally, and literary works in particular, can look to the established guidelines set down by W. W. Gregg, Fredson Bowers, Philip Gaskell, G. Thomas Tanselle, and Jerome McGann over the last seventy years, the editor of a collection of letters must cobble together his or her own principles from a small body of scholarship and a good deal of common sense. While many critics have stepped forward to criticize the inconsistencies that arise from the lack of set principles, the very nature of letters thwarts most efforts to establish all but the most basic boundaries for their editing. Although editors, critics, and readers all agree that an edition of letters must be presented in a way that makes them accessible to users, the word "accessible" has as many definitions as there are editors of letters.

In 1958, Robert Halsband, the editor of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters, outlined the fundamental problems that challenge every editor who attempts to bring forth a volume of letters: which letters to include, how to arrange them, what kind of text to create, how to treat erasures and inadvertent errors, which items to select for

annotation, and how much of the editor's voice should be present in the final text.

Halsband championed texts that:

Print more letters as though they were worth reading for their own sake.

Unless we print letters in such a form as to allow them to be read with ease and pleasure we are in danger of creating a coterie scholarship, when we will only read each other's footnotes; and the ranks of monumental editions will, in truth, be only monuments.<sup>1</sup>

Fifty years after Halsband wrote those lines, the soundness of his advice is still obvious, but too often common sense has been replaced by senseless pedantry when it comes to the editing of letters. In 1975, Stephen E. Meats demonstrated ample common sense when reviewing three recently published collections of letters related to Ring Lardner and F. Scott Fitzgerald.<sup>2</sup> Although Meats does not refer to Halsband's essay quoted above, he sets forth a series of principles to guide editors of correspondence. Before enumerating the specifics, however, Meats, like Halsband above, pauses to offer his own version of the golden rule for editing letters: "*The editor must make a supreme effort to avoid limiting the potential usefulness of his edition in any way*" [emphasis his]. Careful readers will, of course, quickly spot the difficulty inherent in both formulations: unlike the editor of public works, whose primary responsibility is to transmit an accurate text,

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Halsband, "Editing the Letters of Letter-Writers," *Studies in Bibliography* 11 (1958): 37-38.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen E. Meats, "The Responsibilities of an Editor of Correspondence," *Costerus* 3 (1975): 151.

the editor of correspondence is intimately involved in both the transmission and the *recreation* of those texts.

Meats sets forth five principles to guide would-be editors toward his golden rule. For Meats, the editor must “view his edition as a reference work,” present faithful texts of the letters, select a consistent format that suits the particular letters under consideration, assemble all factual information necessary to comprehend the letters, and provide a thorough index to the letters.<sup>3</sup> While these principles may preserve the texts of letters they may leave readers confused about how to interpret those texts. In pursuit of the most useful presentation, Meats neglects a large portion of the readership for collections of letters. While scholars intimately familiar with a particular subject will undoubtedly benefit from Meats’s approach, the majority of readers who take up a volume of letters require a stronger narrative voice than his approach suggests. Personal correspondence, as we will see later, is a much more delicate affair. The editing of personal correspondence requires a close partnership between the editor and the documents themselves.

Halsband and Meats each offer useful advice to the editor of letters. The editor of must try to accommodate the needs of all readers, while realizing that such a goal is virtually impossible to achieve. Editorial choices are often shaped by the scope of the collection (multiple correspondents versus a single pair of correspondents), the number of letters involved, the availability of the documents (with respect both to access to the original documents and to the completeness of the collection), and the nature of the

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: 151-56.

documents themselves. Every editor hopes that his or her efforts will be favorably received by those who consult the work. In order to balance the competing claims of editorial theories, the editor must always be aware of the manner in which these theories have developed over the course of the twentieth century.

When Halsband published his remarks on the editing of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters in 1958 he was applying eighteenth- and nineteenth-century attitudes to his work. While printed editions of personal letters had been popular since the eighteenth century, they were regarded as informal narratives for popular consumption and were meant to provide edifying reading. (One thinks, for example, of Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son, or Rilke's letters to Franz Kappus.) Halsband applied strict standards of transcription to his editions of Lady Montagu's letters, but he continued to privilege readability over strict accuracy. As Wilmarth Lewis, the editor of the Yale edition of Horace Walpole's letters, wrote in 1963:

Eighteenth-century English editors of letters and family papers might identify someone and even elucidate a passage when the spirit moved them to do so, but these were haphazard embellishments .... As for our modern concern with the text of the letters, the eighteenth century would have found it ludicrous .... Up until our own day "editing" meant suppression rather than elucidation; not just deleting passages that might injure living persons, but cutting out what the editors thought was improper or dull, splicing letters together to "improve" them, and even on occasion altering the text. The compilers of these entertaining collections

seldom bothered to tell the reader what they had done; they slid silently into collaboration with the author after his death.<sup>4</sup>

Such editorial collusion was not limited to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Students of the Romantic period of British literature are familiar with the liberties taken in the 1884 edition of Jane Austen's letters edited by her great-nephew Edward, Baron Brabourne, and not sufficiently corrected until the third edition of the letters, reedited by Deirdre Le Faye and published in 1995. American authors faced a similar problem. The first edition of Henry James's letters, edited by Percy Lubbock in 1920, was more concerned with policing James's reputation than it was with publishing full texts of the letters themselves. In addition to the heavy excisions demanded by James's heirs, Lubbock was compelled to include only a small fraction of James's surviving correspondence. Over the last eighty-eight years, more than a dozen collections of James's letters have been published, and each one has followed a different set of editorial principles—each edition promising more accurate and inclusive texts. For the editor of letters, one size never fits all.

The many ways in which editors treat the letters entrusted to their care is the most obvious way in which an editor, to borrow from Betty T. Bennett, is neither blameless nor neutral. Drawing on G. Thomas Tanselle's argument that "any text that a textual critic produces is itself a product of literary criticism," Bennett argues that the same can be said for the editing of letters; her arguments lie between the full-scale intervention

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<sup>4</sup> Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis, "Editing Private Correspondence," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 107, no. 4 (1963): 289.

practiced by Percy Lubbock in 1920 and the more rigid formula proposed by Stephen Meats in 1975. Bennett argues that the editor of correspondence has unique opportunities and responsibilities. She writes:

In transcribing word after word, one comes as close to the act of writing the letters as possible and can consider words as they unfold into a thought, a thought into a series of thoughts. One sees themes initiated, dropped, alluded to, denied, enhanced. In a kind of intellectual voyeurism, the physicality of acknowledging, piece by piece, the structure of words into sentences, paragraphs, and letters constitutes the microscopic study of a subject that allows one the opportunity to organize the meaning of those pieces in a closer approximation of what the subject intended.... The strongest claim for the critical implications of editing occurs, therefore, in the editorial process of accurately determining a context in order to grasp a letter's significance and then finally to turn that significance into a further judgment about historical context. Thus, a documentary technique finds reflection in Jerome McGann's larger thesis of the interactive nexus of people and forces, without the abdication of authorial intention.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of Ginevra King's letters, it is impossible for the editor to be neutral. As the originals were likely destroyed, the only texts of the letters available are the typewritten copies that Fitzgerald requested his typist to make; in the act of transcribing the letters

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<sup>5</sup> Betty T. Bennett, "The Editor of Letters as Critic: A Denial of 'Blamless Neutrality'," *Text* 6 (1994): 218.

from these copies, I have become intimately familiar with Ginevra's tone, style, and voice. Such familiarity has made interpretation of the documents possible, and has allowed me to intervene occasionally in order to restore the flow, rhythm, and punctuation of her sentences. In addition, the close familiarity bred by transcription has allowed me to recognize and interpret the letters as individual texts and not as the single document that Fitzgerald inadvertently created.

Once Fitzgerald had collected Ginevra's letters into a single document, he was able to control his memories of her. The modern editor, however, need not observe this practice. A monolithic approach to collections of letters has troubled the editors of correspondence for many years. In addition to the problems of editorial excision and collusion discussed above, another problem with collections of letters is the matter of uniformity, both in the treatment of the letters and in their treatment of their subject. While Leon Edel, the best-known editor of James's letters, and Nigel Nicolson, the editor of Virginia Woolf's letters, have acknowledged the many difficulties facing the editor of large collections of personal letters, the editors of more limited collections face challenges of their own. The editor of any collection hopes that his or her edition has a long and useful life. The editor may also fear the discovery of a large cache of unknown letters. While unknown or undiscovered letters perpetuate the thrill of the quest, every editor must proceed with the best evidence and tools available at the time. In the case of Fitzgerald's letters, these caveats have produced several collections of letters that sometimes are in conflict with one another in their interpretations.



## ***Fitzgerald's Letters and Their Editors***

No complete edition of Fitzgerald's surviving letters currently exists. Such a collection would make a useful addition to the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, but current plans for the series call for three volumes at most of his selected letters to conclude the edition. When those volumes are published we may find reason to disagree with the editorial treatment of the individual texts, but at least we will have a set of consistent principles with which to contend. Until that time, those interested in Fitzgerald must consult a number of volumes of correspondence which illuminate only partial slices of his life and work.

The first collection of Fitzgerald's letters was very much in the Percy Lubbock mode of the 1920s. Edited and introduced by Andrew Turnbull, Scottie Fitzgerald's childhood playmate and a 1942 graduate of Princeton, *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (1963) followed in the footsteps of Turnbull's *Scott Fitzgerald: A Biography* from the previous year.<sup>6</sup> While Turnbull's *Letters* offers readers a rich and very readable collection of letters, the volume (like Turnbull's biography) is overly concerned with a positive portrayal of Fitzgerald as a devoted father, husband, and friend. Turnbull's arrangement of the letters, by correspondent and then by date, is doubly confusing. On one hand, this arrangement offers readers the opportunity to observe Fitzgerald in sustained correspondence with one person at a time; on the other hand, such an

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<sup>6</sup> See: Andrew Turnbull, ed., *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (New York: Scribner's, 1963). And also: Andrew Turnbull, *Scott Fitzgerald: A Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1962).

arrangement produces a narrative that is altogether too tidy. In Turnbull's edition, each section of letters becomes a distinct narrative, a single sermon from Fitzgerald to his recipient. In addition, Turnbull's editorial methods make it very difficult to observe Fitzgerald at a particular time in his life through his letters to more than one person. This task requires flipping back and forth through the volume without the aid of a chronological index. Perhaps the most troubling aspect of this collection is that it includes only Fitzgerald's side of the correspondence. For Turnbull, the words of the great man himself were sufficient. In June 2008, Jonathan Yardley of the *Washington Post* reflected on the impact of Turnbull's biography on Fitzgerald's reputation:

To my mind Turnbull's book comes close to being an ideal literary biography. To be sure, it isn't perfect. First published in 1962, it misses out on the bits and pieces of Fitzgeraldiana subsequently unearthed by other researchers (none of which really is important) and at times Turnbull quotes at excessive length documents that are less revealing than he believes, but in the areas that matter most—empathy for and understanding of his subject, a keen but clearheaded appreciation of his work, a prose style of genuine elegance and grace—he has no rivals in the Fitzgerald camp and precious few outside it.<sup>7</sup>

If we look beyond Yardley's unrestrained admiration for Turnbull, his praise offers us several important guidelines for the editing of letters: empathy, understanding and clear-

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<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Yardley, "Andrew Turnbull's Great Fitzgerald," *Washington Post*, June 7, 2008.

headedness, but Turnbull's edition of Fitzgerald's letters offers us only empathy. All the same, his edition of Fitzgerald's letters remains an important contribution to our understanding of the man and his many relationships.

In 1980 and, fourteen years later in 1994, Matthew J. Bruccoli provided a tonic to Turnbull's overly sentimental Fitzgerald with the publication of *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald* and *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Life in Letters*.<sup>8</sup> Bruccoli, like Turnbull, tried to present a comprehensive view of Fitzgerald's life and career, but these editions preserve the letters in chronological order. The first of Bruccoli's volumes also includes selected letters received by Fitzgerald so that readers may, on occasion, observe the ways in which Fitzgerald's letters answer those that he received. These collections, however, are at times overwhelmed by Professor Bruccoli's editorial apparatus. The rigidity of Bruccoli's apparatus enforces his own reading of the letters. Both volumes provide comprehensive notations on the form and the location of the original documents, and both provide a wealth of bibliographic information about the letters. Not only does Bruccoli preserve Fitzgerald's stylistic quirks—Fitzgerald often used a plus sign in place of the ampersand, for example—these volumes attempt to preserve every underline, every circle around a word, every mark that Fitzgerald made on the page. While this information gives us a sense of the ways in which Fitzgerald inscribed his own letters, the apparatus obstructs the reader's access to the text. One or two examples of Fitzgerald's habits,

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew J. Bruccoli and Margaret M. Duggan, eds., *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (New York: Random House, 1980).; Matthew J. Bruccoli, ed., *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Life in Letters* (New York: Scribner, 1994).

along with the preservation of his underlining to indicate emphasis, would surely have been enough. While Turnbull privileged the texts of the letters, Professor Bruccoli seems to have constructed a shrine to the physical documents. When this difficult apparatus is combined with slim annotations and an incomplete biographical table (in *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Life in Letters*), the reader must take too much at face value.

In between the large collections published by Turnbull and Bruccoli, three smaller collections of Fitzgerald's letters appeared. The first of these editions, *Scott Fitzgerald: Letters to His Daughter*, edited by Turnbull, was published in 1965 and simply reprinted the letters which Turnbull had published in his larger collection with an introduction by Scottie. In editorial style and apparatus it perpetuates the flaws of Turnbull's earlier volume.<sup>9</sup> The second collection, *Dear Scott/Dear Max: the Fitzgerald-Perkins Correspondence*, edited by John Kuehl and Jackson R. Bryer, is considerably more substantial and provides the most thorough record of Fitzgerald's relationship with his editor at Scribner's, Maxwell Perkins.<sup>10</sup> Kuehl and Bryer set a high standard for the editing of the correspondence between two persons. A significant portion of their preface is worth quoting here:

The editorial procedures adopted in this book have grown out of our conception of it as a *narrative* [their emphasis] involving two principal

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<sup>9</sup> Andrew Turnbull, ed., *Scott Fitzgerald: Letters to His Daughter* (New York: Scribner, 1965).

<sup>10</sup> John Kuehl and Jackson R. Bryer, eds., *Dear Scott/Dear Max: The Fitzgerald-Perkins Correspondence* (New York: Scribner, 1971).

characters: Maxwell E. Perkins and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Consequently, we have included only letters between the two men and only those that sustain the interest and continuity of their story.... Our view of this book as a *narrative* rather than a group of isolated documents has led us to exclude several letters included by Andrew Turnbull ... which seemed to bog down. We have also felt free to cut within letters, supplying five dots for the deletion of an entire paragraph and three for an elision inside a paragraph. It should be noted, however, that the letters appear here exactly as they were written—typographical errors and all.<sup>11</sup>

*Dear Scott/Dear Max* is an invaluable volume, not only for Fitzgerald scholarship generally, but also because it explicitly acknowledges the presence of the editor in a published collection of letters and because it recognizes that a collection of letters can be seen as a narrative. As a published work, it also strikes a balance between the lack of apparatus in Turnbull's editions and the overly full apparatus of the larger Brucoli volumes. And yet, we must wonder, why should Kuehl and Bryer choose which portions of the letters are interesting? As Halsband and Meats have argued, these omissions and exclusions restrict the ways in which readers can make use of the documents.

Shortly after the publication of *Dear Scott/Dear Max*, Brucoli weighed in with a volume of the correspondence between Fitzgerald and his agent, Harold Ober. That volume, *As Ever, Scott Fitz: Letters Between F. Scott Fitzgerald and His Literary Agent Harold Ober, 1919-1940*, served as both a companion and as a counterpoint to *Dear*

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., v..

*Scott/Dear Max*.<sup>12</sup> *As Ever, Scott Fitz* deepened our understanding of Fitzgerald's life as a professional author and revealed the extent of Fitzgerald's personal debts to Ober, but it was also a volley in a struggle between the supporters of Perkins and those of Ober for the dominant role in furthering Fitzgerald's professional career. As an editorial project, *As Ever, Scott Fitz* also demonstrates the effort required to produce a diplomatic, or exact, transcription of a holograph (or even of a typed) letter. Brucoli's introduction to the volume contains a complete set of instructions for creating such a transcription, but offers no rationale for this choice. While it is certainly useful to produce diplomatic transcriptions of literary manuscripts, letters are not works of literature, and an excessive devotion to technical purity ends up revealing little of substance about the content of the letters. Brucoli's earliest volume of letters is scrupulous in its attention to detail but, like his later volumes, offers little in the way of argument in support of his choices and very thin footnotes. While both *Dear Scott/Dear Max* and *As Ever, Scott Fitz* are open to differences of interpretation, only Kuehl and Bryer are open to this editorial discussion.

The most recent collection of Fitzgerald's letters is *Dear Scott, Dearest Zelda: The Love Letters of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald* (2002), edited by Jackson R. Bryer and Cathy W. Barks.<sup>13</sup> This collection is not only nearest in theme to the present volume of

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<sup>12</sup> Matthew J. Brucoli, ed., *As Ever, Scott Fitz: Letters between F. Scott Fitzgerald and His Literary Agent Harold Ober, 1919-1940* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972).

<sup>13</sup> Jackson R. Bryer and Cathy W. Barks, eds., *Dear Scott, Dearest Zelda: The Love Letters of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald* (New York: St. Martin's, 2002).

Ginevra King's letters, but it also provides a finely nuanced treatment of the letters. As Bryer and Barks write in their preface:

The Fitzgeralds' courtship and marriage has become a compelling and enduring part of our literary history. The new letters, placed chronologically with those collected previously, allow us to view their relationship in a more evenhanded manner than heretofore has been possible.<sup>14</sup>

This approach, to present clear texts of the letters in readable, accessible texts, is at the heart of the present volume. Zelda Fitzgerald and, to a much lesser extent, Ginevra King are known to-day through their associations with Scott Fitzgerald. While Zelda has achieved her own place in our literary history through Nancy Milford's biography and Brucoli's edition of Zelda's writings, Ginevra King has been at the mercy of the few scraps and many insinuations provided by Fitzgerald's biographers.<sup>15</sup> *Dear Scott, Dearest Zelda* provides a model framework for an edition of personal correspondence that carefully balances respect for the text with the usefulness of the volume. Bryer and Barks put it this way:

In an effort to retain the distinctive flavor of Scott's and Zelda's epistolary styles, we have attempted to transcribe their letters as literally as possible, consistent with a reader's ability to understand them.... In providing

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., xiii..

<sup>15</sup> Nancy Milford, *Zelda: A Biography* (New York: Harper, 1970).; Zelda Fitzgerald, *The Collected Writings*, ed. Matthew J. Brucoli (New York: Collier, 1992).

footnotes we have attempted to strike a balance between giving needed information and overburdening the reader with excessive scholarly apparatus.<sup>16</sup>

This attitude toward both editorial intervention and the necessary apparatus seems entirely sensible; the approach heavily influences this volume. In one significant way, however, this volume departs from every previous volume of Fitzgerald-related letters: the text of every surviving letter from Ginevra King to F. Scott Fitzgerald appears in this volume in the order in which Ginevra composed each one.

### ***Establishing the Texts of the Letters***

Given the already complex nature of asynchronous communication, the editor of any series of letters must exercise a judicious hand when presenting letters to an audience. Just what it means to exercise a judicious hand, however, is itself a product of the editor's purpose in presenting those letters to an audience. The way that an editor understands his or her purpose influences every decision, from the manner of transcription, to the editorial intervention, and to the annotations, emendations, and introductory matter that frame the letters. In the case of Ginevra King's letters to Scott Fitzgerald, the initial purpose of this edition is to present a textually accurate transcription of all of Ginevra's surviving letters to Scott for the benefit of scholars interested both in the life of Scott Fitzgerald and in his literary career. This is why the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society has

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<sup>16</sup> Bryer and Barks, eds., *Dear Scott, Dearest Zelda: The Love Letters of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald*, xvii-xviii.



commissioned an edition of the letters. However, since Ginevra destroyed Scott's letters, at his request, while he maintained copies of hers, judicious treatment of the letters requires that the editor take pains not to try to interpret how Fitzgerald reacted to or used Ginevra's letters in ways that are not consistent with Fitzgerald's ledger, notebooks, and manuscripts. Fitzgerald left no markings on the typescript of the letters that give readers a clue to his interpretations.

One of the first tasks for the editor of Ginevra's letters is it to differentiate their current physical form from their original state. Fitzgerald himself obliged the editor to this task when, sometime after July 1917, he had a typist prepare copies of Ginevra's letters and, presumably, he destroyed the originals. He then placed the copies in a black three-ring binder and declared them his "personal and private property" on the title page. In this form they eventually passed to Fitzgerald's daughter Scottie and finally back to Ginevra herself. This ownership history is recounted in more detail in the general introduction to this volume, but for editorial purposes we must give more attention to the transmission of the texts from Ginevra's hands to our eyes. How these letters were handled over the past ninety years shaped the ways in which a small and significant number of critics read the letters and crafted a persistent image of Ginevra. That image, while it generally agrees with Scott's few direct comments on Ginevra, misrepresents the letters and the woman who originally penned them.

Ginevra's original letters were highly personal documents; each letter was a unique epistolary artifact. Even the letters themselves attest to their differences. Throughout her letters, Ginevra makes dozens of references to the type and quantity of paper used in her letters, to her penmanship, to the size of her writing, to the type of

stamps that she used, and to the small drawings that she infrequently made in the margins. Each one of these details, if they had been preserved, would add an important layer of meaning to the documents. Instead, Fitzgerald destroyed the originals and commanded regularized surrogates to be produced. These surrogates deny Ginevra's letters their uniqueness as artifacts. This regularization allowed Fitzgerald to keep the letters conveniently at hand, but they also allowed him manufacture memories of Ginevra as he wished her to be. Throughout his life Fitzgerald needed the guidance and support of each of his three muses, but he tried to control their influence and their actions. A writer possessed of a lesser ego might have recognized the futility of such an endeavor and probably would have given in to their influence, but Fitzgerald was no ordinary writer. By replacing Ginevra's original letters with typewritten copies, he created not merely a readable record of her correspondence but, in one sense, a single sculpture in words. Ginevra provided the raw materials, but Scott shaped their final form. In order to understand Ginevra completely, we must try to see behind the raw materials that came together in the pages of Scott's black binder.

In addition to the title page, which makes no mention of Ginevra King, the binder contains 227 pages and sixty-seven letters. Each letter begins at the top of a clean page, and follows the same format. The date of the letter, usually taken not from the original letter itself but from the postmark, is provided in square brackets in the upper left corner. The internal dating (where it exists) is slightly lower than the date in the upper right, and the rest of the letter is transcribed thereafter. Because Fitzgerald himself could not type, it seems likely that he employed a stenographer to transcribe Ginevra's letters. We do not know the name of the typist, nor Scott's instructions concerning the transcriptions,

nor the date on which the project was completed. The letters themselves, however, provide a few clues that assist in several major editorial decisions.

Ginevra's handwriting (as we know from her diary and from her handwritten letters to early Fitzgerald scholars Henry Dan Piper and Arthur Mizener) is generally clear. The transcriptions contain remarkably few direct transcription errors. One concludes that the typist quickly became familiar with Ginevra's handwriting. Additional evidence that the letters were transcribed by a professional is provided by the clean nature of the typescripts; the texts are almost entirely free from strikethroughs, strikeovers, and erasures. Ginevra's use of the em-dash as final punctuation is preserved, along with her infrequent underlining. The typescripts do, however, contain some obvious typographical errors. Examples of these errors include the transposition of letters, typing the wrong letter by moving the hands from the home position on the typewriter keyboard, and typing letters in the wrong case by holding down or not holding down the shift key. These errors suggest that while Fitzgerald employed a reasonably skilled typist, he did not encourage the typist to correct basic errors; the texts as they stand to-day were very likely the first and final copies.

Common typographical errors ("hte" for "the," for example) have been corrected silently. It is a more difficult problem, however, to recognize errors of fact or spelling that may have originated with Ginevra or have been introduced by the typist. Among examples of this second type of error, the two most common concern the use of the apostrophe in the contractions "don't," "can't," and "won't," and in the use of the em-dash as a mark of final punctuation. In these two cases, the typist seems to have attempted to transcribe the letters exactly as they appeared in the originals. A

comparison of the typed letters with other documents in Ginevra's hand shows that her apostrophes are often faint points above the line of text—easily missed during transcription. In this edition, the punctuation has therefore been uniformly supplied for the sake of clarity. Ginevra may not have been a model student, but she did know how to spell. Her diaries and surviving letters show that she was a consistent speller who rarely corrected herself. The case of the final em-dash, however, calls for more assertive editorial treatment. Throughout her letters Ginevra uses the em-dash for both internal and final punctuation. Because the typist spaced the dashes evenly in relation to the parts of one sentence and with respect to new sentences, the syntax of the sentence and the continuation or break in thought has been used as a guide to internal and final punctuation. In rare cases where Ginevra provided no punctuation (or where the typist may have overlooked it), none has been provided unless the clarity of the section demands editorial intervention. These errors, like the purely typographical errors described above, have been corrected silently.

Errors of fact and of interpretation are more complicated to handle. Perhaps the most obvious way in which the letters in this volume differ from the typed copies is that the letters in this edition are dated according to the internal evidence provided by Ginevra. Scott's transcription of the letters appear to have been dated from the postmarks and not from the letters themselves. Although Ginevra's custom was to date her letters using only the day of the week, her notations, along with internal dates and events from her diary, allow us to date the letters more accurately, according to the date of their composition. Because these dates remain speculative, they are enclosed in square brackets in this edition. Re-dating the letters allows us to shift the point of view. In this

volume the letters are presented as Ginevra wrote them, and not as Scott received or read them.

The errors described above present relatively few problems for any editor. The presence of error is clear; the solution is straightforward. At times, however, Ginevra wrote quickly and either repeated herself or omitted letters or entire words. When the source of error cannot be determined with reasonable certainty, editorial emendations are clearly indicated, along with the explanatory notes. These are supplied in footnotes.

Even without editorial intervention, the great majority of the errors found in the transcriptions of Ginevra's letters would present few problems for the reader. When it comes to the personal names and events, however, the situation is more difficult. Ginevra's letters are only her side of the correspondence with Fitzgerald, and so it is especially important for readers to have some guide to the persons, places, and events described in the documents. Matters of fact and history have been dealt with in the explanatory footnotes that accompany the letters. The typist frequently misread proper names; they have been corrected, and footnotes have been provided for the most significant persons, places, and terms. The intention is to edit the letters in a way that allows the reader to concentrate on the texts themselves and on the textual interplay between Ginevra and Scott. At the same time, I have tried to emend conservatively and not polish the prose. While it is impossible to recreate the actual letters, the versions that follow attempt to capture Ginevra's words and intentions as they flowed from her pen to paper and from there to Scott's eyes.

## Introduction

### *Rhetoric and Context in Ginevra King's Letters to F. Scott Fitzgerald*

On the evening of January 4, 1915, at holiday gathering of a group of well-connected and privileged teenagers who called St. Paul, Minnesota, home, a young Princetonian named F. Scott Fitzgerald met a Chicago debutante named Ginevra King. While each was provincially famous, he for his romantic escapades and she for her many flirtations, neither had yet made much of a mark on the world. But in the complicated relationship involving fame, curiosity and biography, their first meeting has taken on significance that neither Fitzgerald nor King could have foreseen on that winter evening more than ninety years ago. With the aid (and the hindrance) of hindsight, however, we can see that the first meeting between Fitzgerald and King set in motion an epistolary relationship that inspired much of Fitzgerald's writing, early and late, and has engaged the curiosity of Fitzgerald biographers since the end of World War II.

Between January 1915 and July 1917 Fitzgerald and King exchanged more than 130 letters, as many as three or four a week during the height of their relationship—but they saw each other fewer than ten times. By the spring of 1917 their largely imaginative relationship was over, diluted by other attractions and by rising agitation about the progress of the war in Europe. The romance was finally brought down by how little they had in common. While King was preparing to take her predestined place among the influential women of the Chicago Service League, Fitzgerald was still dreaming about the literary success that he fervently desired and was making a gentlemanly exit from his

undistinguished academic career at Princeton. Later each married, had children, and went about the business of living. Fitzgerald burned his candle at both ends and died after a heart attack in December 1940; King married twice, raised a family, continued her charity work, and died peacefully in December 1980. In the winter of 1915, however, they were simply two young people who had fallen into what passes for love among teenagers.

### ***In Pursuit of the Golden Girl***

Why should such an intense but ephemeral relationship be of interest to Fitzgerald scholars? Although Fitzgerald's fiction is heavily dependent on the events of his own life (and Ginevra King dominated Fitzgerald's life from January 1915 until January 1917), it remains nearly impossible to pinpoint most of her appearances in his fiction. While we can easily identify the Chicago debutante and champion golfer Edith Cummings as the inspiration for Jordan Baker in *The Great Gatsby* and we can recognize the influence of Zelda Fitzgerald's illness on *Tender is the Night*, we cannot point to a particular character or to a particular story and say, with clarity, that Fitzgerald had Ginevra King exclusively in mind when he wrote this or that particular line or story. Those who come to these letters looking for such conclusive evidence will leave disappointed. But the lack of an identifiable "Ginevra" character in Fitzgerald's fiction does not diminish her influence on his fiction. While it is interesting to know that Edith Cummings inspired the creation of Jordan Baker, and that Zelda's experiences with mental illness influenced *Tender is the Night*, Ginevra's influence on Fitzgerald is deeper. From their first meeting in January 1915 until his death in December 1940, Fitzgerald idealized Ginevra King and viewed her as an abstraction. While many of the women whom Fitzgerald had known provided a

“look” or dialogue for his female characters, his memories and recollections of Ginevra often provided their inner spirits. Her letters may not provide the concrete evidence of character and plot that we have come to expect from archival scholarship, but they provide something just as interesting. Through her letters, Ginevra King provides a window into the mind and soul of Fitzgerald’s typical heroine. Although she was only sixteen years old when they met, Ginevra’s letters show that, for all of her fascination with *folderol*, she was remarkably clear-sighted when it came to her future. This juxtaposition between the romantic and the realist in her nature fascinated and frustrated Fitzgerald. This duality confused the young Fitzgerald: Ginevra’s letters are filled with the answers to questions that he had obviously asked more than once. That same duality—and the tension between love and money, between romance and reality—permeates his fiction. The physical and social divisions that separated Ginevra and Scott meant that they never had their perfect hour of understanding. Her letters to him do, however, offer us a rare glimpse of the grains of sand that irritated his imagination.

After the first meeting in St. Paul, Scott and Ginevra’s correspondence moved quickly. Scott sent his first letter by special delivery, which meant that once his letter arrived at the local post office in Chicago, it would have been separated from the regular mail delivery and hand-carried by messenger directly to Ginevra’s door. Eager suitors often demonstrated their affections with small and large displays of postal extravagance; the stylish women of Ginevra’s class came to expect such treatment. Ginevra destroyed Scott’s letters (at his request) in 1917, but if they had survived, physical markers such as special delivery stamps and the letters that spilled over into two envelopes would tell us much more than we will ever know about the ways in which the exchange of letters



became theatre, with Scott and Ginevra playing both the actors and the audience. It is important for us to understand the physicality of the original letters because they no longer exist. Sometime after 1917 Scott commissioned a typist to transcribe Ginevra's letters and then he destroyed the originals. The implications of his decision are of the greatest importance to this project.

Literary historians rely on original documents. They use them to establish the texts of literary works; we use them to understand authors as individuals, as artists, and as professionals; they use them to reconstruct a particular time and place in literary history. When Scott destroyed Ginevra's original letters, he erased much of the evidence through which we might have reconstructed his relationship with Ginevra and by which we might have experienced her voice. In the place of her words and her letters he gave us a clean copy, a copy stripped entirely of her hand. What remains is a palimpsest. In the pages that follow, I have tried to recreate the experience of reading Ginevra's letters as Scott might have read them in 1915, 1916, and 1917. If Scott reread the typed copies of the over the next twenty years, he inscribed no marks or marginalia on the documents. And yet they never left his possession.

Scott's copies of Ginevra's letters belong to a small group of important documents that he kept at hand throughout his professional life. Along with the typescripts of the letters, Scott's scrapbooks and his notebooks provided a deep well from which he drew ideas, inspiration, names, dates, and facts for use in more than 160 stories and four novels. Many readers have remarked on the ways in which Fitzgerald's works are derived from and interact with his life and times; these documents provided him with

the details that give his works vibrancy and life. As physical documents, however, the letters, scrapbooks, and notebooks are dramatically different from each other.

To-day we have easy access to thousands of pages of archival material through the publication of Fitzgerald's scrapbooks, notebooks, and manuscripts; each of these documents is unique, and each demonstrates the presence of Fitzgerald's hand on every page. With his letters, however, the situation becomes more complicated. Modern photo-reproduction techniques have made many of these materials (especially manuscripts and typescripts) available in nearly their original form. While we cannot see the colors or touch the artifacts in the scrapbooks, much of the physical evidence is plainly visible. But the reproduction of letters is rather more problematic; not only does photo-reproduction strip the letters of their physical properties, it also produces a document that is virtually unreadable. Few of us are prepared to undertake the intense study required in deciphering an author's handwriting, and so we rely on someone else's efforts to produce a usable text. While we rely on an editor's accuracy and honesty in the production of an edition of letters, we also depend on the continued existence of the original letters to verify the integrity of the texts. In the case of Ginevra's letters to Scott, however, the editorial process is reversed. Instead of producing a copy that can be verified against the originals, we must try (cautiously and reasonably) to restore as much of Ginevra's hand as possible from the surrogates.

Ginevra's letters are an important part of our understanding of Scott's early life and literary inspiration. Apart from Zelda Fitzgerald's letters, Ginevra's letters are the largest surviving body of letters addressed to Scott that survive. As such, they stand well apart from the scrapbooks, letters, and manuscripts because even though he controlled the

way in which we received the letters, he did not create them. They are a response and a reaction to him that deepens our understanding of his youthful mind and his romantic attachments. But we must give Scott his due; if it were not for a few notations in his ledger, scholars might never have gone looking for Ginevra King and might never have discovered the letters that she kept hidden away for more than forty years after his death. Passed from Fitzgerald to his daughter Scottie and through her mother-in-law to Ginevra and finally to her daughter and granddaughters, the letters have traveled thousands of miles beyond their original postal journeys. With their publication in this volume, they can again take their place beside Scott's notebooks and scrapbooks as documents upon which he drew for inspiration.

Our discovery of the letters begins with Scott's personal ledger. Fitzgerald moved so many times during his life that he can be easily described as an itinerant writer; whenever he moved, the ledger moved with him. Thus, the ledger is something of a passport that records Fitzgerald's travels. His ledger was not the only object that traveled with him: Ginevra King's letters to him were also his constant companions. From his courtship of Zelda Sayre to his last romance with Sheilah Graham, from Baltimore to Montgomery, New York to Paris, Asheville to Hollywood, Fitzgerald needed to have mementos of Ginevra nearby. Together the ledger and the letters provide valuable insight into Fitzgerald's ideas about youth, romance, money and identity; but as individual documents, ledger and letters could not be more dissimilar. We are fortunate to have them together again. Thanks to Fitzgerald's daughter Scottie and the scholarly efforts of Matthew J. Bruccoli, the ledger is widely available in facsimile to scholars and casual readers alike, as if we could all examine the original. Paging through the ledger, we see

column upon column, page upon page in Fitzgerald's own hand. Although many of the items were drawn not from current events but from Fitzgerald's memory, the ledger remains a deeply personal account of his life and times.

On page 165, in his entry for July 1911, Fitzgerald records Ginevra's name for the first time. Undoubtedly he had heard of her from her friend and his dancing-school partner Marie Hersey, but the entry is still questionable; when he composed the entries in the 1920s, did Fitzgerald actually remember the first time that he heard of Ginevra, or did he merely think that he must have heard her name from Marie at around that time? In any case, the question is both on and beside the point. The fact that Ginevra's name appears twice in the ledger prior to their first meeting in January 1915—and several times during the period of their relationship—encouraged early curiosity among biographers about the relationship. Those lines alone, however, tell us little about her influence on his fiction. Nonetheless, these entries were enough to send scholars knocking on Ginevra's door.

In his first letter to Ginevra, Scott styled himself temporarily devoted, but the history and survival of Ginevra King's letters tells a different story. After their first meeting in January 1915 to the end of their formal correspondence in April 1920, Ginevra and Scott exchanged approximately 130 letters that ranged from a few lines to more than two dozen pages; at the height of their correspondence Ginevra was so far behind in her studies that she was forced to propose a letter-writing schedule that limited the time she spent writing to Scott, but she quickly relented and continued to respond to his letters as soon as she received them. If all of their letters survived to-day we can imagine a cache that, through the variety of paper and postmark, embellishment and

handwriting, would make an enormous contribution to our understanding of their relationship and even to the history of American letter-writing, but Scott was as mindful of his own self-presentation as he was protective of his vision of Ginevra. In July 1917, about six months after the end of their romance, Scott wrote to Ginevra and asked her to destroy his letters. With characteristic promptness, Ginevra replied:

I have destroyed your letters—so you needn't be afraid that they will be held up as incriminating evidence. They were harmless—have you a guilty conscience?

I'm sorry you think that I would hold them up to you as I never did think they meant anything.

If it isn't too much trouble you might destroy mine too.<sup>17</sup>

Despite his own request, Scott could not bring himself to banish Ginevra's letters from his life. Although he apparently honored Ginevra's request to destroy her original letters, he also paid a typist to prepare a copy of Ginevra's letters in the same way that he had had a typed copy of Zelda Fitzgerald's diary prepared in the early 1920s. When the transcription of Ginevra's letters was complete, Fitzgerald destroyed the originals and placed the copies in an ordinary black three-ring binder. Fitzgerald uncharacteristically made no marks on the copies, but he included a title page with these words:

Personal and Private Letters

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<sup>17</sup>Ginevra King to F. Scott Fitzgerald, 6 July 1917. Ginevra King Collection relating to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library

Property of F. Scott Fitzgerald

(Not Manuscript)

Fitzgerald kept the binder with him for the rest of his life; if he could not have Ginevra, perhaps the letters allowed him to feel that he possessed her memory. For all those interested in Fitzgerald's life and work, as well as for those who are interested in a social history of letter-writing and courtship at the beginning of the 20th century, Fitzgerald's preservation of Ginevra's words offers many opportunities for scholarship. For the editor, however, the existence of surrogates in place of the original letters creates a series of unique editorial challenges. How can an editor best illuminate the raw material of Ginevra King's letters without imposing artificial barriers between the letters and twenty-first century readers? The answers to those questions engage the most central debates over editorial practices of the last fifty years.

In order to understand the editorial obligations imposed by these letters, an editor must first understand the nature of the available physical evidence. In the case of Ginevra King's letters, we do not know when Fitzgerald had them typed or when he placed them in the black notebook, but we do know that he could not part with her words. At his death, the binder, along with Fitzgerald's personal papers and literary notebooks became the property of Zelda Fitzgerald; on her death in 1947, custody passed to the Fitzgerald's only child, Scottie. In the fall of 1950, Scottie made contact with Ginevra King through Eleanor Lanahan, Scottie's mother-in-law, and sent the letters (still in the binder) to her. If Scottie formed an opinion of her father's first love, or if she herself wrote to King about the letters, those reflections do not survive. King reciprocated by sending Scottie her father's Princeton University Triangle Club charm. With this simple

and remarkable act of reciprocity, the story of Ginevra King and F. Scott Fitzgerald might have ended in 1950.

Back in 1946 Henry Dan Piper, a doctoral candidate at Princeton, was planning a biography of Fitzgerald when he came across Ginevra King's name in the ledger. At the time, her letters remained a secret to all but a few. While it is quite possible that Sheilah Graham—who collected Fitzgerald's personal effects and sent them to his daughter, Scottie—knew of the existence of Ginevra's letters, she seems to have told no one about them and, with Zelda still alive in Asheville, Scottie was not likely to tell a biographer about the rich cache of love letters from her father's days at Princeton. When Piper first wrote to Ginevra in May 1946, he was, therefore, on a fishing expedition.

Piper may have been the first to reach Ginevra King, but he came away with little useful information. He wrote to her on April 30 and again on May 30, 1947, describing his plan for a critical biography of Fitzgerald up to and including the publication of *The Great Gatsby*. Ginevra's reply of May 12, 1947, provides the earliest detailed account of her relationship with Fitzgerald. Even then, with memories of Scott reasonably fresh in her mind, Ginevra guarded her privacy. In response to a general request for information about Scott, Ginevra responded:

I have been pondering your letter ever since it arrived, trying to figure out in what way I can help you in filling in a few details in Scott's life. I would be truly glad to help but I am afraid I know so little.

My romance, if one call it that, with Scott, was conducted primarily in correspondence, for we met in St. Paul during Xmas vacation

of 1914-15—Then I went back to Westover and he to Princeton—

Whereupon we exchanged daily tomes ranging in length from 12 to 20 pages, (and I got very little work done besides!) It's too bad I didn't keep some of his letters as they seemed very clever to my adolescent mind— I may have a few tucked away in a trunk and as soon as I recover from a current attack of sciata [*sic*] I will dig around and see what I can find.<sup>18</sup>

The remainder of the letter mentions Scott's first visit to Lake Forest in 1915, Zelda's visit with Ginevra in Chicago during the 1933 World's Fair, Ginevra's last meeting with Scott in California in 1938, and the whereabouts of Ginevra's closest friends from Chicago: Margaret Cary, Edith Cummings, and Courtney Letts. Ginevra's response scrupulously avoids giving away too much about herself. She corresponded with Piper and later with Arthur Mizener through the publication of Mizener's biography, *The Far Side of Paradise*, in 1951, but each time she reiterated the substance of her very first letter. She had settled comfortably in the Chicago suburbs; gentle self-mockery and a touch of forgetfulness prevented her from being drawn into the cult of personality that was beginning to swirl again around Fitzgerald.

In the fall of 1949, Scottie Fitzgerald showed Ginevra's letters to Arthur Mizener, but only allowed him to "glance at a page or two"; he described them as "innocent and

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<sup>18</sup> Ginevra King to Henry Dan Piper, 12 May 1946. Ginevra King Collection relating to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.



charming.”<sup>19</sup> In January 1951, however, Ginevra was much more critical of herself. “[Scottie] sent [the letters] to me last fall,” she wrote to Mizener, “and I managed to gag through them, although I was staggering with boredom at myself by the time I was through. Goodness, what a self-centered little ass I was!”<sup>20</sup> Ginevra’s self-critique notwithstanding, the letters suggest nothing of the sort. She was self-confident, fun-loving, and well-versed in epistolary romances to be sure, but her sense of her own youthful self-centeredness misses the mark. From her letters we know that Scott constantly peppered her with probing questions about herself; after the third or fourth set of such questions her responses (reread in adulthood) were bound to seem tedious. To us, of course, they do not.

### ***Ginevra in the Scholarly Imagination***

Over the course of the last fifty years, Fitzgerald’s biographers have relied on Mizener’s biography, a light and slightly misleading interview that Ginevra gave to the *Princeton Alumni Weekly* in 1974, and the small collection of Ginevra’s letters to Mizener for information about Ginevra and Scott’s youthful flirtation. Despite such scant documentation, several Fitzgerald biographers have used Ginevra as a foil for their own views on Fitzgerald. Perhaps the most common depiction of Ginevra King is as a social gladiator; in *The Far Side of Paradise*, for example, Mizener wrote:

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<sup>19</sup> Arthur Mizener to Ginevra King, 19 December 1949. Ginevra King Collection relating to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

<sup>20</sup> Ginevra King to Arthur Mizener, 14 January 1951. Ginevra King Collection.

