THIS SIDE OF PARADISE By F. Scott Fitzge rald ... Well thi s side of Paradise !... There's litt le comfort in the w ise. --Rupert Brooke. Experienc e is the name so many people g ive to their m istakes. --Oscar W ilde. To SIGO URNEY FAY BOOK ONE--The R omantic Egotist CHAPTER 1. A mory, Son o Beatrice Amory Blaine inh erited from his mother every trai t, except the str ay inexpressible few, that made him worth while . His father, an i neffectual, inarti culate man with a taste for Byro n and a habit of drowsing over t he Encyclopedia Britannica, gre w wealthy at thirt y through the death of two elder br others, successful Chicago brok ers, and in the first flush of feeli ng that the world w as his, went t o Bar Harbor and m et Beatrice O 'Hara. In consequence, Stephen Blaine handed dow n to posterity his height of just under six feet a nd his tendency to waver at cruc ial moments, these two abs tractio ns appearing in his so n Amory. For many years he ho vered in the background of his f amily's life , an unassertive figur e with a fa ce half-obliterated by lifeless, si lky hair, continually occupied i n "taking care" of his wife, conti nually harassed by the idea that he didn't and couldn 't under stand her. But Beatrice Blaine ! There was a woman! Early pictures taken on her father's estate a t Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, or in Rome at the Sacred Heart Conv ent--an e ducational extravaganc e that in her youth was only for the daug hters of the exceptional ly wealth y--showed the exquisit e delic acy of her features, the consummate art and simplicity of her clo thes. A brilliant education she h ad--h er youth passed in renaiss ance glory, she was versed in the late st gossip of the Older Roman Fa milies; known by name as a fabu lously wealthy American g irl to Cardinal Vitori and Queen Margh er ita and more subtle celebritie s t hat one must have had some cu lture even to have heard of. S he learned in England to prefer whi skey and soda to wine, and h er small talk was broadened in tw o s enses during a winter in Vienna. All in all Beatrice O'Hara absorbe d the sort of education that will b e quite impossible ever again; a tutelage measured by the numb er of things and people one cou ld be contemptuous of and char ming about; a culture rich in all arts and traditions, barren of all ideas, in the last of those days when the great gardener clippe d the inferior roses to produce on e perfect bud. In her less import a nt moments she returned to Ame rica, met Stephen Blaine and m arried him--this almost entirely because she was a little bit wea ry, a little bit sad. Her only child was carried through a tiresome season and brought into the wo rld on a spring day in ninety-six . When Amory was five he was alr ead y a delightful companion for her . He was an auburn-haired b oy, with great, handsome eyes w hic h he would grow up to in tim e, a facile imaginative mind and a t aste for fancy dress. From hi s f ourth to his tenth year he did th e country with his mother in h er fathe r's private car, from Coro nado, where his mother became so bo red that she had a nervou s brea kdown in a fashionable ho tel, do wn to Mexico City, where s he to ok a mild, almost epidemic cons umption. This trouble plea sed h er, and later she made use of it as an intrinsic part of her at mos phere- -especially after severa l astoun ding bracers. So, while more or le ss fortunate little rich b oys were defying governesses o n the bea ch at Newport, or being spanked or tutored or read to from "Do and Dare," or "Frank on th e Mississippi," Amory was biting acquie scent bell-boys in the Wa ldorf, outgro wing a natural repug nance to ch amber music and sy mphonies, a nd deriving a highly specialized education from his mother. "Amory." "Yes, Beatrice." (Such a q uaint name for his mo ther; she e ncouraged it.) "Dear, don't think of getting out of bed yet. I've al ways suspected that e arly ris ing in ear ly life makes one nervous. Clot hilde is having yo ur breakfast br ought up." "All rig ht." "I am feel ing very old to-da y, Amory," sh e would sigh, her f ace a rare ca meo of pathos, her voice exquisi tely modulated, he r hands as fa cile as Bernhardt's. "My nerves are on edge--on edg e. We m ust leave t his terrifying pl ace to-morrow a nd go searchin g for sunshine." Amory's penetr ating green eyes would look out through tangled hair at his moth er. Even at this age he had no ill usions about he r. "Amory." "Oh, yes." "I want y ou to take a red- hot bath as hot as you can bear it, and ju st relax you r nerves. Yo