Study Questions for F. Scott Fitzgerald, “Bernice Bobs Her Hair”

1. Through the character of Marjorie, does Fitzgerald paint a flattering picture of the flapper? Is she a misguided, superficial flirt? A deliberately cruel manipulator? A strong and independent woman who can hold her own against men? A proto-feminist?

2. Who would you prefer to have as a friend – Marjorie, Bernice, or Warren? What are the most striking character traits of each person?

3. Historians have pointed out that 1920s youth denounced the older generation for being hypocrites. Are the young people in the story “frank” and “honest” or are they too hypocrites? Does the answer vary depending on which character one considers or what kind of a situation the character is in?

4. How does Fitzgerald portray the men in this story? Vapid buffoons? Sexist oppressors? Clueless in the face of sophisticated and manipulative women?

5. Drawing on Fitzgerald’s descriptions, what are the most noticeable characteristics of the youth in this story? What did these young people value? What were their good and bad qualities?

6. Ultimately, in the battle of the sexes, who has more power over the other in this story – the men or the women?

7. Does Bernice change for the better or for the worse over the course of the story? Was the “sophisticated” environment that Bernice enters corrupting or character building?

8. Why did Bernice bob her hair? Why did she bob Marjorie’s hair?

9. Does this story have a “happy ending?” Did Marjorie deserve her fate?