

The Great Gatsby

Summary

A narrator of the story is a man of around thirty years old named Nick Carraway. He comes from Minnesota but moves to New York in 1922 to learn about bond business. He rents a house in the West Egg, which is a wealthy area of Long Island where the new rich live. West Egg is not as fashionable as East Egg though. Right next door of where Nick lives, lives the main character of the novel, Jay Gatsby. He lives in a big gothic mansion and appears to be a very extravagant personality. He throws big parties every Saturday night and invites only the people which are considered to be in the high society. Nick is different from the other people who live in West Egg - he went to college at Yale and has connections in East Egg. He has a cousin, Daisy, who is married to Tom Buchanan. They once meet for a dinner and that is when Nick meets Jordan Baker. He begins a romantic relationship with her. She is also the person who tells him that Tom has an affair with Myrtle Wilson, who lives in the valley of ashes, an industrial dumping ground between West Egg and NYC. Soon after he finds out about the relationship he travels to NYC with Tom and Mrs. Wilson. Tom throws a party at the apartment which he uses for the purposes of the relationship with Myrtle and at this party his lover starts taunting him about Daisy and he breaks her nose. As the days pass by Nick gets an invitation to one of Gatsby's extravagant parties. Jordan is also there and they meet Jay Gatsby in person. He is a surprisingly young man who has a slight English accent. Later on we realize that is because he studied at Oxford. Gatsby wants to speak to Jordan alone. Through Jordan, Nick gets to know Gatsby a little bit more. He learns about Gatsby's romantic history with Daisy and that Gatsby is still in love with her. All the parties and his famous lifestyle are just an attempt to impress Nick's cousin. Gatsby wants to meet Daisy and tries to get Nick to arrange a reunion between them. Nick then invites Daisy to have tea at his house and he doesn't tell her that Gatsby will also be there. The reunion is a bit awkward; no one knows what to do but finally Gatsby and Daisy begin an affair. After a short time Tom grows very suspicious of his wife. He sees Gatsby staring at Daisy with a passionate look in his eyes at a luncheon at their house. Even though Tom has an affair too he cannot stand the thought of his wife being with another man. He forces everybody to drive into NYC where he confronts Gatsby in a room at the Plaza Hotel. He also tells Daisy that Gatsby is a criminal - his fortune comes from trading with forbidden alcohol – and sends Daisy back to East Egg with Gatsby. As Nick, Tom and Jordan are driving along the valley of ashes they discover that Gatsby's car hit Mrs. Wilson and that she is dead. They return to Long Island where Gatsby tells Nick that Daisy was driving the car but that he'll take the blame. Mr. Wilson thinks that the driver of the car was his wife's lover. He goes to Gatsby's house, finds him in the pool and shoots him dead. Then he commits a suicide. Nick attends a small funeral for Gatsby, ends his relationship with Jordan and moves back to Midwest. He thinks of morality and about Gatsby's dream and American dream. He realizes that the era of dreaming is now over.

Main Characters

Nick Carraway – He is the narrator of the story. He is honest, tolerant and tries not to make judgments about people based only on their actions. That's why he often serves as a confidant for people with problems. He gains quickly the friendship of his next-door neighbor – Jay Gatsby. As Daisy's cousin he is the link between Gatsby and Daisy.

Jay Gatsby – He is the title character of the story. He is a wealthy young man who obtained his fortune through illegal activity. He is first presented only by his reputation, we don't meet him personally until the third chapter. He was born on a farm in North Dakota and working for a millionaire developed a strong passion for fortune and prestige. He met Daisy in 1917 and fell in love with her but then went to fight in the WWI and she appeared to have forgotten all about him. He wants to impress Daisy by throwing parties every Saturday night at his mansion. He also changed his name from James Gatz to Jay Gatsby. I think this change also has a deeper meaning - it is somehow a symbol of a certain make-over, a change in his personality.

Daisy Buchanan – She shows a deep need to be loved. She disguises her feelings behind a mask because she doesn't want the world to know the pain caused by her husband's infidelity. She is beautiful and cynical. She is also in love with money, prestige, luxury and ease. She seems indifferent to her young daughter, she pays little to no attention to her.

Tom Buchanan – He is very wealthy. I find him quite arrogant and hypocritical. He is a racist and a sexist. He doesn't follow the moral qualities of the society but expects everyone else to follow them. He has no second thought about his affair but cannot stand the thought of his wife having one too.

Jordan Baker – She is beautiful and cynical young woman. She is also a competitive golfer who doesn't play a fair game. She is not a very honest person because she constantly bends the truth and she also cheated in her first golf tournament.

Myrtle Wilson – She is full of life and desperately tries to improve her situation. He is Tom's lover and he treats her only as his object of desire. She has a boring husband named George.

George Wilson – He loves Myrtle and is really hurt when he finds out that she has an affair with Tom. He seems lifeless and exhausted. When his wife dies he's consumed with grief and that's one more sign that he really loves her.

Action line

Chapter I

Setting: East Egg, West Egg

Characters: Nick Carraway, Jordan Baker, Daisy and Tom Buchanan

Main events: Nick moves to NY, dinner at Buchanans'

Chapter II

Setting: valley of ashes, New York City, Long Island

Characters: Nick, Tom, Myrtle Wilson, George Wilson, McKees, Mrs. Wilson's sister Katherine

Main events: a strange dinner party (sort of) at the Tom's apartment in NYC, Tom breaks Myrtle's nose

Chapter III

Setting: West Egg (more precisely: Nick's house and Gatsby's mansion)

Characters: Nick, Gatsby, Jordan, people at the party

Main events: Gatsby's party

Chapter IV

Setting: West Egg, Gatsby's car, NYC

Characters: Gatsby, Jordan, Nick, Meyer Wolfsheim, the police officer who pulled over Gatsby

Main events: Jordan tells Nick all about the conversation she had with Gatsby at his party

Chapter V

Setting: West Egg (Gatsby's mansion and Nick's house)

Characters: Nick, Gatsby, Daisy, Klipspringer

Main events: Daisy's reunion with Gatsby

Chapter VI

Setting: West Egg (Nick's house and Gatsby's mansion)

Characters: Nick, Gatsby, Mr. and Mrs. Sloane, Tom

Main events: Nick describes Gatsby's background, Tom and the Sloanes visit Gatsby

Chapter VII

Setting: East Egg (Buchanans' house), valley of ashes, NYC (The Plaza Hotel)

Characters: Tom, Daisy, Nick, Jordan, Gatsby, George, Daisy and Tom's daughter, the baby's nurse

Main event: confrontation of Tom and Gatsby, Daisy runs over Myrtle

Chapter VIII

Setting: Buchanans' house, Gatsby's mansion, Nick's office, Wilson's garage

Characters: Nick, Gatsby, George, the police officer, Jordan, Gatsby's gardener, Tom

Main events: George shoots Gatsby and himself, Nick finds their bodies

Chapter IX

Setting: West Egg (Nick's house, Gatsby's mansion)

Characters: Nick, Henry C. Gatz, Owl Eyes, servants, Wolfsheim, Jordan

Main events: Nick breaks off his relationship with Jordan, Gatsby's funeral, Nick's moving to Minnesota