When it became known that “Midge” Hersey was bringing home for vacation her Westover roommate, Ginevra King, it was expected that an interesting passage at arms between her and Fitzgerald was bound to occur. Ginevra King was a celebrity, a beautiful and wealthy girl from Chicago who had already acquired a reputation for daring and adventurousness. Fitzgerald let it be known that, though he had originally not planned to spend the vacation in St. Paul, he might undertake to stay if Miss King interested him. Thus warily the two champions approached one another.<sup>21</sup>

Rhetorically, Mizener’s description of the first meeting between Ginevra and Scott is a *tour de force*, but it also raises teenage romance to martial combat. After such a flourish, Mizener’s observation that “Fitzgerald was something more than one of Ginevra’s conquests; what he loved was the substance she gave to an ideal to which his imagination clung for a lifetime,”<sup>22</sup> hardly captures our attention, let alone our interest. It would simplify matters greatly if successive biographers had paid more attention to Mizener’s latter comment, but instead Fitzgerald biographers have labeled Ginevra as “narcissistic,”<sup>23</sup> have relied too heavily on Fitzgerald’s own writings about Ginevra,<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Arthur Mizener, *The Far Side of Paradise: A Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, Rev. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 49-50.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>23</sup> Jeffrey Meyers, *Scott Fitzgerald: A Biography* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 29.

and have even altered the time-space continuum. For example, in a particularly slippery passage, one of Zelda Fitzgerald's biographers, Sally Cline, writes "In January [1917, Ginevra] broke with [Fitzgerald], broke his heart, then announced her engagement to the wealthy ensign William Hamilton Mitchell, and finally entered Scott's world of fiction as the rich unobtainable heroine."<sup>25</sup> Even if we concede the point that Ginevra succeeded in breaking Scott's heart, Cline's suggestion that Ginevra attacked Scott on three fronts at once not only misleads readers but also plays to the worst of Mizener's gladiator metaphor.

### ***Rediscovering Ginevra***

The publication of *The Far Side of Paradise* in 1951 brought an end to Ginevra's correspondence with Mizener. She took the transcripts of her letters and tucked them away (in the back of one of her closets) from family, friends, and scholars. Precisely why she kept the letters hidden remains unknown, but it is not difficult to arrive at a plausible answer: as the wife of a prominent Chicago businessman and a mature woman of high social position, she would not have wanted to expose her family to the scrutiny that would come from her association with the now famous Fitzgerald. Furthermore, she was no longer a girl of sixteen, and her letters to Fitzgerald probably gave her some embarrassment, as exuberant juvenilia often can. After 1951, she spoke publicly on

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<sup>24</sup> See: Mizener, *The Far Side of Paradise: A Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 306. See also: Matthew J. Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 2nd rev. ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 56.

<sup>25</sup> Sally Cline, *Zelda Fitzgerald: Her Voice in Paradise* (New York: Arcade, 2002), 58.

Fitzgerald only twice. In a 1974 interview with the *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, she held to the line she had taken with Mizener: while she had enjoyed her correspondence with Fitzgerald, there was little substance to their relationship.<sup>26</sup> And in her final interview, with producers of the eight-part radio series, *The World of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, broadcast on NPR in 1979, she provided a general commentary on the effect of World War I on the men of her circle; save for the narrator's description of her as Fitzgerald's "golden girl," her comments for this broadcast walked the same precise, private line that she had adopted with Piper and Mizener thirty years earlier.<sup>27</sup>

For more than sixty years after the end of her correspondence with Fitzgerald, Ginevra King maintained her distance. While she acknowledged their relationship, she relied on the fickleness of youth (a word that she used to describe herself in her first letter to Scott) to disarm her interrogators. Even in her earliest letters to Scott we can see evidence of a gift for dissembling. Witty and charming, slightly coy and yet always earnest, she managed to direct attention away from herself by making biographers think of her as just one of many girls of her type with whom Fitzgerald carried on epistolary relationships. Yet, as cavalier as she could be about her relationship with Scott, Ginevra did not destroy the transcripts of her letters when Scottie returned them to her in 1950. Whatever Ginevra's motives might have been, we finally have access to her youthful

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<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Friskey, "Visiting the Golden Girl," *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, October 8, 1974.

<sup>27</sup> Ginevra King, interview, *The World of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, National Public Radio, 1979.

version of their relationship for the first time, here in this edition, and only because she saved the transcripts. With access, however, comes responsibility; the editor of personal correspondence shoulders the burden of representing the documents fairly and accurately, and analyzing and annotating them in a way that both illuminates them and does not bury them beneath analysis. The editor must wear the hats of biographer, rhetorician, historian, raconteur and advocate.

### ***The Editing of Letters and the Art of Biography***

The editor of any collection of letters, whether they are private documents like Ginevra's letters, business documents, like the letters of Fitzgerald to Maxwell Perkins or Harold Ober, or epistles like Fitzgerald's letters to his daughter Scottie, is necessarily a biographer. Flannery O'Connor once remarked:

In the long run, a people is known, not by its statements or statistics, but by the stories it tells. Fiction is the most impure and the most modest and the most human of the arts.<sup>28</sup>

On the surface, O'Connor's remark best describes the relationship between the writer of fiction and that writer's audience. If we consider O'Connor's words carefully, however, we can see that all of us use language to tell stories that shape our public and private identities; one of the traps, then, for the editor as biographer is that any edition of letters tells a story about at least three individuals: author, recipient, and editor. First, we must

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<sup>28</sup> Flannery O'Connor, "The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South," in *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), 192.

learn what we can about the individual, the human being, who wrote the letters. In the case of Ginevra King, this is a relatively straightforward task.

Ginevra King was born in Chicago on November 30, 1898, and died in Charleston, South Carolina, on December 13, 1980. At the time of her death she was the recent widow of John T. Pirie, Jr., the former chairman of the Carson Pirie Scott department store chain, the mother of three, grandmother of four, and a great-grandmother of one. For more than forty years she had been active in the American Cancer Society and the Chicago Service League. She was eighty-two years old and an Episcopalian. In less than 150 words the *Chicago Tribune* summed up her life and accomplishments:

Ginevra King Pirie, civic leader and widow of John T. Pirie, Jr., who was the grandson of one of the founders of Carson Pirie Scott & Co., died Saturday at a family home in Charleston, S.C. She was 82. Mrs. Pirie, of 1351 E. Westleigh Rd., Lake Forest, was an active leader in the American Cancer Society. She was known as the “first lady of the Cancer Society” here and served as founding chairman of the Chicago Unit, Illinois Division. She was also a former president of the Service Club of Chicago. She is survived by a son, William H. Mitchell Jr.; a daughter, Mrs. Ginevra Hunter; a brother, a sister; four grandchildren; and a great-grandchild. Services will be at 4 p.m. Wednesday in the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, 400 E. Westminster Av., Lake Forest.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Obituary of Ginevra King Pirie, *Chicago Tribune*, December 14, 1980.

While we might add that she was the eldest child of the late Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. King or that she attended Westover School in Middlebury, Connecticut, and Mrs. Isabel Coates's school in New York City, or even that she was former wife of William H. Mitchell of Chicago and Santa Barbara, such facts would do little to illuminate the person behind the history and would do even less for our understanding of her letters to Fitzgerald. For critics like Stanley Fish, a recital of these details reveals the paucity of biography. In a 1999 op-ed piece for the *New York Times*, Fish wrote of biographers and biography as follows:

Biographers ... can only be inauthentic, can only get it wrong, can only lie, can only substitute their own story for the story of their announced subject. (Biographers are all autobiographers, although the pretensions of their enterprise won't allow them to admit it or even see it.)

Biography, in short, is a bad game, and the wonder is that so many are playing it and that so many others are watching it and spending time that might be better spent on more edifying spectacles like politics and professional wrestling.

On the other hand, Fish has considerable praise for autobiography:

[The author of autobiography] is his subject, and his performance, complete with the quirks and blindnesses of his personality, is not a distraction or deviation from the story of his life but an extension of it. Autobiographers cannot lie because anything they say, however

mendacious, is the truth about themselves, whether they know it or not.

Autobiographers are authentic necessarily and without effort.<sup>30</sup>

Aside from the remarks about professional wrestling, Fish's argument that the biographies of ordinary men and women consist of a series of coincidences played out over a lifetime is well taken. Although we should quickly reject a return to the nineteenth century, when Thomas Carlyle argued that the only stories worth telling were the histories of great men, the facts of Ginevra King's life could essentially apply to hundreds of women of her generation and of our own.

Ginevra King's letters to Fitzgerald, however, provide only a faint image of the girl behind the letters and give only the barest hint of the woman who went on to live a rich and varied life for another six decades. Faced with slim documentary evidence, the editor must step carefully, yet creatively, when presenting any series of letters to the public. As James L. W. West III notes:

I should like to suggest that scholarly editing is not, at base, an empirical pursuit. Certainly it has empirical features, but fundamentally it relies on intuition and imagination much more heavily than it does on analysis of evidence.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Stanley Fish, "Just Published: Minutiae Without Meaning," *New York Times*, September 7, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> James L. W. III West, "The Scholarly Editor as Biographer," *Studies in the Novel* 27, no. 3 (1995): 295.



With the case of Ginevra King's letters, the lack of empirical evidence requires even more delicate handling. While some letters, such as the business correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald presented in *Dear Scott/Dear Max*, edited by John Kuehl and Jackson Bryer and *As Ever, Scott Fitz*, edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli,<sup>32</sup> suggest their own methods of interpretation, personal letters in general and romantic letters in particular must be treated with more attention to their presentation, augmentation and supplementation. In order to better understand and interpret letters and letter writers, all editors must assume various roles as detectives, biographers, historians, raconteurs, rhetoricians, and mind-readers. After assuming all of these hats, the editor must then connect the dots to form a useable text or set of texts. As the late Hemingway biographer Michael Reynolds describes the process:

A biographer connects up the dots to draw the picture just as we did as children. First, of course, he must find the dots of data, leaving as little space between them as possible.... Nothing in this book occurs at my convenience. Rain and snow fall as they once fell in another country. Boats and trains arrive and depart on schedule. My only fiction is the space between the dots.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See Kuehl and Bryer, eds., *Dear Scott/Dear Max: The Fitzgerald-Perkins Correspondence*. See also: Bruccoli, ed., *As Ever, Scott Fitz: Letters between F. Scott Fitzgerald and His Literary Agent Harold Ober, 1919-1940*.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Reynolds, *Hemingway: The Paris Years* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 356.

Reynolds was an experienced and thoughtful biographer, but his justification of the biographer's methods also reveals a number of weaknesses. Any student of elementary geometry can quickly demonstrate that every dot has space between it. In those spaces errors will occur, texts will be misinterpreted, and that elusive perfect text will once again escape into the ether. Faced with these many challenges, many critics and scholars either eschew biography and documentary evidence altogether, or they assume that documentary evidence has indisputable authority and wrap themselves in a cloak of neutrality when it comes to editing documentary sources. In the process of editing Ginevra King's letters, however, an editor can be neither neutral nor blameless. In order to bring these letters to light, any editor must first read the letters, establish the text, and shape the letters for publication.

Ginevra was clearly smitten by Scott's attentions, but her diary shows that Scott was only one of many young men and women in her wide social circle. It is tempting to read of their early romance and imagine the perfect ending to an early Jane Austen novel, but Ginevra was no worthy girl of small fortune and Scott no wealthy newcomer to the scene. Instead, as in the novels of Edith Wharton, theirs was a chance meeting that briefly interrupted their comings and goings but could not change the directions of their lives. Over the next two years, a mutual curiosity sustained their voluminous correspondence, but their anxious wordplay did not kindle a real romance. In her letters to Scott, Ginevra understood the limitations of those words and she frequently wished for one "perfect hour" during which she and Scott could really learn to know each other and in which all the mysteries of their correspondence would be revealed. But, of course, that

hour never came. Eventually Ginevra and Scott grew tired of each other, and the wordplay became too strenuous for these young people who had other places to go.

Their relationship ended abruptly after an unsatisfactory rendezvous at the Princeton-Yale football game in November 1917. Soon after Scott wrote to Ginevra asking her to destroy his letters. Ginevra complied and seemed content to be rid of the documentary evidence of their romance. But for Scott, Ginevra had never been just a girl from Chicago with whom he exchanged letters; in his mind, Ginevra represented the ideal young woman of means whose receptive ear was a grand vessel for his thoughts. Scott lost the girl but, despite her request, preserved her letters.<sup>34</sup> For more than twenty years he returned to those letters for ideas and inspiration; with the assistance of Ginevra's voice he created characters that have engaged the American literary imagination. From Isabelle Borgé to Judy Jones, Josephine Perry, and Daisy Buchanan, Scott's idea of Ginevra lives on in his works. But Ginevra King never sought to be idolized, and she resisted Scott's attempts to fix her place in the story of his life. In her letters to Scott from 1915 to 1918 and in her contact with Fitzgerald's early biographers, Ginevra steadfastly maintained her independence. Despite the fact that Ginevra often received requests for interviews about her about her relationship with Scott, she gently deferred on the question of her influence on his works; Ginevra King may have known the young Fitzgerald as well as any woman of the time, but her letters are a remarkable testament to her wisdom and maturity in recognizing Scott's intentions. Ginevra's letters are available to us to-day because of Fitzgerald, but we should resist the temptation to look for Daisy

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<sup>34</sup> Ginevra King to F. Scott Fitzgerald, 6 July 1917, Ginevra King Collection.

Buchanan in the following pages. Ginevra King was an independent woman who could manipulate Scott Fitzgerald's affections as easily as she could feign offense at his suggestion that he intended to kiss her on the night of their first meeting. Her letters are not only a documentary record of her relationship with Fitzgerald; they are also the record of one girl's development as a woman. She was always more than just Gatsby's girl.

According to the custom of the time, Scott wrote to Ginevra first, sending a letter by special delivery; Ginevra received it on Thursday, January 7, 1915, and noted its arrival in her diary that evening.<sup>35</sup> Over the next six months, they exchanged approximately eighty letters—about two-thirds of their total correspondence. These were not mere notes of courtship, but were detailed letters that freely mingled ideas and gossip; on more than one occasion, Ginevra's letters fill more than twenty-four pages and Scott's letters were often so large that they arrived at Westover in two envelopes. Ginevra's early letters are filled with praise for Scott's rhetorical skills; she quickly tried to meet his challenge and acquitted herself well. While Ginevra may not have been Scott's equal in wordplay, she was accustomed to the attentions of several young men and she knew how to provoke a reaction. In letter after letter, Ginevra holds Scott at bay, refusing to answer too many questions about the other boys in her life and carefully measuring her responses to his increasingly personal queries. Ginevra understood, perhaps better than Scott, that a

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<sup>35</sup> Ginevra King Diary, 7 January 1915, Ginevra King Collection relating to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

good letter was both a sign of personal affection and a social commodity. Despite her frequent protests against showing her letters around Princeton, Ginevra knew that her letters (and his) were vital forms of entertainment for their friends. Ginevra rarely revealed overly much of herself in any one letter, and she was careful to warn Scott against the danger of prying eyes if the subject of a letter was too personal.

Ginevra never forgot that her letters to Scott might find a wider audience once the envelope left her hand. Her letters walk a fine line between candor and convention, between writing so that she and Scott could know each other better and writing so that Scott and his friends might be entertained. To illustrate this point more precisely, we might consider Ginevra writing to Scott from her room at Westover School. First let us imagine Ginevra at her desk: as she writes to Scott, she transfers—perhaps translates is a better word—her thoughts onto the page. Thus, the page contains a version of Ginevra's initial thoughts, shaped by her personality, by habit, by convention, and by her desire to provoke a favorable response from Scott. Additionally, Ginevra's translation of thoughts into words is often interrupted by other real-world events like school work, sporting events, other letters, and the arrival of her classmates and girl friends. The words that make it to the page are influenced by these extra-epistolary forces. On Scott's end of the transaction, a similar scene takes place; Scott's life as a reader is just as multi-faceted as Ginevra's life as an author. When Scott writes his return letter, the roles are reversed and the cycle continues. As complex as the reader-writer relationship already is, such roles are relatively easy to understand, if only Scott-the-reader remains just as Ginevra imagined him when she was writing. But their frequent arguments and misunderstandings quickly demonstrate the difficulty of achieving this kind of synthesis

between writer and reader. Walter J. Ong argued that, “the writer’s audience is always a fiction,”<sup>36</sup> but Ong was thinking mainly about public or professional writings for which the author is forced to imagine the audience. Personal letters are much more unsteady.

According to Keith Waddle, there are at least four participants to any letter. In the case of the letters that follow, Waddle’s scheme designates Ginevra King thinking about her letters to Scott Fitzgerald as the “real author.” Ginevra then translates her thoughts to the page and creates an “implied author” who carries the chosen image of herself to Scott. The “implied author” suggests, though choices about language, an “implied reader,” the Scott that Ginevra imagines will read the letters; but since Ginevra has no control over the manner or mood of Scott’s receipt of the letters, both the real author and the implied author must deal with the response occasioned by the present circumstances of “real reader.”<sup>37</sup> Each of these four participants, of course, is influenced by the activities and events in the life of the individual.

The four positions described above are readily understood by anyone who uses the written word to communicate. Whenever human beings engage in asynchronous communication they rely on others to interpret their words and meanings according to their intentions, but disconnect between writers and readers frequently leads to misunderstandings. The letters exchanged between Ginevra and Scott provide ample evidence of that. Despite their frequent miscommunication, Ginevra’s letters

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<sup>36</sup> Walter J. Ong, "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction," *PMLA* 90 (1975): 9.

<sup>37</sup> Keith A. Waddle, "Reader-Response as a Method of Editing Letters," *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 25, no. 3 (1994): 160.

demonstrate a remarkable capacity for forgiveness and flexibility with respect to meaning. While she does not hesitate to chastise Scott for rudeness or lack of consideration, she always seems to remember the presence of the real Scott Fitzgerald whom she met in St. Paul during the winter of 1915; throughout her letters, she frequently comments that his photograph is before her as she writes—at one point she writes that more than one photo of him adorns her desk. For his part, Scott continued to pry at the implied Ginevra of her letters, always looking for more and more details about her and her real life. Still, after reading the letters, we may wonder whether Scott was attracted to the real Ginevra or to the implied Ginevra of the letters. As a fledgling writer, he seems to have been more interested in the latter.

The distinction between the real Ginevra writing letters and the implied Ginevra of the letters is an important one for both the casual reader and the scholar, but there are other considerations that make the interpretation of Ginevra's letters even more challenging. While the most obvious challenge is the loss of Scott's letters, this obstacle is by no means the most difficult to overcome; with the aid of his ledger, his surviving correspondence, his notebooks, his stories, and his novels, the editor can develop a reasonably sound impression of Scott's side of the relationship. In addition, Ginevra's letters often quote from or refer directly to Scott's letters; these references also help us to interpret Scott's side of the relationship. But the most difficult challenge to a clear edition and a scholarly interpretation of Ginevra's letters is Scott's destruction of the original letters and the preparation of the transcript. With the loss of the original letters, the editor must not only provide a usable working text of the letters, but he or she must

also provide context and construct a reading and interpretive experience that both respects and illuminates the documents.

In his article "Annotating Mr. Fitzgerald," James L. W. West III provides some useful advice for the annotator of early twentieth-century literary texts. He writes:

The humble editor is thus presented with some problems. How much of this needs to be identified and explained? For whom should it be glossed? How thoroughly should it be annotated? Does one engage in literary interpretation, pointing out how references and allusions fit and function in the stories, or does one give only the facts? Deciding what and for whom and how much to annotate causes some serious head scratching.<sup>38</sup>

In many ways the editor of personal letters faces similar problems. Ginevra King's letters are filled with personal references to friends and family whose names have passed into obscurity, contain numerous references to contemporary events of little historical significance, and, perhaps most importantly, are private. The editor therefore not only edits but actively creates a reading experience by supplying answers to questions that contemporary readers might logically ask. But personal letters differ significantly from literary works; letters, unlike literature, are not self-contained, and because they are not, the editor of letters must also describe the chronology of the letters and make careful notes about the frequency of letters between two correspondents. When personal letters are collected in print, the reader loses a valuable part of the epistolary experience:

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<sup>38</sup> James L. W. III West, "Annotating Mr. Fitzgerald," *The American Scholar* 69, no. 2 (2000): 84.



patience. When each letter follows the last with regularity, when a reader need not wait for a reply, then a letter becomes a mere vessel of information rather than a spark that ignites the imagination. With respect to love letters, the interplay between the text and the imagination is a central component of the reading experience.

The editor therefore wears a number of interpretive hats. While all editors strive to provide accurate information, such as the date and location of a letter's composition, all published editions condense even the most voluminous correspondence into a single reading experience. In place of the infinite details of handwritten correspondence, including the paper, penmanship, method of delivery and circumstances of composition; published correspondence has been stripped of most of the details that make each letter unique. In essence, even private correspondence becomes a public document. Fitzgerald's transcription of Ginevra's letters and the destruction of the originals complicate the interpretive process further by placing both Fitzgerald and the typist between current readers and the original letters. Without the originals to refer to, the editor must try to see between and around hazards such as lapses in chronology, typographical errors, intended and unintended omissions, and more general concerns about the accuracy of the transcriptions.

Editors often try to mitigate the effects of bibliographic sanitation and regularization by adopting elaborate schemes for the transcription of letters. Some editors, like the late Matthew J. Bruccoli, often tried to preserve the appearance of private letters by retaining underlining and strikethroughs or by adopting a complex series of substitutions to indicate variations, but these systems turn ordinary correspondence into a cipher for which the reader must possess the key. Such systems sacrifice the experience

of reading the letter for the physical details. Even Professor Bruccoli saw the limitations of such a complicated system. While a system of signs and symbols was a workable option for Fitzgerald's business correspondence in *As Ever, Scott Fitz*, Bruccoli himself created much simpler transcriptions in his later collections of Fitzgerald's personal letters, the *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald* and *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Life in Letters*.<sup>39</sup>

Of course no printed edition of handwritten correspondence can accurately represent the original letters; even an elaborate edition that uses photo-reproductions of original correspondence still offers readers only a surrogate for the originals. To take just one example, in eighteenth-century England, the way in which a letter was folded (envelopes were uncommon) indicates the manner in which the letter was sent and the cost of service. That information is available only to those who can consult the original documents. In the case of Ginevra King's letters, such an edition was rendered impossible by Fitzgerald, but often the simplest techniques serve readers the best. In *The Perfect Hour*, West prints a selection of Ginevra's letters in italic type that hints at a handwritten document, but otherwise he prints the texts as simply as possible in order to allow the reader to form his or her own interpretations. Both choices are important: the use of italic type reminds us that although Fitzgerald had the letters transcribed by a typist they were, in fact, handwritten when he originally received them, while the directness of the transcription allows readers to read easily and understand the letters. In the transcriptions that follow, I have tried to adopt the best practices of many systems by

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<sup>39</sup> Bruccoli and Duggan, eds., *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald*. and Bruccoli, ed., *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Life in Letters*.

printing the letters in clear text, by resisting the urge to edit and revise Ginevra's orthography, punctuation and syntax, and by annotating in order to supply context for the letters.

Still, the letters as they exist to-day are misleading. The transcription not only excised Ginevra's hand from the letters; it also allowed Scott to read the letters as a single document that supported the Ginevra of his imagination. This interpretation of the letters is the central problem that we face after almost ninety-three years. While it is relatively simple to create readable texts of the letters, it is considerably more difficult to interpret and present the letters in a way that recreates their pacing, their context, and their impact on Ginevra and Scott's real lives. Rather than read the letters as a single narrative, then, it is important that we understand the progression of the epistolary relationship as it was governed by a web of school and social rhythms that, by turns, fueled and thwarted the romance.

### ***Time and Travel in Ginevra and Scott's Letters***

Over the course of their two-year correspondence, Ginevra and Scott explored many topics, but two of the most frequently encountered are the importance of time and the significance of travel. Ginevra's repeated references to time, particularly to her repeated wish for a "perfect hour" with Scott, have been discussed by James L. W. West III; but it might be added that Ginevra's dreams of a perfect hour become more prevalent in her letters only as the relationship grows more complicated. As we will see later, the more Scott tested Ginevra's fidelity and interest in him, the more she lost faith in the ability of her letters to represent her accurately. From the beginning of their correspondence, however, both Ginevra and Scott viewed their letters as extraordinary—

that is, they saw their letters as events that touched on or intersected with their lives at Westover and at Princeton, and also as performances that interrupted, postponed, or challenged their external lives.

On the night that Ginevra and Scott met, their introduction was both carefully choreographed and dependent on a railway timetable. Since Scott was due back at Princeton the next day, he had to choose between cutting classes and remaining in St. Paul to spend more time with Ginevra. As we know, he chose to stay over and spend a few extra hours with Ginevra. For her part, Ginevra was equally conscious of time. The first line of her first letter emphasizes both time and travel. She writes: “At present I’m on the train, and oh, but it’s rough and rocky on the Lake Shore.”<sup>40</sup> On the one hand, this sentence is straightforward: since this is Ginevra’s first letter to a new suitor, it opens with a simple factual statement about her present situation and the conditions of her trip. On the other hand this first line tells us a great deal more about Ginevra than is obvious at first glance. In addition to the basic information that she is travelling east from Chicago on the Lake Shore Limited and that the ride is quite rough, the first sentence also would have told Scott that Ginevra’s journey would take her through New York City. While these details may seem insignificant at first, Ginevra’s diary (and a little investigation) helps us to understand these lines as Scott would have in 1915. In Ginevra’s diary for January 11, 1915,<sup>41</sup> she indicates that she made the trip in the company of several of her close friends, including Edith Cummings and Marie Hersey, and that they were

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<sup>40</sup> Ginevra King to F. Scott Fitzgerald, 11 January 1915.

<sup>41</sup> Ginevra King Diary, January 11, 1915, Ginevra King Collection.

chaperoned by Mrs. Cummings; the journey back to school was an occasion for a railway sleep-over. On January 5, 1915, Scott did not have such an adventure. Instead of the company of his friends, Scott returned to Princeton alone after boarding the late-night train from St. Paul. His solitary journey also emphasizes an important point about his academic experiences at Princeton. In his early days at Princeton, Scott was very much out of his element. His family connections were weaker than those of most of his classmates, he lacked their financial resources, he had not attended the right prep schools, and few of his St. Paul friends were at Princeton. Ginevra, however, traveled to Connecticut in the company of her permanent social circle. The depth of Ginevra's social network was a constant reminder to Scott that he was out of his depth with her.

The second paragraph of Ginevra's letter continues to emphasize the temporal nature of their relationship. "I suppose by now you are 'greasy grinding' at college," she writes, which only emphasizes the difference in their positions. While Scott spent the previous week grinding away at Princeton, Ginevra spent the time sledding, shopping and meeting with friends. While it would be uncharitable to argue that Ginevra is being lofty about her extended vacation, it is equally hard to imagine that Scott would not have felt the implications of her words. While their time together in St. Paul had cost her only a few hours of leisure time, they had cost him much more. By remaining in St. Paul with Ginevra, Scott continued to cut classes at Princeton; those cuts, and the others that he accumulated during the fall term of 1914, combined with his poor performance on his exams, eventually contributed to the loss of his leadership and acting roles with the Triangle Club.

In addition to issues of time and space, Ginevra's letter demonstrates her skill at epistolary flirtation, a skill that she seems to have perfected under Scott's influence. Later in the second paragraph, asking him to send her a picture, she suggests that Scott is already fading from her memory. When she writes, "I have but a faint recollection of yellow hair and big blue eyes and a brown corduroy waist-coat that was very good looking," she both flatters Scott and emphasizes just how quickly they parted. Scott must have felt the same way, for just two paragraphs later, Ginevra asks the question that became the subtext for each of their letters. Quoting from Scott's first letter, Ginevra mused: "Scott, what an amazing way you ended your letter! It was the most characteristic thing I've heard in a long time "Temporarily Devotedly Yrs." Is it still? I wonder—" Scott's closing, "Temporarily Devotedly Yrs." was part of his 'line' that was meant to arouse Ginevra's curiosity, her expectations, and certainly her vanity.

More than sixty letters later, we can be certain that he succeeded in arousing all three—along with anger, affection, jealousy, and confusion—but here Ginevra turns the tables on Scott. Although the paragraph begins with a compliment, the compliment comes with a price. The phrase "the most characteristic thing I've heard" shows that she sees Scott's letters as conforming to his line. The teasing, "I wonder—" that concludes the paragraph tells us that she did not expect Scott's attentions to be exclusively focused on her. If Scott thought that their age difference and his experiences at Princeton were enough to hold Ginevra's attention, her first letter suggests that he underestimated her flirtatious talents. Closing her letter with a rhetorical flourish, Ginevra turned Scott's words on him with a sharp twist. "Yours Fickely sometimes but Devotedly at present—" she wrote in closing. When the fickleness, a matter of will, replaced temporality, a

matter of time, Scott was on notice that he would have to improve on his line if he were to keep pace with Ginevra.

Ginevra waited four days to reply to Scott's first letter, but over the next two weeks they fell into a routine of rapid replies and voluminous writing that would last for the next six months. From January until the end of June 1915, Ginevra wrote at least forty letters to Scott at Princeton and in St. Paul. Together these letters make up almost sixty percent of her side of their total correspondence. Ginevra played it safe and flirtatious in her first letter, but by the second letter Scott's replies had captivated her imagination. From his letters that survive from this period, we know that he decorated his letters with drawings, created collages, and even composed letters in verse. While Ginevra was unsure of just how to respond to Scott's attentions (she wrote that she hesitated before sending her second letter) his missives provided welcome relief from academic drudgery. Writing witty and entertaining letters was one of Fitzgerald's great gifts. His letters provoked strong reactions from Ginevra: not only did his wit extend the life cycle of their correspondence, but his outrageousness provoked less polished and less practiced responses from her.

Ginevra quickly discovered that Scott's letters required more attention than the letters she received from other admirers; his letters were not only longer than those of her other correspondents, they were also more probing. The length and complexity of Scott's letters was initially too much for her. In her letter of January 20 she protested that Scott was overly critical of her early replies: "If you don't believe me when I say I never read such interesting [letters], what can I do?" Up to this point, Ginevra had written to people with whom she had sustained social contact. Margaret Carey, Edith Cummings,

Courtney Letts, and Marie Hersey were close personal friends; Billy Mitchell and Gordon McCormick moved in the same social circles in Chicago and Lake Forest. Her letters to any one of them were supported by their shared life experiences and were governed by the social codes that provided structure to their external lives. But Ginevra and Scott shared neither a common social background nor the familiarity bred by long association, and her early letters show that she was not always comfortable with his constant probing of her feelings and her loyalty.

Later in their relationship, Ginevra's letters became more complicated as she tried to match Scott's talents, to answer him honestly, and to be understood; but her early letters are generally straightforward and easy to understand even ninety years after they were written. Ginevra's early letters are tentative; while she expresses admiration for his good looks and the wittiness of his letters, her own letters are more inquisitive and exploratory than they are revealing. Take, for example, a passage from her third letter to Scott:

Now Scott this is heart to heart and therefore private!

A few years ago I took pleasure in being called "fast" (if that were possible as young an age as 13 or 14) But anyway, I didn't care how I acted, I liked it, and so I didn't care for what people said— Naturally this was crazy, but I was young, I'm only sixteen now and that isn't aged—

About a year [ago] I began to see that there was something better in life than what I had been doing, and I honestly tried to act properly, but



I am afraid I'll never be able to wholly reform as to the extent of being an angel!<sup>42</sup>

Taken out of context, this passage may appear quite revealing. After all, few women of a good social position would have accepted the label “fast” in 1915, and even fewer would have been quite so candid about their history to a young man whom they had met only sixteen days ago. Considered in the context of the remainder of the letter, however, this passage is much more playful and much less revealing than it first appears to be.

In the rest of the letter, Ginevra distances herself from the passage above by playing the role of the amateur:

I know I am a flirt and I can't stop it. I really haven't got such a “line” as everyone thinks for I mean a lot of what I say way down deep and nobody ever believes me. Except for this, I am pretty good on the whole, but you know how much alike we are, and in a boy it doesn't matter, but a girl has to control her feelings, which is hard for me, as I am emotional.

The inner workings of my mind would or would not be of interest to you, as the case may be— But I do think a lot though, more than people think I do, although I haven't very much sense. I have more than some people credit me with I hope, only I don't know how to use it. I know you think I'm a perfect fool, but really I wish you wouldn't think so, as, though I did flirt with you, I really like you a lot.

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<sup>42</sup> Ginevra King to F. Scott Fitzgerald, 20 January 1915.

I have never written to anyone such a letter as this, but if we don't ever see each other again it's the only way we'd ever get to know each other. I wish you'd write me a letter and tell me the same thing, just how much of a fool you think I am, and for Mercy's sakes! Be Frank!

...This is the kind of letter you said you wanted, and so this is what I wrote. I'm still petrified over exams. I wish you better luck than I'll have on mine—

Write soon and say that you understand.

Yours Ginevra.<sup>43</sup>

The rhetorical strategies of this passage are particularly important to our understanding of Ginevra's subsequent letters. Even as a young teenager, she had a "reputation" and Fitzgerald knew it. But even a member of the "Big Four" had her boundaries, and in this early letter Ginevra tries both to establish her reputation and to whet Scott's appetite for another meeting. As in the earlier passage where Ginevra writes playfully about her history as a pre-teen heartbreaker, the passage above is tongue-in-cheek: her weak protest that "I really haven't got such a 'line' as everyone thinks" is itself a skillful line that is in direct contrast to what Scott probably heard about her from Marie Hersey.

As important as her reputation was, Ginevra also wanted to be taken seriously. Even at the age of sixteen she seems to have grown tired of being regarded as a pretty girl with a wealthy father. While she did not mind being pretty and wealthy, she wanted to be acknowledged for her other qualities. She writes: "I do think a lot though, more than

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<sup>43</sup> Ginevra King to F. Scott Fitzgerald, 20 January 1915.

people think I do, although I haven't very much sense. I have more than some people credit me with I hope, only I don't know how to use it." Here she may have been responding to one of Scott's frequent criticisms, but at the same time her words demonstrate her independent streak, a trait which appears frequently throughout the letters. Ginevra may have not been able to decorate her letters with sketches and witticisms, but she was not going to be cowed by Scott's artistic flourishes either. At the end of the letter she makes this point perfectly clear: "This is the kind of letter you said you wanted," she wrote, "and so this is what I wrote." Scott may have thought that he could order up any kind of letter that he chose, but what he received was Ginevra's own.

### ***An Epistolary Drama in Four Acts***

One of the first things that one notices when reading Ginevra's letters is that they seem to have a natural rhythm about them; whether they are long or short, thoughtful or flirtatious, each one follows a predictable pattern. Because almost every letter is a reply to one from Scott, most open with a comment on his most recent letter, then they describe Ginevra's location and the circumstance of her writing, and then they proceed in one of two ways: either she responds directly to Scott's queries or she provides a bit of local gossip. The order of these last two sections may change, but generally all of the parts are there. This rhythm encourages us to read quickly and to imagine that the letters all contribute something to a conversation begun by Scott in the early hours of January 5, 1915. But on closer inspection, we discover several key points about the letters. The first is that they are not part of one conversation or performance but of several. The second is that those conversations and performances are often marked by the few times that they actually saw each other. A third point is that Scott seems to have been at his

most anxious just before or just after those meetings. While Ginevra eagerly looked forward to each hour that they spent together, Scott seemed hesitant to break the spell that he tried to create in his letters. While Ginevra was most comfortable in the real world of parties and dancing, Scott shined on paper. This is a significant difference in their personalities and a significant source of tension in their relationship.

Reading through Ginevra's letters, we see not one single narrative but a drama that played out between January 1915 and January 1917. The first act of their relationship lasted from January 1915 until the middle of March, when Ginevra left Westover for a two-week holiday in Chicago. The high point, for her, of this period was Scott's visit to Westover on February 20, 1915. The second act played out in the spring of 1915, during which time Scott invited Ginevra to the sophomore prom at Princeton in June (she was forced to decline the invitation) and their brief meeting in New York on June 7, 1915.

In a coincidence that suited Scott's fondness for theatrics, the first two stages of their correspondence are almost Shakespearean in nature. Filled with wordplay and expectant pauses, the first two stages are dense, rich and filled with excitement and expectation. The climax of these first two acts was to be Ginevra's visit to Princeton in June and the capstone of Scott's social successes that spring. With Ginevra on his arm, Scott expected to be the talk of Princeton. Of course, we know now that it didn't happen that way. Instead of a public triumph at Princeton, Scott once again had to content himself with a brief (and private) visit with Ginevra in Chicago and a weekend visit to Lake Forest later in the month. Where he expected to control the situation and convince

Ginevra to fall more deeply in love with him, Scott found himself overshadowed by her wealth and privilege and was deeply frustrated by their inability to have more time alone.

Scott's visit to Lake Forest in June 1915 dampened their mutual expectations. Their correspondence never recovered. After writing to each other almost daily for six months, Scott and Ginevra never truly rekindled their epistolary romance. With Scott rusticating at a Montana ranch for several weeks of the summer and Ginevra off to Biddeford Pool, Maine, the two could not have been much further apart. While their early correspondence was filled with wit and romantic intimations, the summer of 1915 marked the beginning of the end of their romance. While neither of them was ready to acknowledge this change to the other, their letters in the fall of 1915 and the winter and spring of 1916 are decidedly more casual and less heartfelt than the earlier letters.

The next act of their drama played out over the course of the 1915-1916 academic year and centered on three major events: Ginevra and Scott's meeting at the Yale-Princeton football game in November 1915, Scott's departure from Princeton in December, and Ginevra's departure from Westover in March 1916. Once again Scott had put too much emphasis on their meeting in November and once again he came away disappointed. But the more important event was the temporary end of Scott's academic career. When Ginevra and Scott were both at school, their academic difficulties provided a common ground on which to continue their correspondence, but once Scott left Princeton, the situation changed. No longer a Princeton man, Scott's star probably began to fade in Ginevra's eyes. While she reveled in the attention of his Princeton classmates at the Chicago performance of the Princeton Triangle Club's production of *The Evil Eye* (for which Scott had written the lyrics) in December 1915, Scott was only present as a

name on the program. Scott would later recall that the most significant event of that year was Ginevra's "firing" from Westover, and he aired his views on her departure at the beginning of the fourth of his Josephine Perry stories, "A Snobbish Story." The fact however, was that Ginevra was having a better year than he was.

By the winter of 1916, their romance had faded considerably, but Ginevra's letters continue to be warm and chatty. In just over a year Ginevra had developed into a strong correspondent; if Scott was sorry that their public romance had not blossomed, Ginevra was pleased to believe that she and Scott were of the same mind and could remain friends. At a time when Ginevra felt that she had little in common with her Westover classmates, she found comfort in the idea that she and Scott were very much alike.

Scott visited Ginevra in Lake Forest in August of 1916. This visit marked the beginning of the final act of their romance. Scott later wrote in his ledger that, during this visit, someone told him that "poor boys should not think of marrying rich girls," but the troubles in Scott and Ginevra's relationship went deeper than the effects of a single remark. While Ginevra was moving forward, Scott was in retreat. Long before Ginevra tangled with Miss Hillard, the headmistress of Westover, in the spring of 1916, she had already begun to plan the next move in her young career. Like many of her friends, Ginevra seems never to have intended to complete her senior year at Westover, but to conclude her education in Boston or New York at a small, private finishing school where she could study art, music, languages, and where she could experience the cultural life of a large city. When Ginevra enrolled at Mrs. Isabel D. Coates's school, on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, in the fall of 1916, she entered a cosmopolitan world that must have made Princeton seem positively provincial. While Ginevra could not enjoy the

freedoms that she enjoyed in Chicago, Mrs. Coates's was a world away from Westover and Ginevra seems to have thrived in the urban environment. Scott, meanwhile, was repeating his junior year at Princeton and was faltering under the weight of his academic deficiencies. When Ginevra and some friends came down to the Yale-Princeton football game in November 1916, Scott was once again frustrated that they could not spend more time together.

Despite how badly Scott believed things went at their meeting in November 1916, Ginevra's next letter was warm and chatty. Nonetheless, their relationship was, for his purposes, over. If we read the letters straight through from beginning to end, as they appear in Scott's copies, we may be tempted to believe that Ginevra did not fully appreciate Scott during their romance and that she was too immature to fall in love with the (relatively) poor boy from St. Paul. But in the sections that follow we will not read the letters in succession. Rather, we will spend time with four letters that demonstrate Ginevra's involvement in the relationship and which show the degree to which she has been misrepresented in Fitzgerald's fiction and by his biographers. While these individual readings are in no way a substitute for careful consideration of the entire body of letters that are the subject and purpose of this volume, a close reading of these letters demonstrates the work that must be done to clearly understand Ginevra, both as a unique individual and as an influence on Scott's life and fiction. Within each section, a complete letter is printed in its entirety and is further supplemented by context and commentary that orients the letter within their relationship and their mutual history.

### ***St. Paul, Westover, and Chicago: Winter 1915***

Throughout the winter of 1915 Scott and Ginevra exchanged several letters a week. Ginevra's letters are filled with praise for Scott's cleverness and shot through with impatience at Scott's desire to categorize and classify her. Her reputation continued to be the starting point for much of Scott's antagonism. Scott's interest in her reputation is not surprising given that they spent only a few hours together in St. Paul, but the doggedness with which he apparently questioned her frustrated Ginevra. However, she was not a pushover. When, in late January, he called her a vampire, Ginevra promptly fired back a strong rebuke; a few days later, when he tried to provoke her anger by writing another girl's name on the envelope of her letter she refused to take the bait. She was, as she wrote to him, "wide awake to almost all of your letter." If Scott expected to hold Ginevra's affections, or even her "affectations," he was on notice that his frequent attacks and jabs were not welcome.<sup>44</sup>

From the middle of January to the middle of February 1915, Ginevra wrote ten letters to Scott, but their correspondence provides no evidence of a great romance. Often repetitive and filled with light gossip and a mutual distaste for the academic grind, the question-and-response format of her early letters shows that, despite their persistent efforts, the two had very little in common. The most common themes in the letters are her constant praise of his epistolary abilities and her dreams of some perfect, peaceful time. For all of her wealth and privilege, Ginevra's early letters demonstrate a frustration with her life that is reminiscent of an E. M. Forster novel. With her actions restricted in

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<sup>44</sup> Ginevra King to F. Scott Fitzgerald, 24 January and 21 February 1915.J



every direction—by family obligations, by social ties, by youth, by gender and especially by the myriad rules and regulations at Westover—Ginevra struggled to assert her individuality. As we begin to understand the many restrictions that Ginevra experienced, it becomes easier to understand the assertiveness that she displayed in her letter of January 20, 1915. While the candor of this early letter is still surprising in the context of their relationship, it is altogether unsurprising if we consider the freedom that letter-writing offered her. Although every letter is but a suggestion of the writer's thoughts, Ginevra saw letter-writing as an escape from her other responsibilities and restrictions; when she wrote to Scott, she was as free as she wanted to be.

Nonetheless, Ginevra saw the limitations of this world of letters, telegrams, and feigned anger. Aware of these imperfections, she did her best to be as clear and forthright in her letters as possible, yet she still longed for perfection. Perfection, of course, is an impossible ideal in any situation, but Ginevra uses the word eight times in the first ten letters. For her the word perfection both emphasizes her truthfulness and underscores her dissatisfaction with both her life and her correspondence. Fortunately for the two young people, Scott visited Westover on February 20, 1915. Both eagerly anticipated the visit, but Ginevra was less romantic than Scott about the whole affair. Near the end of a long Valentine's day letter, she wrote:

Some day—Scott—some day. Perhaps in a year—two—three— We'll have that perfect hour! I want it—and so we'll have it! It may be different then but after a while we would be brought back to the way I feel now—anything like that would bring me back again—I think. It seems so

impossible, as I think of it up here at school but nothing is ever——  
impossible, I believe—!<sup>45</sup>

Ginevra's attitude toward Scott's impending visit reveals a major distinction in their personalities; despite her belief that she and Scott were very much alike, their differences both propelled and hampered their relationship. While Scott was a masterful letter writer, Ginevra believed in personal interactions and perfect hours; while he was at his best on paper, she shone in person. In order to understand their relationship, we must be fully aware of these differences—while the differences in their personalities certainly motivated them to continue writing in pursuit of understanding, those same differences doomed Scott's hopes for a deeper relationship.