u can read in the tu b if you wish ." She fed him sect ions of the " Fetes Galantes" be fore he was t en; at eleven he co uld talk glibly , if rather reminisc ently, of Brah ms and Mozart and Beethoven. One afternoon, whe n left alone in the hotel at Hot S prings, he sam pled his m other's apric ot cordial, and as the taste plea sed him, h e became quite tipsy. This was f un for a while, but he essayed a cigarette in his exalta tion, and s uccumbed to a vulga r, plebeian reaction. Though this incident h orrified Beatrice, it al so secretly amused her and bec ame part of what in a lat er generation would h ave been termed her "lin e." "Thi s son of mine," he heard her tell a room full of awestruc k, admir ing women one day, "is entirely sophisticated and quite charming--but delicate--we're all delicate ; here, you know." Her hand wa s radiantly outlined aga inst her b eautiful boso m; then sinking her voice to a whisper, she told them of the apricot cordial. They rejoi ced, for she was a brave raconte use, but many were the key s turn ed in sideboard locks that night against the possible defe ction of little Bobby or Barbara. ... The se domestic pilgrimages were in variably in stat e; two maids, the p rivate car, or Mr. Blaine when av ailable, and very often a physi cia n. When Amory had the whoo pin g-cough four disgusted speci alis ts glared at each other hunc hed around his bed; when he to ok scarlet fever the number of a tten dants, including physicians and nurses, totalled fourteen. However , blood being thicker than broth , he was pulled through. The Bla ines were attached to no city. T hey were the Blaines of Lake Ge neva; they had quite enough re l atives to serve in place of friend s, and an enviable standing fro m Pasadena to Cape Cod. But B eatrice grew mor e and more prone to like only new acquaintances , as there were certain stories, s uch as the history of her consti tution and its many amendment s, memories of her years abroad , that it was necessary for her to repeat at regular intervals. Like Freudian dreams, they must be thrown off, else t hey would swee p in and lay siege to her nerves. Bu t Beatrice was critical about Am erican women, especially the flo ating population of ex-Weste rners. "They have accents, my d ea r," she told Amory, "not Sout he rn accents or Boston accents , not an accent attached to any loc ality, just an acce nt"--she becam e dreamy. "They pick up old, mo th-eat en London accents that ar e dow n on their luck and have t o be u sed by some one. They tal k as a n English butler might afte r sev eral years in a Chicago gra nd-op era company." She becam e almost incoherent--"Suppose--t ime in every Wester n woman's lif e--she fe els her husband is pro sperous enough for her to have- -accent-- they try to impress me, my dea r--" Though she though t of her body as a mass of frailti es, she considered her soul quit e as ill, and therefore important in her li fe. She had once been a Catholi c, but discover ing that prie sts were inf initely more attentiv e when she was in process of lo sing or reg aining faith in Mother Church, s he maintained an enc hantingly wavering attitude. Oft en she dep lored the bourgeois q uality of th e American Catholic c lergy, and was quite sure that had she live d in the shad ow of the g reat Continen tal cathedrals her soul would s till be a thin flame on the mighty altar of Rome. Sti ll, next to doc tors, priests were her favorite sp ort. "Ah, Bishop Wi ston," she w ould declare, "I do not want to tal k of myself. I can imagine the str eam of hysterical w omen flutter ing at your doors, be seeching you to be simpatico"-- then after an int erlude filled by t he clergyman--" but my mood--i s--oddly dissimil ar." Only to bish ops and above did she divulge her clerical rom ance. When she had first return ed to her countr y there had bee n a pagan, Swinb urnian young man in Ashe ville, for whose passionate k isses and un sentimental conver sations she h ad taken a decided penchant--th ey had discussed t he matter pro and con with an in tellectual rom ancing quite devo id of sappines s. Eventually she had decided t o marry for backg round, and the young pagan fro m Ashevil le had gone through a spiritu al crisis, j oined the Catholic Ch urch, and was now--Monsignor Darcy. "Ind eed, Mrs. Blaine, he i s still delig htful company--quite the cardin al's right-hand man." "Amory wil l go to him one day, I know," br eathed the beautiful lady, "and Monsignor Darcy will underst and h im as he understood me ." Amor y became thirteen, rathe r tall and