



Taking Things Hard

The Trials of F. Scott Fitzgerald

ROBERT R. GARNETT

F. Scott Fitzgerald published America's favorite novel, *The Great Gatsby*, at the young age of twenty-eight. Despite this extraordinary early achievement, Fitzgerald finished just one novel in the next (and last) fifteen years of his life, ending as a mostly unemployed Hollywood screenwriter. *Taking Things Hard* reveals the story behind the now-iconic *Gatsby*, along with Fitzgerald's struggle to write anything that matched its brilliance.

Robert R. Garnett's new biographical study of Fitzgerald's life and work begins by constructing a portrait of the young man who would wholly and uniquely pour himself into writing *Gatsby*. In the years following its publication, Fitzgerald continued penning stories, some of them among his finest, yet it took him nine years to complete another novel. The downward trajectory of his career had interweaving causes, among them arrogance, irresponsibility, his troubled marriage to Zelda Sayre, financial im-providence, and a destructive alcoholism. At the root of it all, though, lingered the simple fact that Fitzgerald's most intense and profound experiences had come early, during his truncated undergraduate years at Princeton and the months following his February 1919 discharge from the army.

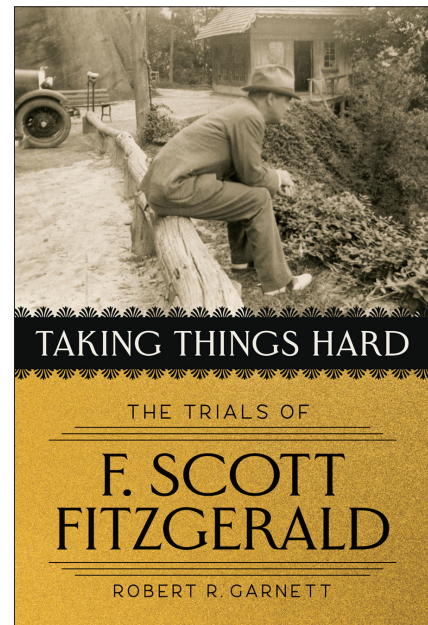
Taking Things Hard provides a fresh look at the imaginative sources of Fitzgerald's fiction and considers the elements, drawn from the keen impressions and salient emotions of its author's youth, that make *Gatsby* a book that still speaks powerfully to readers.

ROBERT R. GARNETT is professor emeritus of English at Gettysburg College. His previous books include *Charles Dickens in Love* and *From Grimes to Brideshead: The Early Novels of Evelyn Waugh*.

PRAISE FOR *TAKING THINGS HARD*

"*Taking Things Hard* is one of the best treatments of Fitzgerald's life and career that I've read. Robert R. Garnett's writing is excellent, clear, and accessible, free of jargon and with nice turns of phrase throughout."—James L. W. West III, general editor of the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of F. Scott Fitzgerald*

"With Fitzgerald the temptation has too often been to connect glibly the world and the work, at the expense of the latter. One of the impressive virtues of Garnett's book is to keep a firm balance that allows him to reassess overlooked material while offering a compelling and scrupulous analysis of the literary art of a true American original."—Sara Antonelli, Università degli Studi Roma Tre



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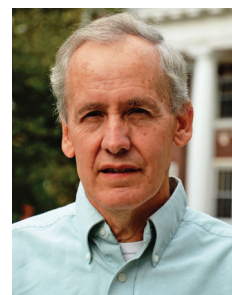
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