According to Ginevra, Scott's visit to Westover was perfectly wonderful, but he clearly expressed reservations: the real Ginevra was beginning to clash with the Ginevra of his imagination. The day after his visit, Ginevra wrote:

Was it honestly as bad as you thought it would be. You see this place is so darn strict that I know you felt a sort of weight on you the whole time—I really hope you liked coming up, as it was so darling of you to bother to come this long way, just for such a short while. I think you were quite wrong in your assumption that I wouldn't like you as much after you'd been up here, for the fact is, that I really and truthfully care all the more. If you could only realize how much I wanted to see you and how I wanted to tell you more strongly (such grammar) how much I enjoyed it!!! You

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<sup>45</sup> Ginevra King to F. Scott Fitzgerald, 14 February 1915

know how hard it is to express anything in a strong way in words in a letter, but I trust you'll read between every line what my feelings are.<sup>46</sup>

Despite Scott's fears, their relationship was going well; less than a week after his visit to Westover, Fitzgerald was elected secretary of the Princeton Triangle Club: his social successes with Ginevra and at Princeton made the winter and spring of 1915 very good indeed, but Scott continued to worry that the difference between their epistolary and temporal relationships would be their undoing. To calm his worries, he seems to have tried to test Ginevra's affections, but she would have none of it. As she pointed out, his disappointment with the Westover excursion was only in his mind. By the end of the month, Ginevra was once again beginning to lose patience: "Don't you fool yourself, you haven't got me 'catalogued' yet," she wrote on February 25.

At this point, the interpretation of Ginevra's letters becomes slightly more complicated. Without the aid of Scott's letters, it is impossible for us to know exactly what he said to provoke a reaction from her, but he seems to have suggested, or told her, that he was beginning to lose interest in their correspondence. For her part, Ginevra was also feeling the pressure of her school work and the pull of her eagerly anticipated Easter vacation. While Fitzgerald returned to his family's rented town house in St. Paul, Ginevra spent her vacation in the luxurious new surroundings of her father's ornate and modern mansion at 1450 Astor Street in Chicago. Waited on by at least half a dozen domestic servants, the Kings inhabited a world that Fitzgerald was only invited to on occasion. While Ginevra languished in the gloom at Westover, Fitzgerald's letters were a

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<sup>46</sup> Ginevra King to F. Scott Fitzgerald, 21 February 1915.

doorway to the seemingly glamorous world of Princeton, but when she arrived in Chicago, Princeton's allure must have faded.

Ginevra was too busy to spend much time writing to Fitzgerald during her vacation, but on March 24 she wrote him one of the longest and most revealing letters in the collection. This letter is filled with subtle and not-so-subtle marks of wealth and privilege that probably stung Fitzgerald's pride. It is also reminiscent of the January 20 letter in which Ginevra tried to correct some of his more aggressive assertions about her character. What is startling here is the degree to which their correspondence continued to tread the same ground. As we can see in the text of the letter that follows, Ginevra seems to have been the more accommodating correspondent. For her part, she was generally content to exchange gossip letters with Scott; he comes off in her letters as needy and demanding. Still, the letter that follows demonstrates that beneath the gossip, Ginevra understood herself more clearly than Scott had bargained for.

1450 Astor Street, Chicago, Illinois

[March 24, 1915]

Wednesday eve.

á 9:52 P. M.

au lit—

Dear Scott—

I've just bid a fond farewell to two youths who leave on the 10:30 train for California. They're going in a private car and are going to stay only two weeks in

all— Isn't that crazy? Isn't it funny, when I got your letter, I was talking on the telephone and so I said "Just wait a minute, I'll open this letter, so I can read while you're talking." And then the first words on the page were "Even now you may be having a tete-a-tete with some 'unknown Chicagoan' with crisp dark hair and glittering smile." Well you'd appreciate the coincidence [if] you saw Deering. He's the darkest thing I ever set eyes on and has a glittering smile. I read him that passage of the letter, as it was so appropriate. But Scott, if I could only believe that you didn't mean all you said in that letter!

I'm terribly terribly horrible afraid that it's a case of plain tiredness, if there is such a word, on your part, I mean—you needn't worry about me. Of course you think that because I'm here with a lot of boys, I have forgotten you, but I know it'll make me like you all the better, because you see, all last term I didn't think of a thing but you—(this is sincere as I've ever been) and by the end of the term naturally my mental powers had given out, and a rest was just what I needed.<sup>47</sup> There are some peachy boys here now.

The Winters, the Kelleys and numerous others, and I am practically the only girl, consequently I'm simply having a glorious time. There have been one or two boys over every night and in the afternoon we go to the dansants at the Blackstone, or else they come and call or we fool around somehow— It is a lot more formal here than in St. Paul, but I suppose that's because this is a bigger city.

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<sup>47</sup> needed ] needn't

It is some baby city though and I'm mad about it and everything belonging to it.

What is your add. during vacation or would you rather not have me write?

That French phrase was sort of peculiar—I'm sorry. I don't know what I meant, but I think probably—"Il n'y a pas pour l'emprendre"— Meaning mon coeur<sup>48</sup>—boger! Let's see, were there any more questions, I don't think so.

Isn't it awful the way writers slander my name—? You've read the "Bride of Mistletoe" haven't you? Her name was Ginevra and Shelly or Keats wrote a horrible one about a Ginevra too. They always seem to have something perfectly dreadful happen to them on their wedding day— That will be my fate I guess, my husband will probably run away——!— And I don't wonder—<sup>49</sup>

Your letter showed just exactly what you thought of me, and if I hadn't heard of your plan to pick a quarrel it would have started one in a second, with out a doubt. As it was, I was terribly disappointed to think that you thought that badly of me and moreover, I don't think personally that I'm as bad as you intimated.

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<sup>48</sup> Trans. There is nothing to take—meaning my heart.

<sup>49</sup> Since the Italian Renaissance, a number of authors have written poems about the tragic death of a young bride named Ginevra who is accidentally locked in a trunk on her wedding day and dies before she can be discovered. Some of the most famous versions of the story include Samuel Rogers's (1763-1855) poem "Ginevra," included in his collection *Italy* (1822-28); Percy Shelley's "Ginevra" (written 1821); the early Victorian ballad, "Mistletoe Bough" by Thomas Haynes Bayley; and the novel that Ginevra refers to, *The Bride of Mistletoe* (1909) by Kentuckian James Lane Allen.

Your view is ridiculous—Just because you and I—for we are remarkably alike—just because you and I happen to be “fresh” (excuse me) and have more emotional feeling than most other people have, we’re bound, simply bound to let it out some way, sometime: and nothing under the sun could control our feelings— They’re bound to show themselves— You know you can’t help falling madly for a girl. It isn’t really you yourself that does it, it’s an indescribable thing inside of you— Of course that’s somewhat what makes you fascinated. I’m perfectly fascinated with some boys I’m willing to admit, especially ones whose reps. are in bad condition, and who I oughtn’t to pay any attention to. (Of course this is not personal. Don’t think so Please.) That’s the reason I’m going to marry some awful reckless fellow, just for the sake of the excitement and that I would want to help him reform. This is a childish view, you may think, but it’s my view. I’d marry any kind of a man under the sun— “Richman, poorman, beggarman, thief,” etc., if I really loved him.

I know you can’t mistake true love—I know it. And it’s a sin not to recognize it. Although of course an outrageous thing to go completely against the wishes of your family. There are loads and loads of boys here of course, but I don’t think that there’s one to marry. The bunch we go with, are really what you might call “speeds” or at least some of them, and although I presume they are rather a bad influence it gives a girl a great experience in loads of things (I can hear you say “Gee whiz—! she hasn’t any experience—!)

I defy you, Scott Fitzgerald! I have love in me—Nothing could hurt me more than to have you say that—

“Never have anybody really love you!” Well that is probably very true, but if the right man does come along, I’ll have love to give him. If nothing else in this world—(at least, I think so)

You show your ignorance of my nature well by saying that I haven’t ever really loved anybody. Naturally I’m awfully, awfully young, but there have been times in my life, in the last few years, where I felt something deeper and truer and more sincere than mere shallow affection. You see I’ve done a lot more for my age than almost any girl, especially those in the East.

You’re crazy! You don’t mean to tell me that you don’t think that girl who, when young, is a flirt, will ever get her share of life. Why, those sort of women almost invariably make the best wives—

“Eat, drink and be merry for to-morrow we die,” May be some people’s<sup>50</sup> attitude to-wards life, and I can see their view but there’s something more than that to be gotten from it, (that sounded just like Church on Sunday)<sup>51</sup>

Heavens! I don’t mean to preach for I’m far, far from anything like that. You probably don’t think I ever think of anything more than a good time, and being crazy about some boy, and loads of other people don’t think so either, but there’s where you’re wrong, Scott, and though there probably isn’t a bit of anything that’s “worth while” in me, I want you to see the way I really feel. I managed to read what you said about letting you go, as you weren’t wasting

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<sup>50</sup> people’s ] people

<sup>51</sup> Ginevra is paraphrasing lines from the books of Ecclesiastes and Isaiah.



affections on [blank space] well, if I hadn't wanted to use more than those ordinary "affections" on you, I'd have stopped long ago. And then, something drew me to you, I don't know why—it just—did. It must have, or else I wouldn't be writing you this or anything else of the truck you've gotten from me.

You are conceited, I'll have to admit that. No reason why you shouldn't be and then, I'm vain, (and self-conscious, some people say, of my self-confidence) That's another thing, I am as un-self-confident as any mortal ever was, yet some say I'm very self conscious of my self confidence.

Poor Scott, I guess you're bored enough—I'm terribly sorry about you're not being able to come to see me at my aunts, as I'd give some anything to see you, but suppose it can't be did. After Monday morn. my address is at school—! oho—!

Please Scott understand this letter and I know you won't think I'm such a fool.

Write soon— With love,

Ginevra.

P. S. It is now 11:05 P.M. Yes I met G. McIlvaine. Doesn't he remember me— Big Stiff— Strange— Huh.

P. S. Notice the length of this also writing. G. K.

You must be in a very serious mood for this. G.

This letter originates not from the more spartan confines of Westover, but from her bed in the King's new Chicago mansion. Even more interesting, given the location, is the fact that the letter opens not with a romantic declaration, but with an anecdote about

unnamed friends who have just departed in a private train car for a two-week holiday in California. While this event itself is not of great interest, Ginevra's comments about their mode of travel further illustrates the economic and social distance that separated her world from Scott's. The same may be said for the remainder of the paragraph. The references to Deering Davis, a local suitor from a family of prominent physicians, would have undoubtedly aroused Scott's jealousy. He also would have understood the subtle import of the first paragraph—the casual ease of Ginevra's conversation with Deering stands in direct contrast both to the more serious tone of the following paragraphs and to Ginevra's growing fatigue at Scott's constant need for reassurance.

Despite her irritation at the end of the first paragraph, Ginevra once again reassured Scott that her affections were secure (even if she did say that thinking of him all term had taxed her mental powers). At home and once again in command of the situation, Ginevra repeated the arguments that we saw on January 20. She and Scott are “remarkably alike” she told him again, and so the questions of love and devotion that he seems to have put to her are of little consequence to their relationship. Young though she was, Ginevra was too savvy to be deceived by Scott's latest line. In response to his suggestion that she has no love in her, Ginevra is even more direct: “If the right man does come along, I'll have love to give him.”

As the letter progresses, Ginevra observes a fine but clear line between rebelliousness and conformity. As the third woman in her family to bear a famous name, she is quick to distance herself from the many fictional Ginevras, but she is also aware of the ways in which her life resembled that of her fictional cousins. From da Vinci's famous portrait of Ginevra di Benci to Samuel Rogers in the eighteenth century to Percy

Shelley in the nineteenth century, and into the twentieth century with James Lane Allen's romance, *The Bride of Mistletoe* (1909), Ginevra had not fared well in art or fiction. The fact that misfortune usually befell her fictional cousins on their wedding nights was particularly challenging for Ginevra. Although she bravely declares her intention to marry for love, "I'd marry any kind of man under the sun—"Richman, poorman, beggarman, thief," etc., if I really loved him," she also says that it is "an outrageous thing to go completely against the wishes of your family." If Scott had been a little less determined, or less conceited, this letter might have ended their relationship, but Scott seems to have enjoyed provoking his correspondents, and this letter seems to have encouraged, rather than discouraged, him in his intentions.

### ***A Remarkable Correspondence: Spring 1915***

By the end of March 1915, Ginevra had grown tired of Scott's insistent questioning and cataloguing (they wrote more than one third of their total correspondence in the first three months of their relationship), but his letters remained a bright spot in the otherwise dull confines of Westover. Despite her protests at his impertinence, she was still taken by the unusual nature of their correspondence. Back at Westover at the end of March, she wrote:

I love to hear you talk about you's and my nature. You know them both pretty well, considering that you've seen me only about 14 hours or less.

Hasn't our correspondence been remarkable. I never knew anything like it.

——No, I don't——<sup>52</sup>

While she still longed for a “perfect hour,” she wanted to believe that Scott understood her in the way that she wanted to be understood. Far from the narcissistic girl that Fitzgerald’s biographers have thought he to be, she was entranced by the idea that someone like Scott Fitzgerald could be interested in her and not in her reputation. The letters that Scott wrote to others during this period, and the fiction that he based on this relationship tell a different story—for the rest of his life Scott imagined and re-imagined his relationship with Ginevra—but during their relationship his letters convinced her that he understood. For a young woman who desperately wanted to be taken seriously, even his more aggressive letters were a welcome tonic to her life at Westover.

The intensity of their correspondence declined dramatically in the spring of 1915 as Ginevra and Scott felt the strain of reality on their relationship. During her visit to Chicago, Ginevra reveled in the opportunities, the attention, and the freedom that came with the new house on Astor Street. Surely she enjoyed the security of her social position and her freedom beneath her parents’ indulgent eyes: the visit to Chicago wiped away the gloom of Westover and challenged Scott’s place in her imagination. To paraphrase the English army officer Thomas Mordaunt, one crowded hour of glorious life in Chicago was worth an entire season of Scott’s letters.

Unable to compete with Ginevra’s wealth, opportunities, and social connections, Scott was desperate to remain her “top man.” After his lackluster (in his view) visit to

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<sup>52</sup> Ginevra King to F. Scott Fitzgerald, 31 March 1915.

Westover in February, Scott surely realized that he was going to have difficulty competing on Ginevra's home field. If their relationship was going to succeed—that is, if he was going to receive both her affections and public recognition for having won her favor—then she must come to Princeton. From his ledger, we know that the spring of 1915 was a very good time for Scott. After his election to the University Cottage Club, and the excellent reviews garnered by his lyrics for the 1914 Triangle Club production *Fie! Fie! Fi-Fi!*, his election as Triangle Club secretary in February 1915 cemented his social position at Princeton. Without Ginevra, however, Fitzgerald's successes were still exclusively local, and quite temporary. Despite his mother's social connections, Fitzgerald was little more than a minor young celebrity from St. Paul who lacked the connections to turn his dreams of grandeur into reality. If he could win Ginevra, then his success would stretch beyond Princeton, and he could compete with his more well-connected contemporaries.

Ginevra's letters from the spring of 1915 are warm, affectionate, and filled with praise, but at the end of the day, they are just pieces of paper. The bragging rights that Scott must have gained from them were fleeting at best. In addition to their limited social value, Ginevra understood the complicated public and private nature of her letters, and she was careful not to give Scott too much encouragement. While she often feigned astonishment that Scott was unsure of her feelings for him, she was not about to declare herself unequivocally. Such a declaration would have constituted not only an egregious breach of her social mores, but it would also have been untrue. If Scott wanted his relationship with Ginevra on public display, it was going to have to be at Princeton.

On March 25, 1915, Ginevra received a letter from Scott inviting her to the Sophomore Prom at Princeton in June. The timing of the invitation is intriguing. The letter inviting her to the prom reached Ginevra in Chicago during her winter vacation and the day after she had sent the long and often defiant letter quoted above. In that letter, Ginevra chastises Scott for this plan to pick a quarrel with her in order to invigorate their relationship. Knowing, as he must have, that his plan would provoke a rapid and heated response, the timing of his invitation to the prom must have been equally well calculated. After arousing her anger and questioning her fidelity, he immediately undercut her wrath by dangling the invitation in front of her. The effect on her mood and language is extraordinary. The next day, she wrote:

Oh Scott that is so perfectly wonderful about the Soph. Prom. I simply can't thank you enough, but now the question is,—chaperone—!

\* \* \*

Please excuse my last letter too, it was awfully foolish but I took yours seriously and for what it said and was rather hurt to realize that you thought that of me. But never mind, "All's well that ends well"—and "it's an ill wind that nobody"—I've forgotten the rest, but what I mean is, that the squabble is all off. I hate hate hate to fight!!!<sup>53</sup>

Ginevra closed her letter emphatically: "Scott—I must see you!!" and once again underlined (literally) the distance between their "life in letters" and her real life. Scott's manipulation of her affections is remarkable. In the space of a few days, he managed to

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<sup>53</sup> Ginevra King to F. Scott Fitzgerald, 26 March 1915.

provoke a quarrel and to have Ginevra to apologize for her reaction to his boorish behavior. If she could have convinced her mother to allow her to attend the sophomore prom, his string of successes would have been complete.

Ginevra, however, was unable to attend the prom that year. Most biographers assumed that she did attend because of an inaccurate entry in Fitzgerald's ledger, but she did not. The spring of 1915, however, was not without its excitement. Next to the initial period of their correspondence, the months of April, May and June 1915 were the richest of their two-year letter-writing campaign. By the end of June, Ginevra had written at least forty letters to Scott. Two themes dominate these letters: the importance of another face-to-face meeting and the presence of competing suitors for their affections. While Scott continued to worry over Ginevra's other correspondents, she was increasingly aware of his wandering eye.

While he was on Easter vacation from Princeton, Scott met Ruth Sturtevant and Helen Walcott in Baltimore and wrote about his encounter with Helen in a letter to Ginevra. In the reply that follows, Ginevra demonstrated that she was attuned to Scott's line:

Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut

[April 7, 1915]

Wednesday

Dear Scott:—

Oh you lucky lucky boy! Having such a wonderful vacation. Of course, I had one too, but then, your's sounded so perfectly grand! I thought of you and envied Helen Walcott, all Monday night! I simply couldn't get to sleep. I just thought of you and Helen and could almost hear you saying—"Now listen—Helen—you know I've never in my life known anybody that etc. etc"—Oh Scott, I can hear it! Poor girl, I hope she didn't take it all in, but from her description, she sounded a little too sophisticated and a little old.

I'm sorry, Scott, I had no right to say this to you. Naturally, you can do what you please without my butting-in and I hope you'll over-look these first two pages as merely the ravings of a jealous girl. Really, though, I am so glad you had such a heavenly time! You see, I went home, and didn't meet anybody new, and of course I had a grand time and all that, but it's one of the ambitions of my life to meet new people and I simply adore new places and new faces, so of course, I was sort of peeved because I couldn't go to Hot Springs. Courtney came back yesterday (Monday, I should say) full of the most wonderful stories of the place, 94 boys and 12 girls, I think there were. She left about a half hour before the Princeton Glee Club concert but met a lot of the men on it in the afternoon. Oh the lucky lucky girl. Believe me, if it's the last I do, I'm going down there next Spring, and stay till the last cock crows. The stars be praised! My roommate came yesterday, and I'm not alone in my misery any more.



The lines above suggest that Scott had underestimated Ginevra. Not only does she show him that she is aware of his flirtations, but she remains playful in her criticisms.

Nonetheless, her attitude in the early lines is not entirely clear. While she teases him about his flirtations with Helen, she had already secured his invitation to the prom, and her protests of youthful jealousy are in direct contrast to the following lines about her adventurous plans for a future visit to the resort at Hot Springs, Arkansas. Most of Fitzgerald's biographers have assumed that he had the better of Ginevra in their relationship, but this letter shows that she played his game very well.

Ginevra was skilled at the epistolary arts, and the remainder of this letter both continues her flirtations and foreshadows the cooling of their affections and the end of their relationship. When her Westover roommate reported that unknown Princetonians were asking about her, Ginevra rose in defense of her reputation:

She saw Joe Shanley on Monday, and met a friend of yours, called Ed Silver, I think, who asked if she knew me— What sort of stuff has been said about me! Honestly, I'm afraid I have a foolish and awful name down there. Tell me, honestly and sincerely, have I? And Scott, if I have, for mercy sakes, stand up for me, and tell anybody that says anything nasty that they've heard that it isn't true. Really I'm so blue and down about all that sort of stuff that I don't know what to do. Why Why is it that people that don't even know a girl will absolutely condemn her by some remark that they've merely heard say! It doesn't seem right, but it's true as anything and it's about a hundred times harder to get on top of a bad name than it is to acquire one you must know that— It seems so awful to think that any girl especially a young one should have a reputation to outlive that

has been exaggerated by—well, jealousy or dislike or just plain “not-knowing-anything-about-it!” I don’t understand it. I’m afraid some of my letters are a little queer, and I wish you’d destroy them, for someday you might think I didn’t mean what I said, and make them public. Then I would be so humiliated if some of the foolish “past history” got out. You know, I think that lately, we’ve written much franker letters, I really do. It doesn’t seem as though they were as thought-over and quite as morally or foolish as they used to be (I mean mine, especially) you understand, don’t you?

I think that was a perfectly rotten thing of that H. W. to say about Westover—! The fact is Farmington is terribly jealous of Westover, while we never think of it’s being in a class. You<sup>54</sup> see, we’re allowed to go to Farmington, and see the place, which really is wonderful, but they’re never allowed to come up here, so that never can compare the two places very well—Oh I tell you, I get patriotic about school when I hear anything like that. It’s a perty good place after all—!<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> You ] We

<sup>55</sup> Miss Porter’s School, located in Farmington, Connecticut, and often referred to as Farmington, was founded in 1843 by Sarah Porter. Miss Porter’s is one of the most elite female preparatory schools in the East and counts among its alumnae Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis.

Oh don't you adore the tango fox trot? We're going to have some steps of that for my dance next summer, but most of it is to be an exaggerated form of the regular tango, with queer catchy Italian music.

Oh, I'm going to have the most wonderful summer! Tell you all about it in some other letter. It'll be divine, if it can ever be worked. About five house-parties and so forth, one being given at Lake Placid and one on a house boat in the East. But Biddeford Pool, Me., for me after the first week in July, and then the quiet life—Bathing—canoeing—picnicking, etc. etc.

Oh, I want June to come so so badly—

Write soon,

I am your Ginevra.

Ginevra's concerns about her reputation were well-founded. From the beginning of their relationship, her reputation had fascinated him and vexed her. When Mizener wrote that their first meeting was like the meeting of two titans he engaged in hyperbole, but Scott was much attracted to her reputation and she was intent on policing and protecting it. As noted above, their relationship was not protected by a well-established web of social connections and shared history and so their correspondence was fueled more by imagination than by fact. When Ginevra asked Scott to destroy some of her letters, she acknowledged that a relationship built on reputation and imagination alone could not survive the scrutiny of real life. Despite her remark in June 1917 that she never thought that Scott's letters meant anything, she was acutely aware of the effect that a mislaid letter could have on her reputation.

The remainder of the letter is light and gossipy, but the reference to H.W. is important to our understanding of Scott's attitude toward Ginevra. H. W. is Helen Walcott, a young woman whom Scott had met during his recent Easter vacation in Baltimore. There he met two young women who later figured in his correspondence: Helen Walcott and Ruth Sturtevant. Just a few months before, in January 1915, Scott had praised Ginevra's poise in a famous letter to his sister Annabel, but by the fall of 1915, even Scott was growing a bit tired by his own pursuit of Ginevra.<sup>56</sup> Sometime after the middle of November 1915, Scott wrote to Ruth:

While the rest of the college was drowning its sorrows in Busbys,  
Maximes, Jacks and other churches along Broadway I was sitting the  
Elton Hotel in Waterbury with Ginevra King, another Westover girl, and  
another Princetonian.

Scott was clearly feeling the limitations of Ginevra's age and social restrictions, but his malaise even extended to his writing. His letter continues:

Ruth Sturtevant I'd like to see you a lot right now. I imagine you'd be an  
awfully cheering person to talk to. I always talk too D—— seriously with  
G.K. and end up with a pronounced case of melancholia but I think you'd  
be likely to leave a person in a good humor—I don't know why!<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> F. Scott Fitzgerald to Annabel Fitzgerald, ca. March 1915. See: Bruccoli and Duggan, eds., *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 7-10.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

With his academic career in tatters and his interest in Ginevra beginning to fade, Fitzgerald was glad to have other female correspondents. But he was not yet ready to let go of Ginevra.

### ***Growing Apart: Autumn 1915-Spring 1916***

Throughout the course of their relationship, Scott found fault with the infrequency of their face-to-face meetings. Whatever feeling fueled his dissatisfaction, Ginevra did not feel the same way. While she was well aware of his disappointment over not having the perfect *tête-à-tête*, she was enjoying this stage of their relationship. Although Scott later imagined Ginevra as a young woman who was emotionally bankrupt, she was nothing of the sort. In the letter that follows, from the beginning of her last semester at Westover, she writes perceptively about their relationship and how she and Scott are closer in feeling than he wants to admit. Scott received this letter at his parents' home in St. Paul, and it is not too difficult to see that while Scott has taken another step backward, Ginevra is developing into a rather mature young woman. As we read the letter, it is important to note the ways in which time continues to play a central role in their relationship. The letter was written only thirteen months after their first meeting, but Ginevra's attitude and tone have changed considerably.

Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut

[January 30, 1916]

Dear Scott—

Just so as to not disappoint you I am writing this the day after I got your letter. In fact, I got it last night and am answering it immediately (Sunday morn) It may be long and it may be short that depends entirely on the mood in which I finish it.

Exams start on Tuesday and naturally I ought to be studying for them now, but as it is, I haven't cracked a book! However, I don't expect to pass so am not worried in the least! Got a bid to a tea dance from Joe Shanley the other day for Feb. 19th to meet the  $\Delta$ <sup>58</sup> and regretted it with much gloom— How I hate to get bids that I know I can't go to, and that I want to go to so badly— Why were schools ever invented anyway.

My, but that must have been stupid to read over my old letters. After you finished them, you must have thought me the greatest fool in the world. However, you must admit that your letters were much more interesting, some of them I even know by heart.

You carried off what you told me about— (You know, the night before the Y-P game) wonderfully, and I'm certain that no-one suspected it at all— I know I didn't, but I'm afraid that the whole evening must have been an awful bore to you.

Midge wants to know why you told Kirkland Jones that she was "the worst."! Ans. Caddy is dictating the following to me— "To tell you that she invites me to visit her anytime during August when you will be with Sam"— She

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<sup>58</sup> Ginevra and Scott both used the  $\Delta$  to represent the Princeton Triangle Club, the dramatic society to which he belonged.

won't be there in July!— Isn't that divine, as the four of us ought to be able to have some awfully good parties! Honestly and truly, it would be wonderful to have that perfect hour, sometime, someday and somewhere. I really think that it would be divine and I think we might be able to find something to talk about. Anyway we've got to arrange it next summer. I have a sneaky feeling that you wouldn't speak to me by the time that the week is up, because you would be so bored with me. Your last letter was divine though, and it seemed like old times to be getting such a nice long one from you—

Early this morning I felt just like writing you a heart-to-heart letter, and all thro' chapel I thought out what I was going to say to you, but somehow I have forgotten it now, worse luck—

The last part of your letter was the truest thing I have ever read, and so exactly fitted in with my ideas on such subjects, that it was almost amusing! You seem to feel the same way that I do about being crazy about people, and I suppose it's just human nature to want to own things, only a girl, I think, would rather belong to somebody she loved, more than wanting to own him— Of course I suppose that includes having the person belong to you, so that isn't any argument. Why oh why isn't it possible for us to have at least one long talk absolutely alone. We certainly have enough in common and would get to know each other abut 100%<sup>59</sup> better if we only could— But no, the inevitable chap is always on the scene!!! Do you know I often wonder why my ideas about somethings don't

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<sup>59</sup> 100% ] 10%

coincide with any other girls—or at least, not many others. Bug is about the only one I can think of now—Court and I certainly clash in our views sometimes. If I had my way everything would be a lot freer, do you see what I mean— Not so darn much convention etc. and everybody would be able to say exactly what they pleased, and not be any the worse for it. But if “wishes were horses, all beggars would ride.” and most people are tied down pretty darn tight by the conventional “What will People say” Seems to me no matter what a person does, if they themselves think they are in the right, there isn’t a reason in the world for worrying about what the other person will say. Perhaps you don’t agree, but I feel this way, I’m telling you about it. I feel exactly the same way towards you as you say you do to me. No matter if I do ever get crazy about anyone else, I’ll always sort of feel that I know you best, or at least better than most boys, even if I have only seen you a few times, and I know that I can always come to you and talk to you and you’ll cheer me up if I get down and out. (This sounds as though I was making my last will and testament, but it isn’t meant that way.) The worst of it is, that you don’t want to know me, and I do want to know you, ‘cause it’s no use having me on a pedestal if I have no business being there!— I don’t see why Midge should have objected to your remark, about feeling that you could get what you want, because confidence (not an over-amount, of course—but self-confidence is a wonderful thing and it’s hard luck not to have any. Perhaps it is because Midge has none that she didn’t like the remark—I’d give anything in the world for a little!! Anyone can get so much farther and so much more out of life if they have a little.



No, I don't think passion would have made you kiss me on the porch and in our house that day, because I pride myself enough to say that it would have been "nerve" and nerve alone that would have made you do it—I may be wrong—tell me if I am!—

I would so much rather have you take me in a more friendly (no, not that exactly) way, instead of idealizing me, because honestly and truly, Scott, I'm not worth it! It's<sup>60</sup> no use you're ever thinking so, and by admitting that I probably have made you lose all interest in me whatsoever—

If you understand at all what I'm trying to write, answer me and tell me if you do—

Hope you had a great time at Princeton———and just you buck up and make yourself think you're getting well, and the first thing you know—you'll be fine again— Anyway, don't forget I'm praying for you——

Wish me luck in my exams, and appreciate my long letter—

Yours with love,

Ginevra

Although this letter begins with yet another reference to the promptness of Ginevra's reply—a rhetorical tactic that affirmed Scott's place in her affections—this is also one of a trio of letters that Ginevra wrote just before the start of the school term. Obviously she is still in a vacation mood. She is, nevertheless, aware that her last meeting with Scott did not go as he had hoped. While we may think that it is odd that she

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<sup>60</sup> It's ] It

is already looking forward to Scott's August 1916 visit to Lake Forest, the importance of that perfect hour helps to clarify her meaning. Despite her encouragement that "the last part of your letter...so exactly fitted in with my ideas on such subjects," they never seem to have satisfying conversations when they are alone together. While she first blames their unsatisfactory meetings on the "inevitable chap[erone]" and on "so darn much convention" the real reason comes out later in the letter: "you don't want to know me," she writes, "and I do want to know you, 'cause it's no use having me on a pedestal if I have no business being there!"

Ginevra's admonition not to keep her on a pedestal is also reflected in her incredulous reaction to the news that he has been rereading her letters. After a number of their attempts at a perfect hour have failed, it is not surprising that Scott would have been looking back a little, but he seems to have been more interested in revising his memories of Ginevra than revisiting her letters. Later in his fiction we will see this revisionist attitude reappear as he tries not only to rewrite their relationship (in the case of Isabel Borgé in *This Side of Paradise*), but also in the ways that he writes and rewrites their perfect hour. While Ginevra longed for a perfect hour with Scott, she was much more realistic about the outcome. When Scott's second visit to Lake Forest was less than a success, he largely withdrew from the relationship.

### ***New Adventures: Autumn 1916***

When Ginevra arrived in New York in the fall of 1916, the world was changing rapidly. Although her parents had kept her in Chicago for several weeks to avoid exposing her to an outbreak of polio, she was nonetheless aware of the changes. Not only

was she separated from a number of her Westover friends, but many more of her male acquaintances were anticipating the entry of the United States into the European war. For Ginevra, however, these days in New York were filled not only with sightseeing, but with the activities that would prepare her to take her proper place in Chicago society. By the fall of 1916, Ginevra and Scott were on pleasant but not warm terms. In the letter that follows, we can see the final decline of their relationship.

228 West 72nd Street, New York, New York

[November 3, 1916]

Friday

My dear Mr. Fitz—

My hand has writer's<sup>61</sup> cramp from addressing the envelope, so I won't be able to write very much—

Thanks lots and lots of your letter also the vera cute picture of you— The McLaughlin pose is quite becoming—

You are darling to ask Peg and I down to the game, we're so twittered up that we scare know what to do—

I'm terribly sorry about Friday night, because you must know how much we want to come, but I think [I] explained to you last night why we wouldn't be able to swing it— It's a crime and we will sit here and weep all Friday night—

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<sup>61</sup> writer's ] written

but oh, the game will be so divine. I'm crazy to see it, and Princeton,<sup>62</sup> as I've never been down there before y'know—

We are going sightseeing this afternoon—The Woolworth and Singer Building, Wall Street and Brooklyn Bridge. I'm all excited—!

It would be slick to have you write a story about me only I don't think it would be a very interesting subject—dry, you understand— I'll write a “Snappy” for you if you'll put it in under your name— It would look well under a literary magazine cover—

I'm working so hard that I don't even think any more—I always was a little unself-controlled but now—oh, I don't know what I'm thinking of—writing you such a foolish line, but somehow I'm not in the mood to write you to-day as I usually<sup>63</sup> have to have a lot clever thoughts— But your letter to Peg was much more amusing than mine, so I don't feel that I have to exert myself. That wasn't meant as any kind of a slam—!

How is every little thing at Princeton? Are all the boys behaving themselves properly? And why don't you come to New York sometime, so we can go stand on the corner by Healy's and watch you go by—in, I mean—It's right near here, you know— Do you suppose you can get us a chaperone down there as there isn't any vacant one here—a dumb and blind one is the best variety

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<sup>62</sup> Princeton, ] Princeton

<sup>63</sup> usually ] usual

I think but tell us her name because we have to explain all about her to the family and Miss Weaver—

Write me soon about it— Do you remember how you signed your first<sup>64</sup> letter—“temporarily yours”

As Ever

Ginevra

Ginevra’s repetition of the closing, “temporarily yours,” from Scott’s first letter is an appropriate ending to their romantic interlude. While Scott undoubtedly intended to be fresh and flippant, his words were strangely prescient. Like many other dramas, their relationship had come full circle. If they could not have their perfect hour, they certainly struggled valiantly to maintain their correspondence. In the end, Ginevra King’s letters are the richest independent account of Scott’s college years that we have. In their pages we can find not only the soul of many of Scott’s female characters, but the remarkable voice of Ginevra King, the young woman who captured his imagination as much as any woman but Zelda Fitzgerald.

The epilogue to their romantic drama came in the summer of 1917 when Scott wrote Ginevra and asked her to destroy his letters. Ginevra complied with Scott’s request, but considered the act unnecessary. They were, as Scott had said so flippantly at the beginning of their relationship, only temporarily devoted. Ginevra quickly married and moved on with her life. Scott joined the army and also married quickly, but as we will

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<sup>64</sup> first ] final

see in the next chapter, Ginevra remained a fixture of his fiction for the duration of his career.

Without the aid of her letters, the comments above would be purely speculative. The Ginevra of Scott's fiction is not part of the complex drama described above and demonstrated below. Rather the characters based on Ginevra appear to play the same scene over and over again.

## Texts of the Letters

### 1. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*En Route to Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut by train*

[January 11, 1915]

Monday

Dear Scott—:

At present I'm on the train, and oh, but it's rough and rocky on the Lake Shore.<sup>65</sup>

I suppose by now you are "greasy grinding" at college. Cheer up! I will be in a day, too. I went in to the photographer's the other day and ordered some more of my homely pictures so you'll get one perhaps in about a week or ten days. Verily though, I think in truth that you ought to return the compliment to me, as I have but a faint

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<sup>65</sup> The Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway provided passenger service between Chicago and New York City by way of Cleveland, Buffalo, and Albany. At the time of Ginevra's letter, the line had just merged with Cornelius Vanderbilt's New York Central Railroad. Covering 959 miles, the *Lake Shore Limited* left Chicago at 10:15 each morning and arrived at New York's Penn Station the following morning. According to her diary, Ginevra was accompanied on this trip by several friends, including Edith Cummings and Marie Hersey; all were chaperoned by Mrs. Cummings. See: Ginevra King Diary, 11 January 1915, Ginevra King Collection relating to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

recollection of yellow hair and big blue eyes and a brown corduroy waist-coat that was very good-looking!

I left St. Paul on Thursday evening as you probably know, and that afternoon Reuben, Bob Dunn, Marie and I went sliding at the Country Club. It wasn't any good, so Bug<sup>66</sup> and I hitched a toboggan on the back of Reuben's car and had a swell!! ride—

The expression that you were trying to think of that I use was undoubtedly “for the love of the trees” not very poetic or original, I assure you.

Scott, what an amazing way you ended your letter! It was the most characteristic thing I've heard in a long time “Temporarily Devotedly Yrs.” Is it still? I wonder—

I dread school—I simply can't go back. I loathe the thought. I curse the fates that call for my education. I rebel at another 8 weeks of grind.

Enough of this though, you've probably gone to sleep— Do write me in the future and don't judge my sanity by this letter—oh how the train jolts——!

Yours Fickely sometimes but

Devotedly at present—

Ginevra

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<sup>66</sup> Ruben Warner, Bob Dunn, and Marie “Bug” Hersey were friends of Fitzgerald's from St. Paul; each one attended the party at Elizabeth “Lib” McDavitt's on January 4, 1915, at which Scott and Ginevra first met. Marie Hersey and Ginevra King were classmates at Westover School in Connecticut, and Ginevra's letters frequently include references to Marie's activities or remarks about Scott's letters to Marie. Later, Fitzgerald regarded Warner as a rival for Ginevra's affections.



P. S. The underlined word is supposed to be “fickle”

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## 2. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[January 15, 1915]

Westover,  
Middlebury, Conn.

Dear Scott—:

Thanks a million times for your marvelous letter. I never knew anyone that could write such wonderful ones—! Really and truly I mean it. You seemed greatly interested in Courtney,<sup>67</sup> and as she is one of my best friends and a member of the Big F.,<sup>68</sup> I can tell you all about her. In short, she is dark, pretty, fifteen and a peach. The other two girls are called Edith Cummings and Margaret Carey, and both are peaches, I naturally think—

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<sup>67</sup> Courtney Letts (1899-1995), a member of the “Big Four” (see below), was a travel writer and wife of Felipe A. Espil, the Argentine Ambassador the United States from 1933 until 1943. Prior to her marriage to Espil, Letts was best known as the author of *The Cruise of the Northern Light* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), an account of an arctic voyage that she made with John Borden, her second husband, in 1925.

<sup>68</sup> In 1914 Ginevra King, Courtney Letts, Edith Cummings, and Margaret “Peg” Carry anointed themselves “The Big Four”—the most eligible debutantes in Chicago; their matching rose gold pinky rings proclaimed and celebrated their status.

Scott, the person that wrote that clipping must have been your best friend. To say the least, it was true to life.<sup>69</sup>

My writing may be like Marie's on the train but not now, do you think so? Those pictures are terribly slow in coming and again I promise you that one will go to 107 Patton Hall—<sup>70</sup> And, Scott, I really and honestly wish you'd send me one of you—I hope it isn't too fresh to ask, but I would adore to have just a kodak—

I can't imagine what possessed Gordon McCormick to write me, as I didn't know the gentleman even knew what I looked like—

I have met Mr. Ames and thought him very attractive. Courtney used to know him a long time ago, I think.

You ought to be able to answer your own question about us (we?) four. (About our weight I mean.) I am the next heaviest of the lot so you can judge by appearances.

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<sup>69</sup> The clipping that Ginevra refers to is probably a review of *Fie! Fie! Fi-Fi!*, the 1914 production of the Princeton Triangle Club. Fitzgerald wrote the lyrics for three Triangle productions during his years at Princeton: *Fie! Fie! Fi-Fi!* (1914), *The Evil Eye* (1915), and *Safety First!* (1916), but did not appear in any of the performances owing to academic deficiencies.

<sup>70</sup> Fitzgerald resided in Patton Hall during his freshman and sophomore years at Princeton. Built in 1906, Patton Hall was designed by Benjamin W. Morris, Jr., the architect responsible for many of the buildings constructed during Woodrow Wilson's term as president of Princeton.

Listen! why don't you ask Gordon McCormick to let you visit him in Lake Forest next summer. I think that would be "simply swell"—!!!—

Now, I'll precede (sp) to answer your postscript

I— I hesitated because that letter was the fooliest thing I'd ever read, and I still think I oughtn't sent it— (Hesitate!—Hesitate!)

Secondly—twoly—2nd:

II— You see, I was afraid to ask you to write in the near future, because I didn't want you to feel you had to write at all and-a- I was afraid perhaps it might interfere with your lessons after you took those cuts and everything to stay over!<sup>71</sup> (All this is being said with a solemn face full of concern)—!

By now you think me a raving maniac, but "I should care"!!—!

Cheers—! Excitement—!

Exams come in 10 days! Outwardly I am so happy B—U—T oh heavens, when I think of all the 40's and 30's and 20's and 0's I am going to get, I feel like a funeral—

Anyway, Scott, please write often, as you haven't any idea how it cheers me up, and how much I like to get your letters—and I'll feel so blue around exams anyway—

Good bye for this time and

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<sup>71</sup> Students at Princeton were allowed no more than fifty cuts per year; Fitzgerald habitually accumulated more than fifty cuts in a semester and incurred a number of academic sanctions. Fitzgerald's numerous sanctions are the reason that he did not appear in any of the Triangle Club productions for which he had written the lyrics; these sanctions also prevented him from holding offices in campus organizations.

I am Yours Always

Ginevra

Postscript—

Dear Scott—

I thought a long time before I sent this letter. So excuse it. My address is

Westover,

Middlebury,

Conn.

### 3. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[January 20, 1915]

Westover,

Middlebury, Conn.

Wednesday

(I'm not the artistic or poetic type or I'd do some Michael Angelo's and Van Dyke's on my letters too!)

Dear Scott—:

This is a very serious letter so for goodness sakes, don't read it until you feel in that sort of a mood—!

I'm terribly sorry you don't think I was sincere when I said I enjoyed your letters. They don't only “amuse me”—for I like them so much because—well, just because they

are so nice! If you don't believe me when I say I never read such interesting ones, what can I do?

Am I supposed to take the fact that I'm fading from your memory as<sup>72</sup> a compliment or otherwise—I suppose there's so little to me that I'm not hard to forget quickly—

Really, though, even if this is the case I have enough pride not to want you to say I am a speed or anything like that— Do you honestly think I am ? Answer please— (truth!)

Now Scott this is heart to heart and therefore private!<sup>73</sup>

A few years ago I took pleasure in being called “fast” (if that were possible as young an age as 13 or 14) But anyway, I didn't care how I acted, I liked it, and so I didn't care for what people said— Naturally this was crazy, but I was young, I'm only sixteen now and that isn't aged—

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<sup>72</sup> as ] is

<sup>73</sup> Young men and women of Fitzgerald's generation often read letters they received aloud in front of an audience of one or sometimes more friends. The public reading of these private documents was an important part of the social system; the number of suitors a young woman had indicated the strength of her popularity and marriage prospects; when the letters were amusing or even discreetly amorous, the reading of letters aloud was a form of entertainment. The fact that Ginevra is already marking her letters private suggests that her early relationship with Scott progressed very quickly.

About a year [ago] I began to see that there was something better in life than what I had been doing, and I honestly tried to act properly, but I am afraid I'll never be able to wholly reform as to the extent of being an angel!

I know I am a flirt and I can't stop it. I really haven't got such a "line" as everyone thinks for I mean a lot of what I say way down deep and nobody ever believes me. Except for this, I am pretty good on the whole, but you know how much alike we are, and in a boy it doesn't matter, but a girl has to control her feelings, which is hard for me, as I am emotional.

The inner workings of my mind would or would not be of interest to you, as the case may be— But I do think a lot though, more than people think I do, although I haven't very much sense. I have more than some people credit me with I hope, only I don't know how to use it. I know you think I'm a perfect fool, but really I wish you wouldn't think so, as, though I did flirt with you, I really like you a lot.

I have never written to anyone such a letter as this, but if we don't ever see each other again it's the only way<sup>74</sup> we'd ever get to know each other. I wish you'd write me a letter and tell me the same thing, just how much of a fool you think I am, and for Mercy's sakes! Be Frank!

After all this that I've written you, I trust you will tell me as much of the truth as I've told you. And I hope I haven't bored you to tears!

Take every word of this as the perfect truth, on my word of honor—

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<sup>74</sup> way ] was

This is the kind of letter you said you wanted, and so this is what I wrote. I'm still petrified over exams. I wish you better luck than I'll have on mine— Write soon and say that you understand.

Yours Ginevra.

P. S. That was the most impossible dream! I hope you don't think it characteristic.

G.K.<sup>75</sup>

P. P. S. I don't know what you meant by "tell me what the Big Four did—I think it's a fake!" Answer this surely.

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#### 4. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[January 24, 1915]

Sunday

Westover,

Middlebury, Conn.

