In a 1935 memo to his Scribners editors, F. Scott Fitzgerald apologized that “The Intimate Strangers” (1935), along with several other short stories, were not worthy of publication because, among other defects, “each story contains some special fault.” In accordance with Axel Nissen’s speculation that the short story form operates as “a perverse reminder of other possibilities,” the plot of “The Intimate Strangers” revolves around a “special fault” of the protagonist’s husband. “This has been a very strange thing,” Killian tells his wife after rebuffing her sexual advances: “I might have been more—well, more demonstrative.” Insofar as it thwarts the reproductive ends of heteronormative narration, the nature of Killian’s “very strange thing” has been subject to a good deal of suspicious reading; indeed, one critic takes the story as evidence that Fitzgerald could no longer write “convincing romantic fiction.” However, rather than substitute Killian’s disinterest in sex for a closeted homosexuality, I argue that Fitzgerald’s short fiction participates in historically contemporaneous debates concerning the practice of celibacy within marriage. According to Benjamin Kahan, “by the late 1920s sexual happiness rather than just spiritual union was an expectation of married life, and celibacy was vilified as unhealthy and unnatural.” The belief that celibacy constituted a deviant sexual practice within heteronormative unions contributed to the demise of celibacy as a social identity in the 1930s. This paper will show how Fitzgerald’s short fiction runs counter to cultural convention, and the traditional love plots of the novel, by proposing the celibate figure as a romantic one. In depicting celibacy as a heightened form of intimacy within marriage—one that carries with it the promise of gender equality between husband and wife—I ask how Fitzgerald’s “faulty” short fiction radically redraws the gender norms and sexual parameters of institutionalized coupling, and what this ‘perverse reminder’ of the other sexualities means for the American modernist canon.