

the sensible thing f scott fitzgerald summary

The Sensible Thing is a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald that delves into the complexities of love, societal expectations, and the pursuit of happiness in the Jazz Age. Set against the backdrop of the 1920s, the narrative explores the inner struggles of the protagonist, a young man named George, as he grapples with his feelings for a woman named Marjorie. As with much of Fitzgerald's work, this story intertwines themes of aspiration and disillusionment, revealing the often painful and perplexing nature of human relationships.

Plot Summary

At its core, The Sensible Thing revolves around George, a young man who returns to his hometown after a stint in college. He is filled with dreams and ambitions, but his life takes a turn when he becomes infatuated with Marjorie. The story is structured around George's reflections on his relationship with her and his attempts to navigate the expectations of society and his own desires.

Introduction of Characters

1. George: The protagonist, whose internal conflict drives the narrative. He is portrayed as a sensible yet conflicted young man, caught between his emotions and societal expectations.
2. Marjorie: George's love interest, who embodies the charm and allure of the Jazz Age. She is depicted as a vibrant and confident woman, representing both George's aspirations and the societal pressures he faces.
3. Supporting Characters: Various friends and family members who represent the societal norms and expectations of the time, influencing George's decisions and perceptions.

Setting

The story takes place in the 1920s, primarily in a small American town that reflects the broader cultural shifts of the time. The Jazz Age is characterized by a sense of liberation, excess, and the quest for personal fulfillment. This setting plays a crucial role in shaping the characters' experiences and decisions.

Major Themes

1. Love and Relationships: The story explores the nature of love, highlighting the tension between romantic ideals and the pragmatic realities of relationships.
2. Societal Expectations: Fitzgerald examines how societal norms influence individual choices, particularly in the context of love and marriage.
3. Disillusionment: The narrative captures the sense of disillusionment that often accompanies the pursuit of happiness, reflecting the broader sentiment of the Jazz Age.

Conflict and Resolution

As George navigates his feelings for Marjorie, he faces internal and external conflicts. His desire for a deep connection with her clashes with his fears of societal judgment and the expectations placed upon him. This tension culminates in a pivotal moment where George must decide between pursuing his feelings for Marjorie or adhering to the sensible choice dictated by societal norms.

Ultimately, the resolution of these conflicts is ambiguous, reflecting the complexities of love and the often elusive nature of happiness. George's journey serves as a microcosm of the struggles faced by many during the Jazz Age, where the pursuit of personal fulfillment often leads to disappointment and

confusion.

Analysis of Character Development

Fitzgerald's characters are intricately developed, showcasing their growth and struggles throughout the narrative.

George's Character Arc

- Initial Aspirations: At the beginning of the story, George is portrayed as a young man with dreams and ambitions, eager to make his mark on the world.
- Conflict with Feelings: As he becomes involved with Marjorie, George's internal conflict intensifies. He is torn between his love for her and his fear of societal disapproval, leading to a profound sense of confusion.
- Final Decision: By the end of the story, George's character reflects the complexity of human emotions. His decision-making process highlights the struggle between following one's heart and adhering to societal expectations.

Marjorie's Role

- Symbol of Desire: Marjorie represents George's aspirations and the allure of love. Her character embodies the spirit of the Jazz Age, filled with vitality and confidence.
- Catalyst for Conflict: As George's love interest, Marjorie serves as a catalyst for his internal conflict. Her presence forces him to confront his feelings and the constraints imposed by society.

Literary Techniques

Fitzgerald employs various literary techniques to enhance the narrative and convey deeper meanings.

Symbolism

1. The Setting: The small-town backdrop symbolizes the constraints of societal expectations, contrasting with the vibrant, free-spirited nature of the Jazz Age.
2. Character Interactions: The dynamics between George and Marjorie symbolize the tension between personal desires and societal norms.

Imagery and Tone

Fitzgerald's use of vivid imagery brings the story to life, creating a sense of nostalgia for the Jazz Age. The tone shifts between hopeful and melancholic, reflecting the complexities of love and the disillusionment that often accompanies it.

Conclusion

The Sensible Thing is a poignant exploration of love, societal expectations, and the pursuit of happiness in the context of the Jazz Age. Through the lens of George's internal struggles and his relationship with Marjorie, Fitzgerald captures the essence of a generation grappling with the complexities of modern life. The story resonates with readers as it highlights the ongoing tension between individual desires and societal norms, making it a timeless reflection on the human experience.

In the end, Fitzgerald's narrative serves as a reminder of the intricate dance between love and reason, inviting readers to reflect on their own choices and the societal influences that shape them. As George navigates his feelings and the expectations of his world, we are left to ponder the question: what is truly the sensible thing to do when it comes to matters of the heart?

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'The Sensible Thing' by F. Scott Fitzgerald?

The main theme revolves around the tension between societal expectations and personal desires, highlighting the struggles of love and the pursuit of happiness.

Who are the primary characters in 'The Sensible Thing'?

The primary characters are the protagonist, a man named 'the narrator', and his love interest, a woman named 'Daisy'. Their relationship explores the complexities of love and societal norms.

What is the setting of 'The Sensible Thing'?

The story is set in the early 20th century, primarily in a wealthy suburban environment that reflects the social dynamics of the Jazz Age.

How does Fitzgerald use symbolism in 'The Sensible Thing'?

Fitzgerald uses symbolism to represent the clash between romantic ideals and reality, particularly through objects and settings that reflect the characters' emotions and societal pressures.

What is the significance of the title 'The Sensible Thing'?

The title reflects the central conflict in the story: the struggle between making rational choices and following one's heart, ultimately questioning what is truly sensible in matters of love.

How does 'The Sensible Thing' compare to Fitzgerald's other works?

Like many of Fitzgerald's works, 'The Sensible Thing' explores themes of love, wealth, and disillusionment, fitting within the broader context of his critique of the American Dream.

What literary techniques does Fitzgerald employ in 'The Sensible Thing'?

Fitzgerald employs techniques such as rich imagery, irony, and a first-person narrative to create an intimate and reflective tone, drawing readers into the emotional landscape of the characters.

What is the overall message of 'The Sensible Thing'?

The overall message suggests that societal pressures can complicate genuine relationships and that true happiness often lies in following one's heart, despite the consequences.

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