Well, Scott F. Fitzgerald, you ought to be thankful and grateful that I wrote seven other letters before I wrote you! I'll tell you why! Principally because I've let off all my steam about coming exams, the weather, lack of pep and so forth, and am free and ready to

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<sup>75</sup> G.K. ] G.R.

write you a more interesting letter. I suppose a letter isn't complete without a "dear" in it, so here goes—

Dear—: Why repeat the Scott? It is understood. Your last letter was a marvel—I howled over it and wept over it by turns! I did in truth! I see you don't believe me. Well, to tell you the truth, I was pleased beyond words to get a frank letter from you! Also I was pleased at some of the things you said, but the others, no!!

"Jamais de la vie" That remark about the "Confessions of a V."<sup>76</sup> was entirely uncalled for and I hope to goodness you don't think that of me.

Also when you said I hadn't any character. I consider that a personal insult- I must be a fine kind of a girl— No sense, no character, a flirt! Still, I might as well take my medicine, as I asked you what I was and that is what I am— No! And a 100 times NO! Of course Reuben didn't kiss me at the station or anywhere else! No fears on that score—! I think him very nice and attractive and cute—and yes, I've gotten two letters from him, also a wonderful box of Smith's candy that the poor boy blew himself to, but which I never even saw as it is not allowed here, and was carted off to a boy's club in Waterbury— What do you mean by this Scott? "They say you have some comeback" Also, I did not understand what you meant by asking me why I laughed when you gave me you "Mouchoir" at the McDavitt's— The reason that I laughed was that I was embarrassed.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Fitzgerald had apparently called her a vampire in his last letter.

<sup>77</sup> Fitzgerald gave Ginevra his handkerchief as a memento of their first meeting.

Although Ginevra claims embarrassment, she later reciprocated; Fitzgerald preserved a



(I hope the fact that I never write over 4 pages to anybody else is appreciated)

Why my picture doesn't come is a mystery to me too, I am sure. It ought to have been here long ago. And oh Scott another thing—what did you mean by “Who is this Mitchell” I can't imagine—Mitchell what? Mitchell Tires! So? (This is my new expression, to get everybody's goat)<sup>78</sup> Also, in one place you insinuated that I did not mean it when I said I really liked you an awful lot. Here is an argument for you, if you like me, and we are both so much alike in every respect why shouldn't I like you, too? Really, Scott I wish you'd believe me—! I don't know why, but I must be awfully drawn to you, for the minute I start to write to you I have a hundred and one things to say, whereas everybody else, I can only think up enough to say for four pages. But to go on— Scott, I'm surprised! I hear you had plans for kissing me goodbye publicly. My goodness, I'm glad you didn't. I'd have had to be severe as anything with you! (Ans. this— Why didn't you? (KISS ME)

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corner of her handkerchief in his scrapbook. See Matthew J. Bruccoli, Scottie Fitzgerald Smith, and Joan P. Kerr, eds., *The Romantic Egoists: A Pictorial Autobiography from the Scrapbooks and Albums of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 27.

<sup>78</sup> William H. Mitchell (1895-1987) was Ginevra King's first husband and the father of her three children; Ginevra and Billy Mitchell grew up together in Lake Forest and married on September 4, 1918. They divorced in 1939.

Oh my<sup>79</sup> the funniest thing happened last night! A boy from Hotchkiss<sup>80</sup> called John Hamline called me up on the telephone and I didn't recognize his voice—it sounded a lot like yours. He said, "I met you in St. Paul," don't you know who I am?" I didn't want to seem like a bone, so I said,—“Is—this—Scott?” Then he said, “Well I caught you then and preceded to tease the life out of me.”<sup>81</sup> I read a letter from Betty Mudge to Bug last night and she had heard from Ed Powers that Dan was furiously jealous at me! His tart letters sound like it. Really they are jokes—I have written him two very stinging ones this week (just finished one of them) just for the joy of stinging him, and he has written me three equally horrid so at present we're not on very affable terms— Edie P. called Bug up last night on the telephone and they talked for almost an hour, so long that at last they were told they had to stop— She also got such a long letter from him last night that it had to be put in 2 envelopes! Talk about being “en amour” “C'est pas au meme classe” (you see, I have been studying for a French exam.)

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<sup>79</sup> Oh my ] Ohm

<sup>80</sup> The Hotchkiss School, founded in 1891, is a prep school located in Lakeville, Connecticut, about fifty miles from Westover School. Many of the men from Hotchkiss attended Yale University and continued their relationships with young women from Westover and the more famous Miss Porter's School in Farmington, Connecticut.

<sup>81</sup> The students' use of the telephone at Westover was severely restricted by the strict institutional schedule and by the comparative rarity of private telephones in the early twentieth century. In order to speak to a girl at Westover, a suitor would sometimes pretend to be the girl's father when calling the school.

You know Scott, that before I started out to write you, I didn't have any idea I could write such a long letter and not begin to complain about the weather, the exams and my awful cold—! Aren't you honored though?

Let me think, is there anything<sup>82</sup> else I had to tell you Oh—I had a dream about you the other night, but I'd never tell you what it was about only that you did the rescuing act— I have been reading the part of your letter where you said something about “The same sort of girl” and have fallen into somewhat sentimental state. I wish a girl could write a sentimental letter and not be criticized—I also wish that I would at the present moment get a long wonderful letter from you— “Distance lends enchantment” Oh I feel so mushy tonight, I'm glad I didn't feel this way in St. Paul, I wish we were riding home from Minneapolis now, Oh, how I wish it, Scott, I'm going to stay in this mood, thinking of my second aft. in St. Paul, till to-morrow morning and then to work till Thursday evening when exams are over and then—oh joy— And Scott, please don't think I forgot you when you went away, I was thinking of you the whole time—well—I think I better stop. I am so proud of the length of this that I have been waving it around taking it all in and I hate to pack it into a tight wad again! (Sort of nobody at home)

I hope to goodness you appreciate its length and begin to realize that I've never written such a letter before in all my days. Do write soon—and long— I am your Ginevra.

P. S. Just reread this, excuse the last page.

(Please scan)

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<sup>82</sup> anything ] anthing

P. S. Notice this paper—it is new! Also homely, also it is my excuse for writing you so soon again.

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5. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

[January 29, 1915]

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

Scott Ma chere—

Notice the unusual promptness! And profit thereby— Your letter was a marvel, and even that word doesn't give it the right amount of credit! Tra—la—Tra—la! I'm so happy exams are over, and though I don't know whether or not I passed them, the mere thought of them being over—brings me glad tidings of great joy! Bliss!—! Heavens but I'm glad the old things are over. Never felt so jubilant in all my life—Cheers——!——!! but s'nough said! This is the life – if you like it! that is my motto. The whole school was in agonies this morn, because Miss Hilliard<sup>83</sup> announced that if there was a large majority, our vacation would be extended for nine weeks more, till the 4th or 5th of April, instead of the 16th of March— We voted at lunch and thank heaven, the vacation is to stay as it was, (March 16th to 30th) Mon Dieu but I'm glad— I'm very glad to hear that you have decided that I didn't kiss Reuben—and now I want you to apologize for calling me a vampire—Tres rude I should say – and please apologize in your next—!

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<sup>83</sup> Miss Hillard ] Miss Hilliard

In reference to “This Mitchell” as you say, I know one boy named Billy Mitchell. He is very nice, but don’t think he likes me particularly well—

Scott—! Of course I can’t tell you what my dream was I’d have told you the first time if I was going to at all—enough said, that you rescued me from a dreadful experience. You’re<sup>84</sup> my friend forever— I slept alone last night as my roommate went out with another girl, so about an hour after lights I got up, got your last letter and I read it through— Then I slept on it all night, but I had such horrid dreams that I never will do it again. In one I played the part of an amateur detective—Sherlock Homes, you know, I was chased over all sorts of fences and things and finally got so tired that I woke up. (Such a truly exciting dream) Only one of all the dreams I had was cute, and that was about you, but I couldn’t describe it on paper, as that would take away from its beauty.

Oh Scott, we’re going to have the most heavenly sleigh-ride tonight—I’m thrilled to death—! Bug and I are going together and oh how heavenly and wonderful it will be—Moonlight—snow—sleigh bells—fur robes—singing—oh marvelous!———

The above space of thought about it. It is to be filled in with your imagination, as you have a good one— Oh why oh why weren’t we able to go on one at the MacDavits’. I think it was a perfect crime—oh how wonderful it would have been— Would [you] have stayed over if it had come off? Say yes!—! It makes me furious to think of it! Oh—

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<sup>84</sup> You’re ] Your

Margaret Ripley is a darling I adore her—I worship her and I room with her—! She’s great and I know you’d like her. Why don’t you and Mr. Shanley (?) (I think that’s the name of her friend) come up and see us here some Saturday. I would simply adore to have you come. The difficulty is though, that you can only come on Saturdays—from four till six—you have to let me know beforehand so I can engage a parlor—and the worst thing is that you must sit in a glass case, or practically one— Nobody looks in at you, but it’s pretty deadly—I don’t know whether you’d like it or not, but I’d like having you come up better than anything else I know!! Here is the inquired-for information. My birthday is November 30th and I have a bad temper when aroused! Please do not try to arouse it. You would have done so had you kissed me without<sup>85</sup> permission on the porch that night! I think that in that case I should have gotten furiously embarrassed, gasped and turned purple, and said in a heart-rending tone—“Scott!” That’s all I should have done—but let me tell you that would have been enough—! I have a feeling that you wouldn’t have wanted to do so again—In the first case I think that I should have considered it for quite a while, all of which time you would be still asking, and then finally I would have said—“No, Scott, I have absolutely reformed, and I’m so sorry but I can’t break the resolution— Then you would keep on begging, but I couldn’t and wouldn’t have let you do it—! There! I answered you truthfully and I do hope<sup>86</sup> you’ll believe that what I say was absolutely what would have happened, had things gone my way—

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<sup>85</sup> without ] with—but

<sup>86</sup> hope ] have

Yes, I saw that your letter was very subtle— I didn't have to go very far to see that on the envelope where everything was all crossed off and rewritten, you were either trying to prove to me that you were speedily forgetting me, or that you didn't have any more envelopes that fitted your paper— Secondly, you tried to find out whether or not Reuben had written me—I told you before that he had— Thirdly—"Stone Age Stuff" means what you wrote me about your exam paper being all marked up. I don't think you would have gotten fussed when the prof. asked you what girls' name etc.—etc. Fourthly, I doubt if you would ever run off with any girl whose "eyes had grown dull, and whose smile was passé"<sup>87</sup>— That could perhaps be accounted for by the fact that it all took place in the moonlight—darkness—you see—— By this you can judge that I was wide awake to almost all of your letter—and by now, I've beaten all records of letter-writing and am going to close— My, I should<sup>88</sup> think you'd be glad!—!

Do write soon again and don't forget to apologize. I hope you are safely though all this mass of writing—It's all sincere[.] I assure you for believe me, if it wasn't, I wouldn't take the pains to write this lengthy epistle. It is [the] best attempt I've ever made lots and lots and lots and lots and lots of snow fell out west—Ha—Ha. I foxed you—!

Yours

Ginevra

P. S. Oh Scott, that moon-light ride to-night.

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<sup>87</sup> passé" ] passe"

<sup>88</sup> should ] sould

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6. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD<sup>89</sup>

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[February 5, 1915]

Friday

Dear Scott—:—

As you see, “adorable” Ginevra is writing an “adorable,” letter, in answer to your “adorable”— So be it— Your last was “adorable,” there is no question about that— My “affectatations” haven’t been hurt yet, in fact, they’re thriving under the stimulus of so much mail— I tell you, all my other correspondents are so mad<sup>90</sup> at me that they’d be willing to do almost anything to me—

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<sup>89</sup> In Fitzgerald’s copy of Ginevra’s letters, the position of this letter and the next are reversed from the sequence in which they appear here, but from the context of the letters we can see that the shorter letter, in which Ginevra apologizes for the flippancy of a telegram from one of her classmates that Fitzgerald received on the evening of February 5, 1915, follows this longer letter in sequence. They are offered here in order of their composition.

<sup>90</sup> mad ] made



There is another girl in the room now, awfully attractive, (you'll meet her this summer, I've a feeling, you'll find out why I think so, soon!) and she's bothering me to death! I simply can't write when anybody's in here! This old "pen" is getting on admirably as the Easter vac. time nears. Now I'll do some more talking about myself. It strikes me that in one of my other letters I told you all about myself so I may repeat myself in this—

#### H I S T O R Y of G. K.

Born—November 30th 1898—Age now 16 yrs. and a couple of months. Early education—(I always have been a bonehead and always will be) so let's pass over that. You see, I started out by running around the streets wild, much to mother's disgust, and used to play with all the little "Ikies"<sup>91</sup>—(exaggeratively) until I was about ten years old, when I finally got tired of going around with them. I used to hate girls—dolls and everything like that, and used to "adore" to play with boys—I loved trains and stuff like that— Then when I got about twelve, I got to be a sort of slushy little fool (I don't suppose I've changed much) and I got conceited and vain, for no reason what ever—— Oh dear, I don't see why I'm telling you all this stupid, crazy stuff— Wake up—! I can't write to-day and I do want to make this interesting, as it's for over Sunday! Scott! You know I'm not bored with your long letters! Aren't you foolish?? (Yes!) Of course I haven't any bet on with Bug, she knows you too well to bet on you!

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<sup>91</sup> Early twentieth-century slang for Jewish children.

My, but isn't it horrible to get old! I just hate it. You see, I'd been working under the delusion all my life, that "nothing" counts till you're<sup>92</sup> sixteen, but I see that that isn't the truth— I do hate to grow up though I have to be good, and act good, but I'm afraid I'll never be any model! I don't want to be what's more! But you'd heard all this before! (I'm a poetess!)

"Some day" you said, Scott, I'm looking forward to that someday I can bet though that you won't be a woman-hater— That's one of my prophecy— We'll see how they both turn out— You see, it would be much better not to have you a woman hater, for then our meeting wouldn't be as you described it—

Yes, I was in your frame of mind last Xmas—still am—in fact—and also, you needn't try practicing any stunts next summer on any other girls— Hear that?

Don't forget our plan of elopement—That mustn't fall through—

Well, I'm wanted in about 100 places now and wanting in my upper story—so good bye— It wouldn't be proper for me to end my letter as you did yours, but believe me, when I tell you I mean it!——

Really——Truly——

Yours

Ginevra

(P. S.) I'll write to-morrow or Sunday or both.—

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<sup>92</sup> you're ] your

7. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[February 5, 1915]

Read this first!

Dear Scott—

Just a line to tell you why you got that telegram!— Hope you weren't too dumbfounded! Well, anyway—The girl that was in here when I was writing, (always omit names, as you said in 1 letter) thought she'd try to get "guy" and read my letter, which she proceeded to try to do—needless to say, I wouldn't let her, and in the scramble I shut up the letter in the desk-drawer, and it went so tight that no amount of pulling would open it—I only had 15 minutes to get it in the last mail to-day and we got started laughing and then of course lost all our strength—I was screaming—so Midge said—"Well, it's my<sup>93</sup> fault, now I'll send a telegram and tell him he won't get his daily letter. Bug dared her, and I said all right, so she went and did it and I went off to do some very necessary studying— My but it was funny though. We both almost died laughing. I'm sending this special delie' in hopes you'll get it before Sunday as I know you want it. Please forgive its un-promptness – but I'm sure you'll appreciate how funny it was—<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> my ] may

<sup>94</sup> From 1885 to 1917, the U. S. Post Office sold ten-cent special-delivery stamps for expedited delivery of important letters; the special-delivery stamp was in addition to the first-class postage of two cents. Special-delivery letters traveled with the rest of the mail, but upon their arrival at the receiving post office, they were separated from the regular

Goodnight, I have to go to a concert now—

In expectancy of a wonderful letter to-morrow—I am

Your Ginevra

P. S. Wish we could have a chance to “drop the question” now Oh Scott, now I wish it!!

8. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[February 7, 1915]

Sunday

Dear Scott—:—

You ought to be ashamed of yourself— You know I’d take a dare!— And now I feel I have to write 24 pages I’ll be miserable— Just to fool you. I don’t think I’ll do it, but will make what I do write very short and sweet! This is my tenth letter this afternoon, without exaggeration and none of them are over four pages in length, and those four—oh boring enough to kill anyone.

mail and were delivered directly to the recipient by teenaged boys working on commission; the delivery boy received a fee of eight cents for each letter. When a suitor sought permission to court a girl by mail, he sent the first letter by special delivery to indicate the strength of his intentions. Ginevra’s use of the extra postage here indicates her quickening affection for Scott.

I just read Bug's reply to your last—very clevah—I should say—I wish I could do such stuff.<sup>95</sup> I'm the most idiotic poet— (Why I said "idiotic" I wouldn't tell you) but after having written about a 100 letters, wouldn't your brain feel slightly strained too. Now, I'll pretend this is the first and last letter I am writing and that I have all night to do it in— Here goes———!

I never was so delighted in my life as when I heard you were going to come up, really and truly—I thought before that that you were only joking but I'm pleased to death to think you're really coming—I asked Courtney if Mr. Ames could come, and she said "Yes with much pleasure" not as stiffly as that, but she would adore to have him come! I went in and got three sitting rooms the night you wrote— And so we'll all be \*\*\*\*\* (oh dear, I nearly ruined my pen over that word!) fixed up all right—

I will dream about it till it comes true, I know. They must give us something queer up here, as I dream every single night. Last night I dreamt you were calling on me,

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<sup>95</sup> Fitzgerald occasionally wrote his letters in the form of poems or even collages. On January 29, 1915, he wrote a teasing poem-letter for his St. Paul sweetheart and Ginevra's friend Marie Hersey that began: "My Very Very Dear Marie / I got your little note / For reasons very queer Marie / You're mad at me I fear Marie / You made it very clear Marie / You cared not what you wrote" See Bruccoli, Smith, and Kerr, eds., *The Romantic Egoists: A Pictorial Autobiography from the Scrapbooks and Albums of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald*, 25. for a photograph of the letter and F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Poems: 1911-1940*, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli (Bloomfield Hills, MI: Bruccoli Clark, 1981), 130-31. for the complete text.

but it went off all right. Only you had purple hair, and would insist upon strutting around and tapping on all the walls, saying “Even walls have ears.” I have just been reading “The Last Days of Pompeii” (sp) which is marvelous.<sup>96</sup>

I suppose that by now, you have stood the sight of my picture and I hope the shock wasn’t too great. I am expecting a telegram every second, telling me you can’t come—! Needless and sad to relate, it would be impossible for us to go to Choate to a dance. My, now I’d like to though. I probably would forget how to dance, or how to act, so suppose I had best stay put—

I have a splitting headache to-night, and what with that and the fact that the final trials of the Glee Club come to-morrow. My mind is wandering.

Of course I want your picture—! Please—and send it soon—I’m awfully anxious for one—! I think you’d get more money for the rest of them if you sold them at auction,<sup>97</sup> or else you can send me two, to put one behind the door, as you suggested. What on earth has Mark been telling you—! He thinks he knows an awful lot, but he really doesn’t know a thing. He has told a lot of other people some absolute untruths about me, and so he’d be just as liable to tell them to you. Anyways, don’t believe him and I’ll tell you if they’re true when I see you!—— You said you’d be here on Jan. 20th I suppose you mean Feb. 20th and I took it as such— Is that right? I’ll bet you that what you’ll do will be to say “Oh Hello” to me in a bored tone, and go rushing up to Courtney

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<sup>96</sup> *The Last Days of Pompeii*, a novel by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, published in 1834.

<sup>97</sup> auction ] action

and Rip and pay no more attention to me—If you dare! though—I warn you. You’ll have to act devoted at least.

Scott, why won’t you believe what I said about your standing first—I can’t tell you any better or any more truthfully, and I wouldn’t have told you at all, if you hadn’t asked me plainly. Really Scott, there’s nothing in the world I was ever more sincere about—! Believe me or not!

## Part II

I don’t tell it to “quite a few people” and the only way I can prove it to you, is to show you by the way I act when you’re up here— It certainly will be sort of embarrassing when we met with everybody all standing around—I will be fussed too<sup>98</sup> and you will be too, probably—nevertheless—it will be too wonderful! I think of it the whole time I simply can’t wait!

You say I am not emotional—I thought you knew me well enough to know that I am if in the right mood or when sufficiently excited— That’s the trouble with me though—I simply can’t control myself sometimes and I do do some things that I am sorry for later perhaps I don’t know what possessed me to say that about being “mushy”— Such a sentimental word—my heavens—it sounds like something bad— I’ve always wished for a real good sense of humor. Father has a marvelous one and I’m supposed to be like him but that is one place where I miss out. I can’t be really humorous. I can’t possibly tell a funny story without losing the point completely— It’s sad but true.

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<sup>98</sup> too ] to

Enclosed is a charming present. You said you'd lost the one you got in St. Paul and so I just amused myself by pulling out a couple more!<sup>99</sup>

Pardon "moi" for calling the Trenton girl a half-wit. Ten to one when you called on her that day, you entertained yourself and herself by telling what beautiful eyes—etc.—etc. Oh Scott I know you and I know that's just your way. I couldn't believe what you said— You'll say it all your life, as I doubt very much if you'll ever give up girls in general— It's not like you a bit— You avoid a good-looking girl!—! You couldn't if you tried all your life— I don't know whether you'll ever marry or not, as you'd probably get tired of your wife after a year or so, but as to your being a woman-hater—I doubt it!!! Notice this is my 20th page and I haven't tired yet only that I've been dotting my T's and crossing my eyes—for the past few pages.

Scott for once in my life I believed all you said in the last few pages of your letter. It was so wonderful that I couldn't help it! Oh, if you'd only realize that it isn't only a joke with me— I don't take such things as a joke usually, or at least not this time. It's the most serious thing I ever did. You see, I'm getting older, I've got to be more dignified, and it's oh, so hard for me, 'cause I've never been kept down very much and I've always had a marvelous time. Scott, please believe me—I ask you to—!

I've now been writing to you for over an hour and I've got to get dressed for supper, which comes in 10 minutes. This has been easy, and I haven't told you half the things I was going to, about an awful exciting sleigh ride Bug and 2 other girls and I had yesterday and etc.—etc.

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<sup>99</sup> Ginevra must have sent Scott a lock of her hair to keep in his watch case.



Scott I hope only that you're not asleep—you'll have to read this on the installment plan—I guess. Good-night and thanks again a billion times for your letter.

Write me again very soon.

Yours Ginevra.

9. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[February 9, 1915]

Tuesday

Dear Scott—:—

Again I take pen in hand and start to tell you how much I enjoyed your last etc.— etc. and so forth. This time the scene is changed to study hour, with many eagle eyes looking on, so this can't be much of a letter.

Thanks a billion times for your last letter, it was the best thing I've ever read, and I honestly feel rather ashamed, trying to answer it.

You simply must come up here! I must see you! You have to come! Please Scott. Really, if what you say about your feelings towards me, are true, just the fact that you see me oughtn't to make any great difference. Scott, I'd simply worship having you, and before we go any farther,<sup>100</sup> I'll pin you down to some facts. The first is, you'll have to let

<sup>100</sup> farther ] father

me know a week or so before you can come<sup>101</sup>, so as to be sure and get the best sitting room. We want to have one alone don't we, and let Mr. Ripley and Mr. Shanley have one together too. The trolley cars, the only way to get out here, leave Waterbury every 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30 etc. but you see you can't get here till four for 3:30 is the one you'd want.

Really, I don't see why you think we'd fall flat. I don't For my part I'm crazy wild to see you and so I think you might come.———Please———!

Scott! The most terrible thing happened this morning. All our marks were read out, and I had another conduct mark! This probably doesn't mean much to you, but I got one last term too, and I tell you—2 in one half year is a very serious thing so Miss Hillard thinks. I'm worried to death!

Did you honestly mean all you said in your last? I can hardly believe it.——

'Calves may come

And cows may go

But "Bull" goes on forever!'

That's why I can't believe. However your letter was wonderful and at the time I tried to believe that all you said was true. The Freshmen<sup>102</sup> I know there<sup>103</sup> are few and far between. The only ones I can think of now though are Arthur Symes, who I know slightly and Mark Walton, who I know quite well, a divine dancer, and very attractive but

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<sup>101</sup> come ] caome

<sup>102</sup> Freshmen ] Freshman

<sup>103</sup> At Yale University.

don't know what your opinion would be . He may be kicked by now. I wouldn't be surprised.<sup>104</sup>

This is really a preparatory for my picture. They came the other night and are so awful that I hate to send one, but I promised—so—!

It will spoil any delusion you ever had about me, as it is the freakiest looking thing I ever set my eyes on.

Oh, this weather— It is simply frightful— Snow—snow—snow—everlastingly—! I'm dying from homesickness and feel about as low as I can't imagine what! You'll have to come up—even if only to cheer me up— Have pity on much—!

My cold is thriving, and will probably keep on doing so for many moons— Glee Club trials come next Monday, “Oh wert thou in the could blasts” That is what we have to sing.

Oh, bye the bye—I slept on your letter again last night and had the most divine dream— First about Mark Walton and then a long one about you—Princeton seems to run in my thoughts.

I simply can't tell you anything of that dream—If you came up I “might”!

Your letter to Bug was charming, we both certainly appreciated its wit! That girl must have been a half wit—at that dinner party in Trenton— That is something I can say for you, that you aren't stupid. Consider that a compliment, as I rarely flatter—

Speaking of classic books. Did you ever read—“The Etiquette of Courtship”. Funny, isn't the name for it!

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<sup>104</sup> Walton was a classmate of Fitzgerald's at Princeton.

Private !!!!!

Really and honestly Scott, I am afraid you'd get conceited if I told you where you stood with me, but anyway—I shall give the pleasure of knowing that at present you're<sup>105</sup> by far the first and foremost. Believe me or believe me not, it is the simple truth. Now that you think you have me crazy about you, you forget me, but you asked me in a serious way, and I am answering as such.

We certainly have been frank in our correspondence, and I think it's wonderful. Why, do you realize that if we hadn't we wouldn't have even known what the other of us was like—!!! I know this letter will disappoint you, but I can't write in study hour. You can be assured though, that I like you just as well as I ever did in St. Paul.

Perhaps it would amuse you to know that Dan and I have had a “heap big fight” We're not on writing terms any more. He is a horrid fresh boy and——.

It is up to me to stop boring you now, I think—s'goodbye—and write soon. The picture comes by the next mail—God Bless it! And I hope you come some Saturday soon.

Remember——you're first.

Ginevra.

P. S. I didn't know what to sign myself, as you didn't approve of “Yours” or “As Ever” Perhaps “Forever” or “However”—“Whenever”

G— K—

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<sup>105</sup> you're ] your

My I wish I could embellish my letters with art. That picture of yourself had quite a bit of resemblance—you had better believe that I am “naïve and innocent” “sweet sixteen” I tell you——!!!

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10. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[February 14, 1915]

Sunday

P. S. I started out to write a short note, but look at what you’ve got to wade through now.

G. K.

Dear Scott——:—

It’s a relief to be able to sit down and start to write you, with the thought that I’ve written all my duty letters and done everything I have to do. My, but it’s a bore to have to do so many things you don’t want to— Don’t you think so!

I can’t thank you enough for your scrumptuous letter. It was the best one you’ve written me.

You know, I have gotten into the most disgraceful habit of getting excused from Bible Class to write to you! Sad but true! You see, I have to have perfect quiet and solitude and when everybody is down at Bible, it is the perfect time—!

Oh, I have an awfully sad piece of news<sup>106</sup> to tell you. Courtney has gone to New York to be examined for appendicitis.<sup>107</sup> It is quite a sure thing, and she will very probably have to go home to Chicago to-morrow, or Tuesday and have an operation so poor Junior Ames will be sort of “put-out”. Of course, if he wants to, he can come up with you and Joe Shanley—but then he’d have to sit in our sitting room with us, and would you want him there? I might persuade Rip and Mr. Shanley to take him, if he has to come up with you two, but I don’t suppose he’d want to, if he couldn’t see Courtney.

Isn’t it the deuce that that should happen? Of course, I’m sorry for Courtney and all that, but I wouldn’t have it gum our next Saturday’s party<sup>108</sup> for the whole world. Scott!! If you don’t come up, I’ll be the most miserable thing alive. Really it would be the most disappointing thing in the world if you couldn’t come up, after all the planning and everything we’ve made. It would just spoil everything! Excuse me for using the word “gum” it wasn’t a bit ladylike!

Gracious! (ladylike exp.) What possesses you to think that picture looks like me. I should think you were forgetting me! You’ll have to come up, if only to see that I’m not quite as bad as that picture.

I do so hope that you passed the rest of your exams! but I guess you probably did.

Don’t mind this scrawl but I was so cold at my desk that I had to move over near the radiator.

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<sup>106</sup> news ] new

<sup>107</sup> appendicitis ] appendicites

<sup>108</sup> party ] part

Talk about Greenland's icy mountains! They aren't in it.

I'm sorry you object to the word "adore"! I think it very fascinating,<sup>109</sup> subtle (sp) genuine etc. etc. It is a real girl's word, and I can't imagine any boy using it.

I've written so much the last few days that I have writers' cramp now—it's a dreadful bore—I tell you. I wrote the flossyest mushyest bit of prose this afternoon on "Winter" for Theenes. All about the "fiery radiance of the setting ball of fire"—the<sup>110</sup> "fleecy flakes mantling the huge fir trees in snow white clouds"! It sounded about as much like me as—I don't know what! Anyway. I guess it'll pass with our teacher, she's only half there— Bug and I have both decided that we're awfully bored with life, and can't think what the d—— to do to raise excitement. First, we were going to elope, but having nobody to elope with, that plan fell through. Then we were going to run away to the Yale Prom but as neither of us had bids, that wouldn't have been satisfactory— Oh, this is dull life.

The preceding two pages must have been of vital interest to you, so now I'll answer some of your questions. You asked me what was the missing word to "Then we'll all be ——" To be perfectly truthful it was probably "swell"— Judge for yourself whether that would ruin my rep.

No, I'm not going to Hot Springs—! You've asked me that three times now and I have told you now for three times. What makes you think I've changed my mind.

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<sup>109</sup> fascinating ] fascination

<sup>110</sup> the ] the the

I certainly will try and manage to get a sitting room alone. I don't see why we shouldn't have one, as I get one for each two of us. I can't wait to see you and talk to you.

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END — OF — PART — ONE —<sup>111</sup>

and ask you all sorts of questions and———Oh everything! I'm too excited for words!! It ought to be great fun as some other girls are also having people up. You mustn't mind a little thing like the uniforms we have to wear, and when you see us appearing in simple white "girlish" frocks, don't fall over backwards. Come as near four and after as possible as we want to get the best sitting room and "first come, first serve!" Of course, I'll have to be very dignified when I first meet you, as a teacher is in the room, glaring at us with her eagle eye—

I hate to answer the truth about what you asked me about whether or not I would have been angry if you'd kissed me coming home from Univ. because the truth is, I'm afraid I wouldn't have been. Of course, I would have led you to believe I was, and would have acted so, but and we both would have been sorry afterwards, but I'm afraid I wouldn't have had strength of character enough to have resisted you—perhaps I might have though!

That is awfully funny about that girl in Trenton! I suppose that after the reconciliation, you are gone on her. In fact, you may be at the present moment, telling her "what beautiful eyes" etc. etc.

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<sup>111</sup> This letter was probably too large to fit in one envelope.



Don't you ever dare say again that "I wonder who's kissing her now," suits me!  
It does NOT! It may have about ten years ago—but if you really think over the words  
you'll see how entirely inappropriate they are!

It is horribly dark in here now, and I can hardly see, but I Hate to turn on the light,  
it seems so much more as if I was really talking to you like this. Some day—Scott—  
some day. Perhaps in a year—two—three— We'll have that perfect hour! I want it—  
and so we'll have it! It may be different then but after a while we would be brought back  
to the way I feel now—anything like that would bring me back again—I think. It seems  
so impossible, as I think of it up here at school but nothing is ever——impossible, I  
believe—! I certainly am moody—Why!, I change my mood every five minutes but can  
usually change it to suit the circumstances. I try to, at least. The sentimental mood is the  
easiest for me to get into worse luck, but I suppose age will conquer that— Oh—how I  
hate to grow old! I'd like to stay just sixteen all my life! It would be wonderful!

No, you would not want to see me furiously mad,<sup>112</sup> I'm simply horrid—That  
poem

"There was a little girl

Who had a little curl

Right in the middle of her forehead<sup>113</sup>

When she was good, she was very very good,

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<sup>112</sup> mad ] made

<sup>113</sup> forehead ] forehead

But when she was bad she was horrid! That is yours truly all over—! I am also deathly stupid when I'm tired of anybody—I sit and look out the window, make fruitless remarks and join other people as soon as possible— It's the same way with everybody—I guess—

This started out to be a short, snappy letter, but has ended in a<sup>114</sup> draggy slow sort of one, but you see I can't write again till I see you, and I had to warn you what I am like— Oh Scott, just think—next Saturday. It doesn't seem possible I can't wait— You've got to come—please—Scott. I can't see a thing now so good night, if there's any thing more I have to tell you before Saturday I'll write a short note.

Write me soon——and before you come up.

Your Ginevra.

# 11. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[February 18, 1915]

Thursday

Dear Scott—

I suppose you think I've deserted you, but no matter, I haven't, I've merely been as busy as the deuce lately. In fact, I've really been digging my head off.

<sup>114</sup> in a ] in an

Cans't imagine? But it's true!

This is just a line to tell you that I think it's too good to be true that you're really honestly coming up on Saturday. I mean—I'm counting the hours till then, and it doesn't seem that it can really and truly come true.

I am in a dickens of a humor to-day, due probably to impatience for Saturday, and everybody that comes near almost get their head bitten off.

No, of course, a teacher is not in the room and we'll have a nice cozy one all to ourselves, or else I'll die in the attempt!

And for two whole hours too!

I'm dying to hear all you have to say to me and to tell me,<sup>115</sup> and I don't see why under the sun you think I'm not Wild to see you, as I really am. Believe me or nay—

“June is thrice June since you breathed it with me—“ This is as good as your quotation or better, “In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love!”—

Don't forget all you have to tell me, and I assure you, I have a million things to ask—

Only 2 more days— Poor Joe Shanley— It is a shame about Courtney— She was operated on for appendicitis yesterday in Chicago. Poor girl. Well anyway, we'll have each other to talk to, and that ought to be enough.

Scott, I can't wait to see you again—!—!

Till Saturday, then

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<sup>115</sup> to say to me ] to tell say to me

Your Ginevra

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12. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[February 21, 1915]

Sunday

Scott, it was perfectly wonderful of you to come up here yesterday. Really, I never can thank you enough! Was it honestly as bad as you thought it would be. You see this place is so darn strict that I know you felt a sort of weight on you the whole time—I really hope you liked coming up, as it was so darling of you to bother to come this long way, just for such a short while. I think you were quite wrong in your assumption that I wouldn't like you as much after you'd been up here, for the fact is, that I really and truthfully care all the more. If you could only realize how much I wanted to see you and how I wanted to tell you more strongly (such grammar) how much I enjoyed it!!! You know how hard it is to express anything in a strong way in words in a letter, but I trust you'll read between every line what my feelings are.

I am going to suggest something now— Do you think that our affectations could stand it if we wrote every other day? This is just a suggestion. Consider it as fresh or otherwise, but I care not!

I know that there is nothing I'd rather have than a letter from you every other day. Just a short one I mean—(first I had every day,<sup>116</sup> but I thought that was too much) or do you like it better if you get a letter say once or twice a week that is very long—? Of course, Scott don't forget that this is only a suggestion—

It doesn't seem possible that the visit that we had planned for so long, is really over with— It seems too awful! It will be awful to think of 3 months straight without seeing you and probably you'll meet someone at Easter that you'll like a lot better.

I told Marie and Kit that you were anxious to see them again and were so sorry not to have been able to and Bug said "Well, he might answer my swell letter," so you'd better do it, Fitz.

I have the spring fever. It is another day like yesterday and seems just exactly like early spring.

I am sitting at the window (it is now 4:04 P.M.) and a machine with three hollering men just went past. One was singing, "Little Grey Home in the West" I thought perhaps one might be you, but if [it] had been I guess you would have sung "Chinatown, My Chinatown," etc.—I love that— But I adore "I love you truly, truly dear."<sup>117</sup> Much the prettiest I think.

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<sup>116</sup> every day ] every other day

<sup>117</sup> "Chinatown, My Chinatown" (1910) by William Jerome and Jean Schwartz and "I Love You Truly" (1901) by Carrie Jacobs-Bond were popular songs from the heyday of Tin Pan Alley. "I Love You Truly" was particularly popular in Chicago; Jacobs-Bond ran her publishing company, The Bond Shop, from several locations around the city.

In one of the letters I got last night, from a boy in Chicago—he said “how is that d—— Scott now! Now I’ll tell you how he knew your name. When I came from St. Paul, I was feeling like you said you were at the same time (both my feet are asleep—oh dear—!) and I told Deering all about it, especially to make him jealous— Well I guess he still remembers it, and so you see what you get—!

I wish you’d tell me what you did in New Haven last night, in your next letter, and don’t forget that you faithfully promised not to tell Bug about what I told you what she said about your letters—(very mixed, I’m sorry, but do you remember?)

Rip is now eating a Tangerine. How I hate the smelly old things. You see during quiet hour, (from 2:15 till 4:30 on Sunday afts.) we’re not allowed out of our rooms and have to be very quiet, so Bug and her roommate and the rest of our corridor all lean out the window and have the hefty confab. There were about 12 of us out of the windows a minute ago, and Bug and I decided to elope by tying sheets together and then running to Waterbury.

Many pardons for this boring letter and I’d make it longer but Bible bell rang, and for once I’m not excused.

For heaven’s sake, write me soon and long—and interesting—and—well as nice as you can—and believe me when I tell you it was the most wonderful thing in the world to have seen you yesterday.

I am

YOURS<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> YOURS ] YOUR\$

Ginevra

P. S. Don't mind my signature, I tell you I have the spring fever.

P. P. S. Give Mr. Shanley my best.

P. P. P. S. I had something else to tell you but I've forgotten now. I can't stand your having that Jewish looking picture of me in your watch. Please let me send you another one.

13. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[February 22, 1915]

Monday Morning

Dear Scott—

Just a line to tell you that I was sort of a nut yesterday when I wrote that letter, and that I didn't mean that suggestion about writing every other day. I really don't think it would be wise, do you? I'm a nut to have suggested it.

Terribly sorry—write soon

Yours

Ginevra.

14. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[February 24, 1915]

Wednesday

Dear Scott—:—

That was the most disconsolate letter you wrote me— It didn't sound a bit like you—

You are so foolish, as you know perfectly well, that if you want to be nice and have a good time, you can as easily as not, but you see you came up here Saturday with the idea that you were going to have a bum time, and that it would go perfectly flat—well, you may think it did, but I certainly don't think so.

Please don't thing I'm just trying to be polite, for that isn't my nature, but you are so absolutely foolish<sup>119</sup> when you keep repeatedly saying that you don't think I enjoyed having you and that it was a failure—it may have been deathly stupid, for it was not for me.

I am inclined to believe that you had forgotten all about what I looked like and was like, and you were intensely disappointed with what you found on Saturday. That is what your letter sounded like. Oh no, I'm not angry, because I can't very well help blaming you, but I'm awfully sorry that it is really so, as I don't feel as though Saturday had made any differences in my feelings towards [you]—even if you think so.

So much for that—Amen!

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<sup>119</sup> foolish] fooling



You see, I'm going to write you every day too— I think it will be just “grand”—  
 What was the matter with my last letter, I worked hard enough over it— My, your letter  
 amused me, you were so blue! Poor Scott, I'm awfully sorry— You ought to be up here  
 now if you want to feel low—rainy—blowey—dark—dull—awful!! S'life—but anyway,  
 we go home in three weeks, and that is something to look forward to.

Now Listen—Scott!<sup>120</sup>—of course you know how perfectly wild and crazy-mad I  
 am to come to Princeton with you next Spring, but I wouldn't for the world have you lie  
 to another girl, or at least, I mean ditch her, or whatever you'd call it. It would make me  
 feel cheap as the deuce, and you probably would be sorry afterwards that you had given  
 her up— And then, if it is before June 8 I couldn't possibly come as school doesn't close  
 till then— But Oh Scott, I can't tell you how I do want to come! Naturally I want you to  
 be able to work it, and there's nothing in the world I'd like to do better—

You are right about the  $\Delta$ <sup>121</sup> show—Ginevra is very couspic, and homely at that—!  
 but I'll be terribly interested in seeing what the girl is like anyway.

I meant “affections” not “affectations” in my last letter. You might have known I  
 wouldn't say the latter— Now do you see what I meant?

My, I'm sorry about that telephone business—but thanks an awful lot for  
 bothering to call me up at all— “Je vous remercie”— (sp) grammar)

If I write you again to-morrow, I must stop now—

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<sup>120</sup> Now Listen—Scott ] Not Listen—Scott

<sup>121</sup> Ginevra and Scott both used a small triangle to indicate the Princeton Triangle Club;  
 in the typescript, the triangle is transcribed as a capital A.

So until to-morrow

I am

Yours Ginevra

15. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[February 25, 1915]

Thursday

Dear Scott—

I got your letter 10 minutes ago— Speaking of promptness—! Ahem! It (meaning the last letter) was about a million times nicer than the other—it was just like you, and the other was just unlike you as could be—gloomy and generally downcast. I don't know exactly see what you mean about when I smile at you, it must look awfully peculiarly. When I got your letter yesterday, I was already horrible, blue, and it made me feel more and more forlorn—so please excuse that last letter. It wasn't awfully nice—I'm making more “faux pas” lately, this morning I got 4 conduct marks, which may or may not can me, as it depends more or less on the humor Mary R.<sup>122</sup> is in when she hears about it, but it doesn't worry me in the slightest, as in a little more than 2 weeks, I'll be in

<sup>122</sup> Ginevra refers here to Mary Robbins Hillard, the headmistress of Westover School.

Dear old Chi. My I wish you'd come out there, and then we could go back together on the train (wild plan) but anyway, it would be marvelous.

Oh, I do do so hope you'll make what you want to—all the thoughts will be with you on Monday, Scott!<sup>123</sup>

Why wish for that hour and a half over again? We can have other hours and a halves where it will be nicer, and where eagle-eyed chaperones aren't peering around every corner.

You are so crazy! "When you're tired of my letters" you said— It seems to me that your the one to get tired of my letters—of course we're not going to drift apart,<sup>124</sup> that is, not, if I can help it. That is a sure thing! It'll be you first or I miss my guess.

And then too, if I ever read your name in "Theatre" as being a woman-hater, I'm coming double-quick time to find out how true it is, for myself. I shall always doubt anything of that kind about you.

If I am responsible for any number of bachelors in my life, I'll also be responsible for making myself an old maid. I already have a "movie" of myself in a little apartment, with peacocks on the wallpaper. An easy chair, with a parrot on a perch at the side, a cat on a cushion in front, and a coffee pot and cup at the other side. Then I'll be in the midst.

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<sup>123</sup> On February 26, 1915, Fitzgerald was elected secretary of the Triangle Club for 1915-16. Ginevra is probably wishing him luck in the elections, although she mistakenly refers to Monday, March 1, 1915, as the day of the elections.

<sup>124</sup> apart ] after

Yes, I'm sure I'll be a man-hater, just because I like them so well now— The trouble is, I can't "play the game" like some girls can, and keep ten on a string at once, because I never can be crazy (really, truly crazy) about more than one—and the rest of course, notice the slight.

Don't you fool yourself, you haven't got me "catalogued" yet, as you say.

This is just a note, but please notice that there are more words to the page, than in most of my letters—

So till to-morrow, I remain (cold salutation) in fact—

I am

Your Ginevra

#### 16. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

[February 28, 1915]

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

Sunday

That is the most marvelous thing in the world, Scott, about the Δ!!!! I'm so happy about it that I don't know what to do! It is perfectly great! Bug and Kit offer their congrats, too! Oh, you can't realize how happy it made me— It<sup>125</sup> seemed too good to be true! You were so wonderful to say what you did about "doing it for me" etc. etc. It

<sup>125</sup> It ] I

made me feel that there was something to cheer up for, as I was feeling blue as the ocean—!

