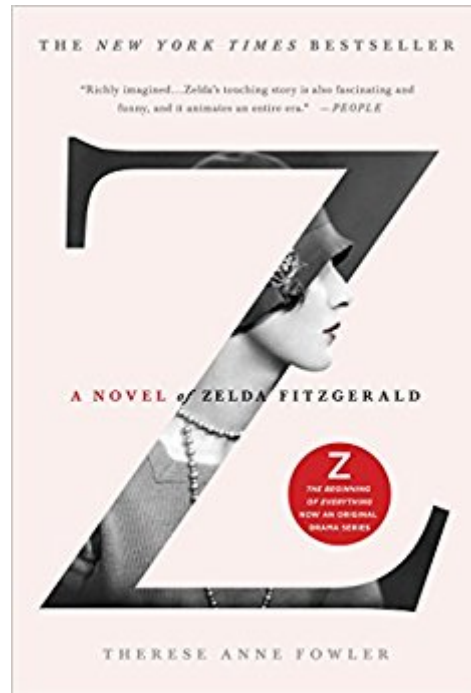




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Z: A Novel Of Zelda Fitzgerald



Synopsis

THE INSPIRATION FOR THE TELEVISION DRAMA Z: THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING I wish I could tell everyone who thinks we're ruined, Look closer – and you'll see something extraordinary, mystifying, something real and true. We have never been what we seemed. When beautiful, reckless Southern belle Zelda Sayre meets F. Scott Fitzgerald at a country club dance in 1918, she is seventeen years old and he is a young army lieutenant stationed in Alabama. Before long, the "ungettable" Zelda has fallen for him despite his unsuitability: Scott isn't wealthy or prominent or even a Southerner, and keeps insisting, absurdly, that his writing will bring him both fortune and fame. Her father is deeply unimpressed. But after Scott sells his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, to Scribner's, Zelda optimistically boards a train north, to marry him in the vestry of St. Patrick's Cathedral and take the rest as it comes. What comes, here at the dawn of the Jazz Age, is unimagined attention and success and celebrity that will make Scott and Zelda legends in their own time. Everyone wants to meet the dashing young author of the scandalous novel – and his witty, perhaps even more scandalous wife. Zelda bobs her hair, adopts daring new fashions, and revels in this wild new world. Each place they go becomes a playground: New York City, Long Island, Hollywood, Paris, and the French Riviera – where they join the endless party of the glamorous, sometimes doomed Lost Generation that includes Ernest Hemingway, Sara and Gerald Murphy, and Gertrude Stein. Everything seems new and possible. Troubles, at first, seem to fade like morning mist. But not even Jay Gatsby's parties go on forever. Who is Zelda, other than the wife of a famous – sometimes infamous – husband? How can she forge her own identity while fighting her demons and Scott's, too? With brilliant insight and imagination, Therese Anne Fowler's New York Times bestseller brings us Zelda's irresistible story as she herself might have told it.

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Customer Reviews

Novelist Fowler (Exposure, 2011) considered it fate that she would write about Zelda, the wife of celebrated writer Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald: the author's mother and the famous flapper passed away on the same day. In this frothy offering, readers glimpse the glorious lives of the rich and famous of the Jazz Age. From the moment gorgeous Zelda laid eyes on her officer husband, her days were filled with magical moments, as Scott began to receive critical acclaim, and the pair navigated a social circuit graced by the likes of Ernest Hemingway, Tallulah Bankhead, and Gertrude Stein. But the high life dropped low when Fitzgerald's good fortune began to fizzle, and his already excessive drinking increased. As her husband grew more distant and distracted, Zelda fell into the arms of a charming Frenchman, but she gave up the romance in hopes of saving her marriage. Could the dazzling literary couple ever find its way back to bliss? Fowler renders rich period detail in this portrayal of a fascinating woman both blessed and cursed by fame. --Allison Block --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

"When I saw that Prime was unveiling its original pilot for Z, a biographical series based on Therese Anne Fowler's novel about Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald, I raised a wary eyebrow. . . But I was wrong, oh me of little faith. . . [I]t's an enveloping period piece, perfectly cast, and I would like to see the pilot green-lighted into a series so that we can see this romance go up like a rocket with one loud champagne pop and strew debris across mansion lawns and luxury hotel lobbies in its transcontinental path." --Vanity Fair "Fowler expertly depicts the rapture of the couple's early love, and later, the bullying and sickness that drove them apart--Z zips along addictively." --Entertainment Weekly "[A] richly imagined novel--Here [Zelda's] touching story is also fascinating and funny, it animates an entire era." --People "A gorgeously rendered piece of literary entertainment, not a biography but rather a love story set in the Jazz Age." --The Daily News "A tender, intimate exploration of a complicated woman." --Library Journal "Fowler's Zelda is all we would expect and more--once she meets the handsome Scott, her life takes off on an arc of indulgence and decadence that still causes us to shake our heads in wonder--soirées

with Picasso and his mistress, with Cole Porter and his wife, with Gerald and Sara Murphy, Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, Ezra Pound and Jean Cocteau. Scott's friendship with Hemingway verges on a love affair--at least it's close enough to one to make Zelda jealous. Ultimately, both of these tragic, pathetic and grand characters are torn apart by their inability to love or leave each other. Fowler has given us a lovely, sad and compulsively readable book.