slender, and more than ever on to his Celtic mother. He had tuto red occasionally--the id ea being that he was to "keep u p," at each place "taking up the work wher e he left off," yet as no tutor eve r found the place he le ft off, his mind was still in very good shap e. What a few more years o f this life would have made of hi m is p roblematical. However, fou r hour s out from land, Italy boun d, with Beatrice, his appendix bu rst, pr obably from too many me als in bed, and after a series of frantic telegrams to Europe and Ame ric a, to the amazement of the pa ss engers the great ship slowly wh eeled around and returned to N ew York to deposit Amory at the pier. You will a dmit that if i t w as not life it was magnificent . Af ter the operation Beatrice ha d a nervous breakdown that bor e a s uspicious resemblance to d eliri u m tremens, and Amory was left i n Minneapolis, destined to spen d the ensuing two years with hi s aunt and uncle. There the crud e, vulgar air of Western civ i lization first catches him--in his underwear, so to speak. ***** A KISS FOR AMORY His lip curle d when he read it. "I am going to h a ve a bobbing party," it said, "o n Thursday, December the seve nteenth, at five o'clock, and I w ould like it very much if you cou ld come. Your s truly, R. S.V.P. Myra St. Claire. He had be en two months in Minneapolis, a nd his chief struggle had been t he concealing from "the other g u ys a t school" how particularly su peri or he felt himself to be, yet th is c onviction was built upon shif tin g sands. He had shown off o ne day in Fren ch clas s (he was in senior French class) t o the utter confusion of Mr. R ea rdon, whose accent Amory dam ned contemptuously, and to th e delig ht of the class. Mr. Reardo n, who had spent several weeks in Par is ten years before, took h is rev enge on the verbs, whenev er he had his bo ok op en. But another time Amor y showed off in history class, wit h qui te disastrous results, for th e bo ys there were his own age, and t hey sh rilled innuendoes at ea ch other all the following week: "Aw--I b'li eve, doncherknow, the Umuricu n revolution was lawgel y an affa ir o f the mi ddul clawses," or "Wash ington came of very good blood--aw, qu ite good--I b'lieve." Amo ry inge niously tried to retrieve h imsel f by blu ndering on purpose. Two years before he had comm enced a his tory of the United Sta tes which, though it only got as far as the Colonia l Wars, had been pronounced by his mother completel y enchanti ng. His chief disadvan tage lay i n athletics, but as soo n as he discove red that it was the touchstone of power and popula rity at school , he began to make furious, pers istent efforts to ex cel in th e win ter sports, and with his ankles a ching and bending in spite of hi s efforts, he skated valiantly aro und the Lorelie rink every aft ernoon, w ondering how s oon he would be able to carry a hockey-stick wit hout getting it inexplicably tangl ed in his skates. The i nv itation to Miss M yra St. Claire's bobbing party sp ent the morning in his coat pock et, where it ha d an intense phys ical affair with a dust y piece of pe anut brittle. During the afternoo n he brought it to li ght with a sig h, and after some c onsideration and a preliminary draft in the back o f Collar and D aniel's "First-Year Latin," compo sed an answer: M y dear Miss St. Claire: You r truly charm ing envitat ion for the evening of next Thur sday evening was tru ly delightf ul to receive this mor ning. I will be charm and inchanted indeed to present my compliments on nex t Thursday evening. Faithfully, Amory Blain e. ***** On T hursday, there fore, he walked pensively along the slip pery, shovel-scraped si dewalks , and came in sight of M yra's ho us e, on th e half-hour after five, a lateness which he fancied his m other wo uld have favored. He waited on t he door-step with his eyes n onch alantly half-closed, and pla nned his entrance with precision . He would cross the floor, not too ha st ily, t o Mrs. St. Claire, and say with exactly the correct modulati on: "M y dear Mrs. St. Claire, I'm frightf ully sorry to b e late, but my ma id "--he paused there and realiz ed he would be quoting--"but m y u ncle and I had to see a fella- Ye s, I've met your enchanting daughte r at dancing-school." Then h e w ould shake hands, using th at sli ght, half-foreign bow, with all the starchy little females, and nod t o the fellas who would be stand ing 'round, paralyzed into rigid gr oups for mutual protection. A b utler (one of the three in Minne a polis) swung open the door. Amory