I will have to do a lot of pleading and begging with Mother about this June—as she mentioned it in her last letter and said I was too young to go etc. etc. Well, most of my letter to-day was saying that I intended to go and would argue her blue in the face etc.—before I gave up, so I have hopes.

Bug is becoming quite the society butterfly. Yesterday “Ev” Griggs came and called on her, and to-day she’s having lunch with him and another girl and boy in town. She pulled the worst graft to do it too, as a woman in Waterbury who has a big “pull” with Miss Hillard, asked her in for Ev. She hasn’t come back yet, and I’m dying to hear the results— Lucky devil! I bet she has a heavenly time.

You said “I hope you notice that I put 3 cents stamps on all my letters.” Well, in answer to that, I hope you noticed the Special Delivery on my last one. And anyway, all those 3¢ stamps are an awful waste— Why do you do it?<sup>126</sup>

How are your “affectations” and the daily letters? Don’t<sup>127</sup> you think they’re a strain— With all this deadly work we have to do up here, I don’t see where I can find time to write every day but I vote that we write each other three times a week, with or without waiting for replies— Say—Sundays—Tuesdays and Thursdays for me, as those days I have more time to write. I think that would be a fine plan and of course, we’d have to be sure and write those days!!!

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<sup>126</sup> Fitzgerald’s use of three-cent stamps indicates that his letters are getting heavier.

<sup>127</sup> Don’t ] Dong

I don't quite remember what Marie's remark was, but does this answer the question? Of course, I didn't want you to tell Bug<sup>128</sup> that I told you what she said, naturally she wouldn't think it was awfully nice of me, as it was a mean one and probably a very thoughtless remark on her part and I shouldn't have told you, anyway—just for general principals too—! See?

The Glee Club hasn't been read yet, and I am living in mortal agony— Where is that picture you promised me? Please send it very very soon— Please Scott.

Again I tell you it isn't a bet at all! What a foolish thing it would be to bet on anything like that anyway— But nevertheless I want to go back—to Chicago for Easter Vacation—I can't wait for the 16th. Why don't you come to visit Mark in Chicago.

Write soon and——oh how glad I am about the Δ.

Yours

Ginevra.

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17. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[March 2, 1915]

Tuesday

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<sup>128</sup> Bug ] But

Poor Scott—you sounded worried to death about that telegram! I guess I don't have to tell you anything about it now as you understand all of the foolish things<sup>129</sup> that happened. It was awfully funny though, you must admit that.

We did the most wonderful thing last night. In the first place, yesterday morning, eight of us and a teacher asked permission to go skating at night, and we got it. Then at lunch Miss Hillard announced that all the school could go, which was sort of hard on our little party. So we decided we wanted to be very exclusive and therefore asked permission for the eight of us to go on a little pond right near the school, in the woods—of course, it was divine! We started out before the others and sang all the way down there, had a wonderful skate and got back before everybody else— Oh Scott, it was so beautiful out. The moon is full and perfectly huge and of course it went to my head—! Have you ever read *Diane of the Green Van*—?<sup>130</sup> Well do you remember when she said, “The moon has gone to your head Philip”—? Well, I was going to write you as soon as I got back as the moon had struck me hard and I felt perfectly wonderful, but we didn't have a bit of time, so I couldn't possibly. The night before that I was going to write you by moonlight after lights, but I was too sleepy! (romantic situation) I am so lame from skating now that I can hardly move, and don't know what I'll do about my dancing.

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<sup>129</sup> things ] thing

<sup>130</sup> Leona Dalrymple's *Diane of the Green Van*, the story of an heiress who takes to the woods in a green van, was number eight on the best seller list for 1914. It was made into a movie in 1919.

The Glee Club hasn't been read yet and I am on pins and needles. A pantomime<sup>131</sup> is being given here a week after Easter vacation and I'm dying to hear who has been chosen for it— Not Yours Truly that's sure!—!

Two weeks from to-day and I'll be in New York—Joy! We get in at 10:30 from this devilish place—I am going to shop—buy a Easter bonnet—etc. have lunch with a girl and her Mother at<sup>132</sup> the Ritz and take the 20th Century at 2:45 for HOME!<sup>133</sup> There won't be a soul there, all the same—

(The scene changes, the shero is ready for bed) Moon etc. etc.

I've been reading the "swellest" poetry lately— The "Spell of the Yukon" by Service— They're perfectly wonderful. Read them by all means!—!<sup>134</sup> The moon is on my head again to-night! Oh Scott if only our perfect hour comes true—it doesn't seem as

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<sup>131</sup> pantomime ] pantomine

<sup>132</sup> at ] and

<sup>133</sup> The 20th Century Limited was a luxury train that traveled much the same route as the Lake Shore Limited.

<sup>134</sup> *The Spell of the Yukon and Other Verses* by Robert W. Service (1874-1958) became an instant best-seller upon its publication in 1907. Known as the "Canadian Kipling," Service is best know for his poems about northern Canada.



if it ever could, because it's too good to be true. Next summer it<sup>135</sup> must be or else when you come to my day-boo—!<sup>136</sup>

I must go bed now and get a little sleep as we have test to-morrow.

Give my best to everybody I know.

Your Ginevra

18. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[March 5, 1915]

Friday Morn.

Notice the envelope—I unconsciously (sp) wrote “New Year” instead of “New Jersey”

Dear Scott—:—

Excuse paper and pen but I'm up in a practice room now (supposed to be singing) and this is all I could get— That was some poetry in your last letter. It must be great to be such a good poet. (This sounds like a letter to some pianist or singer) I have only to add—Send me your picture, please!

<sup>135</sup> summer it ] summer i

<sup>136</sup> Although Ginevra is looking ahead to her debut, she never had a formal coming out because of the U.S. entry into World War I.

School is going as badly as usual—although last night we had loads of fun—Practically the whole school went in and heard Madam Sembrick sing.<sup>137</sup> She was wonderful— The ushers were the freshest things imaginable! I guess they had heard that “all-Westover” were coming in, and so applied for the job. I did the fooliest thing in the middle of it. We had the most horrible time getting seats as somebody had “swiped” our regular ones, so we trotted all around the gallery, getting kicked out of every seat we took and finally, having appealed to Miss Hillard, she got us two seats between she herself and another of the Faculty. Well it wasn’t any joke—in the middle of a great song I gave the seat in front of me a big kick and every one gave me the “once-over.” It was awful—I smiled out loud and was fussed to death.

A week from to-day trunks come down—Raise the flag! and a week from Tuesday, I go H O M E. Just wrote a classy theme on going home on the train and when I had finished it, and honestly thought I was getting off the train at Chicago—

Take a glance at the envelope. It is the school paper’s property and is to be used exclusively by those on the board. Oh No! It isn’t mine, I just took it out of a girl’s drawer— There goes recess bell—more later—Ginevra.

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<sup>137</sup> Madame Marcella Sembrich was a Polish-born coloratura soprano who made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Lucia in Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* on October 24, 1883. She retired from performing in 1909, the silver jubilee of her opening season. From 1909 to 1917 she gave recitals; all of Westover attended a recital in Waterbury, Connecticut on March 4, 1915.

Dear S. Have just reread my letter and have decided not to send it—I never wrote such a slangy one in my whole life. I feel in an American mood, though to-day always omit such things. The above is to get your curiosity aroused—it's worth getting aroused about! I'm furious! The girl that I'm going home with to Chi. for Easter vac. has just insisted on our going early and not staying in New York at all— So we have to take the 11:04 Pennsylvania train, and tear across the city in about two jiffies— Last Tuesday the president, vice-president, sec. and treas. of the 1916 Senior class were elected— They are all great, and I wish I was going to be a Senior next year, but I'm too young—it's a hard life.

I feel peculiarly like you did the other day. I've no line. What shall I say? I can't write poetry to fill up space—(truly orig.)

“Why should I not

Say I like Scott

For otherwise tis tommyrot

A poets mind I have not got!”

My genius burns but faintly on these tender morsel, for good poetry though, read a sonnet I wrote last fall—for 19th century Lit.<sup>138</sup>

So-long—farewell—adieu—anon—fair cavalier—on Sunday I'll write thee again!— “He rode between the barley sheaves. The sun was dazzling on the leaves” (Bug recited that in Red Hall last year) It is from “The Lady of Shalott” and hasn't any

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<sup>138</sup> Lit ] hit

connection<sup>139</sup> with the rest of my letter. How is E. McIlvaine—I always think of him in the——.<sup>140</sup> “Listen, Celeste darling” in his cute voice—if I’d known you then I’d have realized how much like you that was—“Ecrivez bien tot”

Ginevra (King)

This is here so that I could practice making K’s like that.

19. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[March 7, 1915]

Sunday

Dear Scott—

I’m just starting out on my second ream of<sup>141</sup> paper for this term. In six weeks I used up a ream of paper, and to be perfectly truthful, most of it was on you. So be honored (I don’t know why!) I’m a wreck—I have about a million and one things to do, including the fact that I have a fiendish test on Tuesday which I haven’t cracked a book for yet—I’m scared pink. The Glee Club has been read at last. There are so many bum people on it this year though, that I don’t consider it a bit of an honour to be on—!

<sup>139</sup> connection ] connected

<sup>140</sup> How is E. McIlvaine ] Howis E. McIlvaine

<sup>141</sup> ream of ] ream or

The day is gloomy and sad and I am sad and gloomy— Also furiously angry. This morning I got a telegram from Mother asking if she could come up here over this week-end, and stay with me, also if I could go down to New York with her on Monday instead of waiting until the whole school went on Tuesday— What do you think? Miss Hillard wouldn't let me<sup>142</sup> do either. It makes me raging, because it isn't as if Mother came East every day and besides she has never seen the school, so I don't know what her plans are now and I am at sea as to whether or not she intends to take me home for vacation or not.

Yesterday five of us had a very mysterious party<sup>143</sup> Beware— At least, it was a secret from the rest of the school. Well, we went down to a place (an adorable little cottage near here) called “Pinkeye Hall” It is really the contagious building for the school, and we made tea, and wonderful hot toast with cinnamon on it—and cake— It was delicious, after the awful grub,<sup>144</sup> we generally get up here.

Again I'm exed from Bible Class, but this time<sup>145</sup> it is to study.

I like your nerve! I got a letter from a boy at Hotchkiss last night and among other things (he gave me a long lecture all the way through, the fresh mutto) he said “Mike (M. Walton) wrote someone up here that Scott was getting pretty rough letters from Westover”—Does your conscience pinch you? I thought you hadn't “passed two

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<sup>142</sup> let me do ] let do

<sup>143</sup> party ] part

<sup>144</sup> grub ] gub

<sup>145</sup> time ] thime

words with Walton in your life” And yet—and yet—! Of course, Mike talks a lot, but please explain yourself. I plainly see how I must write you anon. “My Dear Mr. Fitz-G” etc—etc. The funniest thing happened about Hotchkiss. A boy I never have met asked me up to the Mid-Dance there for some of the other boys I knew, who weren’t Seniors. His invitation (a letter) was very fresh, which I told him over the phone when he called me up. Well, I got a letter from him again the other night (insufferably fresh) and returned it to him, after another girl wrote<sup>146</sup> the address. Now John tells me that all Hotchkiss<sup>147</sup> is aroused. Oh, it amuses me— It was darn good for him, I think and I’m not a bit sorry. There isn’t an exciting thing to tell you. I hope to hear from you tomorrow, and I’ll write Tuesday and tell you by how much I flunked my test. I should care—

Yours,

Ginevra

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20. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[March 9, 1915]

Tuesday

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<sup>146</sup> wrote ] write

<sup>147</sup> Hotchkiss ] Hotchhiss

Dear Scott—

Having spilt ink all over my fingers, the pen and the paper, I will commence to begin to start to write you. Just for spite, I'm going to try and write you an interesting letter, merely because your last one wasn't so very good! Now let's be Frank and Earnest (if I was an artist, I'd draw their picture).

Speaking of picture, I'm mad about your last one. The one you sent me. It is simply marvelous! I'm crazy about it. It came last night and I was so excited that I tore all around the corridor with it. It revived any dying regard that you seem to think I have lost for you. You're funny—But you're pretty nice! Just read the most adorable love-story—I adore them. They always give you the most satisfied feeling after you've finished them, and I adore to curl in a chair and dream them all over afterwards. I have a hectic cold now and am having a grand time in the infirmary, sleeping away the weary hours. A week from now I'll be on the train (I guess) sailing home to Chi. I simply can't wait to get there. Our new house is all finished now and I simply can't wait to see it, as at Christmas it wasn't nearly done.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> In the spring of 1915 Ginevra's parents moved into their new mansion at 1450 Astor Street, on the corner of North Astor Street and East Burton Place. The house was designed for Charles G. King by the architect David Adler and contained artwork by the American artist Abram Poole (1883-1961). The house was demolished in 1968 to make way for a nineteen-story apartment building.

There isn't a soul exciting home, so I guess I'll see a lot<sup>149</sup> of the family and go to the thay-ter with Mother etc. etc. Of course I'm dying to get my spring clothes—and see all the new styles— Oh, bye the bye Mother wrote me yesterday that she would try hard to arrange to be in New York in the spring after school closes, so she can chaperone me to Princeton (if I'm still wanted and everything can be arranged) She may be in New York to get me for this Easter vacation, and if we do happen to bum around New York for a couple of days, you'll have to do something with us, as I want you to meet her etc. etc. We could go to the theater or something like that. I got a letter from Reuben 3 weeks ago and can't decide whether or not to answer it. Tell me—shall I? Or shall I not? It's up to you Scott!<sup>150</sup>

I've got your picture here with me and it is so good— It helps such a lot too.

Sometime, I'll send you that kodak—but as yet, I've never taken one that you'd recognize.

Last night a French woman came and lectured to us [about] “Jeanne d’Arc” She was great and dressed in different costumes, including armour.

The weather is divine, sun—spring—warm——Oh!

I wish you'd write me more four pages! Even if you do write large— Notice that I always at least write 8 and also, I've answered all your letters—young man! I have a feeling that you're keeping some thing from me—Villain—Enclose (Unclose it, I mean)

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<sup>149</sup> lot ] lost

<sup>150</sup> Rueben Warner had been Fitzgerald's main rival for Ginevra's attentions during her visit to St. Paul in January 1915; his continued presence in her letters clearly vexed him.



Hidden heart affair, I'll bet—you might tell me, Scott, I might give the other party advice— Oh well, of course I don't mean this, and consequently see that I am merely jealous, that Bug got an eight page, very interesting letter!

But I know you're busy, so pray excuse me—F. S. F.

“The course of true love is hard”—Aou cha-know—

Write me soon and long, Please——

I adore your picture—thanks again. (Oh dear I had an awfully good way to sign myself but I've forgotten it now)

Yours till the little devils in Hell go skating.

Ginevra

## 21. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[March 11, 1915]

Thursday

P. S. Who is Billy Sunday?<sup>151</sup>

P. P. S. S. I am terribly glad about what you swore off. You'll be glad too—I know.

<sup>151</sup> Billy Sunday (1862-1935) was an American baseball player and (later) a hell-fire evangelist who strongly supported Prohibition. Fitzgerald may have told Ginevra that he was giving up alcohol.

P. P. P. S. S. Just a line to tell you I'm certainly not "off you!"

Dear Scott—

What under the canopy of Heaven led you to believe that I didn't like to get long letters from you? Why you crazy simp! Don't you realize that there's nothing I like better than to get a long long letter from you. Do you think I am contented with witty<sup>152</sup> little 8 page or 4 pages letters, I guess not!!! I ran a wet pen up my finger<sup>153</sup> yesterday and it has gotten infected so I can't right a word with this bulky old bandage on. I know I'm going to die of blood poisoning. Wilt come to mine funereal—? Say Yea—and bring a nosegay of dandy lions—Ah—I die content—! For I shall die, I shall die—I shall jolly well die D-I-E die——die——die——! Amen.

But as we were saying, only 4 more days and then vacash—! Yea—beau—I'm so excited. I know that for the last letters I have continually said this, but I don't care. After Sunday write me to 1450 Astor Street—Chicago—See—Note the address and don't pull any graft by saying you didn't know, for I'll write it on all my letters, so don't worry!

I am at present crazy about that new song. It's called something about "Back to Carolina I love"<sup>154</sup> It's heavenly——um——um. Oh my writing! Oh dear, I had so many things I had to tell you— Let's see— Oh Mother isn't coming East so we can't have a party but when I come back on the 30th I'll be in New York all morning and will

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<sup>152</sup> witty ] suitty

<sup>153</sup> finger ] finer

<sup>154</sup> "Back to the Carolina You Love" (1914) was a popular song by Grant Clarke and Jean Schwartz.

expect you to come and see me wherever I am. See Comprenez—understandez vous?

Oh oui, Monsieur, je suis sure que vous vouldrez bien veuie me voir á l'appartement de ma tante, qui vie en New York— J'amierai beaucoup si vous vouldrez verner me voir—parce ce que si vous ne faites pas ca je suis sure que vous m'oublierais avant le printemps.

Vous saves que vous allez voir Mary Garlend en vacance, et elle vous oublier mademoiselle Genevieve King Comprenez?<sup>155</sup> If you do, you're doing well, as my French is un peu<sup>156</sup> rusty However—

Dear Scott. It is now evening and I feel in an entirely different mood. Some girls just gave the most adorable play called the “Maker of Dreams.”<sup>157</sup> It was too darling, sort of sentimental, and has just [put] me into very much that sort of a mood—I am sitting alone in my [room] with only the student's lamp on, and your picture in front of me for inspiration. I keep it in my drawer now instead of on my dresser, and then pull it out and

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<sup>155</sup> While her French is far from perfect, Ginevra makes her feelings quite clear: Do you understand? Oh yes, Sir, I am sure that you would like to see me well come to the apartment of my aunt, who lives in New York I would like very much to see if you would like to see me-because if you do not I am sure you will forget me before spring. You know that you will see Mary Garlend on vacation, and she will make you forget Miss Ginevra King. Understand?

<sup>156</sup> a bit

<sup>157</sup> “The Maker of Dreams,” a one-act play by Oliphant Down (1885-1917), tells the story of a man and woman who live together in a platonic relationship, but the woman is secretly in love with the man. The “Maker of Dreams” brings the two together.

look at it every few seconds. It gives me a new thrill every time I look at it, and I like it a lot better. It is so adorable— Thanks so much for sending. Just got an invitation of a subscription dance at home on the 20th. I'm so excited, but I know I won't know how to act and will have to take numerous dancing lessons so I won't wreck everybody's feet— Oh Scott, why aren't we———somewhere else to-night. Why aren't we at a dance in summer now with a full moon a big lovely garden and soft music in the distance. I don't want to be here!

Everybody feels sentimental to-night and if you move out of your room you get all slopped over. Don't mind this writing but don't forget my hand! I don't know how to express it but please write me a wonderful letter to Chi. and tell me all your thoughts about me and everything and how everything is getting on—if you only knew how interested I was— And write soon.

Love

Ginevra

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22. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*En Route to Chicago*

[March 16, 1915]

Tuesday

Dear Scott—

This can't be much as I'm on the train. Do your thoughts ever run smoothly while<sup>158</sup> jolting around? Mine do not! Well, we've wiped Westover's dust from our feet, thank the Lord. Was awake at 2:30 A. M. this morn, and we got up at 5:30 and took a 8:45 train from Waterbury to New York, rushed across the city to Penna. Station, met my darling Dad there and caught the 11:04 train. I've been having an H. to H. talk with Dad all aft. It did me good, we discussed all concerned and he finally discovered that I knew a little something<sup>159</sup> of the world in general— Perhaps someday he may appreciate me. I hope so. Well, dear old Chicago isn't so very far off now, but don't get "noivous" about anybody taking my<sup>160</sup> heart out there this vac. "Il n'y a pas pour l'imprendre"<sup>161</sup> Cans't read.

Oh Scott I hate to think of having to have a fight. It would make me miserable all vacation. But something must be done to interest you again. You seem to be despairing!!<sup>162</sup> Perhaps it could be worked if we got into a big fight for about two days at the end of vac. and then if I come East early over Sunday (That would be about the 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>) we could have a grand celebration and make it all up. How about it?

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<sup>158</sup> while ] whil

<sup>159</sup> something ] somthing

<sup>160</sup> my ] may

<sup>161</sup> Ginevra's French is failing her here. She is trying to say that there is nothing to take, that is that her heart cannot be stolen.

<sup>162</sup> despairing ] dispaving

Does this appeal—I hate to do it, but we could have a wonderful making up that it might be worth the while. And if mother would go out, we might be able to have our perfect hour— I hope we come and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if mother and I spent the last Sunday together at the Ritz in New York. What could we arrange that would be marvelous— It must be marvelous! It's got to be—! Of course this plan won't work if we don't come east early as we want to have the time and the place to make up it all. We can have quite a dramatic scene, I'm great on this actress stuff and a grand finale. Chorus and all—

A fresh conductor has just been glaring at me and I have had great amusement in stinging him. He is trying to read this letter I hope he reads this, it might amuse him. Oh these train pens— Who under the sun chews them?

(The length of this is amusing me)

Oh the most awful thing happened which I never discovered till the other day. Mark Walton sent me a Princeton Pictorial Review in January of the Ano and as we aren't allowed school magazines, it was never given me, and consequently I never acknowledged it. At the end of the term (yesterday) I got it and oh—my embarrassment!—!!!

Yesterday also brought me your wonderful letter. I felt ardent at the time and it suited my mood admirably.

I suppose you'll have a gay vac. and come back to Princeton having forgotten Westover in general and in particular, one G.K. and I can't say I'd blame you—! (Not fishing)

Someday may be some one will ask you “Do you happen [to know] a lemon named G. King”—“Slightly” you’ll say, “awful wall-f—” “To be sure, rushed her for a short time one winter—” (Scott’s answer) Yes, Yes I can hear it now. It will be said while at a dance and behind the screen, taking in the decorations, we’ll see—— Yours truly—

Your letter is in my suitcase and I’m too lazy to go get it so can’t answer any questions— Suggestions on the circumstances and methods of quarreling will always be gratefully received— How about a scrap over some unknown Chicagoan— Who’ll he be? Or shall it be different anyway, remember, I don’t want to fight but the circumstances seem to require it and it must be arranged for us to “renew that spark of something or other.” I could rave on forever on that subject but will only say that I have never felt exactly the way towards anybody as I did towards you in the machine going home from St. Paul. It was too delightful a feeling to be ever expected to come again— but enough—with this goes what has always accompanied my letters GINEVRA

P. S. My add. is 1450 Astor Street Chicago, Ill.

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23. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*1450 Astor Street, Chicago, Illinois*

[March 21, 1915]

Sunday

1450 Astor Street

Chicago

Oh! I'm so happy Scott! This city is so heavenly and I'm having such a heavenly time—and oh—I don't know, I adore to dance—so!— I've gone simply mad on the subject—I don't know why, guess its because all the best dancers are home now and I went to a great dance last night (the only one) Every one was adorable and I had the best time— About 30 girls and 50 boys— It was grand! I'm not over the effects of yet (It is 9:30 A M) now I've just had my breakfast and am in bed writing. Downstairs the children are playing the phonograph now—The Mississippi Cabaret at present— I am nuts about the fox trot again, at least, the way they do it now—like a regular rag—much shoulder motion etc., this boy I know very well here (the one that said “How is that d— — Scott?” is about the best dancer in Chicago and has loads of offers and things for the stage—and another one, terribly nice, took me jointly— I'll tell you why they probably did it, because I was too much of a job for one boy to cart along so it took two of them.

It's funny how music changes one's emotions, isn't it? It always makes me feel, oh, so happy and have a wonderful wonderful sort of thrill way<sup>163</sup> down deep—I suppose it's because I'm so absolutely crazy about anything that has a thing to do with dancing. I'm taking lessons in the Tango fox trot—and some Spanish Tango steps for the vaudeville next summer— This is the life—!

I really haven't been doing anything particularly exciting—shopping, going out for lunch people coming to call—and the movies and the theatre— Have seen Grumpy and the "Auctioneer"— Both are perfectly great—! by the way, Dan was there last night and cut in every minute. The fight seems to be off as he didn't say a thing about it, but it

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<sup>163</sup> way ] was



was one too many for me! Wallie W. is more fun though—I acted like a perfect ass with him last night but I had so darn much pep that it had to be let off in some way.

Mother and I have decided not to go to N. Y.— I'm sort of glad because you said that anyway you wouldn't be able to get off to come to New York so it wouldn't be very much fun. I'll be there all Tuesday morning though and if you can possibly swing it, do so, and when I've found out what to do from mother I'll telegraph you everything— Of course I'll write again though—

Harriet came to lunch on Friday (your cousin) and was very interested in your picture on my bureau— It took me about 10 min. to convince [her] that it was you—!

I expected to find Mark lounging around here when I came back but not at all—he is at<sup>164</sup> some tutoring school at Redding Ridge Conn.— Poor boy— He sent me a Princeton Pictorial Review last Jan— (number) and I never acknowledged (oh but I told you about it already)

Did you ever know anybody named Dick Pope at Princeton? He is here now—he left in Feb. There seems to be a mystery about it. I know he worked his way through college— He is rather nice—fresh as paint though.

Have gotten the best looking spring suit of wonderful thin soft tan (quite dash) stuff. It is the handsomest structure I think.

Wonder how Bug is enjoying it at V. H. S. with 15 or 20 girls and 5 or 10 boys. It must be awfully gay for some but Bug should worry. The Jaffrey twins are there again

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<sup>164</sup> at ] as

this year (I met them there last year) and some other Hotchkiss fellows that's just about all—

My what a thrilling letter—

“But what would you do in a case like this—?” (You know the circumstances.)

This aft. I'm going to your cousin's house for a reunion of the old bunch that used to go over there every Sunday aft. and have a grand rough house— Then Mother, Bus Kelley and I are going down to the Blackstone to criticize their new orchestra and have tea with the Drake's who run it—

Well it seems to me I've [unintelligible word—blank space in the text] you quite a bit of uninteresting news— Were's for more? I'm still in the same frame of mind as I was on January 5th Can you remember? “Donchu remema” California in Septemba.

Write soon, blanco, blanere—and long—

The other day Harriet and I went to a dirty little shop on Clark Street here and had our mugs shot. If you're good, I'll send you one—I mean if they're good too— The only boys I know on that list were Mack and Artie Symes—I've heard of Frank Packard. The others are probably from way out South.

Aff—Ginevra

P. S. This is a P. S.

Just reading over your last—

1— The Yale fellow is undoubtedly a New York boy named Darrow B. Fulton— He is a peach, very serious, soberminded and I doubt greatly if you two would get on.

2— You ask “Describe your last affair.”

I'm inclined to say—"None of your affair" but that's too snitty!! The last one was—let me see I don't know—the last real one was last summer and then it wasn't horribly heavy. You see at Christmas you don't get much of a chance to see anybody for any length of time and I was half-way crazy about nearly a dozen—till I went to St. Paul—

S'all! S'nough!

P. S. You would make a fine priest. You make me laugh. You'd kid along all the nuns—and make eyes at me if I ever came to hear you preach—— S'long.

24. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*1450 Astor Street, Chicago, Illinois*

[March 24, 1915]

Wednesday eve.

á 9:52 P. M.

au lit—

Dear Scott—

I've just bid a fond farewell to two youths who leave on the 10:30 train for California. They're going in a private car and are going to stay only two weeks in all— Isn't that crazy? Isn't it funny, when I got your letter, I was talking on the telephone and so I said "Just wait a minute, I'll open this letter, so I can read while you're talking." And then the first words on the page were "Even now you may be having a tete-a-tete

with some ‘unknown Chicagoan’ with crisp dark hair and glittering smile.” Well you’d appreciate the coincidence [if] you saw Deering. He’s the darkest thing I ever set eyes on and has a glittering smile. I read him that passage of the letter, as it was so appropriate. But Scott, if I could only believe that you didn’t mean all you said in that letter!

I’m terribly terribly horrible afraid that it’s a case of plain tiredness, if there is such a word, on your part, I mean—you needn’t worry about me. Of course you think that because I’m here with a lot of boys, I have forgotten you, but I know it’ll make me like you all the better, because you see, all last term I didn’t think of a thing but you—(this is sincere as I’ve ever been) and by the end of the term naturally my mental powers had given out, and a rest was just what I needed.<sup>165</sup> There are some peachy boys here now.

The Winters, the Kelleys and numerous others, and I am practically the only girl, consequently I’m simply having a glorious time. There have been one or two boys over every night and in the afternoon we go to the dansants at the Blackstone, or else they come and call or we fool around somehow— It is a lot more formal here than in St. Paul, but I suppose that’s because this is a bigger city. It is some baby city though and I’m mad about it and everything belonging to it. What is your add. during vacation or would you rather not have me write?

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<sup>165</sup> needed ] needn’t

That French phrase was sort of peculiar—I'm sorry. I don't know what I meant, but I think probably—"Il n'y a pas pour l'emprendre"— Meaning mon coeur<sup>166</sup>—boger! Let's see, were there any more questions, I don't think so.

Isn't it awful the way writers slander my name—? You've read the "Bride of Mistletoe" haven't you? Her name was Ginevra and Shelly or Keats wrote a horrible one about a Ginevra too. They always seem to have something perfectly dreadful happen to them on their wedding day— That will be my fate I guess, my husband will probably run away——!— And I don't wonder—<sup>167</sup>

Your letter showed just exactly what you thought of me, and if I hadn't heard of your plan to pick a quarrel it would have started one in a second, with out a doubt. As it was, I was terribly disappointed to think that you thought that badly of me and moreover, I don't think personally that I'm as bad as you intimated.

Your view is ridiculous—Just because you and I—for we are remarkably alike— just because you and I happen to be "fresh" (excuse me) and have more emotional feeling

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<sup>166</sup> Trans. There is nothing to take—meaning my heart.

<sup>167</sup> Since the Italian Renaissance, a number of authors have written poems about the tragic death of a young bride named Ginevra who is accidentally locked in a trunk on her wedding day and dies before she can be discovered. Some of the most famous versions of the story include Samuel Rogers's (1763-1855) poem "Ginevra," included in his collection *Italy* (1822-28); Percy Shelley's "Ginevra" (written 1821); the early Victorian ballad, "Mistletoe Bough" by Thomas Haynes Bayley; and the novel that Ginevra refers to, *The Bride of Mistletoe* (1909) by Kentuckian James Lane Allen.

than most other people have, we're bound, simply bound to let it out some way, sometime: and nothing under the sun could control our feelings— They're bound to show themselves— You know you can't help falling madly for a girl. It isn't really you yourself that does it, it's an indescribable thing inside of you— Of course that's somewhat what makes you fascinated. I'm perfectly fascinated with some boys I'm willing to admit, especially ones whose reps. are in bad condition, and who I oughtn't to pay any attention to. (Of course this is not personal. Don't think so Please.) That's the reason I'm going to marry some awful reckless fellow, just for the sake of the excitement and that I would want to help him reform. This is a childish view, you may think, but it's my view. I'd marry any kind of a man under the sun—"Richman, poorman, beggarman, thief," etc., if I really loved him.

I know you can't mistake true love—I know it. And it's a sin not to recognize it. Although of course an outrageous thing to go completely against the wishes of your family. There are loads and loads of boys here of course, but I don't think that there's one to marry. The bunch we go with, are really what you might call "speeds" or at least some of them, and although I presume they are rather a bad influence it gives a girl a great experience in loads of things (I can hear you say "Gee whiz—! she hasn't any experience—!)

I defy you, Scott Fitzgerald! I have love in me—Nothing could hurt me more than to have you say that—

"Never have anybody really love you!" Well that is probably very true, but if the right man does come along, I'll have love to give him. If nothing else in this world—(at least, I think so)

You show your ignorance of my nature well by saying that I haven't ever really loved anybody. Naturally I'm awfully, awfully young, but there have been times in my life, in the last few years, where I felt something deeper and truer and more sincere than mere shallow affection. You see I've done a lot more for my age than almost any girl, especially those in the East.

You're crazy! You don't mean to tell me that you don't think that girl who, when young, is a flirt, will ever get her share of life. Why, those sort of women almost invariably make the best wives—

“Eat, drink and be merry for to-morrow we die,” May be some people's<sup>168</sup> attitude to-wards life, and I can see their view but there's something more than that to be gotten from it, (that sounded just like Church on Sunday)<sup>169</sup>

Heavens! I don't mean to preach for I'm far, far from anything like that. You probably don't think I ever think of anything more than a good time, and being crazy about some boy, and loads of other people don't think so either, but there's where you're wrong, Scott, and though there probably isn't a bit of anything that's “worth while” in me, I want you to see the way I really feel. I managed to read what you said about letting you go, as you weren't wasting affections on [blank space] well, if I hadn't wanted to use more than those ordinary “affections” on you, I'd have stopped long ago. And then, something drew me to you, I don't know why—it just—did. It must have, or else I wouldn't be writing you this or anything else of the truck you've gotten from me.

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<sup>168</sup> people's ] people

<sup>169</sup> Ginevra is paraphrasing lines from the books of Ecclesiastes and Isaiah.

You are conceited, I'll have to admit that. No reason why you shouldn't be and then, I'm vain, (and self-conscious, some people say, of my self-confidence) That's another thing, I am as un-self-confident as any mortal ever was, yet some say I'm very self conscious of my self confidence.

Poor Scott, I guess you're bored enough—I'm terribly sorry about you're not being able to come to see me at my aunts, as I'd give some anything to see you, but suppose it can't be did. After Monday morn. my address is at school—! oho—!

Please Scott understand this letter and I know you won't think I'm such a fool.

Write soon— With love,

Ginevra.

P. S. It is now 11:05 P.M. Yes I met G. McIlvaine. Doesn't he remember me— Big Stiff— Strange— Huh.

P. S. Notice the length of this also writing. G. K.

You must be in a very serious mood for this. G.

25. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*1450 Astor Street, Chicago, Illinois*

[March 26, 1915]

Friday

Scott ma cherie—



Juste une line pour te dire que je vous remercie pour ton bien bonne letter et pour te dire que, si tu serai a New York Mardi prochain, je crois que je mangerai la lunch au Ritz-Carlton et<sup>170</sup>——that if you're out for vacation by that time and are in New York, I would adore to see you for a second there, if you had time. It doesn't seem right for us to have to wait till June. Oh Scott that is so perfectly wonderful about the Soph. Prom. I simply can't thank you enough, but now the question is,—chaperone—! I've argued it all out with Mother and I'll tell you just the simple truth that she told me! You see, It's like this, Mother says she feels that it is asking too much of father to go on to pay for Mother's going down there, although she'd adore to chap. You see, with everything, and the new house, and then, we will be going East again in July—so she says it makes things hard. Of course, I begged and pleaded with her, and told her that I was simply bound to go, and she really wants me to come very badly, and so I am hoping for the best— It's always better to be frank about it all, so that you can understand it perfectly. If you do happen to get out on the 30<sup>th</sup> and are to be in N. Y., I will be at my aunt's house between 9:15 and 10 A. M. or else the message can be left for me, I am lunching with a girl from school that lives here named Lolita Armour and I guess we'd go to the Ritz, but I could tell you that over the phone. Then I could see you, if only for a minute. That would be something, as it's been so ~~darn~~ long (that crossed-out word was “darn”)

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<sup>170</sup> Translation: Just a line to tell you that I thank you again for your very good letter and to tell you that, if you will be in New York next Tuesday, I believe that I will be having lunch at the Ritz-Carlton and...

Please excuse my last letter too, it was awfully foolish but I took yours seriously and for what it said and was rather hurt to realize that you thought that of me. But never mind, “All’s well that ends well”—and “it’s an ill wind that nobody”—I’ve forgotten the rest, but what I mean is, that the squabble is all off. I hate hate hate to fight!!!

Hope this catches you before you leave—I trust it will— This is just the briefest kind of a note—I hope you can work that Tuesday business——Scott——I must see you!

Yours

Ginevra.

P. S. Forget to tell you my aunt’s name.

Mrs. Marjorie Burnes,

Wyoming Apartments,

7<sup>th</sup> Ave. & 55<sup>th</sup> St.

P. S. Ugh—Ugh! But I dislike Dick Pope!—Fresh little mitto!

## 26. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[March 31, 1915]

Wednesday

P. S. What is the exact date of the thing in June.

Dear Scott:—:—

Thank goodness, I can rest my weary brains(?) a little, and write you! In reading that over, it sounds<sup>171</sup> like a sham, but it isn't meant to be, for you know what I meant. I mean "rest the lesson—part of my<sup>172</sup> brains" Really they are so darn weary of studying—studying—studying, and copying all sorts of fool notes and dope, that I hardly know how to think straight. So please ex. this letter. My roommate is again staying away for the first week of school, only this time she thinks she has appendicitis. Courtney is staying a week longer than<sup>173</sup> she ought to, in Hot Springs, and of course, she will have and is having the time of her baby life! She makes me ===== and ===== with jealousy.

I'm glad you're not going there too, for you'd probably forget me entirely if you did.

Your last letter was divine!! And I think quite the most sensible you've ever written. It made me feel like a new person to know that you still cared, but of course that may be all off now. I wish I could write as charming letters as you do. But I guess it's a gift, only given to a few.

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<sup>171</sup> sounds ] soulds

<sup>172</sup> my ] may

<sup>173</sup> than ] in

Marks are read to-morrow and of course I'm too nervous for words. Speaking of marks reminds me, he called me up on the telephone while I was in New York.<sup>174</sup> It was a shame that we didn't wait to come back till to-day for then I might have been able to see you or hear you, at least for a second.

Oh, Scott, I never was so excited about anything as I am about next June. It is the only bright spot ahead for such a long time, but it's going to be so very wonderful when it does come, that that'll make up for<sup>175</sup> the long wait. The last thing Mother said was that she would try her very very best to be there in June with me, as she's dying to have me go. She hated to have me go back and the last few days I got almost anything out of her, and she's so adorable anyway that I know she'll arrange, because I told her that there wasn't anything in the world I'd rather do. She was planning to come East about a week before that, and will (I hope) stay over. Oh Scott, when I think of it, I get too too thrilled for words. I suppose you're having the grandest time, at least but now and then, when you're having an especially hilarious party, think of me studying and plugging and grinding away—Oh—cru—el cr—u—el—! (sob stuff)

The weather is gorgeous out. The only excitement to-day has been as follows, this morning I opened my desk in the schoolroom and found a screamingly funny<sup>176</sup> note

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<sup>174</sup> Mark Walton, one of Fitzgerald's Princeton classmates, telephoned Ginevra while she stopped in New York on her way back to Westover. She is disappointed that Fitzgerald didn't even call to say that he could not come to New York to see her.

<sup>175</sup> for ] it

<sup>176</sup> funny ] runny

from [a] fresh boy from New Haven whom I've never set eyes on and who (by the note) says he was at the house party Miss Hillard [gave] during vacash. for her nephew from New Haven, Archie MacLeish,<sup>177</sup> and his fiancée. Of course, I almost fell over when I read it, and the fresh thing never signed his name and went all though my desk, which seems to be the only one he touched—kind of him. I hope I never meet him! —

Excitement No. 2 A whole bottle of evil smelling hair tonic spilt in my trunk, all over everything so I presume that for the next month I'll go around radiating (sp) of canned eggs or other nice things. Such is life—and I hope it kills everybody!

Mother suddenly asked me the other day, if I wanted to come back here next year, which I couldn't answer. Shall I? (Your advice, lady)<sup>178</sup> I can't decide, 'cause I don't know what I'd do if I didn't that's the trouble—!

Don't you think this picture is a charmer? I certainly do. One night, a girl I know awfully well spent the night with me. Well, she picked up the picture and said "Who under the sun is this I know I've seen her somewhere!! Isn't that droll (cowguettish word)

Oh, yes, and what else was I going to tell you? —Ah— I've been finding out during vacation all about the vaudeville we're going to have next summer in Lake Forest— It's going to be "simply swell"! All the older people are in it, and the four of us are the only infants. I'm going to sing a wonderful (at least the song will be good, but not

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<sup>177</sup> Archibald MacLeish (1892-1982) was a poet, essayist and the Librarian of Congress (1939-1944). A graduate of the nearby Hotchkiss School and Yale University, MacLeish married Ada Hitchcock, a Westover girl, in 1916.

<sup>178</sup> lady ] ledy

the rendering) and dance a tango with Derring—(don't get jealous. He's harmless, and besides, I think you'd like him) It's going to be one of these creepy crawly syncopated dances—donche know? It'll<sup>179</sup> be great I guess, I have a movie of myself in a tight black gown—toughie! toughie! You'll simply have to be there to see it. You can stay at McLaugh's. I'd ask you, only I'd be visiting in Lake Forest at the time. Right after that, I'm going to be dragged to Biddeford<sup>180</sup> for the rest of the summer, to lead the “quiet life” worse luck. I'll detest leaving Lake Forest, but then, I suppose the country simplicity will be good for me. But, Oh rot, I hate it! I love to hear you talk about you's and my nature. You know them both pretty well, considering that you've seen me only about 14 hours or less. Hasn't our correspondence been remarkable. I never knew anything like it. —No, I don't—

Tell your “poet friend” that he's bats in his upper story. I don't think my head is as “phony” as all that.

On Friday afternoon, from 5 till 9—think of me. I will be thinking over and reviewing my whole past history, during the time that Miss Hillard reads the “Life of Christ”<sup>181</sup>— That's the time when I think and think and think. I really don't mind sitting still that long at all.

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<sup>179</sup> It'll ] It's

<sup>180</sup> Biddeford Pool, in southern Maine, is the name both of a large tidal pool and of the neighboring community. Ginevra's family often went to Biddeford Pool in the summers.

<sup>181</sup> *The Life of Christ* (1874) was a popular history of Jesus of Nazareth by Frederic William Farrar (1831-1901), an influential Anglican cleric.

Well, kindly notice that I've crowded my writing all though this, as you were so adorable about it in your last and now I must close.

Tell Teddy Brown for me that I ought to know where I myself am going to spend vacation—and any—it's spent now!!

That letter of yours was great (again I say it) but it surely was. It was so frank—Perhaps I ought to have scolded you for saying some of those rather crude things—but well, I was awfully glad to hear about it all, as it makes me feel as though I knew you a lot better. I hope you're having the most wonderful vacation and haven't forgotten me entirely——

Yours as usual

Ginevra.

27. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[April 4, 1915]

Easter Sunday

Happy Easter——!——!

I guess your holiday's over by this time, Scott, and I do hope you had a perfectly ravingly good time. I'm sure you did.

This weather is the most freakish thing I ever knew. I wanted dreadfully to wear my lovely new spring suit and Easter bonnet but nothing doin' it snowed an awful

blizzard yesterday afternoon, and this morning it was just like Christmas and not like Easter. I am so sleepy this afternoon and am “all alone, all alone” in my room as my roommate hain’t come back yet. Blame her!—! She doesn’t get here till Tuesday. Courtney is down at Hot Springs and has been cavorting around with that creature of all intense interest T. C. Brown. At that rate she must be having one grand time, but at least he can give her knock-downs to everyone else— Am I jealous? Well, I guess! Every letter so far, I think I’ve told you that same thing. Poor F. S. K. F. G. you must be bored.

Scott! I apologize on bended knee! (This is about your letters, so be prepared!) Now don’t fly off the bat before I explain the whole situation to you. You see, it’s this way.

In the “premier place,” I have an idea that “the friend” that you wear, is a St. Paul man, Mr. Jackson by name. I found out——n’emporte— Anyway, he took what the girl said to him as meaning that she had read all letters, which nobody has!—! There now. I’ll tell you the honest truth. Your letters are so wonderful and so amusing that it seems a shame that some of the poor letter-less females who have a sense of humor, up here, shouldn’t be read some of the funny parts of some of your letters. But really and truly and honestly Scott, I wouldn’t for the world show any of the really “nice” parts, because other people would think them foolish and would also think that I was a nut to let you string me along with what they thought was “bull” Anyway, I don’t think it’s at all, and so I don’t show those parts, but I’ll admit that I’ve read some sections aloud to some girls, not public, you understand, but just small private séances. Don’t mind me. That last is crazy, but before that I’ve been telling you the gospel truth. Tell the boy that told you that to go get another record or something on that order. He makes me d--- tired! But



Scott, please please don't believe it, and don't say you don't care or that it "doesn't matter"—because it does matter an awful lot to me if not to you! Don't let anything foolish like that make you angry at me, please.

I can't imagine who under the sun those people were. The boy must have made a mistake, or else the people couldn't have known me. The conversation must have lagged awfully too. Oh this pen. No, it must be the paper that's only the blink, I don't know, it's *quelque chose*.

