

Character Traits Of John T. Unger From The Diamond As Big As The Ritz By F. Scott Fitzgerald

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F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story, *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, features a compelling array of characters, each embodying distinct traits that contribute to the narrative's richness. Among these, John T. Unger stands out as the story's protagonist, embodying a complex mix of curiosity, innocence, morality, and resilience. Understanding John T. Unger's character traits offers valuable insights into the themes of wealth, morality, and the American Dream that Fitzgerald explores. This article provides a detailed analysis of the key character traits of John T. Unger, supported by examples from the story, all organized to enhance SEO relevance.

Introduction to John T. Unger

John T. Unger is a young, upper-class American boy from a privileged background. He visits the mysterious and opulent estate of Percy Washington, which is hidden atop a mountain and guarded by unimaginable wealth. Throughout the story, Unger's reactions, decisions, and internal conflicts reveal much about his character. His traits evolve as he navigates the moral dilemmas posed by the Washington family's secret, making him a relatable and morally upright figure in a world of greed and deception.

Core Character Traits of John T. Unger

1. Curiosity and Wonder

One of John T. Unger's most prominent traits is his innate curiosity. From the moment he arrives at the Washington estate, he is fascinated by the extraordinary wealth and secrets surrounding it.

- He marvels at the grandeur of the estate and the wealth of the Washington family.
- His curiosity drives him to explore the hidden corners of the estate, such as the mine that holds the enormous diamond.
- This trait underscores his youthful innocence and desire to understand the world beyond his own privileged experience.

His curiosity acts as a double-edged sword—leading him to uncover secrets but also putting him at moral risk as he becomes entangled in the Washington

family's dangerous secret.

2. Innocence and Naivety

John's innocence is a defining trait that shapes his reactions and judgments throughout the story.

- He initially perceives the Washington estate as a wonderland, unaware of the darker implications of the family's secret.
- His naive belief in honesty and fairness contrasts sharply with the greed and deception of the Washingtons.
- This innocence makes him vulnerable but also highlights his moral purity and genuine nature.

Despite witnessing greed and corruption, Unger's innocence sustains his moral compass, guiding his eventual decisions.

3. Morality and Ethical Integrity

Throughout the story, John T. Unger demonstrates a strong sense of morality.

- He is appalled by the Washington family's willingness to hide a massive diamond at the expense of others' safety.
- When faced with the truth about the secret, he questions the morality of wealth built on deception.
- His refusal to partake in the Washingtons' dishonest schemes reveals his ethical stance.

This trait positions Unger as a moral hero, emphasizing Fitzgerald's critique of greed and the corrupting influence of wealth.

4. Courage and Moral Courage

John exhibits courage in confronting the dangerous truths of the estate.

- He risks his safety by exploring forbidden areas of the estate and learning its secrets.
- He stands up to Percy Washington when he realizes the implications of the family's secret, demonstrating moral bravery.
- His decision to leave the estate rather than participate in its immoral activities underscores his moral courage.

His bravery underscores the importance of standing up for one's principles, even in the face of danger.

5. Resilience and Determination

Unger's resilience becomes evident toward the story's climax.

- He refuses to be swayed by the Washingtons' wealth or threats, maintaining his resolve.
- Despite the allure of the estate's riches, he chooses morality over material gain.
- His determination to leave the estate and expose its secrets highlights his strong character.

This resilience reflects Fitzgerald's broader theme of moral integrity in a corrupt world.

6. Compassion and Empathy

John's reactions often show his capacity for compassion.

- He feels pity for the servants and the oppressed who suffer because of the Washingtons' greed.
- He empathizes with the plight of others who are victimized by wealth and deception.
- This trait enhances his moral stature and differentiates him from the greed-driven characters.

His compassion underscores the story's critique of superficial wealth and the importance of human empathy.

Summary of John T. Unger's Character Traits

To summarize, John T. Unger embodies several interconnected traits that define his role in *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*:

1. Curiosity and Wonder
2. Innocence and Naivety
3. Morality and Ethical Integrity

4. Courage and Moral Bravery
5. Resilience and Determination
6. Compassion and Empathy

These traits work together to paint a picture of a young man who is morally upright and courageous, standing in stark contrast to the greed and deception of the wealthy Washington family.

Impact of John T. Unger's Traits on the Story's Themes

Understanding John T. Unger's character traits is essential to grasping the story's themes:

Wealth and Corruption

- Unger's innocence and morality highlight the corrupting influence of wealth when paired with greed.
- His resistance to participating in immoral schemes emphasizes the moral decay behind the estate's opulence.

