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F. Scott Fitzgerald , Edited by James L. W. West, III
Excerpt
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THOUGHTBOOK
OF
FRANCIS SCOTT KEY FITZGERALD
OF
ST PAUL MINN. U.S.A.

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Last Kiss

3

VIII

My girls

August, 1910

My recollections of Nancy are rather dim but one day stands out above the rest. The Gardeners had their home three miles out of town and one day James Inham¹, Inky for short, my best friend, and I were invited out to spend the day. I was about nine years old Nancy about eight and we were quite infatuated with each other. It was in the middle of the winter so as soon as we got there we began playing on the toboggan. Nancy and I and Inky were on one toboggan and Ham (Nancies big brother came along and wanted to get on. He made a leap for the toboggan but I pushed off just in time and sent him on his head. He was awful mad. He said he'd kick me off and that it wasn't my toboggan and that I couldn't play. However Nancy smoothed it over and we went into lunch.

¹ Fitzgerald, writing in the third person, notes in his *Ledger* entry for September 1906: "He made up shows in Ingham's attic, all based on the American Revolution." Many of the entries for 1908–1911 in the *Ledger* mention events that are recorded in the *Thoughtbook*. It is likely that Fitzgerald had the *Thoughtbook* at his elbow as he inscribed the *Ledger*. Some of the girls' names in the *Thoughtbook* appear on a dance card reproduced in *Romantic Egoists*, p. 11.

IX

Kitty Williams is much plainer to my memory. I met her first at dancing school and as Mr. Van Arnum² (our dancing teacher) chose me to lead the march I asked her to be my pardner. The next day she told Marie Lautz and Marie repeated it to Dorothy Knox who in turn passed it on to Earl, that I was third in her affections. I dont remember who was first but I know that Earl was second and as I was already quite over come by her charms I then and there resolved that I would gain first place As in the case of Nancy there was one day which was preeminent in my memory. I went in Honey Chilenton's yard one morning where the kids usually congregated and beheld Kitty. We talked and talked and finally she asked me if I was going to Robin's³ party and it was there that my eventful day was. We played postoffice, pillow, clappin and clapp out and other foolish but interesting

² Charles H. Van Arnham appears in Lee F. Heacock, ed., *The Buffalo Artists' Register*, Vol. 1 — 1926 (copy at Buffalo Public Library). His studio was located at the Hotel Statler in Buffalo; he gave "carnivals" at the Twentieth Century Club with his pupils.

³ Robin's identity remains a mystery, although in his *Ledger* Fitzgerald wrote that Robin was a cousin of the Penfields (p. 162). Katherine Penfield, born in October 1895, and her siblings lived at 87 Highland, a short distance from the Fitzgeralds. Katherine's father was a magnesia manufacturer; the family had two live-in servants. New York State Archives; Albany, New York; *State Population Census Schedules*, 1905; Election District: E.D. 03; City: *Buffalo Ward 24*; County: *Erie*; Page: 96.

Last Kiss

5

X

games.⁴ It was impossible to count the number of times I kissed Kitty that afternoon. At any rate when we went home I had secured the coveted 1st place. I held this until dancing school stopped in the spring and then relinquished it to Johnny Gowns⁵ a rival. On valentines day that year Kitty recieved no less than eighty four valentines. She sent me one which I have now as also one which Nancy gave me. Along in a box with them is a lock of hair—but wait I'll come to that. That Christmas I bought a five pound box of candy and took it around to her house. What was my surprise when Kitty opened the door. I nearly fell down with embarresment but I finally stammered "Give this to Kitty," and ran home.

⁴ In the children's game "Clap In and Clap Out," a player who has been sent from the room returns and attempts to guess which other player has chosen him or her for a partner. If the guess is wrong, the other players clap their hands loudly.

⁵ Johnny Gowans was a local amateur athletic star.

XI

Indians and Violet

Sept 1910

Violet Stockton was a neice of Mrs. Finch and she spent a summer in Saint Paul. She was very pretty with dark brown hair and eyes big and soft. She spoke with a soft southern accent leaving out the r's. She was a year older than I but together with most of the other boys liked her very much. I met her through Jack Mitchell who lived next door to her. He himself was very attached as was Art. Foley and together they sneaked up behind her and cut off her hair that is a snip of it. We had a game we played called Indians which I made up. One side were the Indians and went off and hid somewhere. The cowboys then started off to find them and when the indians saw their chance they would jump out and take them by surpris We were all armed with croquet mallets. There were about fifteen of us. Kitty Shultz, Betty Mudge, Betty Foster, Elenor Mitchell, Marie Hersey, Dorothy Green, Violet Stockton and Harrit Foster. The boys were Adolph Sholly, Wharton

XII

Smith, Jack Mitchell, Arthur Foley, Archie Mudge and Roger Foster. Every day for a month we played this and then we turned into truth. At that time I was more popular with girls than I ever have been before. In truth Kitty Shultz, Dorothy, Violet, Marie and Catherine Tie⁶ all liked me best. At the present moment it is the reverse with probably most of these; with at least two, Kitty Shultz and Katherine tie. However I am wandering from the subject. Finally Violet had a party which was very nice and it was the day after this that we had the quarrel. She had some sort of a book called *flirting by sighns* and Jack and I got it away from Violet and showed it too all the boys. Violet got very mad and went into the house. I got very mad and therefore I went home. Immediately Violet repented and called me up on the phone to see if I was mad. However I did not

⁶ Probably Katherine Tighe, who would later offer Fitzgerald editorial advice for *This Side of Paradise*.

XIII

want to make up just then
and so I slammed down the receiver.
The next morning I went down to
Jacks to find that Violet had said
she was not coming out that
day. It was now my turn
to repent and I did so and
she came out that evening before how
ever I had heard several
things and, as I found
afterwards so had Violet and
I wanted to have justified. Violet
and I sat down on the hill back
of Shultze's a little away from
the others.
 "Violet," I began, "Did you call
me a brat."
 "No".
 "Did you say that you
wanted your ring and your picture
and your hair back."⁷

⁷ Rings, photographs, and locks of hair were among the items traded by the romantically inclined. A small photograph, presumably of Violet, was at some point glued to this page within a pencilled frame. Only the glue marks now remain.

Last Kiss

9

XIV

“No”

“Did you say that you hated me”

“Of course not, is that what you went home for”,

“No, but Archie Mudge told me those things yesterday evening.”

“He’s a little scamp” said Violet Indignantly.

At this juncture Elenor Michell almost went into hysterics because Jack was teasing her, and Violet had to go home with her. That afternoon I spanked Archie Mudge and finished making up with Violet.

Extract from my diary the next day

Wednesday. Aug. 20

Didnt do much today but learned a few valuble things to wit

- 1) that I was a fool to make up with Violet,—From Harriet Foster
- 2) that Violet wished she had my teeth from Elenor Mitchell

XV

- 3) that Violet had said that she wanted her
 ring as soon as she could get it—From
 Betty Mudge
 Thursday Aug. 21
 I learned two things from Betty Mudge
 1) that Violet thought I was a flirt
 2) that Violet did not like me half
 as well as she used to

- Friday Aug. 22
 I learned in truth⁸
 1st) that Betty Muges fellows were
 Bob Harrington, Tom Daniels
 and Bob Driscoll
 2nd) that I had a new rival in Wharton
 Smith
 3d) that Dorothy's fellows were me
 and Aurther Foley
 4th) I also learned that as Harriet Foster
 said Violet said some things
 that wern't honest

⁸ That is, the children's game of Truth—in which prevarication is not allowed.