As I said before, I'm sleepy! Now I'll tell you why—I got up at 5 this morning with the rest of the Glee Club, and we marched around through the corridors singing Easter hymns. It must have been great for those in bed, but I was so sleepy that I couldn't hear what it sounded like. Then at 7 we had a service in our own chapel. At ten we went into long service in Waterbury and communion. Didn't get back to school till 2 o'clock, but we had a grand lunch to make up for it. Another chapel service, but believe me, I'm going to get exed and hit the slats. A little American girl swearing for you. Isn't it awful to hear a girl swear? I've often wondered<sup>182</sup> what a boy thought of it, Mother always says it sounds so ordinary to hear a girl swear—and I always do it! But really you get in an awful habit of it up here, because everybody does it.

In a minute, I'm going into Bug's room to muss her. She's writing Edie now, I think, but since Easter she's got two new ones.

Funny—you said "How did you ever meet D. Pope?"— Well, as it happened, I never have! We were both at this kid's dancing class that my sister goes to (don't know

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<sup>182</sup> wondered ] wonderful

how he got there) but he came up and sat down and said “I bet you don’t know who I am?” And I said “Oh yes, Dick Pope” (somebody had told me beforehand) “I used to know you in dancing class 3 years ago”— But he said “Not unless you were there in 1907!”— And then I realized that I’d never met him, but it was too late to call the bluff and so we went on talking. I didn’t know he used to go to Princeton or I would have asked him about you, but he took me home that afternoon and that time I was ready to say goodbye and take the quickest way out! Of all fresh lunatics! He was the worst!

You were adorable to call up my Aunt Marjorie’s. And I don’t see why they were so stupid as not to tell you that I was going to be at the Ritz for lunch instead and that I wasn’t going to my aunt’s after all. We probably would have been all embarrassed though, and wouldn’t have known what to say (a la Scott) But just think, I’m not going to see or hear you (not hear from you) till June! I think that’s a disgrace to the community! I’m afraid you won’t know what I look like by that time (my pictures certainly won’t help you) and wouldn’t that be dreadful—Oh awful! I’ve learned to play “Bridge”—after a fashion, and I’m crazy about it, but I’m sure I don’t play it a bit right. It requires too much trouble for my simple brain. Don’t you worship Poetry. I’ve been reading some of Browning’s, and in class the other day we had a long discussion about his idea of love—I aired my views to my heart’s content. One of his especially on that

subject, is perfectly marvelous “Evelyn Hope”. But Tennyson is my favorite. I simply adore everything he wrote.<sup>183</sup>

~~Well~~, I wish to goodness I’d get out [of] the habit of starting every paragraph with a “Well, etc. etc.”

As soon as I hear from you I’ll write again right away. And don’t forget that you’re to believe what I told you, Oh dear—I wish I could express myself in letters—  
— Wish you were hear to soothe my headache. Oh well—! Tell me immediately if there is any “latest” and I’ll prepare the challenge.

Your Gin——

A signature left to the imag. —You  
have a vividous G

P. S. (At 9:19 P.M.) Just opened this again to wish you a goodnight message. I’m sleeping all alone to-night and will be thinking of you till—I fall asleep. Remember—I still feel the very same. Do you? That is the question, answer it!

## 28. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[April 7, 1915]

<sup>183</sup> “Evelyn Hope” (1855), is a dramatic monologue by Robert Browning in which the forty-eight year-old speaker mourns the death of his beloved, the sixteen-year-old Evelyn Hope.

Wednesday

Dear Scott:—

Oh you lucky lucky boy! Having such a wonderful vacation. Of course, I had one too, but then, your's sounded so perfectly grand! I thought of you and envied Helen Walcott, all Monday night! I simply couldn't get to sleep. I just thought of you and Helen and could almost hear you saying—"Now listen—Helen—you know I've never in my life known anybody that etc. etc"—Oh Scott, I can hear it! Poor girl, I hope she didn't take it all in, but from her description, she sounded a little too sophisticated and a little old.

I'm sorry, Scott, I had no right to say this to you. Naturally, you can do what you please without my butting-in and I hope you'll over-look these first two pages as merely the ravings of a jealous girl. Really, though, I am so glad you had such a heavenly time! You see, I went home, and didn't meet anybody new, and of course I had a grand time and all that, but it's one of the ambitions of my life to meet new people and I simply adore new places and new faces, so of course, I was sort of peeved because I couldn't go to Hot Springs. Courtney came back yesterday (Monday, I should say) full of the most wonderful stories of the place, 94 boys and 12 girls, I think there were. She left about a half hour before the Princeton Glee Club concert but met a lot of the men on it in the afternoon. Oh the lucky lucky girl. Believe me, if it's the last I do, I'm going down there next Spring, and stay till the last cock crows. The stars be praised! My roommate came yesterday, and I'm not alone in my misery any more. She saw Joe Shanley on Monday, and met a friend of yours, called Ed Silver, I think, who asked if she knew me— What

sort of stuff has been said about me! Honestly, I'm afraid I have a foolish and awful name down there. Tell me, honestly and sincerely, have I? And Scott, if I have, for mercy sakes, stand up for me, and tell anybody that says anything nasty that they've heard that it isn't true. Really I'm so blue and down about all that sort of stuff that I don't know what to do. Why Why is it that people that don't even know a girl will absolutely condemn her by some remark that they've merely heard say! It doesn't seem right, but it's true as anything and it's about a hundred times harder to get on top of a bad name than it is to acquire one you must know that— It seems so awful to think that any girl especially a young one should have a reputation to outlive that has been exaggerated by—well, jealousy or dislike or just plain “not-knowing-anything-about-it!” I don't understand it. I'm afraid some of my letters are a little queer, and I wish you'd destroy them, for someday you might think I didn't mean what I said, and make them public. Then I would be so humiliated if some of the foolish “past history” got out. You know, I think that lately, we've written much franker letters, I really do. It doesn't seem as though they were as thought-over and quite as morally or foolish as they used to be (I mean mine, especially) you understand, don't you?

I think that was a perfectly rotten thing of that H. W. to say about Westover—! The fact is Farmington is terribly jealous of Westover, while we never think of it's being in a class. You<sup>184</sup> see, we're allowed to go to Farmington, and see the place, which really is wonderful, but they're never allowed to come up here, so that never can compare the

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<sup>184</sup> You ] We

two places very well—Oh I tell you, I get patriotic about school when I hear anything like that. It's a perty good place after all—!<sup>185</sup>

Oh don't you adore the tango fox trot? We're going to have some steps of that for my dance next summer, but most of it is to be an exaggerated form of the regular tango, with queer catchy Italian music.

Oh, I'm going to have the most wonderful summer! Tell you all about it in some other letter. It'll be divine, if it can ever be worked. About five house-parties and so forth, one being given at Lake Placid and one on a house boat in the East. But Biddeford Pool, Me., for me after the first week in July, and then the quiet life—Bathing—canoeing—picnicking, etc. etc.

Oh, I want June to come so so badly—

Write soon,

I am your Ginevra.

## 29. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[April 12, 1915]

<sup>185</sup> Miss Porter's School, located in Farmington, Connecticut, and often referred to as Farmington, was founded in 1843 by Sarah Porter. Miss Porter's is one of the most elite female preparatory schools in the East and counts among its alumnae Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis.

[No Date]

(For heavens sakes—Don't read this unless you are in a very serious frame of mind. It would strike you as a farce—which it certainly is not.)

Notice I got your letter 15 min. ago—and am answering now. True devotion—I tell you. Also got 5 others.

I have the most terrible case of grippe, Scott, so beware and don't catch it from this. Am in the inf. and therefore the paper and pencil. I had to go out for a while last night, to a dress rehearsal of the pantomime we're having to-night—and I never felt like such a wreck—the ragged end of a misspent life isn't it?<sup>186</sup>

I didn't exactly know what to make of your letter the first time I read it, but when I reread it, I saw your meaning perfectly. Now this letter is going to be just as frank as yours was and by the time it's finished we ought to know each other a lot better. For really, just the superficial on-top things that we've always written about, can't really tell us what we're like way down deep— I don't know, but I really never thought of you as thinking seriously about certain things, and I know it's the same with you— But that's only because we don't know each other so very well. Everyone I think, has some higher ambition, no matter what they are— They ought to have, at least.

What was the matter with my last letter, I don't even remember what it was like at all.

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<sup>186</sup> isn't it ] isn't in it

1. Biddeford Pool is a summer place in Maine—Helen James, The Driscolls—I guess that is all that you know up there. Why not come and visit there this summer. I know one person that goes there, called Billy Odell so undoubtedly, I'll have a stupid time.

2. I told you all that Mr. Silver said, which wasn't anything much, but it just struck me peculiarly, because Courtney and Edith Cummings and myself (by the way, she is going to the Senior dance at Princeton in June with her cousin, Harold Chapin—) We're just wondering what under the living sun, gave us such an awful rep. Truly, Scott, you don't know how worried I am about it all—I was shocked and hurt to think that you ever believed for a minute that I ever smoked a cigarette or anything in public! I think that's simply awful! Why, the family would disown me, and as for unchaperoned parties, well, I tell you, if Mother ever got any wind of one that I'd been on, she'd never forgive me— So the other things I admit, but of course, that was a long time ago I think I'd be a lot different if I had a brother a couple of years older than I was. My but I wish I had, it would do me such an awful lot of good— I guess that girl who was Mr. McLean's cousin was Barbara Granger— Don't believe anything she says or said about me please for both her and her sister are the worst little gossips ever, and then, they know nothing about me whatever, except from foolish rumours they heard while in L. Forest last summer— Besides—My Glory, they needn't talk.

Your cousin must be perfectly marvelous! From your description anyway! I yes I do know that I'd like to be that kind of a girl, but it isn't in me. I don't realize that I flirt, (that seems an awful thing to say!) and really, I am perfectly sincere in half the things I



tell people that they think me simply bull— That's the trouble! If I only didn't mean them!!! Really I'd give anything to be the sort that—was like her—!

Of course, you won't marry when you're twenty-one—Because you know you wouldn't marry a girl that you didn't really care for. I'm sure you'd wait for the right one. When I was young, I used to think that the moment I came out, I would hook my claws on the first sufferer that came along, and marry him for the sake<sup>187</sup> of being married. That was foolishness, for it's much much better to be an old maid all your life than to fly off and marry the first man that comes along, whether or not you really love him. That would be a real crime—!

Of course I have ambitions. About my greatest ambition is to get married (you may not agree with it) but I'm sure that almost every girl's highest ideal [is] to belong—really—truly—belong to someone, ~~and to know that but one person loves you best above everyone else!!!!~~ Oh what slush!

I'm really awfully critical and always look for a person's fault the minute I see them. Even before their merits, perhaps. A girl appeals to me more if good looking I don't know why, but that doesn't make really so much difference to me in a boy—of course—there are advantages— My ideal in a man is strength—love—strong qualities, and—for me, I'd have to have a sensitive husband—because I know I'd do absolutely everything for my husband and if he was sensitive, I'd have to put myself out to be nice to him and therefore we'd get along finely as I'm not a bit sensitive—I don't suppose all that's clear to you, but I don't seem to be able to express myself this morn. at all—I think

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<sup>187</sup> sake ] sabe

I can size people up pretty well, when I first see them, but nobody can ever tell what a strange or new person's inner feelings are. Therefore I try to be as tactful as possible till I see what that certain person likes and then I talk about that—See? That's some of my policy!

I'm awfully tired of the (I'm afraid that sounds blasé, I'm sorry) kind of boy that you meet and who tries to be so coquettish and to flatter you, because so few of them ever get away with it. You're one of the few that do— This is a T.P. not a slam—

I don't know just what you mean by "are you ever sincere with yourself" Heavens, I hope so. No one knows my short-comings better than I do, and I'd much rather have a person tell me a fault than a virtue. I think I'm frank—too frank at times, but other people don't think so—I love every one in a different way, according to what sort of a person they are, but there's only one way I could love<sup>188</sup> my husband! Yes, I think I'd sacrifice a lot for the pleasure of knowing that it was a kindness to someone else—I only hope I'm not stingy— I hate novels, they are so superficial—I would any day rather read good poetry or prose. And sometimes I feel oh so tired of dances and flirtations and silly talk and do so long to have a long and really serious talk with somebody. It all seems so so ungrateful! Especially at this time.<sup>189</sup> Of course I love

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<sup>188</sup> love ] lover

<sup>189</sup> Ginevra seems to be thinking of the progress of World War I in Europe; although the students at Westover School had limited access to newspapers and other outside reading material, Miss Hillard often told the students about the progress of war during assemblies.

good times, but there is always too much of a good thing and then—doesn't dancing seem foolish? I don't see why anybody should ever admire me—so of course I would feel unworthy. It isn't my fault if I have any virtues, they were given to me, and, heaven only knows, I haven't used them to advantage—Loads of people tell me I'm conceited. Isn't that naïve? Why should I be—I mean, isn't it too stupid that I'm—I was given every thing I have.

Yes I often have really deep feelings—but they make me feel so little and unworthy that they almost drown any ambitions I ever had— That isn't really true though, for of course, one really accomplishes things for—everything religious. I hope you see a little of the code by which I go by, it really is so much nicer for us to have such an understanding between us. I feel as though I knew you better than almost anybody else, Scott, certainly better than any other boy— Isn't it wonderful—?—? So many things in this world are too marvelous! Too good to be true almost——

It's a pretty good world isn't it? And though I kick about school often, I really think I'm pretty lucky and in June, I'll be the luckiest ever—

Write me soon.

Scott—This is very frank—so excuse it.

Ginevra.

Please excuse this frightful scrawl and all the mistakes—G

### 30. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[April 15, 1915]

Thursday

Oh Scott! The most awful thing has happened! Instead of breaking it gently, I'll tell you right away—that—I can't come in June! Isn't that perfectly frightful! I never have been so blue in my whole life, and as for being disappointed well!—! I feel absolutely rotten to think that you took<sup>190</sup> so much trouble, and were so wonderful to have asked me, and—oh, I can't tell you in a letter how absolutely hopelessly discouraged it makes [me]— I got a letter from Mother yesterday, saying to write and tell you that it would be simply impossible for her to stay East for a whole week after school lets out, for, as it is, she has to wait a week for me in New York before June 8th, when we leave. She thanked you for asking me and so forth, and I'm sure she tried her best to arrange it, but I'm certain she didn't realize how disappointed I'd be, or how much bother and trouble you'd gone to, for nothing! If you can't get someone else, I'll never forgive Mother or myself. Really, Scott, I wish I could tell you how awfully I feel about this, especially as you'd been counting on me to come, and I'm afraid I've told pretty late, but I'm sure that you only know how much I wanted to come!!! I think too that perhaps Mother may think I'm too young, but I know that if it had been possible in any way for her to arrange it, she would have done so. You see, we leave Chicago for Biddeford Pool the first of July and she has piles of things to do in Chicago before she leaves, closing up both the country and the city houses.

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<sup>190</sup> took ] to

I simply can't think of anything else except how badly I want to come and I am going to strangle the family if they dare refuse to stay a day in New York after I get out of school. Courtney Letts may stay over that night (Tuesday, June 8th) with me, and if she does, I shall expect you to come in to dinner and the theatre or something and bring someone along, probably Junior Ames—as he knows Courtney. If she doesn't stay with us, why, then, you come in alone! I personally think that would be much better (being of a jealous disposition) but it may have to be arranged with Courtney.

You owe me a letter, so I'll close till I hear from you again, and, Scott, please don't think I'm perfectly awful not to let you know about next June before, but I only found out about it yesterday and really thought before that, that I had a fine chance of getting there.

You only know how badly I feel about it. Write soon and tell me that you understand—and console me. Yours with L---

Ginevra.

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31. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[April 18, 1915]

Sunday

Dear S----

I'm overjoyed to see that you understood about the dance and everything. It makes me more—more blue every time I think of it, and I don't [know] what we're going to do, if we only see each other that one night—June 8th. My goodness, if you don't pay a darn lot of attention to me and no other, that night, why—I don't know what will happen— I told Edith Cummings that Mother had said she couldn't chaperone me this spring, and she said in a nonchalant way “Oh come along with me, Mother will chaperone us both”— She didn't sound enthused so I let the subject drop, but the dear girl didn't realize what she had said. Anyway, I'd already written you about it—I don't quite see how she can be going with her cousin, who is a Senior! Do you—?—

I only have a minute to write so excuse this if it's only a note— Yes, I certainly do save letters! I wouldn't throw yours away for the world, and have them at present locked up in my strong-box—only that there are so many that they don't all quite go in! Every now and then, when I feel blue, I pull out a nice long, fat one, and read it through. We'll have that party some day soon, only I won't burn your letters, and I won't have you read mine<sup>191</sup> out loud, they're too absurd—! I often wonder if they sound simply killing when read by some other person, but you see when I write to you, I always feel just as though I was talking to you, and as I say foolish things sometimes, I am just as liable to write them in my letters—I know, if I ever saw one of my letters again, I would think myself crazy. That's the reason I felt so foolish when I got that slang letter. I read it to a girl here, Virginia Burns—Portland—Oregon, who uses more slang than anyone I know (she met Mr. Jackson (excuse change of ink) in Easter vac.) She thought it was just

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<sup>191</sup> mine ] min

lovely and Bug has been asking to see it ever since! You asked if Darrow Fulton stayed over a week from college to amuse me! Well, it was “comme ca”—he had to get off a condition a at tutoring school before entering Yale last fall, and he just stayed over a week longer at Pittsfield, where I was— C’est tout—! Not very thrilling!

How is the  $\Delta$  show getting on?<sup>192</sup>

May I not give you some “helping hints”— Come down and teach<sup>193</sup> the chorus or something like that—? I’m sure I would do an awful lot of good—

Scott! Did I honestly use all these slang words in my letters. For heavens sakes go through them again and cross out all of them. I don’t suppose that would leave much reading-matter though— I intended to write you a very sensible beautifully worded epistle, but it took much too much bean and time and besides it didn’t sound a bit natural.

Last night the Seniors gave a dance, the only time in the year when Males are allowed to roam around the place. I played tennis all afternoon to try and get a slant at them, and succeeded pretty well, but there were only two of [them] here that I knew— I spent most of the night lying on a pillow by the window, watching the dancing and listening to the music— It was so divine— “Oh Tennessee—I hear you calling me”— Oh—“I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier”—both are two cute for words I think—!<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Scott had already begun work on the 1915-1916 Triangle Club Show, *The Evil Eye*.

<sup>193</sup> hints ] Units ; teach ] teack

<sup>194</sup> As a sophomore, Ginevra was barred from the seniors’ dance, but the younger girls could hear the music from their rooms. “Tennessee, I hear you calling me,” by the Canadian-American songwriter Geoffrey O’Hara, was a hit record for Al Jolson in 1914.

Scott, you contradicted yourself in the last—but-one letter. Firstly, do you remember that when you came up here, it was a marvelous day, and you said that fine days always depressed you—well—secondly—in your last letter, you said “on rainy days I wake up and immediately begin to gloom—but spring days and fine weather makes me happy and excited and peppy. Which do you mean (N. B.) Be sure and answer this, as it is of vital importance—!!!! You understand, I suppose, that my life depends on it—Oh yes—oh yes—!

I agree with you though, that life in the sunshine is very bright, and at this rate and with this weather, I ought to be the peppiest little thing going! Tennis and Basketball have been going on all week and ~~the~~ I am shark in both sports, of course—oh Lordy! My game of tennis is pitiful—! Let’s see, I had loads to tell you, but can’t think of anything now as the bell is ringing and I must away——

Yours “Comme et pour toujours!”

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Born in Chatham, Ontario, in 1882, O’Hara was often inspired in his writing by the songs sung by African-Americans who had immigrated to Canada from the United States after the Civil War. O’Hara himself immigrated to the United States in 1904 and had a prolific career as a songwriter and teacher; his most famous composition is the World War I standard, “K-K-K-Katy,” published in 1918. The second song that Ginevra mentions, “I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier,” by lyricist Alfred Bryan and composer Al Piantadosi, was a popular anti-war song in 1915. Ginevra was increasingly conscious of the progress of the war in Europe; just over a year later, in May 1916, she complained to Scott that her father would not allow her and her mother to march in a Preparedness Parade.



Ginevra.

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32. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[April 26, 1915]

Sunday

Dear Scott——

For the last week, I've been sending Mother telegrams—letters—night-letters etc. about the dance—and yesterday I got my answer— It was a telegram—"Regret Princeton affair Have talked it over with Mrs. Cummings—Sorry—Mother—" Well, of course, I was absolutely raging, and was on the point of sending a telegram saying I was going anyway when I thought I'd better stop acting like a fool, and look at things sensibly—of course, you know how sorry I am to have regretted, then told you that there was a chance of my coming and then regretting again, but honestly, if you only knew how much I wanted to come—why—it just makes me weep to think of it! I never was so disappointed and I do hope you'll have another girl, because I don't think you'll enjoy it so much, and then, I feel that I have stopped you from asking anybody in time.

But of course you see the way I feel—it's the same feeling as I had at Christmas in St. Paul and you know how much I would have given to have gone then— This sounds awfully crazy, but don't think I'm foolish as I'm only trying to tell you how sorry

I am. I guess Edith won't be able to go either, and another girl up here, Katherine Rennich wanted to go too, with a boy called Kenn (?) and her family said "Nay—nay"

Oh it infuriates me!—!—!

Exams come in four weeks and in six weeks (from Tuesday) I'll be in little old New York—I guess I won't be glad too! Oh—!! I told Mother I'd asked you for dinner that night, and she said that would be fine, so for Pete's sake, don't forget the date—and come! Courtney won't be there, so I suppose you'll be disappointed, but I think it will be just as nice with only a family party.

Last Monday Bug, Midge Minor another girl, and myself motored down to New Haven, rode all through the town and had a grand time. We took an especially stupid chaperone as it is against the rules to go near New Haven (secrecy—Scott!)

We rode up and down all the populated streets, using our eyes to great advantage, and while passing some building, who should Bug see sitting on the steps, but June Clarkson. She hollered at him and he waved back in a dazed way, so on the way home, she sent him a card, saying—"So glad to have seen you Monday morning—Why weren't you more cordial? Marie Hersey—" <sup>195</sup> I only saw two people I knew but plenty of ones

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<sup>195</sup> The typist seems to have inadvertently omitted several words here. According to Ginevra's diary for Monday, April 19, 1915, Ginevra and her friends saw three people that she and Marie both knew: Arthur Tuttle, June Clarkson, and a young man named Darrow (she was unclear about whether it was Darrow or not). The masculine pronoun in these sentences must refer to Tuttle. Ginevra King Diary, April 19, 1915, Princeton University Library.

who seemed to know us all—I bet we were a sight too, all in white tams, white jumpers and skirts—and Midge and I on the two little seats in bright green outing suits— It was great fun, though—

Basket-Ball and tennis are progressing, and I'm working like a Trojan for the teams, but there isn't a chaw-nce in the world for yours truly— However, while there's life, there's hope!—!

I'm sure you must be a divine cor! I sometimes wish I was one, but then I think a little and decide hastily that I don't, after all!

Margaret Ripley has gone home over Sunday, for her teeth, and I told her that if she saw Joe Shanley, to be sure and get him to see you and give you messages and so forth. I bet she forgets to do it, too—

Katherine Ordway— Why she's getting along finely— Went to New York about 2 weeks ago, to Lucius Ordway's marriage to Jo Green,<sup>196</sup> and she says she had a grand time. She's a peach, I think, rooms just across the hall, with Courtney etc. I should think you'd feel as if you had known Court all your life, because I'm always mentioning her in

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<sup>196</sup> Ginevra's classmate, Katherine Ordway, was the daughter of the prominent St. Paul businessman Lucius P. Ordway, Sr., one of the original partners in the 3M Corporation and the developer of the St. Paul Hotel. On April 10, 1915, Lucius P. Ordway, Jr., married Josephine Green, the daughter of A. W. Green, one of the owners of the Plaza Hotel, in the Plaza Ballroom. This section of the typescript contains a number of typographical errors in the spelling of proper names; since Ginevra knew the family well, the misspellings are very likely errors in transcription; all have been corrected here.

my letters. I wish you did know her as I know you'd like her— DEAR Teddy. do give him a heartful of love from me—but no—I don't even know G. McConnich, however give him my best and E. MacIlvaine and—and I know no more, I don't think!

For heavens sake, don't get mumps! That would be awful! If you do, you'll have to write me a journal, just a little bit every day—and then have it fumigated and send it to me when you are over them.

I wonder how many sheets of paper I have used on you, because my supply is almost gone. I'll have to begin on wrapping paper soon, as that's all I'll be able to afford. Yes, I agree with you about the Spring being a sentimental time. It certainly is! and to keep us up at school all through it, is positively cruel— One always feels more kindly towards everyone— Why! I'm even on good terms with Dan! At least he thinks I am—I simply adore You see, I've carried out my threat!—!

These wonderful soft evenings, to make you feel so sort of happy and contented and dreamy and nice!— Oh, I love the Spring— Then summer is pretty nice too, but one gets so hot in summer and by that time, you're used to the green trees etc. and it doesn't seem so wonderful and true—

Talk about your raving spring-feverists! That's<sup>197</sup> worse than any other Chicago girl could be accused of.

Another girl and I went over this morning to a poor old paralyzed<sup>198</sup> man's house and talked to him. In a few days we're going over to sing and play to him and in the

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<sup>197</sup> That's ] That

<sup>198</sup> paralyzed ] paralyzed

meantime we're<sup>199</sup> going to get some spring white violets with all the roots and all from the woods.

I hope you didn't flunk out on any more tests. I took one on Saturday and did, I am sure—

It is broiling up here to-day and I'd give anything for a pitcher of lemonade and a good book or——something else. I'm so so disap. about the dance I can't see straight and expect to hear from you very soon—

Yours (I know of no original ending)

Ginevra.

### 33. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[May 9, 1915]

Sunday

Dear Scott—

Yesterday I received your letter and was very glad to hear of your state of mind—I only can say that I sincerely wish that you would have acquainted me with your feelings before this, and humbly apologize for the foolish actions which I accredit myself with

<sup>199</sup> we're ] we're are

during the past three months. It would be the greatest kindness I could ask for you to destroy my letters.

However, I am awfully glad to say that you do not understand my real character, as you profess to, for I would not have you know for the whole world the feelings which I have held for you since January fifth.

I have been very blind, I am afraid, for a long while, but I came to with a start yesterday, and I thank you for bringing me to. Perhaps we were too frank, frankness does not always result in the best ends, it seems, but, although this has occurred, I nevertheless feel that I know you better than almost anyone else—Perhaps you know me—perhaps not.

I still expect you on June eight, at seven o'clock at the Ritz-Carlton—where I hope we can come to a more different settlement.

It seems so—such a shame that this has happened!

Yours,

Ginevra.

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34. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD<sup>200</sup>

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[May 12, 1915]

Wednesday

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<sup>200</sup> Before mailing this letter, Ginevra misplaced it, and so it was received after the following letter. Fitzgerald restored the proper order when the typescript was prepared.

(Letter gotten Tuesday)

Dear Scott—

I was awfully surprised to get your letter as your next-to-last-one certainly sounded as though you had just about finished with me, and were just waiting for me to write and say “It’s all off!” At the time, I was furious, and wasn’t even going to answer it, for by its sound, it seemed that you had written it in the frankest possible manner—I wasn’t either, because your last few letters had been stupid as anything, and I was<sup>201</sup> told from various sources that “That was what have been expected!” So you see the way I felt about a week ago, in fact, even till I got your letter, I can’t tell you what a relief it was to get it, and know that you hadn’t meant all you said! I am sure I had a perfect right to be angry for if you had written a letter like I got from you, you would have been furious.

At present, I am simply petrified, for two reasons— 1—Exams ~~come~~ I mean start, a week from yesterday and to-night the basket-ball teams. I doubt if I make it, but just for the foolishness of it, I’m going to leave this open and P. S. the outcome— Two weeks from Friday Mother will be up here for Visitors’ Sunday—when all the parents come, and I am going down to the Elton, in Waterbury, to stay over Sunday—Edith Cummings is going to the dance after all and all the games and things! I could curse her, the lucky lucky thing! And Mother is only letting me stay over one day in New York, and then we’re going to Buffalo for over-night to visit some relatives. Father got us seats for “Nobody Home” on the 8th.

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<sup>201</sup> was ] have was

Isn't the Lusitania<sup>202</sup> accident awful? One of Mother's best friends went down, and the aunt of a girl at school, drowned, while her uncle went mad— Of all terrible years, 1915 seems to be unlucky—I never realized what awful times we were living through till the other day and then it came with a shock— Every now and then Miss Hillard gives us a wonderful talk on the war and all the circumstances and everything!

The weather has been divine for the last week, up to this very moment, and now it's raining like the Old Harry—I've just been busy making up a long line of bull for 19th Century Lit,<sup>203</sup> telling "What were my greatest gain from the thought of the 19th century—" Glory Anna! I'm all talked—I mean to say—written-out—and feel as flowery as a piece of dough—!

I haven't written a letter for so long that I have simply forgotten how. Would you believe that I have written 3 outside of the family in 2 weeks! Pretty good!—Hey. What? I don't know what a letter looks like, in my box and the cob webs are daily growing thicker!<sup>204</sup> Oh—S'life—if you like it—But personally, I don't!!! Less than four weeks, however and————(suspense)

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<sup>202</sup> On May 7, 1915, the Cunard liner *RMS Lusitania* was torpedoed by a German U-Boat off the coast of Ireland and sank in eighteen minutes. The deaths of 1,198 civilians gained much attention and spurred anti-German rhetoric in the United States.

<sup>203</sup> Lit ] hit

<sup>204</sup> thicker ] the cher



I will write you again!—What a foolish thing to say! I’m sorry! I meant to say, I’d see you!! Aha—Ahem! I think I’d better stop now, before I get to more wandering—but seriously—and frankly—

I am terribly [glad] that our fight is “passé” and I’m sure we’ll like each other all the better for it. I certainly do want to know you well, and for heaven’s sake D O N ’ T idealize me! of all people!

Wouldn’t it be terrible, if, after all this we couldn’t be even friends, and both go off in a big huff— It would be simply terrible!

However, my feelings remain unchanged through all our deadly strife! And hope you feel “la meme chose”—

Do write soon, and tell me why you ever wrote me such a letter—

Yours

Ginevra

### 35. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[May 13, 1915]

Thursday

Dear Scott—

This is the second letter I’ve written you within a day— Last night in study hour I wrote you a long 8 paged one and lost it somewhere around between dinner and a

lecture. You see, the basket-ball teams were read right after dinner and I was so excited that I lost it in the flurry, I guess. Anyway, I made forward, much to my surprise, as I had been playing like the deuce up to yesterday, and never was so happy about anything in my life! After duly explaining to you why I haven't written before, I'll go on and tell you the whys and wherefores I wrote you that correspondence card—I had seriously thought of not writing at all as, to be perfectly frank, I was furious at your next-to-the-last letter. Perhaps you didn't realize what you said, but no sensible girl would<sup>205</sup> have meekly taken that letter, and answered it as though you had written her all about the weather! Why, it said, practically, "I'm sick and tired of you, You have no character. I idealized you at first, perhaps, but soon found out what a big mistake I made etc. etc. —!" What would you have done? Said "Thank you," and gone straight on? I'm sure you would have cared too much about it to have done that!

But, if I can honestly believe your last letter, which I am going to, as we promised to be absolutely frank about everything we said, I guess it was just as well that we had our little squabble, for everything is much nicer now that it's over, and I am sure that we can come to a clearer understanding.

My Heavens! It wasn't my fault that I was idealized! Goodness only knows I don't deserve it, and that it was too absurd to last long, but there's nothing I'd rather do than to really know you well, which considering that I have seen you only thirteen or [ ] hours in all, seems sort of hard. After this, I'm going to write you sensible letters, I mean not foolish ones, like the weak ones I wrote you last term. They may not be so long, but

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<sup>205</sup> would ] who

one can never tell! Of course, I'm sorry that you felt badly towards me, but please please try to forget it! You said, in that letter, that for two months, you had absolutely hated me at times. Of course, that didn't cheer me up very much, but let's call it quits, and DON'T for heaven's sakes, fight any more—I simply hate to!!!!

There isn't a thing to tell you, if I ever find my other letter, I may send it. Hope I find it, as it wasn't sealed— Sounds as though I suspected somebody to open it, but they might by mistake, you know— Two weeks from to-morrow Mother will be up here and I'm going down to spend Sunday night and Monday with her at the Elton in Waterbury— Then only a little more than three weeks and I'll see you—I can't wait for vacation! Exams. start next Tuesday—I have two on Tuesday none Wednesday and one Thursday and that's all I have to take—thank heaven! Write me a lot, and if I don't answer as soon as usual, you'll know I'm trying to survive an exam. Thank you! Remember, I have forgiven your letter, and you must do the same for that correspondence card, and we'll forgive and forget. I'll write again as soon as possible.

Yours,

Ginevra.

P. S. Don't you think Bug's poem was a wonder? It was purely her own and I almost died laughing when she read it to me— She'll be a poetess someday—but it isn't often that she gets the inspiration!—

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### 36. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[May 23, 1915]

Sunday

Dear Scott—

As the moments fly on, and apple boughs shed their white splendour—(Westover specimen writing, according to Spence) I'm getting more and more excited over vacation. Exams are O V E R! and I won't have to crack till fall now! Raise the flag—! I feel haphazard already, and as for being cheerful well? —Ask me in an off-hand manner—?—!—!!<sup>206</sup>

I guess poor old Spence is darn jealous that they can't hear the "peeping of the birds" instead of parading two and two up and down Fifth Avenue—Nothing stirring—!!— Country life for me— You see, I get really patriotic, when anyone insults Westover—and only then! Gin Burns is one of the biggest peaches in school, far removed from Ruth Teale's type, from her description. Slang?—My heavens! She's a real Westerner and comes from Portland—Oregon—

It makes me furious to think that everyone except yours truly is having such a good time— Why, what is Spring for anyway, but to raise the dickens, and there certainly is no chance for it in Middlebury—(three churches and a couple of houses) Bug thought she was a reg'lar devil this morning when she winked at a Waterbury tough!— Then they wonder why we're wild when let loose— My heavens! What can be expected—on Tuesday night I'll probably be so hilarious that I won't be able to stay

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<sup>206</sup>!! ] x!!

quietly at the theatre—oh never heard such slang as I've been using so far this letter, I'm so sorry! It is awfully quiet, though, I never have to think hard when I write you, everything comes just as easily as can be and I don't have to force my brain (?) This is proven by some of those<sup>207</sup> sentences in your<sup>208</sup> last—! Gee Whiz! I'm sorry about it, though! I doubt if they would have proved very interesting. Oh By the way—When do you go through Chicago to St. Paul— It would be simply great if you'd stay over there for awhile— Don't you know anybody that lives there? Any relatives or anything? I'd ask you to stay with us, but the guest room in our new house hasn't even been furnished yet, so—anyway, you'd have to spend the day or night in Chicago and could come up for a meal— Could you?

Yesterday we had one of our basket-ball games and our team got beaten 17-24. It was a good game though, but I did a fool thing, by picking up a pin in the field and calmly and skillfully jabbing it way into my finger, thusly the bad writing—!

Well, I hardly would say that you are as conceited as Bug insinuated in her letter, but I really think it was very clevah—and as far as poetry goes, why——

I'm glad that that was the only reason you wrote me that horrid letter— You see, I take it for granted that what you said was the gospel truth— One certainly is inclined to feel very strongly either one way or another, about different people—I mean, some people you can never feel anything but indifference to, no matter how hard you try to like

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<sup>207</sup> those ] the those

<sup>208</sup> your ] you

them, but others, especially those you like, a feeling of hate can easily come across you, it doesn't though, usually—!

For two Saturdays now we've tried to get over Taft and each time something has turned up and we couldn't go and now it's too late and we won't get there at all.

The funniest thing happened the other day— After an exam the maid told me that my Father had called me up from New Haven. I told her she was crazy and that Father wasn't East, I knew, but she said he had said he was Mr. King and my Father so she had gotten special permission for me to talk to him. I went to the phone and who should it be, but a boy I knew awfully well, who said he simply had to speak to me about something, so had gotten me that way——Nut!——!!!

Notice the smallness of my writing this time, and also that you owe quite a few pages of writing, but “it don't make no difference”—

I thoroughly agree with you about fires. There isn't [ ]thing I love more—I adore to sit and read or just think in front of it, it gives you such a nice comfortable, contented feeling— We have a divine one at home, down in Father's den which we will use for the purpose which you proposed in your last. Only it must be before I'm 23!

Oh, the dickens! There's Bible and I haven't even started to get ready.

Write soon too

and I'll answer soon too.

Yours,

Ginevra

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37. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[June 3, 1915]

Thursday

Dear Scott—

This is the last letter I'll write till I see you, so it will be short— Yours so very short, so “don't get huffy!” You didn't seem to understand that I expect you for dinner and the theatre, your last letter implied only dinner. Of course if you have too much work to do, it will be understood, but naturally, I want you to come an awful lot! Mother has decided to stay in New York till Thursday night, and then go on to Buffalo. We get home Saturday morning—I don't see Mother's point in not letting me wait over, as Edith Cummings is going to, but still—that seems to be Mother's way. We had a divine time last Saturday in Waterbury, on Sunday we had tea in New Haven and saw a lot of people, and on Monday, went to the Yale-Cornell ball game. It wasn't very good, as Yale put it all over poor Cornell— Last night we had a school picnic that we have every year. It is wonderful and we stay out late, which is a devilish thing for Westover to do. Oh, by the way I got another conduct mark this term! I'm in a bad way! I haven't been for my lecture from Hiss Hillard yet, as I've got cold feet.

This afternoon the old members of the Athletic Association are giving a tea for next year's members, and believe me, I'm looking forward to a lot of good food! Still, it's only five days till Tuesday! and some thing doing every second till then, which will keep things pepped up. I've got loads to say on Tuesday—Come up to our sitting-room,

and don't wait downstairs. It would be great if you'd come early so we have a talk before dinner!!

Well goodbye for five days, Scott

Yours,

Ginevra.

38. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*New York City*

[June 8, 1915]

Dear Scott—

Who<sup>209</sup> said I would send you a Special Delivery to-day? I'm out ten cents, but that makes no difference! I ought to take advantage of the Special and say something, but I haven't a moment's time and so all I'll do will be to tell you how glad I was to see you last night and that I expect you on Monday aft. at 1450 Astor. If Midge comes early, we can go down in the car to get her together.

Goodbye till then

Ginevra.

P. S. Did you mail the letter to Mrs. Miller that I gave you? Hope so!!

<sup>209</sup> Who ] How



39. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Kingdom Come Farm, Lake Forest, Illinois*

[June 21, 1915]

Monday

P. S. It has taken me forever to write this as my hand is out of practice. Therefore appreciate it doubly—G.

Dear Scott—

I have a peculiar feeling that I know what you are going to say “Too much Deering and Chicago high-life”<sup>210</sup> But no, my boy, no no! I’ve been out in the country since Friday last, where it was practically impossible to write a line, and before that, Midge was here and I couldn’t leave her—!

Undoubtedly by now you are madly in love with Midge. You ought to be, if you aren’t! You and Edie, and Midge and Bug probably had a time together the first few days in St. Paul, but I guess you’re out in the wild and wooly (sp.) West now, and far from cabarets! ——Gracious, I seem to be talking through my hat but I suppose I’ve been too gay! Shall I tell you what happened over Sunday in the Lake Forest, but first I must tell you how wonderful wonderful wonderful it was to see you last Monday. Really, Scott, I can’t thank you enough for coming up in that pouring rain and everything! I really think

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<sup>210</sup> Deering Davis was the son of a prominent Chicago physician; he and Billy Mitchell, Ginevra’s first husband, frequently called on Ginevra when she was at home in Chicago.

we did get along well alone though, don't you? I feel a lot more as though I understood you better in those few minutes.

It<sup>211</sup> has been raining here till I could [ ] almost anything to have it stop—and while it has been raining, I have been prosing! oh,—oh what a job! Honestly it's perfectly hectic! If the old thing ever gets finished, there will be grand celebration in the King family— As I was saying though last Friday I went to the country to stay with Edith Cummings, (Who by the way, did go with her cousin to the Prom, but is not red-haired!!) We went to Charley Chaplin on Friday eve and Saturday, played tennis all morning. In the afternoon we danced at the Club till six. Deering was there, and he still dances marvelously—!! In a couple of weeks vaudeville rehearsals begin and then comes the fun! I am going up to Lake Geneva to a house-party over the 4th of July with Billy Mitchell, and I hope to see Mark there.

Oh Scott, I've met such an attractive Yale fellow in town. His name is Lawrence Williams, and he is captain of some track team and draws divinely—! My, he's attractive! The sane and safe but jolly kind, you know.

This next may sound queer but really I do wish you weren't out in Montana, that is such a long stretch from Biddeford Pool. But "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" and "Distance lends enchantment" are fine proverbs—I always hated the one that said "Out of sight is out of mind"—I don't believe in it, do you?

You see, I'm trying to make my letters sensible and comprehensible and yet tell you that I miss you! Oh well, you have the village queens to console you—and I have—

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<sup>211</sup> It ] I

Biddeford Pool, which means gloom personified to me—!!! I'm in a blue mood tonight so I'll go to sleep— Better luck to you when you get this.

Yours,

Ginevra

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40. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Kingdom Come Farm, Lake Forest, Illinois*

[June 25, 1915]

Friday

Scott Fitz-Gerald!——!!!

Why oh why don't you write me—? Are you dead and buried or what is the mater? Is St. Paul as fascinating as all that, or is it caused by a St. Paulite. Anyway, for heaven's sake, write and tell me that you've not succumbed, and tell Bug for me that she [ ] a fine one to write me such a letter. As if I'd air my thoughts to her, the fresh thing!—!

Write—write—w r i t e—r i g h t away!

Yours,

Ginevra

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41. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*En route to Biddeford Pool, Maine*

[July 15, 1915]

Dear Scott—

Well, I'm thoroughly ashamed of either you or myself! Do I owe you or vica versa. Anyhow, I'm taking Fate by the hands and am————writing you!!

Courtney and I are at present on the train bound for Biddeford Pool, Maine so by to-morrow we'll be only about four thousand miles apart. This train is just roasting hot and I'm cross and tired so this will be short but not<sup>212</sup> sweet, I'm afraid. I'll write longer up at Biddeford though. I'm dying to see the place but oh, did I hate to leave Lake Forest!<sup>213</sup> Well I guess, Really I'm<sup>214</sup> homesick to the weeping point at present.

I heard all about you from Courtney!<sup>215</sup> Did she come up to your expectations and how did you agree? I guess she had a marvelous time from all I've heard about it.

It has been gay as the deuce in Lake Forest for the last ten days. I went up to Lake Geneva on a house party over the fourth and then stayed with Peg Carry till Court got back from St. Paul and then I went to her till we left to-day. There was a perfectly divine dance on Wednesday night and I danced quite a bit with one of the best dancers in the world! There have been more heavenly dancers floating around Lake Forest lately.

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<sup>212</sup> not ] now

<sup>213</sup> Forest! ] Forest?

<sup>214</sup> I'm ] I

<sup>215</sup> Courtney! ] Courtney?

It's pretty class! I tell you! I was finally introduced to Gordon McCormick<sup>216</sup> there and he commenced raving about you—Well, so did Ted Brown.

At last the Four of us are separated, Courtney and I going East and Edith and Peg are up in Wisconsin at camp for another week. I won't see them till September just think!

This train jiggles so that all my brains (?) are rattled and can't think of a thing to say. Wait till the "solitude of the Maine woods" falls upon me—Oh Gosh!!

I lost thirty dollars and a box full of clothes this morning and if my<sup>217</sup> head wasn't attached to my shoulders, I'd lose that too!

Two men are howling down the aisle and laughing at the top of their lungs—They make me tired—! I'm so bored with life that I could cry, I don't want to go to Biddeford, and oh dear, I want to die—Courtney sends her best and wanted me to ask you how Helen Wolcott is—Oh—oh Scott—And yet you said, well, I can't believe you any more!

I'm not going to bore you any longer as I'll write again at Biddeford. Write me

G. King

Biddeford Pool, Maine

and soon! — Do you hear! How are the village queens.

Yours,

Ginevra.

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<sup>216</sup> Gordon McCormick, Class of 1917, Princeton.