stepped inside and divested him self of cap and coat. He was mil dly surprised not to hear the sh rill squawk of conversation from t he next room, and he decided i t must be quite formal. He appro ved of that--as he approved of t he butler. "Miss M yra," he said. To his surprise the butler grinned hor ribly. "Oh, yeah," he declare d, " she's here." He was unaware th at his failure to be cockney w as ruining his standing. Amory c onsidered him coldly. "But," con ti nued the butler, h is voice rising unnec essarily, "she's the only o ne wh at is here. The party's gon e." A mory gasped in sudden ho rror. "What?" "She's been waitin ' for Amory Blaine. That's you, a in't i t? Her mother says that if y ou s howed up by fiv e-thirty you t wo was t o go after 'em in the Pa ckard." Amory's despair was cry stallized by the appearance of M yra he r self, bundled to the ears in a pol o coat, her face plainly s ulky, he r voice pleasant only wit h diffic ulty. "'Lo, Amory." "'Lo, My ra." He had described the state o f his vitalit y. "Well--you got here , anyways. " "Well--I'll tell you. I guess y ou don't know about the auto accid ent," he romanced. My ra's eyes opened wide. "Who was it to?" "Well," he cont inued desp erately, "uncle 'n aunt 'n I." "Was any one kille d?" Amory paused and then nod ded. "Your uncle?" --alarm. " Oh, n o just a horse--a so rta gray horse." At this point the Erse butler s nickered. "Probably killed the e ngine," he s uggested. Amory would h ave put him on t he rack without a scruple. "We'll go now," said Myra coolly. "Yo u see, Amo ry, the bobs were orde red for five and everybody was here, so we cou ldn't wait--" "Well , I couldn't hel p it, could I ?" "So mama said for me to wait till ha'past five. We'll catch t he bobs befor e it gets to the Min nehaha Club, Amory." Amo 's shred ded poise dro pped from him. H e pictured the happy party jingli ng along snow y streets, the app earance o f the li mousine, the horrible public des cent of him and Myra before sixt y reproachful eyes, h is apology --a real one this time . He sighe d aloud. "W hat?" inquired Myra. "Nothing. I was just yawning. Ar e we going t o surely catch up w ith 'em e fore they get there?" He was encour aging a faint hope that t hey mig ht slip into the Minneha ha Club rs there , be found in blasé sec lusion before the fire a nd quite r egain his lost attitude. "Oh, sure Mike, we'll catch 'em all right --let' s hurry." He became consc ious of his stomach. As they ste pped into the machine he hurri edly s lapped the paint of d iplomacy ov er a rather box-li ke plan he had conceived. It was based upon some "trade-lasts" glean ed at dancing-school, to the ef fec t that he was "awful good-loo kin g and English, sort of." "Myra ," he said, lowering his voice a nd choosing his words care ully, "I beg a thou sand pardons. Can y ou e ver forgive me?" She regard ed h im gravely, his intent green eyes , his mouth, that to her thir teen- y ear-old, arrow-collar taste was t he quintessence of romance. Ye s, Myra could forgive him very easily. "Why--yes--sure." He loo ked at her again, and then dropped his eyes. He had la s hes. "I'm awful," he said sadly. " I'm diff'runt. I don't know why I make faux pas. 'Cause I don't ca r e, I s'pose." Then, recklessly: "I been smoking too much. I've g ot t'bacca heart." Myra pictured an all-night tobacco debauch, w ith Amory pale and reeling from the effect of nicotined lungs. Sh e gave a little gasp. "Oh, Amory, don't smoke. You'll stunt your g rowth!" "I don't care," he persis t ed gloomily. "I gotta. I got the habit. I've done a lot of things that if my fambly knew"--he hesitated, giving her imagination time to pi cture dark horrors--"I went to th e burlesque show last week." My ra was quite overcome. He tur ned the green eyes on her again. "You're the only girl in town I lik e muc h," he exclaimed in a rush of se ntiment. "You're simpatico ." Myr a was not sure that she wa s, bu t it sounded stylish though vagu ely improper. Thick dusk h ad d escended outside, and as t he limousine made a sudden turn she was jolted against him; the ir h ands touched. "You shouldn 't s moke, Amory," she whispere d. "Don' t you know that?" He sh ook his head. "Nobody cares." Myra he sitated. "I care." Someth ing stirr ed within Amory. "Oh, yes, you d o! You got a crush on Fr oggy Pa rker. I guess everybody knows that." "No, I haven't," ver y slowl y. A silence, while Amory thrill ed. The re was something fas cinating ab out Myra, shut away here cosily from the dim, chill ai r. Myra, a l ittle bundle of clothe s, with