

Student Name **Grade 11 Required Summer Reading Analysis**

MODEL

Choice #1 *Tender Is The Night* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Taking place on the French Riviera in the 1920's, *Tender Is The Night* is a gripping story that entangles lust and heartbreak. The book follows the struggles of Dick Diver, an American psychologist. At the time, the Riviera was the social center of France where many sophisticated and educated people lived. Dick Diver is one of them. While visiting a clinic for his practice of psychology, he falls in love with a patient named Nicole Warren. As a child, Nicole had been sexually abused by her father, leading to mental illness. She also developed a fear of men, but Dick and Nicole eventually get married. On the outside, this sounds like an ideal relationship that will save Nicole, but inside is an invisible, twisted story. Enter Rosemary Hoyt, a young movie star on vacation in the French Riviera who is befriended by the Divers. A relationship starts between Rosemary and Dick, and they continue their affair behind closed doors without any suspicions from anyone, until one day when all the lies and betrayals are discovered and both Nicole and Rosemary are angry. Dick loses both of the women he loves. He has spent his life devoted to Nicole and the ideals of love, though this eventually ruins his life, dreams, and career. Throughout the book, appearance versus reality is a conflict. To outsiders, everything in the Diver family appears normal. The Divers try to retain the "happy" appearance and conceal the unpleasant, and Dick tries to conceal his love of Rosemary. (Today's reality television has far less drama and heartbreak than this literary classic. Just think of *Temptation Island*.) Furthermore, Rosemary first says she loves Dick because he appears "very handsome" (12) before she even gets to know him. I think *Tender Is the Night* is a tragic love story. F. Scott Fitzgerald paints the portrait of characters who truly struggle with love, and his language and description of the culture and locations in France really come to life. He writes, "For a moment all the outdoors shut in with mist was like spring with the curtains drawn. Life was gathered near the hotel. Dick passed some cellar windows where bus boys sat on bunks and played cards over a litre of Spanish wine" (153). Still, Fitzgerald has many minor characters involved in the story, and at times it is difficult to keep track of everyone. I think there could have been more character development for some of these other characters. He develops his main characters, Rosemary, Nicole, and Dick well, though. In a lot of ways, these characters' habits and personalities remind me of patients who could have been featured in the book by psychologist Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia*. Just as in *Reviving Ophelia*, topics such as alcoholism, mental illness, and sex are many of the problems the characters deal with throughout their stories. *Tender Is The Night* also reflects Fitzgerald's own life. The romance Dick and Nicole share parallels F. Scott Fitzgerald's relationship with his wife, Zelda. Zelda, like Nicole, was mentally ill during their marriage, but unlike Nicole, who recovered from the illness, Zelda remained mentally unstable until the day she died. Overall, I enjoyed *Tender Is The Night* because it sheds light on its famous author and the cultural world of the 1920's, and because it depicts two realistic characters—both full of complications and struggles.

- The writer has successfully incorporated all four required elements into her narrative:
- (1) a clear, precise, and concise plot summary that demonstrates comprehension of the book;
 - (2) reflection on literary features of the book, such as character, setting, theme, symbolism, or writing style;
 - (3) a personal evaluation of the book, supported by specific details; and
 - (4) comparisons between the book and another book read for summer reading.