<sup>217</sup> if my ] if I my

42. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD*Biddeford Pool, Maine*

[August 2, 1915]

Monday

Dear Scott

Many apologies for not answering before, but you must know how it is in summer vacation. Maine to Montana! My goodness but that seems a long way! Why couldn't we have chosen places nearer to each other, instead of on the other sides of the continent. We see each other so little that it is funny—I wonder what it would be like to see each other every single day all summer. Do you suppose we would get tired of each other—you know, I honestly and truly doubt if we would— You sound by your letter to be having a great time— (What a sentence construction! OH!!) I only wish that you could have come to Lake Forest to visit— Oh by the way, did I tell you that I finally met Gordon McCormick. He didn't say a word about the letter he wrote me last Christmas, but told me all about you!

This place is killing! absolutely a scream!—!!! There is hardly a tree in the whole place no sidewalks or telephones and it seems practically like a big picnic the whole time. It's so different from Lake Forest that I'm simply crazy about it—

In the first place, there are only about seven girls and five boys in the whole town but it is quality, not quantity here— A lot of Chicago people come up here, so it is great for Mother, but mostly all the young people are St. Louis.

Courtney arrives to-morrow and is going to stay for about a week I guess. The Heavens only knows if the weather will be good by that time, as there has been a fog for almost a week, and it is pouring now.

I wish you would tell me what you thought of Courtney and whether you liked her or otherwise.

I never did think that you two would get along and I really would like to know whether I was mistaken or not! I hope so! We've been on loads of picnics since I got here, and played a lot of tennis, but as the weather has been so rotten, we haven't been canoeing yet.

Bug is coming up the last week in August to visit—at least I've asked her— Oh, this place, at the present moment is terribly on my nerves—principally because I loathe rain. Please come up here and we can start something exciting. I'm pining away for excitement! Write and tell me the most devilish thing you can think of for me to do and I'll do it. —probably! Anyway write soon and tell me that the village maidens haven't absolutely overcome—no, I don't mean that—I mean—well, that you haven't forgotten that I exist!—!

Yours with love,

Ginevra.

P. S. My add—is just Biddeford Pool, Maine.

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43. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Biddeford Pool, Maine

[August 25, 1915]

Wednesday

Dear Scott—

I started to write you yesterday at the Club but only got as far as about the middle of the third page—the Bug<sup>218</sup> got too inquisitive, and I had to stop—I left the letter over there, so someone won't have to go out of their way for literature.

Bug got up here last Friday and has been visiting Helen James, but she is coming here to me to-morrow.

I went down to Magnolia over last week-end to visit and had a pretty good time as two I knew came down and stayed there too.

I hope, Scott, that you recognize me. I doubt it though, for we see each other about as seldom as any two people—

This summer has been an awfully funny one, at least, it has for me, because I had all my excitement in the beginning then I came up here, where it is awfully quiet, and then the twelfth of September I'm going to a wonderful house party in Pittsfield, Mass.— I get to New York about the 19<sup>th</sup> and school opens the 21<sup>st</sup>— Then—Oh Gosh—3 straight months of—I don't know anything bad enough to express it with— Courtney, Peg Carry and I are to be the girls on the house-party and about ten boys—Oh, it'll be swell!!— Believe me, I've had a restful time up here. Mother thinks I have been out too

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<sup>218</sup> Bug ] But



much but I disagree with her—Heavens! It's so much quieter here than at Lake Forest that it's funny—

Kit is visiting Court at Lake Forest now and in a letter I got from Court this morning, she seems to have made quite the big hit— Bug has asked me to visit her again this Christmas— Isn't that darling of her—! Scott, you've just got to be there, so we can really see each other for more than an hour— I told you didn't I, that I figured out that we have seen each other for exactly 15 hours. But letters do help—don't they?

I agree with you about writing in the summer— Not that I don't like to write you or anybody else, but I hate to have to get unusually stupid letters from me. One comfort is up here that it rarely gets hot (that's because it rains all the time, I guess) but still, it's nice to have it that way.

I hope you'll be floating around New York about the 20<sup>th</sup>, Peg and Court are going to stay in New York with me too!—

Write me soon——

Yours,

Ginevra

44. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*1450 Astor Street, Chicago, Illinois*

[September 9, 1915]

Thursday

Dear Scott—

I certainly don't envy you now, working down at Princeton— Nevertheless, in less than 2 weeks I'll be back at good old Middlebury plugging away for another year— Thank heaven, it's the last!—! I'm going to Miss Wickham's in New York the year after, which I think, ought to be a lot of fun! <sup>219</sup>

Oh listen—Scott—Courtney and Margaret Carry are going to be in New York with Mother and I over Monday night, September 20th. Do you suppose you could come in for dinner and the theatre that night. Mark Walton is down there tutoring too, I think, and I'd like him to come up too— Would you ask him for me?<sup>220</sup> If you can't come then don't ask him, because I don't want him, without you—! I do hope you can work it,

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<sup>219</sup> Many young women of Ginevra's social position chose to complete their education by attending small finishing schools that were located in large cities, often New York or Boston. Beginning in the fall of 1916, Ginevra attended Mrs. Isabel D. Coates's school at 228 West 72nd Street in New York City. Although Scott chose to believe that Ginevra had been "fired" from Westover, her frequent references to negotiations with her mother over where she would attend school in 1916 support Ginevra's own account that, while she left Westover before the end of her junior year, she never intended to return for her senior year but could have.

<sup>220</sup> Students who failed classes during the previous semester at Princeton were required to make up their academic deficiencies through tutoring, or by retaking the classes.

Fitzgerald's deficiencies ultimately precipitated his temporary departure from Princeton in the fall of 1915.

because I'd like to see you an awful lot and that would be the only chance I'd have for a long while— Beside, I'm very anxious to hear that thing you have to tell me—

Curiosity—! Oh yes!—!!

This pen is so bum that it spoils the pleasure of writing you!

I'll be awfully, awfully disappointed if I can't see you before I go back to the pen, and I would much rather see you alone, but I have Peg and Court on my hands so——

Write me after next Sunday to c/o Warren Salisbury—Pittsfield, Mass. and tell me if you and Mark can come. It will be seven o'clock at the Ritz probably.

Yours,

Ginevra

P. S. Try to come!!

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45. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[October 12, 1915]

Tuesday

Dear Scott—

Don't be overcome by the beauty of this paper, but it's the best I can muster from my schoolroom stock. Midge is busy writing beside me, so you see, we are in the schoolroom at present.

Personally, I think I am doing very well to answer your letter so soon, considering the length of time it took you, and all my duties as president vice-pres. secretary and treasurer of the “High Muck-a-Mucks!”<sup>221</sup>

However, I am going to be able to get away from school for the Sunday and half of Monday after the Yale-Harvard game. Am I pleased? Well, I guess! Mother and Father are coming East for the game and Miss Hillard is going to let me spend Sunday with them in Waterbury—!<sup>222</sup>

Next Saturday a funny thing is going to happen— Two boys whom I know are coming up to see Courtney and Peg Carry and are bringing a friend—who they say is a wonder-good-looking—on the Yale crew etc. and whom I have to entertain all afternoon. I’m scared to death. His name is Thatch Lave (sp.) or something like that! I can’t get over how sorry I was not to see you in New York. Mark didn’t even give me a message from you, which hurt considerably.

You ask me to talk about myself! All I can say is, that least said, the better. I rested myself mental and bodily self this summer at the Pool, and consequently have gained about ten pounds, am as fat as a cow and equally as homely— This is straight goods, which you will undoubtedly believe— Helen James is crazy about Tommy Nied—as we were awfully good friends, but that was all! She left just when he was

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<sup>221</sup> High ] “High

<sup>222</sup> Ginevra mistakenly wrote Yale-Harvard instead of the Yale-Princeton game. The game was played in New Haven, Connecticut, on November 13, 1915; Yale defeated Princeton 13 to 7. Ginevra’s father, Charles G. King, was a Yale alumnus.

giving me a rush— I wish to goodness you'd write me some of the things you did in St. Paul. Nothing like a bit of amusement while at school, also some more about yourself as I haven't seen you and talked to you for so long that I hardly know [what] you look or act like— You know, it's queer, but I've always been able to write reams to you and never get bored or tired, as there's always something to say, boring or otherwise. That's a compliment too, believe me. It's up to you now, to write me a real nice letter! As this is the only piece of paper I have—I can't write anymore but I'll do better next time.

Love

Ginevra

46. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[October 31, 1915]

Sunday

Dear Scott—

Many thanks for your letter—it was “short but sweet.” Kindly notice the size of the writing on this letter as it is going to be very small.

That exam paper was awfully funny, but I don't quite see why you connected me with an exam—as I'm not exactly what one would call studious.

I won't be able to have the stage box at the  $\Delta$  show in Chicago now, as you won't be there to watch, but believe me, I'll be in the front row anyway— Bug hasn't said

anything more about St. Paul at Christmas, so I don't think I'm going to be asked out there.

I'm all excited—Mother and Father are coming East for the Yale-Princeton game and I'm going to spend Sunday with them at the Elton in Waterbury— Miss Hillard has put the “kibosh” on our going to the game, so I have to meet them afterwards, and not see the game after all— However, it certainly is something to be able to get off of school for at least a couple of days!

Last night was a Hallowe'en German,<sup>223</sup> lots of fun, except that a few boys now and then do help a bit—!! That's the extent to the excitement around here. The Hockey teams and marks are to be read on Tuesday—

Do you know a boy named Sammy Conant? One of my roommates, in fact, both of them, know him— Their names are Elizabeth Thomas and Catherine Crapo—

The country has been perfectly heavenly around here till a few days ago, and now all the lovely color is going— To-morrow eight of us are going for a long hike, taking

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<sup>223</sup> A German, or German prom, is formal dance in which one couple leads the dancers in a series of steps that involve the frequent changing of partners. For a socially active young woman like Ginevra, Germans provided the opportunity to receive the attention of many suitors in one evening but, as she notes here, Germans were also held at Westover for the exclusive entertainment of the female students. Later in the twentieth century, the term was often used for informal skits presented by the students at exclusive boarding schools like Westover and Miss Porter's.

our luncheons along with us— Believe me by the time we get back, I ought to be as thin as a rail, which would be going some.

You wouldn't recognize me now, I've grown so fat! It's awful, but true—! Everybody comes up to me and says in a sweet voice "Oh how well you're looking and how fat you've grown!" It makes me perfectly furious!——!——!

I feel as though I hadn't seen you for years! If I don't go to St. Paul, I don't see when I'll see you! When do you go home for Christmas vacation. I wish you'd stay over in Chicago for a while.

Why oh why do you think I'm going to forget you! In the first place, I wouldn't want to, and then again, I couldn't with all the letters I've got and everything! The Yale man was quite a mess and very disappointing— Never say again that I'm going to marry Deering! I'm absolutely off him now— I wish you would tell me some more of your experiences as they are very interesting and do write soon too.

Yours,

Ginevra

47. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[November 17, 1915]

Wednesday

P. S. "Pike" the writing on page 4.

Dear Scott—

It was perfectly swell to see you last Saturday, especially as we seem to see each other on the average of about three times a year—

What you said was awfully puzzling— At least, some of it. Really I think you accredit me with loads more common-sense than I really have, and I don't [know] why— because I know you think I'm awfully simple in some things, but even then, I think you think I have a lot of brains. Let me assure you to the contrary though! What the exact point of the above is, I couldn't tell you, but just remember that I'm not as world-wise as your St. Paul friend—

In your last letter you mentioned a sleigh-ride by moon-light. It certainly sounds marvelous. I wish we did such things in Chicago. Just between you and the lampost I do hope— No, I won't say it, I guess I'd better not—I'm already so excited about Thanksgiving that I don't know what to do. Two other girls and I are going down to New York with a N. Y. girl. Have dinner, theatre, and Cascades, then motor out to her country house outside the city, and spend the night— We have to be back by 7 o'clock on Thursday evening, though, and motor each way— Think of wearing evening clothes etc. etc. again. It will be simply divine!—!!

I think Sam Conant is a perfect wonder— He thought probably that I was a perfect wreck but nevertheless, he's a darling! Hope you like Caddy, she certainly is a wonder—! This place is so dead that there isn't a blessed thing to tell you, Thanksgiving and Christmas are all I can think<sup>224</sup> of I'm so furious at Mother, she's making me give a

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<sup>224</sup> think ] thing



dance with some of the most unattractive cousins that you ever knew! I'm going to tell everybody secretly not to come as it'll be a bum party. (They probably wouldn't anyway) Please notice the size of this writing and also the paper as it is new and I'm crazy about it. I'm trying my best to work a graft and get out of school to-morrow to go for a walk— Had more fun on Sunday but I didn't get to New Haven because the old junk we hired didn't get us any farther than just out of Waterbury, so I was disappointed and couldn't have supper with Wallie Winter—

Let me see, is there any news? I have seen you so recently and talked to you so lengthly, that I feel as if I knew you a hundred times better than before. But you're an awfully hard person to understand, I think, because your opinions are a lot different from most boys I know, and you're a lot more observing, consequently you've got to sort of "think twice before you speak" I wish you'd write and tell me that you don't think I'm a perfect ass, because for some reason, I feel as though you thought so now

Yours

Ginevra

R. S. V. P. P. D. Q.

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48. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[December 1, 1915]

Wednesday

P. S. I'm very sorry to have written so late— If you knew how busy I've been—(and this is a good excuse too this time.) Got 95 in a U.S. History<sup>225</sup> test and 92 in architecture, so you can see how hard I've worked—G.

Dear Scott—

You say that you never can write a good letter till after twelve o'clock at night, well, just to prove the differences of our natures, it is now 9:30 in the P.M. and I'm already lost to the world, I'm so tired.

To say the least that was a pretty darn frank letter, but I'm glad that it was so, for at the time, I don't think you realized quite all you were writing. No! Don't be alarmed I'm not peeved or anything foolish like that, but I must confess it was quite a surprise.

I wish you and Sam (give him my very best, please) had called Caddy and I up that night, as it would have caused quite a bit of excitement, although I doubt if we would have gotten up.

I do wish that you were going to be with the Δ this year in Chicago, as I'm going to a dinner at Gordon McCormick's before it, and going with them afterwards to it. I'm hoping to meet the people on the Δ at dinner and so kindly tell Eddie MacIlvaine and Sam Conant to keep out a friendly eye for me, as I will probably be "pet"

I was seventeen years old yesterday and really feel grown up now— Honestly though you can't imagine the difference that being 16 and 17 seems to make to me. Why, I feel as though the responsibilities of the entire continent rested on my shoulders alone, but whether or not I will feel in a subdued or responsible mode will be seen at Christmas.

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<sup>225</sup> U.S. History ] V.S. History

Do you know, I'm really darn anxious to know how I'm going to act whether I'll lose my head, fall desperately, or lose my pep, anyway I'll write you full particulars.

Perfectly truthfully though, I am at the present moment absolutely heart whole (Honour bright!) It is a peach of a way to be too, although it doesn't give you much to worry about— I'm in sort of an "I-don't-care" mode and feel as though "Well what the h--- do I care whether anybody's crazy about me, likes me, or not", though I know, way deep down, of course I do care! A lot, too!!!!!! Do you think I'll fall the way you did for—well you know who I mean—in St. Paul— To be frank, when I came back from Biddeford I had kidded myself into believing that I was in love with Tom, but since then, I have been kidded out of it, and have woken up to the fact that I don't care so very much for anybody, I suppose that's<sup>226</sup> a darn susceptible mode to go home in for Christmas vacation, with the dances and everything and I'm curious to know how hard I'm going to fall, and for how, I don't feel as though it could be for anybody at<sup>227</sup> the present moment. It was perfectly marvelous to see you again and you can't imagine how wonderful it was to talk to you. Do write me soon about the  $\Delta$  as you know how interested I am about everything! Where are the pictures of yourself that you were going to send me. I did want to see them so! You're a peach and I like you very much.

Ginevra

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<sup>226</sup> that's ] that

<sup>227</sup> at ] and

49. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[December 17, 1915]

Scott—:

You were a wonder to send these and they are too marvelous for words!

Everyone in school has enjoyed them! So sorry E. MacIlvaine didn't make the Δ. I have loads to tell you, which I will do soon.

We leave the 21st! Oh Bliss!!

When do you go thru Chicago?

Tell me!

Yours,

Ginevra

50. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[January 16, 1916]

Sunday

Dear Scott—

I haven't an idea whether or not I owe you a letter, but I have a sort of feeling that I do, and anyway I just had to write you and tell you how perfectly divine I thought the

whole Princeton  $\Delta$  show and people were! Why Scott, it was the most marvelous thing I have ever known. I sat in the front row for both performances, and was crazier than ever about it the second time. When<sup>228</sup> they were in Chicago I went to a luncheon for them, and was practically the only girl that wasn't a debutante! Sat by Sam Cooper, and Sam Conant, only he was sick with so wasn't there and I had Hugh Gibson instead. They were both darling, but the ones I liked by far the best were C. Haddon (can't spell the first name) Allen Marsh and Paul Nelson— There were too divine, and were simply darling to me. I never met such an attractive bunch! And Larry Bordman was darling too, but one was almost as nice as the other. I certainly was disappointed when I heard that you hadn't come down, as I had counted on knowing you and Sam Conant at least and neither of you were there. Sam Cooper said that he imagined me a peroxide blond, of the chorus-girl type—My Lord, Scott, what had you been telling him.

Listen, Scottie, I'm so so sorry about you not being able to go back to college. It is a perfect crime and I know everybody, including Ginevra King will be awfully sorry— Honestly, I heard the most wonderful things about you all vacation from everyone at Princeton. And other people too— Why, I spent most of my time telling people how much I like you, and hearing their ravings. It was so funny when I met Paul Nelson, because he had heard about me from you and I had heard so much about him from you, that I felt as though we were old friends already— I just can't get over the  $\Delta$  as it was the most wonderful thing I have ever seen or heard—"The Never, Never Land" and "Little

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<sup>228</sup> When ] Whey

Girls, Jump off the Wall” and “Over the Waves” etc. etc.—etc. were the best pieces but they were all divine!!!!

I guess you and Bug are pretty darn lucky to be home together! I hear that you have it very heavily on her this vacation. I tell you, Scott, you show good taste! But what happened to Fandy Robertson—Is she engaged again? By the way, you can tell Bug for me that she is sitting by Edith Cummings<sup>229</sup> and Ginevra King this term, which is a great change, seeing that we were together last term too. Tell her also that the rest of the “bunch” or “K. I. D. ’S” (as you prefer it) are in a string together right near us—Thank you, Mr. Fitz-g.—!

I don’t know why in the world I’m writing you, Mr. Fitz-Gerald, as I’m not all sure I owe you a letter, but you see, I really would like to know whether you ever got that letter from Caddy and I to you and Sam, and also if you have absolutely forgotten who I am— You see, I don’t want you to, and I’m afraid. If you have, perhaps Bug will know who I am. Tell her to hurry back to school as I’m crazy to see her and that——, no, never mind—!

How I wish that it was June instead of January! If only the trees were out and the snow was gone, all would be well. I’m so tired of winter, even though I do adore to skate.

Really, this school is so dead in winter that it just kills any wit that one might possibly have. I don’t see how I ever wrote you so much last year, but must have been under some divine<sup>230</sup> inspiration or else in love—which was undoubtedly really the

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<sup>229</sup> Edith Cummings ] Helen Cumming

<sup>230</sup> divine ] ficine

case— Poor thing, you must have almost passed out when you had to wade thru' those stupid long letters——

I hope you will answer me, as I would like very much to hear from you— Of course, I'm not fresh or anything like that to ask you to.

Give my best love to Bug and

With some to yourself

Lovingly

Ginevra.—

G.K.<sup>231</sup>

# 51. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[January 27, 1916]

Dear Scott—:—

“Underneath the Stars” is running through my head so that I shall die if I can't get up and sing it in the middle of the schoolroom!<sup>232</sup> Isn't it a marvelous tune! But one<sup>233</sup>

<sup>231</sup> By the end of this letter, the transformation from infatuation to acquaintance seems to be complete. The intensity of their relationship never recovered from the major disagreement over his letter in May 1915 calling her dull.

would hardly connect it with the schoolroom, especially when exams start next week and I don't know a thing. When is Bug coming back—and why did you say in one letter “I'm going back to college in Feb.” and in another “I think I will go to Washington for six weeks!” Very strange, and I wouldn't be surprised if you had changed your mind from one letter to another!!! If you go to Washington, I'll bet you that you fall for some of the belles there, so I might as well write my farewell letter— I have forgotten— Oh no, her name is either Ruth Styvesant or Helen Walcott (or was that Baltimore?) Well anyway, write me before it is announced.<sup>234</sup>

Those pictures were divine, thank you a million times. The ones<sup>235</sup> of Bobby and Bug were rotten so I cut them off, and now I have only five pictures of you on my dresser and one on my desk— And don't be conceited enough to think that they are there only because you are good-looking!!! So!!!

Just read your letter over again and laughed heartily. I'll think about giving Paul Nelson a hand up. I guess that he won't [need] one though, because he's so attractive.

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<sup>232</sup> “Underneath the Stars,” with words by Fleta Jan Brown and music by Herbert Spencer, was one of the most popular fox trot dance numbers of 1915.

<sup>233</sup> tune! But one ] time! But on

<sup>234</sup> Fitzgerald frequently tested the devotion and the patience of his female correspondents by telling them about other women he had met. Fitzgerald met Ruth Sturtevant, not Ruth Styvesant, and Helen Walcott in Baltimore during Easter vacation 1915.

<sup>235</sup> ones ] once



I can't tell you how sorry I am that you have to drop a year in college, much less to have you give up the Δ presidency. It is a perfect sin! And I just can't [tell] you how badly I feel about it.

I wish that you would write me some kind of a cheerful letter next week during exams. As I certainly will need something to keep me going!

I think that's awfully funny about Marsh, as I really thought he was quite attractive. Perhaps that was only because he was nice to me. Crowell H. was the most attractive though (ex. P.N.)

We have most absurd Easter vacation this year from the 21st of March till two weeks after that— Did you ever hear anything so early in your life?? So far as I can see, everybody else gets out about a month after that. I am at present fishing hard for a bid to New Haven with the girl Bug and I roomed with our first year! I hope I get it, as it ought to be perfectly wonderful! I'm also going to try to work a graft and catch the grippe so I can stay home after vacation!—! All I can say is that I am darn glad that I'm not coming back here again next year. I'd die if I had to.

To come down to hard tacks though, I never was less crazy about anyone as I am about the world in general. I didn't fall hard once all vacation, and that is some record, believe me!! Everybody was wonderful, but I couldn't be crazy about one person without<sup>236</sup> being crazy about a dozen— Honestly, I don't think I'll ever get married, because I'm entirely too light headed! You probably already know the latter. (Change No. 3 in writing material) The reason is that I am in school at present and am going from

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<sup>236</sup> without ] with out

class to class— It also gives variety to the letter, and variety, you know, is the spice of life!!

Caddy just drew a darling picture for me, and after she was all finished, tore it up. It was awfully cute!

You know, it was the funniest thing this Christmas! About a dozen people told me that I had changed more in three months than anyone they had ever known— Tom and Deering said that especially—because I gave them both the door— Ugh! How I dislike them—I don't know which one I hate the worst! People said that even my principals<sup>237</sup> and whole ideas were different, so I warn you that when you see me again, I may be a quiet unassuming, unflirtatious, man-hating, beautiful damsel— This is just a warning—!! I think perhaps I am just beginning to realize that acting like a fool isn't the only interesting thing to do in this world— At least, I'm hoping that I can acquire some common sense before I come out— Have I forgotten yet the plan you made last year for eloping with me over the garden— We simply must do what you say sometime soon—I mean about our letters over to-gether, only believe me, I won't tear up any of yours, though (another little variation!) Just got a peachy letter from Bug telling us all of the wonderful things that you people are doing at home— Gee Whiz but I envy you all! Please make Bug come back soon as I am lost without her— She is so darling!! Sorry this has been such a terrible letter, but all I can seem to think of is Exams!— Oh, how I dread them. When I started, I had lots of interesting things to tell you, but they got lost on the way through it—

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<sup>237</sup> stet ] principals

Goodnight—

Love,

Ginevra

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52. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[January 30, 1916]

Dear Scott—

Just so as to not disappoint you I am writing this the day after I got your letter. In fact, I got it last night and am answering it immediately (Sunday morn) It may be long and it may be short that depends entirely on the mood in which I finish it.

Exams start on Tuesday and naturally I ought to be studying for them now, but as it is, I haven't cracked a book! However, I don't expect to pass so am not worried in the least! Got a bid to a tea dance from Joe Shanley the other day for Feb. 19th to meet the Δ and regretted it with much gloom— How I hate to get bids that I know I can't go to, and that I want to go to so badly— Why were schools ever invented anyway.

My, but that must have been stupid to read over my old letters. After you finished them, you must have thought me the greatest fool in the world. However, you must admit that your letters were much more interesting, some of them I even know by heart.

You carried off what you told me about— (You know, the night before the Y-P game) wonderfully, and I'm certain that no-one suspected it at all— I know I didn't, but I'm afraid that the whole evening must have been an awful bore to you.

Midge wants to know why you told Kirkland Jones that she was "the worst."!

Ans. Caddy is dictating the following to me— "To tell you that she invites me to visit her anytime during August when you will be with Sam"— She won't be there in July!— Isn't that divine, as the four of us ought to be able to have some awfully good parties! Honestly and truly, it would be wonderful to have that perfect hour, sometime, someday and somewhere. I really think that it would be divine and I think we might be able to find something to talk about. Anyway we've got to arrange it next summer. I have a sneaky feeling that you wouldn't speak to me by the time that the week is up, because you would be so bored with me. Your last letter was divine though, and it seemed like old times to be getting such a nice long one from you—

Early this morning I felt just like writing you a heart-to-heart letter, and all thro' chapel I thought out what I was going to say to you, but somehow I have forgotten it now, worse luck—

The last part of your letter was the truest thing I have ever read, and so exactly fitted in with my ideas on such subjects, that it was almost amusing! You seem to feel the same way that I do about being crazy about people, and I suppose it's just human nature to want to own things, only a girl, I think, would rather belong to somebody she loved, more than wanting to own him— Of course I suppose that includes having the person belong to you, so that isn't any argument. Why oh why isn't it possible for us to have at least one long talk absolutely alone. We certainly have enough in common and

would get to know each other about 100%<sup>238</sup> better if we only could— But no, the inevitable chap is always on the scene!!! Do you know I often wonder why my ideas about somethings don't coincide with any other girls—or at least, not many others. Bug is about the only one I can think of now—Court and I certainly clash in our views sometimes. If I had my way everything would be a lot freer, do you see what I mean— Not so darn much convention etc. and everybody would be able to say exactly what they pleased, and not be any the worse for it. But if “wishes were horses, all beggars would ride.” and most people are tied down pretty darn tight by the conventional “What will People say” Seems to me no matter what a person does, if they themselves think they are in the right, there isn't a reason in the world for worrying about what the other person will say. Perhaps you don't agree, but I feel this way, I'm telling you about it. I feel exactly the same way towards you as you say you do to me. No matter if I do ever get crazy about anyone else, I'll always sort of feel that I know you best, or at least better than most boys, even if I have only seen you a few times, and I know that I can always come to you and talk to you and you'll cheer me up if I get down and out. (This sounds as though I was making my last will and testament, but it isn't meant that way.) The worst of it is, that you don't want to know me, and I do want to know you, 'cause it's no use having me on a pedestal if I have no business being there!— I don't see why Midge should have objected to your remark, about feeling that you could get what you want, because confidence (not an over-amount, of course—but self-confidence is a wonderful thing and it's hard luck not to have any. Perhaps it is because Midge has none that she

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<sup>238</sup> 100% ] 10%

didn't like the remark—I'd give anything in the world for a little!! Anyone can get so much farther and so much more out of life if they have a little.

No, I don't think passion would have made you kiss me on the porch and in our house that day, because I pride myself enough to say that it would have been "nerve" and nerve alone that would have made you do it—I may be wrong—tell me if I am!—

I would so much rather have you take me in a more friendly (no, not that exactly) way, instead of idealizing me, because honestly and truly, Scott, I'm not worth it! It's<sup>239</sup> no use you're ever thinking so, and by admitting that I probably have made you lose all interest in me whatsoever—

If you understand at all what I'm trying to write, answer me and tell me if you do—

Hope you had a great time at Princeton——and just you buck up and make yourself think you're getting well, and the first thing you know—you'll be fine again—Anyway, don't forget I'm praying for you——

Wish me luck in my exams, and appreciate my long letter—

Yours with love,

Ginevra

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### 53. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

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<sup>239</sup> It's ] It

[February 7, 1916]

Monday

Dear—no, Fresh Scott:—:—

So you think my letters crazy—well, I guess you're pretty darn fresh—!!!!!!  
 Anyway, here is the correspondence card that you expected—!— I am using this hideous paper because Mother says I write so many letters that she won't waste any other kind on<sup>240</sup> me— She's also pretty fresh, I think! Oh Dear, everybody's fresh and green, 'cept me and I'm as low and gloomy and absolutely down-and-out as they make em—! Took my mid-years last week and didn't flunk any, thank the Lord, but I'm so damn (Yes, just exactly that!) tired of books and lessons and lessons and books that I could just sit down and weep when I see one in front of me— (I suppose the best plan would be to get up and walk away, but that isn't the question) The fact is, I'm a physical, a mental and a moral wreck—! That's the honest truth, as exams have almost finished us.

But I haven't congratulated you on your letter yet— It really was perfectly wonderful and was the truest thing I have ever heard. You almost made me feel as though letter-writing was the craziest thing in the world and up till now I've always sworn by it, but I don't see how under the canopy you and I would ever have gotten along if it hadn't been for our numerous letters all last year. Now I will feel as though you are<sup>241</sup> going to pick over every letter I wrote you to see what kind of a lint you should

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<sup>240</sup> on ] one

<sup>241</sup> are ] were

answer back. If that isn't artificial, I'd like to know the reason why! And yet you say that you believe in perfect frankness? Well, so do I, and that's why I expect people to believe what I tell them in my letters, as well as what I say when I'm with them— Dost understand? Here endeth the first lesson! I don't know about what you said about kissing me within a year and a half! I'll think it over, Mr. Fitz but you sounded pretty darn cock sure of yourself, and I'd hate to give you a come down— However, that is too far off to be “bickered” about, one can usually tell better when the time is close at hand. Bug says that she refused to show me the poetry, but finally I teased and kidded her so that she said she would someday. I'm crazy to see.

At the present moment, instead of sitting here cooped up in school, I could be bouncing around the floor at the Soph. German at New Haven. It makes me sick to think of it, and ten lucky girls got off from here and I had to sit around and look pleased when they sailed off. Such is life—“One damn thing after another and love two d--- things after each other!” Of course that is a chestnut, but it's<sup>242</sup> too true to be funny. I'm not particularly scintillating to-night so I think I'll hit the hay—Goodnight till good morning—Love

Ginevra.

Again it is evening, only now it's Tuesday 'stead of Monday— I'm not a bit in the mood for letter writing to-night, as I'm cross as two sticks! I've just decided that I have water on the knee and that I'd better go home and get rested up and then you'd better come down and recuperate in Chicago. How about it?

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<sup>242</sup> it's ] it



Mother has entered me in Boston next year at Miss Winsor's<sup>243</sup> school—so I'll be far away from New York and the “high life”! Darn it, anyway—I wanted to go to New York and have a wonderful time, but Mother, I am afraid, got on to that and said “Nothing doing, Boston for yours”, so little Ginevra is going to spend the winter cultivating herself in Boston— I am to board at an awfully nice lady's house in Boston, and to go to Miss Winsor's as a day scholar. None of the whole business sounds very attractive to me, and I'd [give] anything to be going to Miss Wickham's where Bug thinks she is going—<sup>244</sup> I don't know why, but Boston never did strike my fancy and as

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<sup>243</sup> Winsor's ] Winser's

<sup>244</sup> Young women of Ginevra's class rarely completed their education at schools like Westover. Often they were sent to New York or Boston where they received instruction in languages, art and music from socially connected widows or spinsters who allowed the young women to board in their homes. Some schools, like the Winsor School in Boston, were as large as or larger than Westover, while others, like Mrs. Coates's school, where Ginevra went in the fall of 1916, were smaller finishing schools that provided a gracious atmosphere and proper chaperones for young women of means. According to the 1916 *Handbook of American Private Schools* (Boston: Porter E. Sargent), the Winsor School “is perhaps the most successful girls' day school in Boston as well as the largest.... Miss Winsor's has long enjoyed the highest social prestige so that it is patronized by the most exclusive Boston families and those who appreciate the social advantages of membership in the school. The administrative and teaching staff of forty provide, in addition to the general finishing course, a college preparatory and a post-graduate course” (157).

for staying there for a whole winter, Oh Gosh!!!! If I only knew more boys at Harvard, and liked the place a little better, as usual, I am in a terrible humour— Oh, what's the use, wish I were dead and gone— But what's the use of fretting— I'm going to be on the shelf very soon, I'll be an old maid, and knit and have black cats and parrots, and be homely—and oh what fun that will be—when you're an old bachelor, you can come and see me, and perhaps I'll let you kiss me then if you would have the nerve to come near my homely face!! I've fully decided though that I'll be an old maid, because, though I may be nice when it comes to being crazy about me, when as for marrying me, that is another question! You see? I know my own faults and failings very well! So please be a Laura Jean Libbey<sup>245</sup> the second, and give me some advice—freckle lotion—face

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Ginevra's lack of enthusiasm for academics and her abrupt departure from Westover probably precipitated the change that sent her to New York for her final year. Miss Louise F. Wickham's in New York, where Marie Hersey went after Westover, is described as "an intimate home life and chaperonage for ten to fifteen girls who wish the advantages of residence in New York and opportunity for special study along varied lines" (167). Neither Miss Wickham nor Mrs. Coates provided academic instruction.

<sup>245</sup> Laura Jean Libbey (1862-1924) was a dime romance novelist whose work was popular at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

Libbey's novels, filled with moralizing and advice, almost always told the story of a young woman alone in the world who won the attention and protection of a well-heeled suitor.

cream—beautifier—a book on Etiquette—something!— But be sure to give me some  
kind of advice—

As I can't draw, I'll have to let Caddy show you a futurist picture of myself—!—

Goodbye—

Ginevra—

[Picture is absent from the typescript]

“20 years from now”

#### 54. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[February 18, 1916]

Friday

Dear Scott—

I am excused from study hour, and have decided to sit down and write you, I don't know [how] long it will be, it depends on how long my brain will work, but seeming I owe you two letters, one for that very peculiar dream, and the other for the clipping from Snappy Stories—(by that I mean the letter I got last night) It was a whiz and Bug, Midge, Caddy and I all enjoyed it immensely and voted you unanimously the

cleanest letter-writer<sup>246</sup> we had ever known— However, I insist upon disputing one of your phrases “The modern girl has little intellect and no education”—!! Shall I begin a treatise on Woman’s Suffrage—of Westover School— No-no—alright— Far better not— If I was as clever as you, I would answer your thriller by a musical comedy or two, but there’ll lie one of my many failings. I can’t see why you call me self-confident, when I insist that I am not— Land only knows I hope I don’t act the way some of the girls up here do who are sure of themselves, strutting around with their heads in the air, and acting so darn self-centered and self-conscious.

Last summer (perhaps I told you this) James Montgomery Flagg—he lives up at Biddeford Pool during the summer—said I was self conscious, and childishly, I have hated him ever since— Now kindly explain to me why when you say I’m self-confident that I like you all the better for it? Isn’t it absurd, though? He said “She’s pretty and she knows it!” but I don’t care (only I do) cause he’s an awful old fool, and everybody up at the Pool think he’s the limit, including myself—

Enclosed you will find an envelope in which is something of great value! As you probably know there are 6 of us here, called “The Bunch” or K.I.D.S. (Keep it dark) or Kappa I Delta (that’s one dissy name) and that Caddy, Midge, Bug and I are all members. Well, I wish you could see the pins we have— They cost \$.35, are plated gold about an inch long, and represent little devils with green eyes They just arrived to-day and until then we have been wearing charming pledge pins, “Safety First!”, one of which is

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<sup>246</sup> letter-writer ] letter writer

enclosed—<sup>247</sup> We are allowed to have one of these in circulation, and as you know almost all of us, and ought to be pretty interested in it, I thought I'd send you mine. If you lose it, any ordinary safety pin will do, provided it is the same size. I hope you fully appreciate the honour of this!— So after this, you'll have to be true to the K. I. D. S.<sup>248</sup>. These are the rules of the pledge pins (1) When in sane and happy frame of mind, wear across like this [Ginevra's drawing is absent from the typescript] (2) When low, head of pin down (3) When broke, head of pin up— Don't forget to obey this implicitly, it must be done.

However, back to self-confidence. I meant to thank you for telling me that I was, for now at least I'll be able to try to improve— No—don't think I'm sore, for I'm feeling very happy— Now for some Conceit— I got the most divine bid to lead the Zeta Psi dance (Yale Chapter) at the Waldorf a week from to-night, with one of the best dancers on whose toes I have ever stepped! I took my nerve in my hands and popped the question to Mary R. but didn't even get a rise out of her, and she firmly and quietly stung me. So next Friday I'll be sitting at home twirling my thumbs while everybody else has a swell time. Oh Damn this morbid mess of a hole—!!!

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Just read over some more of your letters and it was so interesting that I've forgotten all the dope I was going to tell you— Oh Ye—es— Did I tell you that next August I'm

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<sup>247</sup> *Safety First!* was the title of Fitzgerald's last production for the Princeton Triangle Club.

<sup>248</sup> K.I.D.S. ] K.I.D.'s

going to try the cowgirl life? Courtney and I are all going to go out to H. F. Bar Ranch, Wyoming for the month of August— She spent the summer there two years ago, and was crazy about it, so I’m dying to see what it’s like. We are going out the first of August and will just stay a month, and believe me, we ought to be able to scrape up a good time—even if cowboys are the only males in sight. Guess we’ll each have to hook a cowboy, and have him give us all the dope about punching—bucking broncos—and so forth— More fun!

Speaking of dreams, Bug told me of the funniest one that she had about us the other night. She and I were<sup>249</sup> walking along the street (this is all I can remember) and we had on—oh, I’ve forgotten what—but anyway, we came to a sign that said “F. Scott Fitz-Gerald Shop.” Then I said, “Oh Bug, I want to go in here and get some of Scott’s kisses!” Well, the rest of the dream isn’t very funny, except that all the clerk (who was Vernon Castle, by the way, and came waltzing out to us)<sup>250</sup> would let us buy,<sup>251</sup> were

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<sup>249</sup> were ] where

<sup>250</sup> Vernon (1887-1918) and Irene (1893-1969) Castle were the most famous ballroom dancers of the early twentieth century. At the outbreak of World War I, the Castles were already popular performers in both Paris and New York; in the year 1914 alone, they opened a night club, a dancing school, and restaurant in New York City. Together they also authored a best-selling dance instruction manual, *Modern Dancing* (1914), and starred in a number of motion pictures. Vernon Castle died in a military plane crash in 1918. Irene Castle had a long and successful career. Some historians credit Irene Castle with popularizing the bobbed hair style favored by the flappers in the 1920s.

caramels, so he took us out to the back of the shop, and showed us some things (Candies I think) which turned into cats and chased us out of the store. Did you ever hear anything so asinine—?!? Hope you haven't been asleep thru' all this though! However, wake<sup>252</sup> up now, because Midge just came into the room and [is] going to write you a little note—

I can hear you snore now—M.M. Ha. Ha.

Dear Scott—

I haven't a thing to say—but Ginevra has given out of gossip and says I will have to waste a little space—needless<sup>253</sup> to say! I am very, very sorry you have been so ill—you and Bug seemed to manage to have a darn good time at that it seems—

Thanks for the little note enclosed in Ginevra's letter— Even if I didn't get on with you terribly well I don't go around telling everyone that I dislike you—like you do about me—however you can't make me mad— I'm a devil cutting a practice period in order to converse with Ginev. and write this epistle to you— She has something more to say—

Goodbye—

Midge

Just where Midge thinks I'm going to say what I have to, I don't know—but I guess I'll have to waste another sheet.

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<sup>251</sup> buy ] by

<sup>252</sup> However, wake ] however, Wake

<sup>253</sup> needless ] heedless

You said that you expected at least 16 pages in answer to your eight— And at this rate, you may get them!—!

Now what will I say— It is snowing——!

The Tuskegee singers were here this morning (they are colored—negroes I mean) and are perfectly wonderful! Such harmony—you never heard, except when Midge and Jimmie sang “There are Eyes of Blue”—!<sup>254</sup>  
(Midge thinks that is very funny)—

Oh by the way, we wish you would get especially clever and write something funny for the “Bunch Book”<sup>255</sup> (this is a book edited by the six of us described on page 3 of this issue) How about a sonnet on each of us separately— A little work for rainy days! Of course, any verse will be appreciated—of course, these will go in the book, which is very exclusive, and it’s hard as the deuce to get anything in it— Let’s see—there are six of us— Four of us Charmers—you know—

1-Midge – A simp

2-Bug – A boob

3-Caddy – A fool

4-G.K. — indescribably—Ugh—!

5- Here is one you don’t know— Elizabeth Thomas

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<sup>254</sup> “There are eyes of blue, There are brown eyes too, There are eyes of ev’ry size and eyes of ev’ry hue,” is the first line of the chorus of “The Maiden with the Dreamy Eyes,” published in 1901 by the African-American composer Bob Cole (1868-1911).

<sup>255</sup> “Bunch Book” ] “Bunch Boob”



(description—bleached blond—green eyes—fat—beefy hands— A boy called Whitney is her “best-boy-friend” if that is necessary— He is only 6 ft.-6 in.— Cute little thing—!—

6-Sarah Ide – Whom you met in Waterbury that night. Short—brown hair— rather cute—perfectly proportioned legs but not feet— Practically engaged to a fellar called Alec Blandy.

Now come on,<sup>256</sup> and please do this for us as you can’t imagine how much we will appreciate it—certainly you must have extra time, and we need something clever in our “bunch book”—(good nice—)

Thanking you in advance— Oh piffle—!— Midge is gone now so I can be sensible again, I’m sorry this is such a foolish letter, but I really started out to write a nice one, and anyway, it’s darn long— You’re so darling and I wish I could see you again as you’re so nice and I’d like to talk to you—and when oh when is that going to come off— You sound as though you had given up hope of kissing me within a year and a half—! Ha-Ha.

Good bye

Love

Ginevra

Write soon

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<sup>256</sup> on ] one

55. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD*Westover School, Middlebury Connecticut*

[March 4, 1916]

Saturday

Dear Fitz—:—

Your letter was a master piece— Why, I never in my life read anything so perfectly wonderful— I don't see how under the sun you knew Darrow, Deering Daneto—so well— Also Tom, only he spoiled part of it for me, as I can't stand him now and the idea of running away with him was one too many.

Honestly though, it was the most amusing letter I ever read, and I wish to goodness that I was bright enough to answer with something witty. Enclosed you'll find out [what] my idea of a "Perfect Hour" is, so you see my idea is quite different from yours. It isn't a bit clever, so don't expect anything—

Oh Scott, I'm worried to death! If you weren't<sup>257</sup> such an awfully good friend I wouldn't tell you this, but I think perhaps you may be interested. About two weeks ago Miss Hillard<sup>258</sup> called me into her sitting room sat me down, and told me some of the most terrible things I have ever heard. They may have been true, but believe me, I won't stand for people insulting me like that—saying I was "bold", "lightly spoken of" "self-conscious" etc. that in general, the only thing I thought of were men-men-men. So I got

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<sup>257</sup> weren't ] were

<sup>258</sup> Hillard ] Hiallard

her to have a confab with Mother and Father who were in New York at the time and now the terrible climax is that they believed all she told and consequently have me booked for a perfect——fool! I think now they are becoming a little nicer, but just the same are going to send me back here next year, which almost kills me, and also are contemplating a girls' camp next summer. But believe me, I'll come back here but I won't go to a Girls' Camp, that's<sup>259</sup> all there is to it.

One thing though, I decided to come back just soon enough to become one of the Junior Class, which were formed on Friday, and that afternoon we had our elections— Mary Bush is Pres. etc. etc. and now comes a little conceit— Here it is—I am Secretary. I never was so surprised about anything in my whole life and you could have knocked me over with a pin! One thing, it will make it much easier to come back next year, and another thing it ought to convert me into a regular old maid by the time I get my diploma!