stra nds of yellow hair cur ling out fr om under her skating cap. "Because I've got a crush, to o--" He pa used, for he heard in t he distan ce the sound of young laught er, and, peering through the frosted glas s along the lamp-li t street, he m ade out the dark o utline of the bobbing party. He must act quic kly. He reached ove r with a violent, jerky effort, and clutched Myr a's hand--her thumb , to be exac t. "Tell him to go to the Minneh aha straight," he whi spered. "I wanta ta lk to you--I got to talk to you." Myra made out t he party ahead, had an instant v ision of her mo ther, and then--a las for conventi on--glanced into the eyes besid e. "Turn down thi s side street, Ri chard, and drive straight to the Minnehaha Club!" she cried thro ugh the speaking tube. Am ory sank ba ck against th e cushions with a sigh of relief. "I can kiss her," he thought. "I'll bet I can. I'll bet I c an!" Overhea d the sky was half crystalline, ha lf misty, and the n ight around w as chill and vibran t with rich ten sion. From the Country Club steps the roads stretc hed away, dark creases o n the white b lanket; hu ge heaps of snow lini ng the side s like the tracks of gia nt moles. T hey lingered for a moment on the steps, and watched the white h oliday moon. "Pale moons like th at one"--Amory mad e a vague g esture--"make peop le mysterieu se. You look like a y oung witch w ith her cap off and her ha ir sorta mussed"--her hands clu tched at her hair--"Oh, leave it, i t looks good." They drifted up the stairs and Myra led the way i nto the li ttle den of his dreams, where a c osy fire was burning be fore a big sink-down couch. A few years la ter this was to be a gr eat stage f or Amory, a c radle for many an em otional crisis. Now they tal ked fo r a moment abou t bobbing parti es. "There's always a bun ch of shy fellas," he commented , "sitti ng at the tail of the bob, s orta lu rkin' an' whisperin' an' pu shin' e ach other off. Then there 's alwa ys some crazy cross-eye d girl"-- he gave a terri fying imitation--" she 's always talkin' hard, sorta, to the chaperon." "You're such a f unny boy," puzzled Myra. "H ow d'y' mean?" Amory gave immedia te attention, on his own gro und at last. "Oh--always talking abo ut crazy things. Why don't y ou c ome ski-ing with Marylyn an d I to -morrow?" "I d on't like girls in th e daytime," he said shortly, and then, thinking this a bit abrupt, he added: "But I like you." He c l eared his throat. "I like you first and second and third." Myra's e yes became dreamy. What a st o ry this would make to tell Mar yl yn! Here on the couch with thi s wonderful-looking boy--the little fire- -the sense that they were alone in the great building-- Myra cap itulated. The atmosphere was t oo appropriate. "I like you the fir st twenty-five," she confessed, her voice trembling, "and Frogg y Parker twenty-sixth." Froggy h ad fallen twenty-five places in o ne hour. As yet he had not even no ticed it. But Amory, being on the spot, leaned over quickly and ki ssed Myra's cheek. He had never ki ssed a girl before, and he tast ed his lips curiously, as if he ha d munched some new fruit. Then t heir lips brushed like young w il d flowers in the wind. "We're a wful," rejoiced My ra gently. She slippe d her hand into his, her he ad dr ooped against his shoulde r. Su dden revulsion seized Am ory, d isgust, loathing for the who le in cident. He desired frantical ly to be away, never to see Myra agai n, never to kiss any one; he bec ame conscious of his face a nd h ers, of their clin ging hands, a nd he w anted to creep out of hi s body and hide somew here safe ou t of sigh t, up in the corner of his mind. "K iss me again." Her voice came out of a great void. "I don 't want to," he heard himself sa ying. T here was another pause. "I don 't want to!" he repeated pas sionately. Myra sprang up, her c heeks pink wit h bru ised vanit y, the great bow on th e back of her head trembling sy mpathetic ally. "I hate you!" she c ried. "Don 't you ever dare to spe ak to me again!" "What?" stammered Amo ry. "I'll tell ma ma you kis sed me! I will too! I will too! I'll te ll mama, and she won't let me play with you !" Amory ros e and stared at her helplessly, a s though she were a new a nimal of who se presence on the earth he had not heretof ore been aw are. The d oor opened sud denly, and Myra 's mother a ppeare d on the threshol d, fumbling wit h her lorgnette. "Well," she bega n, adjusting it b enignantly , "the man at the desk told me y ou two chil dren wer e up here--How do you do, Amor y." Amor y wat ched Myra and