

# "the great gatsby" review

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



The Great Gatsby is a classic book from American Literature, written by F. Scott Fitzgerald, one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. Fitzgerald is said to be known for his descriptive language and he brings the roaring 20s back to life through his vivid descriptions. The title of the book implores the audience to find out what is great about Gatsby. As the title suggests, the story is about Gatsby, but all the things surrounding that era, that makes his life what is and the others in the story. This book touches upon various themes, spread throughout. The book is a romantic fiction set in the 1920s and captures the essence of America back then. The era of prosperity, breaking away from traditions and embracing modernity. Fitzgerald captures not only the grandeur of the era but the hypocrisy and moral vacancy that lies beneath the society. It was also the period in which materialism rose and that is the central theme of the novel; money and materialism amongst other major themes such as hope and love. The novel dives deep into the era and draws the audience into the mysterious nature of the main characters.

There are four major characters in this book; Jay Gatsby, Daisy Buchanan, Tom Buchanan and Nick Carraway. Although the characters Jordan Baker, Myrtle Wilson and George Wilson also play important roles to move the plot. Gatsby is the lead protagonist, on whom the whole story is based, the self-made billionaire, hopelessly in love, trying to do whatever to win back the woman he desires. After Gatsby opens up to Nick about his past, Nick says, “So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end”—which describes him well, a man with a heart full of hope and a strong stubborn mind, chasing his dreams. The second important character is Daisy,

Gatsby's love interest. Upon meeting Daisy, Nick asks her about her daughter when she says, " I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool." This quote gives the audience insight into what kind of a woman Daisy was. She was born into wealth and never had to struggle for her ambitions. Daisy wishes for her daughter to be a fool because she isn't one and because of that, her life is empty. The 1920s wasn't an era where a woman's intelligence or opinions would be valued, a girl could have more fun if she was dumb and pretty. Tom is Daisy's rich, arrogant, prick of a husband. He is the antagonist in the story and does not let Daisy and Gatsby get together but he himself danced around town with his mistress. Finally, Nick, the narrator is an interesting character and the only one who is honest and upright from the start. Although he mentions in the first page of the very first chapter that he is reserved from all judgments, he did eventually take sides, if not judging the others. From narrating the story, his character develops a lot from the oblivious neighbor to the camaraderie he becomes to Gatsby. The death of Gatsby leaves him traumatized enough to move him out of the city, he once came to pursue his dreams. Over the course of the book, he realizes the misery wealth can bring. But all of the events that took place to conspire to make him into the writer he originally wanted to be after graduating from Yale. Perhaps all of this was a grand journey for him to get where he wanted to be and all the others where side character in his great story. Nick is my favorite character I would say, it is easy to relate and empathize with Nick's story.

The narrator Nick Carraway is also the key mover of the plot, as the whole story is told from his perspective. He starts narrating from a third person perspective, observing everyone reserved from any judgment but as the story progresses, he speaks about the stories of all the characters as well as his own personal experiences and remarks on the situation. Without him moving to the West Egg to pursue fortune, the story would not have taken place, Gatsby would've never taken place. He reunites Gatsby and Daisy. The interactions that take place between Nick, Jordan, and Gatsby are important for the whole plot, as Gatsby seek both of them out to ask for a favor. Jordan is also a key mover in this love story of Gatsby and Daisy since she is the only character who knew Gatsby and Daisy five years ago and again strolls into Gatsby's unknowingly and helps to reunite them. The growing friendship between the Nick and Gatsby throughout the novel is quite interesting, Gatsby requests Nick's acquaintance in order to win back Daisy but they become really good friends. The last face to face interaction they both exchange, Nick tells Gatsby, " They're a rotten crowd," " You're worth the whole damn bunch put together." Nick also mentions he is glad he said that, and so am I. That is perhaps the only reassurance Gatsby receives, and one of my favorite parts of the book. When Gatsby dies, Nick seems to be the only one moved by the situation and is repulsed by everyone's reaction. Nick ensure to piece things together and stand by Gatsby through the end, making sure Gatsby isn't alone.