Those are the biggest pieces of news I have to tell you— Do write us some pretty sonnets—and I know what I wish you'd do—come down to Chicago for our Easter vacation—March 21st to April 4th—I'll be home either 25th or earlier— Goodbye and do write me soon and long

Yours

Ginevra

**Editor's Note: Ginevra promised to describe her idea of a "perfect hour" and included that description with her letter of March 4. Her story follows:**

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<sup>259</sup> that's ] that

The wedding bells were gayly chiming and all the inhabitants of the town were excited, as to-day Ginevra King was to wed the Count Spagettioni. Everyone expected it to be one of the prettiest weddings of the season, and were proud of the Chicago girl who had been won by a titled Russian—

At quarter after two there was a final rustle of excitement. Heads<sup>260</sup> and necks were craned<sup>261</sup> towards the door, which finally died away in an excited hush, broken at last by the triumphed and immortal strains of Lohengrin's Wedding March—

—————The ceremony was on—————!!!—

X        X        X        X        X        X        X        X

With a passionate gesture she flung off the crimson scarf that wrapped in glowing folds her silver<sup>262</sup> form. In her eyes there lurked a subtle transient indefinite look that contrasted drolly<sup>263</sup> with her fine aristocratic face. Her lips were pursed in an angry line, and her brow was darkened by a deep scowl.

How—How could it be<sup>264</sup> accomplished? For days—months—years—centuries, it seemed she had been living—breathing under a false atmosphere. Leonardo was good but no, he could not give her what she craved—affection—real deep sympathy— He gave her all he could in his reserved, unsympathizing way and she was thankful of the

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<sup>260</sup> excitement. Heads ] excitement heads

<sup>261</sup> craned ] cramed

<sup>262</sup> silver ] fliver

<sup>263</sup> drolly ] drooly

<sup>264</sup> could it be ] could it could be

fact that he adored her. But an indefinable something was lacking in her married life—and that thing (if she could have guessed it) was L O V E!

Seated on a large divan, her head in her jeweled hands and buried in deep thought, the half-hours sped by till finally as the tiny diamond encrusted clock on the console struck five, she started up suddenly, and with an excited motion, gazed wildly at herself in the mirror—

“Ginevra—you’re dreaming—no it can’t be you! Would you—could you dare! But where—where would you go!”

Again her gaze shifted to a tiny little locket on her arm. In a flash, she opened it, and gazed at the picture with-in.

With a decisive nod she grasped her crimson veil from the bronze, and ran out [of] the room, up the broad marble stairs, and into her dainty boudoir. Twenty minutes after she was walking out the front door, clad in an elaborate street costume and muffled beyond recognition in her voluptuous blue fox furs.

Her “Rolls-Royce” was waiting and for the next ten minutes she was speeding past<sup>265</sup> the beautiful residences of the popular suburb, to the cozy station, just catching the last train for the city—

X      X      X      X      X      X      X      X

The clock was striking ten when she turned down a side street, and walked through a small court, into the vestibule of a fashionable apartment.

“Mr. Fitz-Gerald’s apartment, please” she inquired of the elevator boy.

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<sup>265</sup> speeding past ] speeding fast

“Fo’th flo’, ma’am—” as he tore up the shaft madily and deposited her in front of a large mahogany door.

A tall somber butler answer her summons.

“Mr. Fitz-Gerald at home?”

“Yes’m, step in here a moment, pleas’m—I’ll call him!”

The whole apartment was furnished in black and yellow, shading into cream— The marble floor was made up [of] large squares,<sup>266</sup> the wall paneling cream, and with black hangings— A large concert grand stood in one corner littered with operatic scores. A huge silver picture frame showed Melba in “Carmen” and Mary Pickford in “A Good Little Devil”— Hanging in an alcove was a large painting, beautifully lighted and framed with decorative yellow and black banners of Mr. Fitz-Gerald “most beautiful of show girls” Tapestries of “old Nassau” hung everywhere, and the andirons in the fireplace were in the form of tigers. In front of this fireplace, now bright and blazing, and casting lurid<sup>267</sup> yellow streaks over the unique room was a large comfortable Morris chair, of black leather. It was by far the most comfortable spot in the room, and was undoubtedly Mr. Fitz-Gerald’s palladium.

The Countess picked up a “Princeton Tiger” and was turning over the leaves when a cheery whistle came from the recesses of the abode—“Beware-of-the-Evil-Eye” and Mr. Fitz-Gerald strode into the room.

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<sup>266</sup> squares, ] squares

<sup>267</sup> lurid ] lured

The Countess gave a start, she would scarcely have recognized in this man her friend of forever years. His handsome stern face showed few traces of boyhood. Around his mouth was a determined yet melancholy look and in his eyes was a new light—that of a thriving business man— He was dressed in a brown and white checked suit which suited his thin sun-burned face.

Upon perceiving the Countess reading the “Tiger” he smiled.

“Very well edited—that, used to run it myself—a few years ago—y’know!”

After this remark the Countess felt more at her ease.

“Well—?” interrogatively—

“I don’t suppose you know who I am” she started in a hurt tone.

“Let me see— Did you apply for that position in my last moving picture— It was you, wasn’t it?”

The Countess was horrified “Indeed no,—I—well, do you remember the name Ginevra?”

“Ginevra?—Ginevra?—Oh yes, that patent tooth paste they asked me to boost in one of my movies— Yes, yes! It wasn’t very good, I advise you—”

“No, oh don’t you remember me? I’ve come all the way from the country to see you!”

“Listen, lady, if you’re looking for a job, don’t come to me, my places are all full—”

“But—Scott—!!”

“What, calling me Scott? What do you want anyway?”

“Do you remember Marie Hersey?”<sup>268</sup>

“Oh yes, my old friend Bug, yes, yes, I’ve written several movies about her— So you know her?”

“Well, I’ve known her all my life—and once—in 1914—I visited her—in St. Paul—at Xmas—and I met you and you wrote me all that winter—and—oh now can’t you remember me now!” She collapsed in a spasm<sup>269</sup> of tears—

“Good Grief—don’t cry—you’d almost do for new opera—“When Tears are Wet” Who are you anyhow?”

“Ginevra King”

“Ginevra King—just minute—1914”— He ran to the table, opened the drawer and took out a box of files—

“Let me see—Walcott-Helen,<sup>270</sup> Teale-Ruth, Roberston-Fandria, Sturtevant-Ruth, etc. etc. etc. Ah, here we are—King-Ginevra-Xmas-1914-Short Stocky-dark fair looker and dancer-passionate-no character-personality-no brains-letter best part (N. B. Look in compartment old letters— For picture—Look File T. 99th from top— Characteristic music—“China Town”—)

“Well, well, so I used to know you—how pleasant this is sit down and we’ll talk over old times— Will you have a little something? Sherry—or perhaps a cocktail? Pardon me a moment!”

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<sup>268</sup> Hersey?” ] Hersey”

<sup>269</sup> spasm of tears ] spasen of tears

<sup>270</sup> Walcott ] Wolcott



The Countess was completely crushed and sat staring unheeding into the blazing fire. There she saw, vanishing with the last of her beautiful air-castles, the vision of a perfect hour—She—Scott—the quiet dreamy fire—perfect peace, for an hour only and now this was fading away like a spent rose— She ought to have realized that it could never have come true, and now she must go back to the Count and the old life—a changed woman—without a heart—! Her sense of loss was beyond expression and she shivered as she sat deep in thought— Suddenly she was rudely awakened by F.S.F's return with the cocktails—

“Won't you stay a little longer,” he said cheerily, “My wife ought to be home directly!”—

FINIS—

56. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*1450 Astor Street, Chicago, Illinois*

[April 11, 1916]

Tuesday

P. S. Best to all I know.

Dear Scott—

Many many pardons for not having answered before but somehow or other, when I write you, I always like to have plenty of time, so I can say all I want to. I'm taking it

very easy in bed this morn. with a swell cold, (at least Ma thinks she's going to keep me here, but she is greatly mistaken!!)

To say the least, this place is as dead as a doornail—I never knew so few people as there are here! Only about a dozen boys—(four of which are quite attractive)—but the worst of it is that there many many girls.

Last Sunday aft. John Hamline was over here from two to six and among other things, I read him “The Perfect Hour” He thought it was divine—esp. the part about “Davis, the Butler!” Well to continue, on Monday morning Mrs. Hamline called Rus Kelly up (he and Courtney had also been over here) and said that John had come down with M U M P S! Isn't that killing?! Of course Court and I were<sup>271</sup> exposed to them and are working hard at present trying to pull a graft and stay over after vacation, as it takes three weeks for mumps to develop— I really think it's one of the funniest things I ever heard about and believe me, it makes it great for Court and I—

Got a raving-tearing letter from Bug yesterday, saying that Hot Springs was too wonderful for words and that she was having the time of her life— The Tafts,<sup>272</sup> Howard McMillan, Reuben and loads of other[s] were down there—the weather was like summer and alto-gether it was unspeakably swell!— Gosh but I envy her and wish I was somewhere where the sun shone now and then—

As for New Haven— Well, Scott, I never in all my life could have imagined anything to be so wonderful— I got there early on Tuesday morning—and on Tuesday

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<sup>271</sup> were ] well

<sup>272</sup> Tafts, ] Taffs.

aft. had the most exciting time! Oh yes! I went to a Symphony Concert and snored all the way thro'!! The girl I was visiting dragged me to it, and was I sore—oh no!—!!!

That night she gave an informal dance and the concert was the joke of the party—but for me it was no joke!!!

On Wednesday morn. at 8:15 I went to chapel, being the only girl with 1500 boys— My idea of a good time, believe me—

Both Wed. & Thurs. we danced at the Taft Grill, and on Wednesday who should I see there, but Mary Johnston, looking adorable! Everybody I ever knew came down there on Thurs. so I had one divine time— That night we went to Commons for supper which was a circus, and I left the next morn. at eight o'clock— Despite three telegrams from different people, Ma wouldn't let me stay over for the Pump and Slipper Dance that night and I was sore, as it's supposed to be an even better dance than the prom—the best one of the year, in fact!<sup>273</sup>

Court was visiting in Phila so I met here there, and we came west to-gether— Heavens only knows when we'll get East again!—!

Scott! I think that's a great plan of yours—I mean about you and I understanding and trusting each other no matter what the other person does— For sometimes when a person does a thing that they are afraid [the] other will not understand it would be wonderful to feel that there was someone who wouldn't criticize, but would trust in them,

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<sup>273</sup> The Pump and Slipper Dance is an annual undergraduate ball at Yale University, organized by the members of St. Anthony Hall. The name comes from the formal dancing shoes worn by the attendees.

and understand that what they were doing was all for the best. I'm really trying hard to get to be more sensible, and whether or not I'll succeed, remains to be seen— But anyone is always more apt to do a thing if they are sure that some one else understands it—don't you think so?

I think we should also give advice to each other when it is needed, so in your next, please send some good sound advice to yours As Ever and with love

Ginevra.

P. S. My what a stupid messy letter I'm sorry about it

sorry sorry sorry sorry sorry

P. S. This is to thank you ever and ever so much for your invitation in June—I mean by this, to thank [you] for having asked me, and to tell you how sorry I am that it can't be worked out. To console you though, the fact that school doesn't let out till the 13th and the Princeton thing is before that so I couldn't have gone anyway. Thanks again for having asked me though.

G.K.

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57. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Westover School, Middlebury, Connecticut*

[April 30, 1916]

Sunday

Dear Scott

I feel just in the mood this afternoon to announce my engagement, but having no one to announce it with, I guess I'll have to wait awhile.

To tell the truth, I am expecting any moment to be canned, as the Senior dance came off last night and I did everything in the world that was crazy.

The craz-i-est was to pick up Bud Talbott though the window and talk to him for about ten minutes, and then five seconds after that, to be taken out and introduced to him. Speaking of having to keep one's equilibrium, just ask me!—! We also were serenaded about ten o'clock, and sat outside in the quad. with a boy for over two dances (but there were three of us there!)

Lamb Heyinger was up here with a girl named Marian Savage who graduated two years ago and is back teaching now— He looked very appetizing, but I didn't dare bow to him as I didn't believe he'd recognize me.

We're really having just loads of excitement lately. Next Saturday the Yale octette are coming up, and 8 of us from Westover are going to sing too at a joint concert, and every girl is allowed to invite a boy up with her. Gosh, but I'm already nervous over it! Hope to goodness I'll get a cold or something.

I was pretty darn sore at you for not writing me for so long, and was just about off you for life when I got your vera nice letter— Thanks loads (This should have been done at the beginning of the letter—sorry!)

Oh Scott, I'm all twittered. I hear I'm to meet your friend Dally Powers, up at Hotchkiss this spring at Commencement. That's simply great! I'm crazy to see what she's like, after all I've heard.

I don't agree at all with your idea of kissing a girl under an umbrella would drop, or something like that. Isn't it funny why things in real life never turn out like they do in books. That's why<sup>274</sup> it's such<sup>275</sup> a darn relief to get a book with an unsatisfactory ending.

Why under the sun do you think that Jimmy and I feel for each other? You know Jimmy<sup>276</sup> well enough to know the way he falls—and picks himself up again in a minute. He certainly is a wonder though! Give him my best when you see him, please!

You make me so jealous when you talk about dancing that I almost go wild. Just think nothing like that till June for me!

I'm going to visit in Troy after Hotchkiss and Clas Day at New H. and then Court and I will go home to-gether after the races, which will mean about the twenty-fifth of June.

Mother and I have decided that three weeks at the ranch in August will be enough for us, so I'll have a week more in Lake Forest than I had counted on—not more than six though, at any rate.

You say you are crazy about “Babes in the Woods”—I am too, but much much more crazy about “The Ragtime Pipes of Pan”<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> why ] way

<sup>275</sup> it's such ] it's a such

<sup>276</sup> Jimmy ] Jimmine

<sup>277</sup> Both songs mentioned in this paragraph were popular Broadway tunes from the 1915-1916 season. “Babes in the Wood,” not “Woods,” was the title of a duet written by

I'm crazy to see you again, not only to see if you'd be embarrassed, but because I'm really crazy to see you— But the question is, when can it be done? Don't you happen to be going to Lake Forest or anything this summer? Have you decided yet what you are going to do?

As I think I've told you before, Deering's an ass, but, seeing you asked me about him, I thought I had better tell you again to make sure— Oh, he's so awful! You'd just hate him!

Please tell me about your All-American team!<sup>278</sup> I'm all curiosity— Do tell me, and don't forget! I won't be a bit hurt because I'm not on it, but I'd like to see your taste!

Also tell me about your Δ play, in other words, be sure and write me soon

Fraternally yours,!!!

Ginevra.

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Jerome Kern and Schuyler Green for the musical *Very Good Eddie* which ran from December 23, 1915, to October 14, 1916. “Ragtime Pipes of Pan” is a fox trot from the musical revue *A World of Pleasure*, with story and music by Harold Attridge and lyrics by Sigmund Romburg. It ran at the Winter Garden Theater in New York City from October 14, 1915, to January 22, 1916. Both songs were widely distributed through sheet music and player-piano rolls.

<sup>278</sup> Fitzgerald must have written to Ginevra about his idea for the “All-American Petting Team” that features in *This Side of Paradise*.

58. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*1450 Astor Street, Chicago, Illinois*

[May 21, 1916]

Sunday

P. S. I'm slowly getting good on the Ukalalee! Oh this soft hula stuff—Oh—

Dear Scott—

Undoubtedly Bug has written you and told you that I am no longer in the exciting atmosphere of Westover— In fact, I left the place a week ago to-morrow— I've been meaning to write you and tell you the whole story straight from the shoulder, but I was so sick of the whole business myself, that I couldn't bear to write it, and besides I was afraid of boring you—

Primarily, this whole awful affair has made me lose all my pep—also 7 lbs. You wouldn't know me anymore, neither would you want to know me, as all I can do is to sit like a lump on a log, and try to act cheerful.

Secondly—the Thing itself started at the Senior dance! Caddy, Tommy and I were peacefully lying in our downys about 10 minutes after the last bell, having had a peach of an evening sitting in the quadrangle, listening to the music. Well, as I say, we were peaceful, when a paste jar came sailing in a window and struck my bed— Of course, we all hopped out and peeked<sup>279</sup> out the window, where we saw one of the girls we knew, and a couple of boys we did not know. We said “Hello, there!” and retired, till

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<sup>279</sup> peeked ] piked



another bombardment began, this time by a boy whom Tommy knew awfully well, and I slightly. We talked to him for about ten minutes, and then got back “au lit”—

Well, that is all that happened, and there were at least a dozen other girls that did the same thing, but the teacher who rooms above us, heard us and went to Mary R. and squealed so the next night, I want you to know that<sup>280</sup> Mary R. took the 3 of us up in her office and fired us without a chance to explain! Of course, we went thru’ all the lower regions that night, but the next morning she found that there were other girls implicated, so she revoked the first punishment— Well, she told us we were “bold, bad hussies”— “adventuresses”—“honey-combed with deceit” etc etc—that “our honour was stained” “rep. ruined” “disgrace to school” and the rest of her usual line and a lot more— But that was all very well—as we had done a foolish (not however disgraceful), thing and of course we had to take our punishment. But when she told us that we had to leave school over Visitors’ Sunday, and preferably on the 25th after exams, we began to talk— Then, she closed the matter “forever”, as she said, and things had just started smoothly again, when she brought it up again, by calling Mary Wilcox (another girl who was in as dutch as I) and I in to see her and telling us that we “were damned assess” etc. because we hadn’t had sense enough to resign a certain position we had— She didn’t even let us explain that we were coming to her on Sunday morning (that was Friday) after we had pulled thru’ the German we were giving on Saturday and resign our positions— She called an over meeting and said terrible things about our not resigning our positions etc.—when it happened that I’d previously resigned everything else I’d held—and of

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<sup>280</sup> that ] the

course, everyone was furious at her doing it the day before the German and everything. So I telephoned Father who happened to be in New York on business and told him I wanted him to come up and talk to Mary R. so this he did on Sunday.

Mind you, after all the things that demon had told me, she was as sweet as sugar to Father, even if he did tell her a few plain truths about herself— You wouldn't have known her for the same woman. She was all smiles, and agreed heartily when Father said he thought the best thing to do would be to take me home, and she was sweet as anything to me when I said "goodbye" to her, and got off as superb a sweet line, as she [had] gotten off a rotten one two weeks before— So I left last Monday morn and since then Pa has gotten a letter flattering me to the skies, and Father answered her by ripping her clean up the back—saying "she oughtn't to be at the head of a school with a temper such as she had"—also he dwelt on her "unjustness—unfairness and partiality in not punishing any other of the girls concerned"— We haven't heard anything from that yet—

Finis—!

You are probably asleep, by now, after that long winded account, but I've been trying awfully hard to tell it all to you and make you understand why I'm here, and that I haven't been fired—and I'd like to know if you think that what I did was disgraceful— Frankly now!! I'd give anything under the sun if you would come down to Lake Forest, or I could go up to St. Paul, so that I could talk it all over with you and make you understand better, as there are too many other details that made the whole thing too long for a letter— But all I can say is that I've come out of it a wiser, and soberer girl and I think it's been a wonderful lesson for me, because it has made me stop and think.

X      X      X      X      X

You're last letter was just adorable! I never in my life read anything so funny nor so ideal as the perfect day except that I suggest that you had let me sit with you<sup>281</sup> in the morning instead of making me amuse you by playing golf— As I have lots of time now, I'll compose my idea of a perfect day someday soon, but I guess it'll correspond pretty well with yours. The evening adventure sounds as though you had had experience— especially the shaky part!! It certainly affected me after being cooped up in school for so long!

I've got reg'lar writer's cramp from writing so much and so fast, so I guess I'll stop. That petting team is some team—but pray tell me, what do you know about the Quarter-back? Also, I really think that Fandria R. ought to be the captain!—!

I'm scared to death that my trip East in June will go up the flue now, and that I won't be able to get to New Haven or Hotchkiss— This place is absolutely dead. I'm going to write letters all day long, also take lessons in gol-luf<sup>282</sup> perhaps—maybe also read poetry and take care of the dogs! Oh Lord—what a life— For Pete's sake write me often, and don't please let's let our correspondence go hang this summer—!

Please tell the editor of the "Ideal Day" that I think he was darn rotten to have censored a couple of these pages—I was just getting excited— The whole thing was inexplicably divine! It made the shivers sail up and down my spine!

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<sup>281</sup> you ] me

<sup>282</sup> gol-luf ] goll—uf

Don't you dare say I'm drifting!!! Humph! I like your jolly nerve— Believe me, you know it's not my fault, was it my fault that you had a hangover, after the Yale-Princeton game tho' I didn't know it!?

For heaven's sakes, don't look at the horrid pictures Elsie Freeman has of me I know very well what my kodaks look like and as for your saying that they were good—  
—wee!—!

I guess you're pretty sleepy after all this now—but all I can hope for, is that you will be able to understand everything—

Please try to come to Lake Forest—I'm just crazy-mad to see you again.

Please—Do this and bring joy to the heart of your

Loving

P. S.

Taken in summer

of 1913—Aint

I just a bear!—!

59. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*1450 Astor Street, Chicago, Illinois*

[May 28, 1916]

Sunday

Dear Scott—

Sorry I haven't had time yet to compose my "Ideal Day" yet, but I've got to wait till I feel like writing it, and that feeling hasn't come yet—!

You're last letter was absolutely div——ine—! Oh, it was so darling, and makes me hope all the more that you'll come down here to visit. I saw Mrs. and General Hardin going to Chicago and checking a trunk the other day, so I thought perhaps they might be on their way to St. Paul. Go make them ask you, the weather is divine here, but beyond that, it is very stupid—I mean, there aren't any people except myself, so I've been having a time taking golf lessons, and going to Chicago. So far, I haven't missed but about three days yet when I haven't gone to the city for at least half a day.

On Saturday I had the most exciting day since I've been home. Went to Huyler's to lunch with a boy called John Weaver, (I had expected a whole crowd to be present, but not at all, John and I dined "a deux") We took in the movies till 4, saw Mae Murray, also Billie Burke in "Gloria's Romance" Then we went up to the Blackstone, where we met a bunch, and danced for a little while, but I had to catch the 5:10 to L.F. Saw Deering for the first time since last Easter. He look thriving, but I certainly was not in the least thrilled!! Oh, Scott, if you would only come down!

Last night I went to a dance given by the L. F. Academy, and much to my amazement, found that an awfully nice bunch of boys went there. However, I went with a terrible prune, but had a slick time, in spite of it.

Two weeks from to-morrow I leave for New York— Oh yes, didn't I tell you—! Well, we're really and truly going to go, and I'm too excited for words! Just think, first school dance I've ever been to, and I'm 17.

I'll be well chaperoned, at least, as Mrs. Winter and Mother are both going up there with me.

We certainly are a lot alike tho', Scott—I just was sort of copying you when I left school, wasn't I? I never thought of it till you spoke of it, and then it made me realize how many things we'd done that were alike—of course, not writing  $\Delta$  plays or anything dressy like that— Heaven only knows I wish to goodness that I had a little genius of some sort to fall back on at a time like this, when one hasn't else to do. It just shows<sup>283</sup> up what a poor silly ass I am, not having any kind of a talent—Not even playing the p i a-ner! Oh dear—I'm blue—I am! And also, I'm deathly lonesome for someone that I know to come along. A boy's coming out from Chi, to-night to see me, I tried to dissuade him, but he said he'd be here, and I know will be awfully [ ] to find two other people—one an awful prune—and the other perfectly darling—here— By the way, I hear the “perfectly darling” one is engaged to some girl out here, I don't think he acts it, but the girl had better watch out for him or else I'll try to claw him, as he's<sup>284</sup> darn attractive!—

The school mess hasn't been dropped yet— Father wrote Miss Hillard a letter full of some straight, plain truths, but not complimentary, by any means. The letter really was final, but the other night he got another letter from her, flattering me again, taking back some of her rotten remarks, and generally trying to crawl out of it. She actually

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<sup>283</sup> shows ] show

<sup>284</sup> he's ] his

invited me back for Visitors' Sunday, after having expressly forbid it, all along! Also told me I could resume my positions etc.

Father and Mother are even sorer than before now, 'cause she didn't stick to her point, but I'm trying my best to pacify them, as I think that this is the best way to have it end, by having her see that she has made a grave mistake—I hear that the directors of the school gave her the devil for acting so unwisely! Ha, Ha—I'm darned glad, and certainly have no more sympathy with her.

Gosh, but I miss Bug. You can't imagine how awful it was to have to go away and leave all the best friends you have on earth, even tho' you know that they were for you!! And Bug is such a jolly sort of a nut to have around, and I certainly do adore her!

Thanks—

Tell Jimmie to be careful and—no, to be careful and not “read aloud” in his new machine— Tis very bad for the heart— Give him my vera best, also—

By the way, I heard yesterday that it is the general opinion that I was fired! Well, I'm pretty darn sore! Anyone can ask Miss H. herself and get settled on that subject! Damn the gossips, anyway!

That's swell for you that Fandy's back—I guess you are pretty glad, aren't you?—

I haven't taken but about two lessons in gol-luf from Harry V. but he's a peach, tho' I didn't know he knew me— He used to always tell me to “Bend the ‘hell-bow’”— while wielding the golf bat—

My dope for the summer of 1916 is this— New York – Hotchkiss – New Haven – New London – June 12th – June 24th – Lake Forest – till around July 18th – Houseparty

in Mich. – July 18th – July 25 – H. F. Bar Ranch – Wyoming – July 29th – August 20th –  
Lake Forest – August 22 – Sept. 18 – Houseparty in Pittsfield – till school opens (don't  
know what school yet!)

This is the way I want it to be but it may not turn out that way after all!

Next winter I'm going to school in New York— It's to be a finishing school  
where<sup>285</sup> I can go out and have a good time now and then!— Preferably the same one  
Bug will be at. (Look out or I'll accept your invitation!)

From your table of "moods" I see that yours last for 3 or 4 months— Mine last  
three or 4 days<sup>286</sup>—and often minutes— Oh I'm terribly moody, and it's a fairly  
interesting way to be. I'm now<sup>287</sup> coming from a period of depression and self-  
consciousness to a period of unrest—(too much nothing to do I'm afraid) I'm really and  
truly not a bit contented when I'm not doing something every minute—studying or  
otherwise— At present I'm exceedingly idle, with the exception of trying to help Mother  
(we've just fired every darn servant, so we're good and busy).

Oh Scott please please come down here, I'm just aching to see you—

Love

Ginevra—

P. S. Isn't Father nasty? He won't let Mother and I march in the Prepared-ness parade—

Write soon—Please!

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<sup>285</sup> where ] when

<sup>286</sup> three or 4 ] three for 4

<sup>287</sup> now ] not



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60. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Kingdom Come Farm, Lake Forest, Illinois*

[August 20, 1916]

Sunday

Dear Scott—

It's been just a week exactly since I last saw you, just think of that!— I was so sorry that you didn't come around on Monday to give the glad hand, and say goodbye, but I suppose I'll have to bear up on it—<sup>288</sup>

Of all hot weather, this is the worst! Honestly, I'm almost dead! This is the third day of it, and I'm just contemplating suicide—I don't think I'll have to bother about doing that, because I think I'm getting infantile paralysis, and that ought to kill me sure!—!<sup>289</sup>

By the way, what do you think? Bernie Rogers is engaged to Gladys High— She's awful attractive and I found it out the day after you left— It isn't announced yet,

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<sup>288</sup> According to Fitzgerald's ledger, during this visit someone told him that "poor boys shouldn't think of marrying rich girls." See F. Scott Fitzgerald, *F. Scott Fitzgerald's Ledger: A Facsimile* (Washington, D.C.: NCR/Microcard Editions, 1972), 170.

<sup>289</sup> More than 27,000 cases of infantile paralysis (polio) were reported in the United States during the summer of 1916; New York City alone reported more than 9,000 cases.

though— I asked Hol Mabbath where he went to college, and he said Harvard for a while, but that he never stayed anywhere more than a couple of months— No, he didn't come to the dinner and I haven't seen him since. I guess I didn't make much of an impression, but what the h--- do I care— I have gotten into the queerest frame of mind lately—I don't give a hoop whether or not anybody cares<sup>290</sup> about me or not— I have gotten to the point where I don't care what kind of a mess I look like or act like—or whether or not I make a hit—which I never do! In other words, all my pride and pep has gone, and I'm getting terribly blase—

Frank Jaffrey, Edie Hoyt and Lloyd Hixon went thru' here to-day, and stayed with the Winters, but I was over at the Demham's all morning in swimming, so I didn't see them at all, which was a disappointment—

By the way, you said I was "true to type" For heaven's sakes, what kind of a type am I— It must be some type—! I'm sorry that you feel that I'm not natural, because I hate a person that is always acting— They always seem so dull and artificial and almost always conceited. For Goodness sakes tell me how to get over it!—

This place is absolutely awful! Not a soul in sight. Laurie Williams and his brother, Wallie, Dan, Edie, John Hamilin, and Paul Martin are the only boys here, and on Wednesday they all leave for a couple of days in Lake Geneva for the golf tournament, so Peg and I will hold up the walls of Lake Forest with alacrity till someone gets home. By the first of September things out to pep up, I think—

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<sup>290</sup> cares ] care

I'm afraid that Mother isn't going to let me go to New York till the first part of November or the last of October on account of the paralysis—I think Peg and I ought to have a slick time, don't you?

That tennis dinner was terrible! Peg and I danced most of the evening to-gether, till finally we got so good that we had to stop, so we went up to the porch and drank orangeade till our families called for us.

I quite fell for Dawson— He was simply divine, also Maurice McLoughlin—I couldn't grant Church much, though.

I'm now working hard to get thin—Friday I played 18 holes of golf—it was a scorching day and I went for a swim—and Saturday (which was also frightful) I did the same thing, but unfortunately I feel just as heavy now as I always have. Oh, why can't I get thinner.

Well, my dear boy—I fear I must stop now as dinner is ready (here's where I get fat again)

Be good and write me soon—

Love

Ginevra

61. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Kingdom Come Farm, Lake Forest, Illinois*

[September 14, 1916]

Thursday

Dear Scott—

This is going to be a stupid letter—I feel it coming—so you know what to do if you feel in a bored mood—

Your letter was long and fairly amusing, especially the part about Sam— As if he gave a darn about me—Fat chance—! and you either—

The picture idea is quite a stunt— If I had enough pictures of “fellas” I’d perhaps do it too, but you see, I’m not that popular.<sup>291</sup>

We had a divine time last night, as all the youngsters left, gave a subscription over at the club, and for once there were a bunch of stags. The night was icy and my foot hurt me and I had a cold and oh, why abbreviate—(I know that’s<sup>292</sup> the wrong word) anyway—as I was saying—I was un-popular—

Our school has been postponed till the 11th of October and Bug’s till the 25th. She is coming thru’ here on her way home next Wednesday and I’m going to show her a time in Chicago and try to make her stay over a couple of days with me— She’s so darling and it has been an age since we’ve last parted!

I’m still sore that Bernie Rogers is engaged— Haven’t seen him since that Sunday— Yes, Gladys is darn attractive—but nothing above— Well, you know the rest—now, run and tell Bernie— I’m having a time with Dave Forgan now though, so

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<sup>291</sup> see ] these ; that ] they

<sup>292</sup> that’s ] that

Speak not to me—I don’t understand his line and it makes me sore not to understand it, because you see I like to get the best of everyone, although I almost always get rooked—!

~~What did~~ I mean—how did Mary Buford Pierce strike you— All I can think of is high white buckskin shoes at a dance one evening last winter. You see, by all the above slams that I’m not in a complimentary mood to-night.

I guess Helen James is up in Biddeford now giving Tom a time. I hope she succeeds, but he may have someone else by now—

No, don’t urge Kitty to invite me. She doesn’t want me much and I don’t know her so very well, and I’d rather visit Bug, but she hasn’t given me the “say-so” yet, which is unfortunate.

Everybody is away now, it’s hectic. Dan and Wallie left ages ago—Laurie Williams, John, Bill Kelley and Fuller, and a bunch of others are the only survivors. Gosh, but this is a stupid place. Golf, golf, golf all day long. We have just had the women’s “pow-wow” at the club. It is the club championship and a bunch of other things. Edith only won 7 things, poor girl—I was so sorry for her— I only got away with 1 thing, so I felt myself very clumsy— Florence Folds told me the other day that she had met you up in St. Paul or Minn. or some place like that.

Is James Harrison still there?<sup>293</sup> He and I have gotten along so beautifully that I really feel we ought to renew our past<sup>294</sup> relationship. Oh yes, he loves me like a brother!—!

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<sup>293</sup> there? ] there.

<sup>294</sup> past ] fast

I've been going in town every other day for the past three weeks to the dentist and other stupid places. Gosh, but I hate this business of making the rounds of doctors' offices before going away to school. Any, but I'm thrilled over New York— To think— oh—to think of being in that great big city all winter doesn't seem straight, I am so excited—! I hope it is easy to get away from—but I have my doubts I am going in to have lunch with Miss Weaver to-morrow—

Well, wake up now—I'm almost thru'— Write me soon and before I get to 228 West 72nd St.<sup>295</sup>

Goodnight and be good—

As Ever Ginevra—

I explained the  $\Delta$  pin  
to Peg—don't worry—

62. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*228 West 72nd Street, New York, New York*

[October 11, 1916]

Wednesday

<sup>295</sup> 228 ] 128. In the fall of 1916, Ginevra boarded and studied with Mrs. Isabel D.

Coates at 228 West 72nd Street in New York City where she studied art, music, and languages. For more on girls' finishing schools of the period, see note 141.

Dear Scott

Of course—you think I'm terrible I expect that—but I really am sorry about not having written sooner, but I've been so busy—and we came here to New York Sunday with Mother (Peg and I) and stayed at the hotel with her till to-day, and now we're up here at school——wow, that's a long story, but it's a good alibi—

Lake Forest stayed dead till Peg and I finally got so discouraged that we left hastily— Not a soul was left by the time we went, and we did nothing but go in town together— Got a letter from Bug to-day and she says that St. Paul is in the same fix and that she can't wait to get down here to the French school—gee, I wish she was coming here—

It's the funniest feeling being a new girl at a school again after 3 years at Westover—of course this is lots different, the girls are all older and it's more like a big family but even so Peg and I feel more or less out of it— We just arrived this morning but are practicaly (sp.) settled, and it looks more homelike to see your picture sitting on the desk again— The girls here are almost all from small towns and aren't so awfully attractive but Peg and I are to-gether so that makes it a lot nicer—(she (Peg) sends her very best, by the way)!!

I'm sort of worried that I won't be able to get away from here on Friday night before the Y-P game, but when I know the ropes better I can tell better.

Please ask someone else if you can't wait, though, because I don't want you to feel that you [need] to still wait for my answer— Be frank and earnest and tell me that you want to get someone else—

Thanks—!—

I'm so excited about this whole place that I don't know what to do—no bed hour—candy in your rooms also books and magazines—see where I sit up every night and read till one or two—

Have discovered three nice girls, Madeline Dickey from Kansas City, Virginia Summers from some joint, and Margaret Allen from another place—this must be so interesting to you—

My, but I was disappointed at not being able to come up to St. Paul this fall—I had it all so beautifully planned, and then Mother came up and busted all my hopes.

I'm off everybody for life, not crazy about a soul and don't see how I ever can be again— Life is too short to sit and worry about one's love affairs—

Oh, what do you think—Peg and I have a fire escape just off our window and we've decided to escape by it some evening. Will<sup>296</sup> you wait for us at the other end?—  
Oh, thank you so much—

After your<sup>297</sup> short, scimpy letter I don't owe you much in return— But I'm a sweet girl, so am answering your letter by an interesting wonderfully exciting letter—

Give my love to all who'll have it, and save a speck or two for yourself—

As Infinitely

In finitum, or

whatever it is

Ginevra

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<sup>296</sup> evening. Will ] evening will

<sup>297</sup> your ] you



P. S. Don't know what that means—

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63. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*228 West 72nd Street, New York, New York*

[November 3, 1916]

Friday

My dear Mr. Fitz—

My hand has writer's<sup>298</sup> cramp from addressing the envelope, so I won't be able to write very much—

Thanks lots and lots of your letter also the vera cute picture of you— The McLaughlin pose is quite becoming—

You are darling to ask Peg and I down to the game, we're so twittered up that we scare know what to do—

I'm terribly sorry about Friday night, because you must know how much we want to come, but I think [I] explained to you last night why we wouldn't be able to swing it— It's a crime and we will sit here and weep all Friday night—but oh, the game will be so divine. I'm crazy to see it, and Princeton,<sup>299</sup> as I've never been down there before y'know—

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<sup>298</sup> writer's ] written

<sup>299</sup> Princeton, ] Princeton

We are going sightseeing this afternoon—The Woolworth and Singer Building, Wall Street and Brooklyn Bridge. I'm all excited—!

It would be slick to have you write a story about me only I don't think it would be a very interesting subject—dry, you understand— I'll write a “Snappy” for you if you'll put it in under your name— It would look well under a literary magazine cover—

I'm working so hard that I don't even think any more—I always was a little unself-controlled but now—oh, I don't know what I'm thinking of—writing you such a foolish line, but somehow I'm not in the mood to write you to-day as I usually<sup>300</sup> have to have a lot clever thoughts— But your letter to Peg was much more amusing than mine, so I don't feel that I have to exert myself. That wasn't meant as any kind of a slam—!

How is every little thing at Princeton? Are all the boys behaving themselves properly? And why don't you come to New York sometime, so we can go stand on the corner by Healy's and watch you go by—in, I mean—It's right near here, you know— Do you suppose you can get us a chaperone down there as there isn't any vacant one here—a dumb and blind one is the best variety I think but tell us her name because we have to explain all about her to the family and Miss Weaver—

Write me soon about it— Do you remember how you signed your first<sup>301</sup> letter—  
“temporarily yours”

As Ever

Ginevra

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<sup>300</sup> usually ] usual

<sup>301</sup> first ] final

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64. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*228 West 72nd Street, New York, New York*

[January 28, 1917]

228 W. 72nd St.

Sunday—

Dear Scott—:—

Well, I guess I'm pretty darn fresh, writing to you first and everything— But honestly, you owe me a letter and I'll be very sore at you if you don't write and apologize for your negligence——!

My, but it's been a dog's age since I last wrote you—I can't get over it—!

Did you have a slick time at vacation—and how are you now—and tell me all about your latest “affaire du coeur” and all that sort of stuff. Did you know that I'm going in as a professional “Laura Jean Libby” as soon as I can get a job on a paper, so you better let me advise you before it costs you good money—

But a week from to-day I leave for the Prom. and the Friday I get back from that the whole school including your humble servant leaves for a ten days stand at Lake Placid— Lots of skiing and skating and fun! I've never been near a ski before and I'm just shaking at the idea of it already.

Wish I could see you sometime soon & have a nice long talk with you, as we haven't had one for an age, and I've loads of funny things to tell you.

We had such a nice vacation—I met a lot of your little friends on the Δ club and they were very nice and attractive I thought— Also Frank Shepard was on the Yale Glee and he was oh so attractive! Perfectly divine in fact—and quite the best dancer I’ve ever danced on—

I’m going to have such fun this week—going to concerts, operas—singing lessons and lots of other pretty things that are so stupid!—!

It is the funniest thing in the world having Bug in the same town, and then never seeing her— We haven’t even talked on the phone since before Christmas—one would almost think we had a fight!

Went to the first Yale-Princeton hockey game here in New York in hopes of seeing you but I didn’t have that good fortune. I’m feeling very sarcastic to-day, seems to me—guess it’s because I went to church this morning and disagreed with everything that the old preacher said—

I haven’t a thing to tell you I wish you’d write me and tell me some dope—and don’t think I’m a crazy little ass because I wrote you first—guess I know you well enough, don’t I? Sure!

Scott, do you know something? No? Well—I’m getting horribly and dreadfully blase lately and I can’t imagine what I’ll do to get over it— Almost everybody bores me to tears and I’m afraid I’ll have to elope or something like that just to get myself a little excited over sometime. I used to have quite a lot of pep too, once upon a time— Please give a remedy for this as I need it badly—

I fool so feelish to-day—have you seen Bug lately—? Midge is coming on next week for the prom. also Caddy so I’m all thrilled.

Trust<sup>302</sup> you're enough bored by this time by this time so bye-bye—

Love

Ginevra—

65. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*Kingdom Come Farm, Lake Forest, Illinois*

[July 6, 1917]

Friday

Dear Scott—:—

I have destroyed your letters—so you needn't be afraid that they will be held up as incriminating evidence. They were harmless—have you a guilty conscience?

I'm sorry you think that I would hold them up to you as I never did think they meant anything.

If it isn't too much trouble you might destroy mine too.

Sincerely

Ginevra

66. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*1450 Astor Street, Chicago, Illinois*

<sup>302</sup> Trust ] Just

[July 15, 1918]

1450 Astor St.

Dear Scott:—

I certainly was glad to hear from you and to know that you were still alive, though your ears were frozen. I've got a piece of very wonderful news for you, that I am sure will be a great surprise. I am announcing my engagement to William Mitchell on July 16th.

To say I am the happiest girl on earth would be expressing it mildly and I wish you knew Bill so that you could know how very lucky I am.

The family are all East, but they have been marvelous about the whole thing, and now I am hoping to be able to persuade them that I must be married soon and go to Key West where Bill is stationed as ensign in naval aviation.

Pardon the brevity of this but I wanted you to know first!

As Always,

Ginevra.

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67. TO F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*229 Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois*

[April 15, 1920]

229 Lake Shore Drive

Dear Scott:—

Your very nice present was a-waiting me on my return from California last Saturday, and I haven't written to thank you as I wished to read some of your book before I sent my congratulations to you.

I am enclosing a criticism from the Chicago Tribune, with whom you certainly seem to have an unholy drag—!<sup>303</sup> I can hardly blame them though, for the book is a great success, I personally think, also everyone seems to be speaking of it, and you have made a name for yourself. Not that I didn't think for a moment but that you eventually would, after receiving the "Part I and Part II's" for so long a time, but I cannot begin to tell you how really pleased I am at your success, so try to read between these incoherent lines and gather that I'm proud to know you!!

When next you are in Chicago, please come and see us, telephone conversations are very unsatisfactory, especially as the last one we had was rudely interrupted by the yelling of my young son! He's quite a boy, you had better come up to see him, anyway, also to meet Bill— By the way, who are you going to marry so shortly? Why didn't you tell me her name n'everything instead of mere insinuations? You're a funny one—

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<sup>303</sup> Ginevra sent Scott a copy of Burton Rascoe's review of *This Side of Paradise* entitled, "A Youth in the Saddle," from the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 3, 1920. For more information on Rascoe's response see: James L. W. III West, *The Perfect Hour: The Romance of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ginevra King* (New York: Random House, 2005), 76.

Many, many thanks to you, Scott, for remembering me, and I do wish you all the success in the world!

Always sincerely

Ginevra K. Mitchell

Thursday



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# VITA

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#### **The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA**

Lecturer in English	2006-2009
Graduate Lecturer	2000-2006
Research Assistant to Dr. James L.W. West III	2001-2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research assistant for three volumes of the <i>Cambridge Edition of the Collected Works of F. Scott Fitzgerald</i></li> <li>Research assistant for <i>The Perfect Hour: The Romance of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ginevra King, His First Love</i></li> </ul>	

#### **Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA**

Head of Public Services and Instructor, L.A. Beeghly Library	1997-2000
Reference Librarian and Instructor, L.A. Beeghly Library	1996-1997

### PUBLICATIONS

“Popular Music in Britain 1930-1955.” In *Literature and Culture in Modern Britain Volume Two: 1930-1955*, edited by Gary Day, 216-229. London: Longman, 1997. Co-authored with Peter Driver and Benedict Sarnaker

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Trading Spaces: Fanny Price and the Dimensions of <i>Mansfield Park</i> .” Northeast Modern Language Association, Baltimore, Maryland	March 2007
“Editing <i>The Sturdy Oak</i> : Elizabeth Garver Jordan and the Struggle Between Woman Suffrage and Masculinity.” Society for the Study of American Woman Writers. Fort Worth, Texas.	September 2003
“Negotiating Woman Suffrage: The Genesis of <i>The Sturdy Oak</i> and the Editorial Correspondence.” Society for Textual Scholarship. New York, New York.	March 2003
“Cool Intentions: Raising Information Literacy Levels Among Undergraduates.” Computers in Libraries. Washington, D.C.	March 2002