waited for the cr ash--but none came. The pout f aded, t he high pink su bsided, and Myra 's voice w as plac id as a summer lake when she a nsw ered her mother . "Oh, we started so late, mama, that I thought we m ig ht as well--" He heard from belo w the shr ieks o f laughter, and smelled the vapi d od or of hot chocolate and tea-cake s as he s ilently followed m other and daughter down-stairs. The s ound of the graphophone ming led w ith th e voice s of many girls humming the air , and a faint glow was bo rn and spread over him: "Case y-J ones--mounted to the cab-un C asey- Jon es--'th his orders in his hand . Ca sey-Jones--moun ted to the cab-un Took his fare w ell journey to the prom-ised lan d." *** ** SNAPSHOTS OF THE YOUNG EGOTIST Amory spent nearly two years in M i nneapolis. The first winter he w ore m occasins that were born yellow, but after many applications of oil and dir t assumed their mature color, a di r ty , g reenish brown; he wore a gra y plaid mackina w coat, and a red tobogg a n ca p. His dog, Count Del Mon t e, ate the red cap, so his uncle g ave h im a gray one that pulled down ove r his f ace. The trouble with thi s o ne wa s that you breathed into i t and y our b reath froze; one day the darn th ing froze his cheek. He ru bbed s now on his cheek, but it turned bluish-black just the sam e. ***** T he Count Del Mont e ate a box o f bluing once, but it didn't hu rt him. Later, ho wever, h e lost his mind and ran ma dly up the street, bumping into fen ces, roll ing in gutters, a nd pursu ing his ecc entric course out of Amo ry's life. Amory cried o n his be d. "Poor little Count," he c ried. "Oh, po or little Count!" After se veral mo nths he sus pected C ount of a fine piece of e motional acting. ***** A mory and Fro g Parker c onsidere d that the greatest l ine in literatu re occurred in Act III of "Arsene Lu pin." They sat in t he first ro w at the Wednesday a nd Saturday mat ine es. The line wa s: "If one ca n't b e a great artist or a great sold ier, the next best t hing is to be a g reat criminal. " ***** Am ory fell in love agai n, and wrote a po em. This was it: "Marylyn and Sallee , Those are the girl s for me. Maryly n s tands above S allee in that sweet, deep love." He wa s interested in wheth er McGovern of Minnesota w o uld make the first or second All-American, how to do the card-p ass. ho w to d o the coin-pass , chameleon ties, how b abies we re born, and whe ther Three- fingered Bro wn was rea lly a better pi tcher th an Chris tie Mathe wson. Among o ther things h e read: "F or the Honor of the Sc hool," "Little Wom en" (twice), "The Common L aw," "Sa pho," "Dangerous Dan McGre w," "The Broa d Highway" (three t imes), "Th e Fall o f the House of Usher ," "T hree Weeks," "Mary Ware, the Little Col onel's Ch um," "Gunga Din," The Police Gazet te, an d Jim-Jam Jem s. He had all the Hent y biass es in history, and was particul arly f ond of the cheerful m urder stories of Mary Robert s R inehart. ***** School ruined h is French and gave him a d istaste for standard a uthor s . His masters considered him i dl e , unreliable and superf icially clever. ***** He coi l ected locks of hair from many g irls. He wore the rings of sev eral. Finally he could h orr ow no more rings, owing to h is ne rv ous habit of chewing t hem out of shape. T h is, it seemed, usually aroused t he je alous suspicions of the ne xt borrower. ***** All through the summer months A m ory a nd Frog Parker went each w eek to the Stock Com pany. A fterward they would s tr oll home in the balmy air of August night, dreaming alo ng He nnepin a nd Nicollet Avenue s, throu gh the gay crowd. Amory wonder ed how people could fail to notice tha t he was a boy m ark ed fo r glory, and wh en faces of the th rong g turned toward hi m and am biguous ey es stared into hi s, he assumed the mo st romantic of expre s sions and walke d on the ai r cushions t hat lie on the as pha lts of fourteen. Alwa ys, after he was in b ed , there were v oices--indef inite, fading, e nchantin g--jus t outside his window, and before h e fell asleep he w ould dream one of his fa vorite waking d reams , the one about becoming a great half-back , or the one about the J apane se invas ion, when he was rewarded b y b eing made the you ngest general in the world. It was always the becomi ng he d ream ed of, never the being. This, too, was quite characte ristic of Amory. ***** CODE OF THE YOUNG EGOTIST Befor e he was summoned back to Lake Geneva, he h ad appeared, shy b ut inwardly glowing, in his first long trousers, set off by a pu rple accordi