

Analytical Questions: "Winter Dreams" by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Literary Analysis

1. What is the significance of the title? Why do you think Fitzgerald used "winter" and not "spring" or "fall" in the title? In what ways do the seasons affect Dexter's outlook on life?
2. Describe the setting AND its significance.
3. Describe Judy Jones at age eleven. How do you feel about her treatment of the nurse?
4. Why do you think Dexter quit?
5. Discuss the significance of this line: "... Dexter was unconsciously dictated to by his winter dreams." Are you ever dictated to by your "winter dreams"?
6. "Often he reached out for the best without knowing why he wanted it—and sometimes he ran up against the mysterious denials and prohibitions in which life indulges." Why is this significant? Is this story about denial as the narrator suggests? What is denied?
7. How had Dexter's perception of Judy changed in part II?
8. Compare the description of Judy's mouth at age eleven with the description in part II. What do you think the significance of her mouth is?
9. What atmosphere does the descriptive language used in part II create? Examples: 1. "Sun went down in a riotous swirl..." 2. Metaphor: "silver molasses" 3. "personification: the moon held a finger to her lips."
10. What is the significance of the tune coming from the piano?
11. What does "direction" signify in the line at the end of part II, "... for the second time, her casual whim gave a new direction to his life."?

12. Describe adult Judy. What kind of person is she? Do you know anyone like her?
13. What does Dexter “surrendering” part of himself (beginning of part IV) mean?
14. How does Dexter justify Judy’s lying to him? Why?
15. Compare Dexter’s view of autumn in part IV with his view at the beginning of the story. Why do you think the views differ?
16. A series of metaphors are used to describe Dexter’s view of Irene. How does his view of Irene compare to his opinions of Judy? What does, “That old penny’s worth of happiness he had spent for his bushel of content” mean?
17. What is the symbolism and imagery found in Judy’s appearance as she approaches Dexter at the University Club?
18. Discuss the significance of the description of the Jones’s house at the end of part IV.
19. Discuss the significance of the laundries. Why do you think Dexter had intended to sell them at the end of part V?
20. Interpret the following sentences: “The dream was gone. Something had been taken from him.”

Language and Style Analysis

21. Fitzgerald frequently uses dashes in place of other punctuation: commas, semicolons, periods, parentheses. Write down two examples. What effect does this achieve?
22. Fitzgerald employs colons in places where other punctuation would suffice. What effect does this achieve?