American Dream and Moral Integrity

- His resilience and determination reflect the ideal of integrity in the pursuit of the American Dream.
- Fitzgerald critiques the materialism that threatens moral values through Unger's moral stance.

Class and Social Hierarchy

- Unger's traits contrast sharply with the arrogance and entitlement of the Washingtons, illustrating social inequality.
- His empathy and compassion demonstrate a more humane outlook on wealth and privilege.

Conclusion

In conclusion, John T. Unger's character traits—from curiosity and innocence to morality and resilience—make him a compelling figure in Fitzgerald's *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*. His moral integrity and bravery serve as a critique of greed and materialism, emphasizing the importance of maintaining one's principles in a corrupt world. Analyzing his traits provides a deeper understanding of the story's themes and Fitzgerald's commentary on the American obsession with wealth. For readers and scholars alike, John T. Unger

exemplifies the virtues of morality, courage, and compassion amidst a world of superficial luxury, making him a timeless character in American literature.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the defining character traits of John T. Unger in 'The Diamond As Big As The Ritz'?

John T. Unger is portrayed as curious, naive, and morally conscious. He is curious about the opulence and secrecy of the wealthy family, naive regarding their moral corruption, and morally conscious about the ethical issues surrounding their wealth and actions.

How does John T. Unger's character evolve throughout the story?

John T. Unger evolves from an innocent, curious boy to a more aware and morally conflicted individual, recognizing the corrupt nature of the elite and grappling with the moral dilemmas posed by their lavish and secretive lifestyle.

What role does John T. Unger's personality play in highlighting the story's themes?

His traits of innocence and moral sensitivity serve to emphasize themes of greed, corruption, and the loss of innocence, contrasting his honest perspective with the decadence and moral decay of the wealthy family.

How does Fitzgerald depict John T. Unger's moral character in the narrative?

Fitzgerald depicts John T. Unger as morally upright and empathetic, often reflecting concern about the ethical implications of the family's secret and wealth, which underscores his integrity and innocence.

In what ways do John T. Unger's traits contribute to the story's critique of wealth and privilege?

John T. Unger's traits of honesty and moral awareness highlight the superficiality and moral corruption behind the glamorous facade of wealth, serving as a critique of the moral decay associated with extreme privilege.

Additional Resources

Character Traits Of John T. Unger From The Diamond As Big As The Ritz

F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story *The Diamond As Big As The Ritz* features a compelling protagonist named John T. Unger, whose character traits significantly influence the narrative's direction and themes. As the story

unfolds, Unger's personality, values, and decisions reveal much about the nature of innocence, morality, and the allure of wealth. Analyzing John T. Unger's character traits offers a deeper understanding of his role within the story and the broader commentary Fitzgerald makes on American society during the Jazz Age. This article explores Unger's personality traits in detail, examining his motivations, moral compass, relationships, and growth throughout the story.

Introduction to John T. Unger

John T. Unger enters the story as a typical American teenage boy, but his character quickly becomes a vessel through which Fitzgerald explores themes of innocence, curiosity, and moral awakening. As a guest of the wealthy and mysterious Percy Washington, Unger's reactions and decisions highlight his core traits, making him a relatable yet morally conflicted figure. His character development from an innocent, naive boy to someone who begins to question the corrupting influence of wealth provides a rich landscape for literary analysis.

Core Personality Traits of John T. Unger

Innocence and Naivety

John Unger's initial characterization is rooted in innocence and naivety. Coming from a modest background, he is unfamiliar with the extravagance and moral ambiguities of the Washington family's world. His innocence is reflected in his wonderment at the grandeur of the diamond mountain and the luxurious estate. Fitzgerald depicts Unger as a boy who is captivated by the novelty and beauty around him, but also somewhat unaware of the darker implications.

Features:

- Curiosity about the world beyond his own experience
- Lack of awareness of the moral complexities of wealth and power
- An idealistic view of the American Dream, believing in fairness and honesty

Pros:

- Endearing and relatable for readers
- Serves as a moral contrast to the corruption of the Washingtons

Cons:

- Vulnerable to manipulation due to naivety
- Limited understanding of the consequences of his actions

Morally Upright and Ethical

Throughout the story, Unger displays a strong moral compass. Despite the temptations and the secrets he uncovers, he is fundamentally guided by a sense of right and wrong. His discomfort with the Washingtons' secret – the diamond mountain and their unethical practices – underscores his ethical stance.