on tie and a "Bel mont" collar with th e edges unassailab ly meeting, purple socks, and h andkerchief with a purple bord er peeping from his breast p ocket. But more than that, he had form ula ted his first philosophy, a code to live by, which, as near a s it c an be named , w as a sort of arist ocratic egotis m. He ha d realized that his best in teresting were bound up with th ose of a certain variant, c hangin g person, w hose la bel, in order that his past might al ways be id entified with him, was Amory Blaine. Amory mark ed himsel f a fortunate youth, ca pable of i nfinite exp ansio n for good or evil. He d id not consi der himself a "strong char'c'te r," but relied on his facility (le arn things s orta quick) and his s uperior men tality (rea d a lot ta deep bo oks). He was proud of t he fact that he could never bec ome a mechan ical or scientif ic genius. Fro m no other height s was he deba rred. P hysically.-- Amory though t that he w as excee dingly handsome. He was. He fa n athlete of possibilities and a supple dancer. Socially.--Here his co nditio n was, perhaps, most dangerou s. He gran ted him self personality, charm, magneti wer of do minating all contem porary male s, the gift of fascin a ting all wom en. Mentally.- -Complete, unques tioned s uperio rity. Now a confession will have y had ra ther a Puritan conscie nce. Not t hat he yielded to i t--lat er in life he alm ost comple tely slew it--but at fift een it m ade h im consider himself a gre at dea l oys... unscrupulousness... the desire to influence peo ple i n almost every wa y, even for evil... a certain coldn ess an d la ck of affection, amounting s om etim ftin g sense of honor... an unho ly se lfishness... a puz zled , furtive interest in ev erythi ng concerning sex. There was, a l so, a curious strain of weaknes s running h is make-up... a harsh phrase f ro m the lips of an older boy (older boys usuall y d etested him) was liable to sw ee p him off his poise into surly sen sitiveness, or timid stupidity... h wn moods and he felt that thoug h he was capabl e of recklessness and audac ity, he possessed neither coura g e, perseverance, nor self-respec t. Vanity, tempered with self-sus pi dge, a sense of people as auto m atons to his w ill, a desire to "pass" as many boys as possible and get to a v a cion if not self-knowle gue top of the world... with this bac kground did Amory drift int o ad olescence. ***** PREPA R ATORY TO THE GREAT ADV ENT URE The tra in s lo wed up with midsumme r la nguor at Lake Geneva, and A mor y cau ght sight of his mother w aiting in her electric on the grav elle d station drive. It was a n ancient electric, one of the ea rly types, and p ainted gray. The sight of he r sitting there, slenderly er ect, and of her face, where beaut y and dign ity combined, melting to a dreamy recollect ed smile, filled him with a s udden gr eat pride of her. A s they kissed coolly a nd he stepped into the e lectric , he felt a quick fear lest he had lost the requisite charm to see i f ther e's anythin g coming... " She looked left and right, s he slippe d cautiously into a speed of two miles an hour, b "De ar boy--you're so tal l... look beh ind and g s he made him get out a nd run ahead to sig nal her f orward like a traffic polic eman. Beatrice wa s what might b y to act as sentinel; and at one busy crossin hand some--you've sk ipped the awkw ard age, o r is that sixt een; perhap s it's fourteen or fifte en; I can ne ver remember ful d river. "You are tall--but you're st ill very s me," murmured Amory. "But, my dear bo y, what odd c lothes! T hey look as if they were a set--do n 't they? Is y ; but you've skipp ed it." "Don't embar ras unted impolitely. " You must go to Brooks' and get some r eally n ice suits. Oh, we'll have a talk to-night o our u nderwear purple, too?" Amory g r ell you about your heart--you've probably been neglecting yo ur heart--and you don't kno w." Amor r perh aps to- morrow night. I want to t cent overlay of his own ge neration. Aside from a minute sh y ness, he felt that the old cy nical ki y thou ght how superficial was the re en one bit broken. Y et f or the first few d ays he wandered about the gardens and alo ng the nship wi th his mother had not be ess, finding a le thargic content in smoking "Bull" at the garage with one of the shore in a state of superlonelin the estate wer e dotted with old and new summ er ho uses and many fount ain chau ff eurs. The sixty acres of e suddenly i nto sight from folia ge-hung hidin g-place s; there was a gre s a nd white benches that cam family of white