

THE GREAT GATSBY - CHARACTER ANALYSIS

NICK

Nick is the hardest character to understand in the book because he is the narrator and will therefore only give us an impression of himself that he would like to give. He tells the reader that "I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known", but we see him lie on several occasions. So it is all but impossible to get an accurate picture of Nick. By the end of the book he is very jaded, though. When he and Jordan break up he says "I'm thirty. I'm five years too old to lie to myself and call it honour". So the experience with Gatsby and the others takes its toll on him. But in the end, the reader cannot be certain of who the real Nick is.

GATSBY

To understand Gatsby one has to look at not only his true life, but the life that he tried to create for himself. The truth is that he came from poor beginnings and created a fantasy world where he was rich and powerful. Even in his youth Gatsby was not content with what he had. He wanted money, so he managed to get it. He wanted Daisy, and she slipped through his fingers. So even when his wealth and stature are at their greatest, he will not be content. He must have Daisy. Yes, there is love. But more than that there is a drive to possess her because that is what he wanted for all of those years. She was part of his image for the future and he had to have her. And although Gatsby seems very kind, he is not afraid to be unscrupulous to get what he wants.

DAISY

Daisy is a trapped woman. She's trapped in a marriage that she is unhappy in and trapped in a world where she has no chance to be free or independent. She is at the mercy of her husband, a man who takes her for granted. Daisy is also terribly clever, delivering some of the funnier lines of the book. She is smart enough to understand the limits imposed on her and has become jaded and indulgent because of them.

The word careless also describes Daisy well. Many of the things that Daisy does, the accident with Myrtle in particular, show a woman who is just careless. She has become very much wrapped up in herself. Part of this is due to the fact that she had been spoiled all her life. She was born into money and had an endless assortment of men who would continue to spoil her. So she has learned to think only of herself without regard for the people that it may hurt.

TOM

Being born into a family that is wealthy has made Tom a spoiled man. He hasn't really worked his entire life and instead spends his days in indulgence and ease. This is what motivates Tom; gratification. He has a shameless affair with Myrtle because it satisfies his needs. He flaunts their relationship in public because he does not concern himself with the consequences of his actions, he's never had to. This is also

why he and Daisy escape in the end of the book. There was a situation they would have to face and they didn't want to. So they ran to their money and fled the situation, leaving it to be dealt with by others. Tom will spend his whole life doing things like that because that is who he is: A careless man who won't be bothered by the suffering he causes.

JORDAN

Jordan faces the same problems that Tom and Daisy do. She has been born with money and has lived in a culture full of money and has been spoiled by it. She is surrounded by people like the Buchanans who perpetuate her indulgent behaviour. This can be observed in the scene where she and Nick are driving in the city and calls her a careless driver. She says she doesn't worry because the other people on the road aren't as careless as her and that she makes sure she surrounds herself with people who won't "crash" into her. It can be seen that Jordan has no concept of accountability and that has been furthered by the people who allow her to go unaccountable.