The most prominent theme of the novel is money, materials, and domination of the upper class. From the beginning to the end, the East Egg and West Egg are compared, how the newly rich of the West compares to those old

aristocrats in the East. East Egg is presents, hereditary wealth, and class or "old money," while the West Egg represents people who became newly rich through bootlegging or other illegal affairs or "new money." The story is a clash between the two types of rich living in the two Eggs, and ultimately the "old money" wins. Tom and Daisy get away with not one but two murders—Daisy accidentally kills Myrtle (Tom's mistress) while Tom ensures Gatsby's death by encouraging George Wilson (Myrtle's husband) to go after the owner of the yellow car, his wife was driving. So in the end "old money" will always dominate. This part is my least favorite in the novel. It's disturbing knowing Tom and Daisy escape, and Daisy who was so in love with Gatsby has no remorse for her actions, she doesn't even make a phone call to pay her respect to Gatsby's death. Nick also describes, "They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made." This also shows the readers why Tom and Daisy's dysfunctional relationship works well. I found solace after reading the symbolism Fitzgerald creatively brings into his writing, the concept of the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg as God. Although there is no mention of religion or God throughout the book, nearing the end of chapter 8, George Wilson speaks to Michaelis and says he spoke to his wife "God knows what you've been doing, everything you've been doing. You may fool me, but you can't fool God!" and then Michaelis notices the eyes from that billboard. It is an intriguing part of the story that all the actions of all the characters are being watched by some greater power, but no character except George has made this

connection. Fitzgerald left clever symbolism such as the billboard, open to interpretation by the audience which engages the readers well. The novel brings forth the harsh reality of the 1920s, the decline of the American Dream. In spite of his hard work, and persistence in achieving his goals, Gatsby is murdered and not a single person among the hundreds who enjoyed his wealth comes forward to pay respect. This self-made Great man and all his achievements die in vain. From this perspective, it is quite a morbid book, which exposes the hollowness of the upper class and their ability to get away with everything.

My favorite part of the books is when Nick and Gatsby meet at the party. Before meeting Gatsby, Nick has been hearing all sort of rumors about Gatsby, most of which were negative. He was portrayed as a millionaire, who could be a Prince or a Nazi or Spy, exploiting his millions throwing extravagant parties. But then Nick sees him and describes, " He had one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced, or seemed to face, the whole external world for an instant and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself." I love this quote, as this description of Gatsby is one of the ways which makes him " great." This quote is the first real introduction we get of him, and it really raises the bar on his character and contradictory to what people have been saying about Gatsby. It reveals his potential to immediately connect with an individual make that person feel valued. Perhaps this is what connects him with Daisy, whose appeal lies in her

pleasant voice and also makes Gatsby an outstanding frontman for Wolfsheim's bootlegging company. After Gatsby opens up to Nick in chapter 8 about his past, his character is seen to slowly deconstruct and we learn some hard truths about his past. The author's delayed revelation of Gatsby's character emphasizes the greatness of it. We learn Gatsby has this strong fascination of bringing back the past and holding on to it, and he constructed himself into a charming persona—which he is how he appears in front of the World in the beginning—just to “repeat the past.” His tireless quest of winning back Daisy shows his incredible persistent ability to transform his hopes and dreams into reality. His smile captures that persona and hopes he fosters in his heart and plays the part well.

The Great Gatsby is also a book of hope. From the beginning to the end Gatsby does not give up once on his dreams even though it pulls him into disasters. He dies with the belief that Daisy will call. As Nick concludes the novel, “Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And then one fine morning—So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.” These last few lines in the book speak volumes, not only does draw a connection to the very beginning of the book where Gatsby is seen reaching out to the green light at the end of Daisy's dock but also it is the symbol for Gatsby's hope, desires, and dreams. A representation of his future, our future. It makes the readers realize our hopes to recapture the past and idealize it. “So we beat on,” this phrase gives the readers hope and optimism to push back harder and beat the current that tries to pull us back

into the past. Gatsby's greatness lies in the fact that he was hopeful, in spite of the misfortunes he was born into and faced throughout the course of his life.