cats that prowl ed the many flower-be ds and were silh a t and constantly increasing gainst th e darken ing trees. It w as on one o f the shadow y paths that B ouetted s uddenly at night a mory, after Mr. Bl aine had, as usual, reti red for the even ing to his pr eatrice at last captured A ing him for avoi ding her, sh e took hi m for a long tete-a -tete in th ivate librar y. After reprov o t reconcile hims elf to her beauty, that was mother to h is own, e moonligh t. He could n shoulders, the gr ace of a f ortuna te woman of thirty. "Amory, d the exquisit e neck and ly, "I had such a str ange, w eird t ime after I left you." "Did you ear," she cro oned soft had my last breakdo wn"--s he spoke of it as a sturdy, gall , Beatrice?" " When I s told me"--her voice san g on a confidential note--"tha ant feat. "The doctor ad done the consisten t dr in king that I have, he woul t if any man aliv e h ally shattered, my dear , an d in his grave--long in d have been phy sic winced, and wondere d how this would have s his grave." Am o ry Parker. "Yes," contin ue, d Bea trice tragically, " ounded to Fro ggy nderful visions." S he p ressed the palms of h I had dream s--wo yes. "I saw bronz e river s lapping marble shor er hands in to her e that soared th rough t he air, par ti-colored b es, and gr eat birds t plumage. I heard st range musi c and the irds with iridescen umpets--w hat?" Am ory had snic kered. " flare of barbaric tr aid go o n, Beatrice. " "That was al l--it me What, Amory?" "I s recur red--garden s that flaunted color rely recurred and th is would be q uite dull, moons tha ing against which yed, paler than winter moons, m o t whirled and swa vest moons--" "Are you quite wel r e golden than har Quite well--as well as I will ever b I now, Beatrice?" " ood, Amory. I know that can' t ex e . I am not underst ry, but--I am not understoo d." A press it to you, Amo ed. He put his arm arou nd his mory was quite mov s head gent ly against h er shou moth er, rubbing hi --poor Bea trice." "Tel l me ab lder. "P oor Beatrice ou have tw o horrible years? out you, Amory. Did y lying, and then de cided aga " Amory co nsidered enjoyed them. I adapted m inst it. "No, Beatrice. I ie . I beca me c onventional." yself to the bo urgeois by s aying that , and he pictu He surprised hi mself have gap ed . "Beatrice," he red how Froggy w ould t to go aw a y to school. Eve said suddenly, "I w an s is goin g to go away to sc rybody in Minneapoli some ala r m. " But you're onl hool." Beatrice showe d rybody go es aw ay to school y fifteen." "Yes, but eve Beatric e." O n Beatr ice's sugg at fifteen, and I want to, roppe d for t estion the subject was d lighte d him b he rest o f the walk , but a week later she de have your wa y saying: "Amory, I have decided to let you I." "Y es?" "To y. If you sti ll want to, you can go to schoo ick e xcitement. St. Regis's i n Con ne cticut." Amor y felt a qu 's bet ter that you "It's being arr ange d," c ontinued Beatrice. "It ave go ne to Eton, an should go awa y. I' d hav e prefer red you to h s impr acticable now-- d then to Christ Ch urch, O xford , but it seem ue stio n take care of its and for the prese n t we'll let th e university q Heave n knows. It seem elf." "What are you going to d o, Beatrice?" " try. Not for a second do I s my fate to fret a w ay my year s in this coun a regre t t ypical of very vu regret being Am eri can--indee d, I think that comin g nat ion--yet"--and lgar people, an d I fe el sure w e are t he great owsed away c lose to an old she sighed--" I feel my life s hould ha ve dr and a utumnal br owns--" Amo er, mellower civiliza tion, a l and of gree ns : "M y regret is th at you have ry did not answer, s o his mother continu ed , it 's better that you should g n't been a broad, but still, as you are a man a t the right term?" Amory ag row up here under t he s narling eagle--is th ated the Japanese in vasion. reed th at it was. She wou ld not have appreci 'll have to start East a little e "Whe n do I go to sch oo l? " "Next month. You 'll have a free week, so I wan arly to take your exam i nations. After that you "To who?" "To Monsigno r Da t you to go up the Hu dson and pay a visit." Harrow and then to Yale--b e r cy, Amory. He wants to see you. He went to el he can be such a help--" S came a Catholic. I want him to talk to you--I fe y, dear Amory--" "Dear Be at he s troked his auburn ha ir gently. "Dear Amor ed with "six suits summ er u rice--" ***** So early in S epte mber Amory, provid er or T shirt, one jersey , one nderwe ar, six suits winte r und erwear, one sweat