



Background Notes

- **The Decline of the American Dream**
 - Roaring Twenties from Fitzgerald's perspective:
 - Decayed social and moral values
 - Cynicism, greed, empty pursuit of pleasure
 - Decadent parties, wild jazz
 - Corruption of the American Dream--Unrestrained desire for money and pleasure surpassed more noble goals.
- **World War I--Lost Generation**
 - Young men returning from war disillusioned and cynical after brutality
 - Social morality of Victorian America no longer acceptable
- **Stock Market skyrocketing**
 - Anyone can make a fortune
 - Clash between old money and nouveau riche
- **Prohibition--18th Amendment**
 - Banned the sale of alcohol
 - Demand for bootleg liquor--rise of organized crime
- **Geography**
 - East Egg--Old Aristocracy
 - West Egg--Nouveau Riche
 - Valley of Ashes--Moral/Social Decay of America
 - New York City--amoral quest for money and pleasure
 - East--Decay and Cynicism
 - West--Traditional Values and Ideals