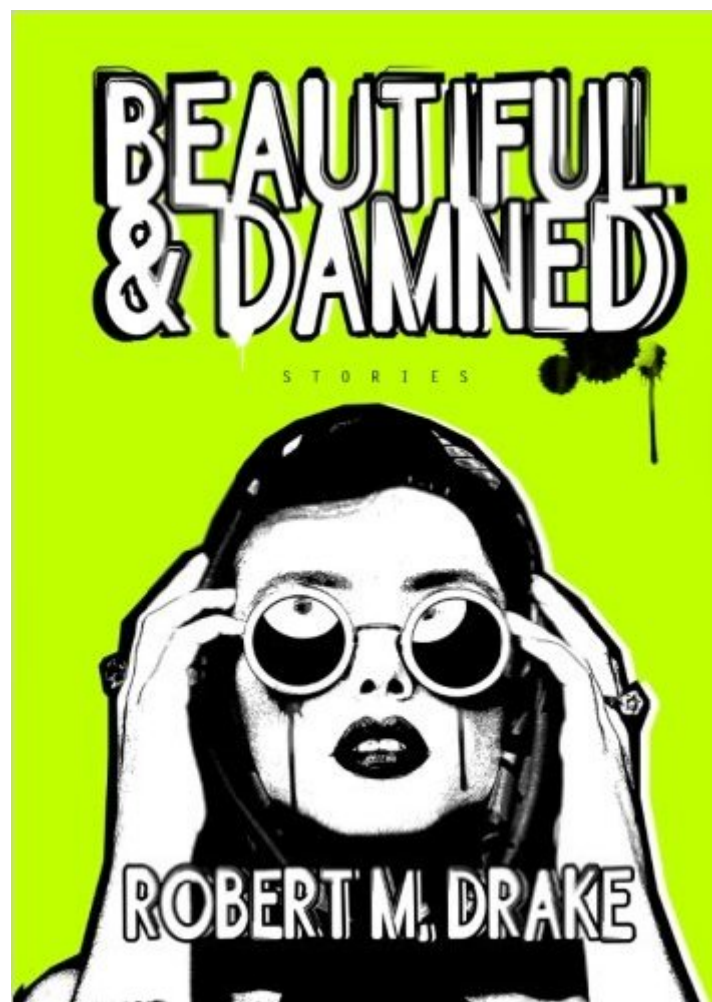


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Beautiful And Damned



Synopsis

With the same heartwarming composition and genius Robert M. Drake brought to his international bestselling books *Beautiful Chaos*, *Black Butterfly* and *A Brilliant Madness*, Robert M. Drake now takes his readers to a deeper level of his consciousness with this collection of stories. A man encounters God in a bar; a family is saved by a time traveler in the middle of the night; a journey into the mind of a severely autistic man; a woman finds herself one night out in the city and more. *Beautiful and Damned* is as haunting and as captivating as the stories it tells, it is proof that Robert M. Drake is one of the most visionary writers working today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"It is seven thirty on an August evening. The windows in the living room of the gray house are wide open patiently exchanging the tainted inner atmosphere of liquor and smoke for the fresh drowsiness of the late hot dusk. There are dying flower scents upon the air, so thin, so fragile, as to hint already of a summer laid away in time." This is the story of a young couple Anthony and Gloria Patch living out their days to the hilt in New York City as they await the death of Anthony's grandfather, Adam Patch from whom they expect to inherit his massive fortune. Gloria is a spoilt child from Kansas City turned into a sophisticated and most beautiful woman. Gloria does not intend to lift a finger to do any domestic work in the home, no matter how slight; while Anthony who considers himself an aesthete, finds it quite hard to get his act together and instead of buckling down to some work, prefers instead to hang with his wife and their friends on nightly binges. They drink and eat in the classiest restaurants and hotels, rent the most expensive apartments, travel out

to the West in the spring time driving plush cars, wearing top-of-the-line clothing and just generally living it up high on the hog, as they wait. Meet Maury Noble who is Anthony's best friend who spends his time between New York and Philadelphia; Richard Caramel who has just completed writing a book and looking for new ideas for a second one. Joseph Bloeckman from Munich who started out small in America and is now a big shot in Show Biz. Also the quiet Jewess Rachael Barnes and Muriel Kane who is young, flirtatious and sometimes a bit too talkative and Tana the Japanese housekeeper of the Patches. We are shown the Patches at their very best as the novel starts, with the world at their feet and loaded with cash with which they make very expensive choices. But, as we get further in, we see things begin to change gradually and we realize that those very choices will be their very downfall. It was quite a good read but it could be very heartbreaking at times as we put ourselves into the shoes of the main characters. All lovers of F. Scott Fitzgerald should read this book if you haven't done so already, and those of you who like reading about the ultra rich in the Roaring Twenties this one is for you. It is the kind of book that you feel you will want to read again. It is that good and I shall miss it. Reviewed by Heather Marshall Negahdar (SUGAR-CANE 10/04/04)