— Kirkus Reviews (starred review) — "Fowler renders rich period detail in this portrayal of a fascinating woman both blessed--and cursed--by fame. — Booklist — "With lyrical prose, Fowler's Z beautifully portrays the frenzied lives of, and complicated relationship between, Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald...This is a novel that will open readers' minds to the life of an often misunderstood woman--one not easily forgotten. — RT Book Reviews — "A novel that is as heartbreaking as it is mesmerizing. About love, desire, betrayal, and one extraordinary woman struggling to shine in the world--even as the one she loves best is drawing the shades. Just magnificent. — Caroline Leavitt — "A wonderfully engaging read. With crisp dialogue and vivid descriptions, Z delivers both a compelling love story and a poignant tale of a woman coming into her own as an artist. — Heidi W. Durrow — "An utterly engrossing portrayal of Zelda Fitzgerald and the legendary circles in which she moved. In the spirit of *Loving Frank* and *The Paris Wife*, Therese Anne Fowler shines a light on Zelda instead of her more famous husband, providing both justice and the voice she struggled to have heard in her lifetime. — Sara Gruen

— Z: A novel of Zelda Fitzgerald — tells the story of the wife of Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald. Zelda's story replays the glitter, parties and fame that so often combine with the sadness, disappointment and drama in the lives of the rich and famous.

Zelda's story is that of a wife whose dreams and talents are hidden behind and sublimated by a famous and self-important husband. It is similar to the stories of the wives of Frank Lloyd Wright as told in *Loving Frank*, and Robert Lewis Stevenson in *Under the Wide and Starry Sky*. The wives of these famous men were always in the background of their famous spouses, and many times were as capable and accomplished or sometimes even more so than the men they married and supported. The overpowering quest for Frank to write the great American novel is part of a central focus in both *Zelda* and Frank's life. You are taken through the years with the ups and down of time and experiences. Zelda was not a character I identified with as she seemed self-indulgent and spoiled. I understand some of the hardships she faced but did not connect with

her. I give this book a 3.5 rating

Z aligns so perfectly with the era in which it was written! The detailed narrations were decadent without being over indulgent. Some scenes made me crave more and others made me want to look away. All the while, I felt truly captured by Zelda Fitzgerald's tale. HIGHLY recommend!! also listened to the audible narration when I decided to read it again, which only made it better! Narrations brought her Southern anecdotes to life and made it that much more sensational.

Although I said there are "some twists," it is of course mostly predictable because the story of the Fitzgeralds has been told and told and they lived very public lives. I enjoyed hearing the story told more from Zelda's perspective however. It was fun to "experience" the Twenties in all their decadence, even though as a woman I was angered by some of the societal mores of those times. And as I read it, at some point along the way the awareness that it's not going to end well moved more to the foreground of my mind. Still I enjoyed it. It was an escape and interesting to get a woman's perspective on that story.

As the topic has been covered beautifully for years by several other authors, I found the information a little redundant. It was a novel, and not a biography, and fits well into today's literature, focusing on Zelda's frustration to be her own woman. The reading group questions in the back are very good, and could be applied to any novel about Zelda and Scott.

This book was slow to go. It took me two months to get through the first 50 pages.....it definitely improved as the book went along. Not a page turner by any means but certainly an interesting insight into the relationships of this infamous literary couple.

Very interesting take on a person whose life was little known to me. Many years ago I had read Sheilah Graham's novel "Beloved Infidel" but I, like others, had thought of Zelda as "Scott's crazy wife." One can only wonder what Zelda's life would be like if she were born into a time that is more recent. Did she really have schizophrenia or were the actions the result of living with an active alcoholic? Would Zelda allow Scott to take credit for her writing today? Or would it be necessary to do so, with the more equal status women have achieved today? It was interesting to read this sympathetic portrayal of a misunderstood person in the Jazz Age.

I haven't finished this book yet but am intrigued by Zelda's story. The book takes you back in time and captures the era very well. I love reading historical novels because they're usually interesting and you learn while being entertained. I would recommend this book.

I expected a fluffy written book on F. Scott Fitzgerald's wife Zelda. Instead I found a beautiful story of the life of the woman behind the legend. Truly - Zelda stood firmly behind her man- and paid quite a price for doing so. This book reveals so much more about Zelda than I had ever imagined possible. While remembered for her flights of fancy with Scott dancing atop tables and cavorting in fountains in New York her talents were many: she was a dancer, an artistic painter, and most importantly she penned many stories on her own which either appeared with her husbands named attached as co-author or were sold to magazines under Scott's name only. The interaction between various other famous artists - be they painters, dancers, movie stars, musicians or famous writers - explains to me why Zelda and Scott spiraled down - down - down. The sober happiness of their lives juxtaposed against the drunken fights and often near-penniless existence of their roller coaster ride of a marriage goes a long way to explaining why poor Zelda finally hit bottom - long before Scott. From a pampered socialite to the shattered wife of a world-class author (and denied her place in the sun with all of her various talents) this book is addictive. I highly recommend reading to anyone in love with Scott - and anyone who is interested in learning the entire story of his wife Zelda.

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