Features:

- Disapproval of the Washingtons' dishonesty and cruelty
- Desire to do what is right, even if it means risking his relationship with Percy
- Repulsion at the idea of exploiting the diamond mountain's resources

Pros:

- Illustrates integrity and moral clarity
- Acts as a moral anchor in the story

Cons:

- His morality sometimes leads to feelings of helplessness or frustration
- A limited capacity to challenge the powerful directly

Curiosity and Adventurous Spirit

Unger's curiosity drives much of the story's plot. His desire to explore the unknown and understand the secrets of the Washington estate propels him into dangerous territory. Fitzgerald presents Unger as an adventurous boy, eager to see the world beyond his small-town life, which ultimately leads to his moral awakening.

Features:

- A keen interest in the mysterious diamond mountain
- Willingness to venture into unfamiliar and risky situations
- A desire to experience the grandeur of the wealthy elite

Pros:

- Adds excitement and tension to the narrative
- Demonstrates youthful curiosity and desire for discovery

Cons:

- His curiosity blinds him to potential dangers
- Risk of recklessness in pursuit of knowledge

Sense of Justice and Fairness

Unger's actions and reactions reveal a deep sense of justice. He is disturbed by the exploitation and dishonesty he witnesses among the Washingtons. His moral indignation underscores his belief in fairness, truth, and the importance of integrity.

Features:

- Disapproval of Percy Washington's arrogance and cruelty
- Desire to expose the truth about the diamond mountain
- Compassion for those oppressed or harmed by the wealthy

Pros:

- Highlights his compassionate nature

- Reinforces the story's critique of greed and corruption

Cons:

- His sense of justice puts him at odds with powerful figures
- His moral stance sometimes isolates him

Growth and Transformation

As the story progresses, Unger's character exhibits signs of growth. Initially portrayed as a naive and innocent boy, his experiences with the Washington family and the secrets of the diamond mountain challenge his moral beliefs. His reactions evolve from admiration to disillusionment, illustrating a loss of innocence and a deeper understanding of the world's complexities.

From Innocence to Realism

Unger's journey from naive admiration to disillusionment reflects a classic coming-of-age narrative. His exposure to the greed, cruelty, and moral corruption of the Washingtons forces him to confront harsh realities. This transformation underscores Fitzgerald's critique of the American Dream – suggesting that innocence is often sacrificed in the pursuit of wealth and power.

Features:

- Increased awareness of societal inequalities
- Recognition of the corrupting influence of wealth
- A more critical view of the American Dream

Pros:

- Adds depth and realism to Unger's character
- Provides a moral lesson on the loss of innocence

Cons:

- His disillusionment may lead to cynicism
- The story suggests that innocence is difficult to maintain

Decision-Making and Moral Courage

Unger's final decisions in the story reveal his moral courage. Despite the allure of wealth and the safety the Washingtons offer, he chooses to reject complicity in their immoral activities. His decision to leave the estate signifies a rejection of greed and a stand for integrity.

Features:

- Courage to stand against corrupt authority
- Willingness to risk personal safety for moral principles
- A symbolic rejection of materialism

Pros:

- Demonstrates growth into a morally courageous individual
- Inspires readers to uphold their values

Cons:

- His choice leads to personal loss and disappointment
- The story ends with ambiguity about his future

Conclusion: The Complexity of John T. Unger's Character

John T. Unger embodies a multifaceted character whose traits serve as a mirror to societal values and human nature. His innocence, morality, curiosity, and growth make him a compelling figure within Fitzgerald's critique of the American Dream and the corrupting influence of wealth. Unger's internal struggle between innocence and disillusionment resonates with readers, reminding us of the importance of integrity and moral courage in a world often driven by greed and deception.

While his naivety exposes him to danger, it also makes him a symbol of genuine virtue. His evolution from an idealistic boy to a morally conscious young man offers valuable insights into the nature of personal growth and the loss of innocence. Fitzgerald's portrayal of Unger encourages reflection on the costs of wealth and the importance of staying true to one's principles, even when faced with powerful temptations.

Final Thoughts

Pros:

- Well-rounded portrayal of a moral and curious young protagonist
- Embodies themes of innocence, morality, and growth
- Serves as a critique of materialism and societal corruption

Cons:

- His naivety can make him vulnerable
- His moral stance sometimes isolates him from others
- The ending leaves some ambiguity about his future

In conclusion, John T. Unger's character traits are central to the moral and thematic fabric of *The Diamond As Big As The Ritz*. Fitzgerald masterfully crafts Unger as a relatable and morally upright figure whose journey from innocence to disillusionment offers profound insights into human nature and societal values. His traits underscore the story's enduring relevance, reminding us of the importance of integrity in the face of temptation and corruption.

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