The genius of F. Scott Fitzgerald shines brilliantly in this vastly underappreciated classic novel of moral depravity. The pervasive themes of Fitzgerald include moral corruption, profligate behavior, agnosticism, selfishness, narcissism, egocentrism, and of course, a sick obsession with money and alcohol. These themes permeate all too well throughout the beautifully written *The Beautiful and Damned* (pardon the pun). Released in 1922, 2 years subsequent to the seminal *This Side of Paradise* and 3 years prior to the magnum opus *The Great Gatsby*, incomprehensibly, *The Beautiful and Damned* was not well received critically nor financially. As a result, history has erroneously filed it under the dubious sophomore jinx category. Strange it may seem, I vehemently disagree. As you read this book, you witness first-hand the maturation of an amazing writer. No American writer of the 20th Century can compare to the profound power and unwavering genius that is F. Scott Fitzgerald. If you enjoyed *The Great Gatsby*, you will no doubt enjoy this work - an equally beautifully written and tragic tale of aspiring morally depraved young Americans in pursuit of The American Dream. "Remarkable that a person can comprehend so little and yet live in such a complex civilization."

Nearly ninety years after its first publication, *The Beautiful and Damned* is still a shockingly relevant account of the entitlement class, the children of the rich or privileged who don't know how to navigate through life without big money. And, it's a New York City novel--written as only a

mid-westerner can. It seems to me that because New Yorkers are too much in the middle of it to see themselves clearly, an intelligent "outsider" like F. Scott Fitzgerald must come along. To write as well as he did, Fitzgerald let the city inhabit him. New York got into his blood, and he recorded it in narrative right down to the dirt under the carpet. Fitzgerald's details lead the reader into the depths of the beautiful and doomed couple, the Gloria-Anthony entanglement, as they are part and parcel of the extremes of poverty and wealth (in the World War I era or the roaring 20s). I don't know how Fitzgerald knew what he knew about the human psyche, or specifically about how a young man might react when he is good-looking and swimming in money and New York, but Fitz's life at Princeton University among this set of people gave him the environment in which to observe; Fitzgerald supplied the story around which the narrative coheres. Of course, there are autobiographical elements to this novel--a lot of himself and Zelda--but what the literary art requires is critical distance. To put his main characters through some shameful scenes, Fitzgerald had to know what tough love is in the New York City context. He had to put his couple to the test, people who from birth had relied on the "religion" of charm and money. And the author had more than just critical distance: F. Scott had them down right! Every expression, every word. Gloria: "This is life! Who cares for the morrow." And you can see Anthony deciding to have one more drink, his speech becoming slurred, his manners maudlin. While Anthony and Gloria wait for his inheritance, we find out what they're made of. Most pleasurable about Fitzgerald's craft is his carefully-controlled technique of letting Anthony and Gloria visit hell (the "damned" in the title) while softening the harsh surgery-like light with well-timed, well-handled, lyrical sentences. In a single beautiful line, the passage of the winter sun describes both Fitzgerald's craft and his beautiful couple's descent: Gloria "lay still for a moment in the great bed watching the February sun suffer one last attenuated refinement in its passage through the leaded panes into the room" (p.173). Fitzgerald knew how to show the attenuated and refined way downhill. One more thing about the craft of writing: Only the omniscient narrator technique--which Fitzgerald employs--can show characters in shameful acts and show what they're thinking, and the circumstances in which they got there, and how they "need" money in order to "survive." I wonder if now, in nearly 2010, this novel is not more important than in 1922. More than ever, *The Beautiful and Damned* is a national portrait. (I can see how "spending" money could be the "sex" in the novel.) Advice: Read this novel while in New York, if possible. The first time I read *The Beautiful and Damned*, I was living near 123rd (me, a Westerner!). I looked up every address in the novel (except for the gray house near Cos Cob, Conn.) and got to know New York through this novel. In fact, I could almost pick out their final apartment in Harlem near 127th.

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