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SIMON GRIFFITH

LITERARY GUIDES

The Connell Guide
To F. Scott Fitzgerald's
The Great Gatsby
John Sutherland
and Jolyon Connell
Connell Guides £6.99 **★★★★★** £6.99

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The list includes *Pride And Prejudice*, *Tess Of The D'Urbervilles* and some of Shakespeare's plays. Anyone who's ever had to sit an English exam will probably be reminded of Coles Notes, but the Connell guides are more attractively laid out and much better written, by

leading experts in their field. They will appeal not only to students but also more mature readers.

It has been so long since I've read *The Great Gatsby* that I was glad to be reminded of what I'd forgotten, and intrigued to discover what I'd never known in the first place.

For instance, I had never grasped Fitzgerald's debt to Rudyard Kipling, that most English of writers. Apparently the main character's name was inspired by a protagonist called Captain Gadsby in one of Kipling's short stories.

IT'S A FACT
The English don't drink the most tea in the world. Nor do the Indians or the Chinese. Top of the table for tea-drinking per capita is Paraguay, at 11kg a year. The UK is 13th, with a modest 1.9kg.

Rudd's tone can occasionally grate. He's relentlessly upbeat and matey, resorting to more than a touch of Jeremy Clarkson's technique of moving from highbrow to lowbrow in a single sentence. He notes for instance that: 'So many of the problems of the world are to do with the slow pace of evolution, not least war and nipple rash.'

But anyone who sticks with him to the end will find out more home truths, and fewer clichés, about the English than they will in most Anglo-hunting books.

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