

# What qualities of daisy from the 'great gatsby' essay



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Both the 'Great Gatsby' and 'A Dolls House' contribute to the rich collection of books that have marked the 1800-1900's, through their reflective theme's of society of the time, depicted through fascinating three-dimensional characters. These two women, Daisy Buchanon and Nora Helmer have been specifically chosen, being the subservient and inferiorly treated possessions of their husbands, who mask their possible intellectual potential. Whilst Nora develops a dramatic character change throughout the book by realising her duties to herself, Daisy remains the same careless and carefree person she was at the beginning of 'The Great Gatsby'.

Comparisons will be made regarding both women's relationships with their husbands, and children, as well as a deeper analysis into their personalities, uncovering their secret beliefs, motivations, priorities in life, and moral compass'. Furthermore, the study of the two characters will unveil their significance in the books, as well as their influence on those who have read both novels. Initially, the plot of both books must be elucidated in order to enable a greater understanding of Daisy and Nora's importance. 'The Great Gatsby' takes place in the contrasting worlds of the wealthy East Egg and the underprivileged West Egg.

The traditionally prosperous and morally deficient families are located in the East side, whilst the desperate and dejected part of the Americans are situated in the West. Like her name suggests, Daisy Fay lived a fairy-tale like childhood, described as "by far the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville<sup>1</sup>". She presented herself in white, fluttering clothes to represent a false appearance of innocence and purity, the manner society expects of her. Rather than wait for her first love interest, Gatsby, to return from war, <https://assignbuster.com/what-qualities-of-daisy-from-the-great-gatsby-essay/>

Daisy hastily marries Tom Buchanon, mesmerised by his social status and wealth.

Considering Nora Helmer, her name sounds more like a working class person's, who has her feet firmly on the ground and uses money for necessary requirements, as opposed to buying ostentatious property to project an image of wealth like Daisy. She married her husband out of genuine love, and takes care of her children like a traditional parent should out of instinct. Daisy in contrast lacks that instinct, and exerts her time and energy on pretending to be living a satisfied life. Nora has secret depth that is masked by her husband Torvald, who she has a parent-child relationship with.

He doesn't take her seriously, which is implied by his patronising names for her, such as " little spendthrift<sup>2</sup>". He is clearly making a distinction between himself and Nora, by underestimating her potential, and limiting her to household chores. She cannot explore her abilities in a job, since according to Torvald, Nora is fulfilling her duties of family already. Unlike Daisy, who has no intentions of working and accepts the role of the inferior wife, Nora liberates herself from her husbands grasp and the shackles that society has placed on her, and that is why she comes out as a stronger character of the two in the end.

When we first meet the two characters, they are both seemingly positive and in high spirits. In ' A Dolls House', Nora is the first person introduced, preparing for Christmas in their home. She tips the messenger who brought the Christmas tree double the amount the tree itself cost. We can

immediately sense her careless attitude with her wealth, from which it can be deduced that she's never been taught the value of money. It is also interesting to see her excitedly try to hide the Christmas tree in order to make it a surprise for the children.

Her genuine care for her family is shown here, as opposed to Daisy, who only introduces her daughter at one point in the play, as a possession to show off when company are present. She also raises her to centralise around people's appearances, like Daisy herself. This can be seen when she asks Pammy " Have you looked at your mothers friends? Aren't they pretty? " Pammy is taken care of by her maid, the only genuine person who seems to care for this girl. In fact, the only time Daisy's daughters name is mentioned is by the maid.

Similarly, Nora's children are taken care of by a maid too, but in contrast Nora communicates admirably with her children, and takes part in every game they play. She also emphasises their names as she talks to them, reminding them of their strong identity and importance in her life. So far, we can conclude the major differences between the two characters. Whilst money remains a key motivational factor for Daisy regarding her marriage choice and life, Nora uses money only for genuine purposes such as taking a loan from a family friend Krogstad, for an operation necessary for her husband to survive.

The significance of the act is that she sacrificed her life and reputation, as well as her husband's. She naively believes that the court wouldn't condemn her for an act of such nature. It demonstrates Nora's capability to think

independently of her husband, unlike Daisy who accepts her reliance on Tom. As well as that, it shows the length Nora will go to help her husband, whilst Daisy is incapable even of attending the funeral of her one-time love, Gatsby. Gatsby's fate was an unfortunate one, where he spent the past few years of his life trapped in his dream of conquering Daisy.

He never came to terms with reality, that Daisy was in fact the central corruption to his dream. Whilst she may have loved him before marrying Tom Buchanon, by the time they meet again, Daisy had settled into her superficial plastic world, where love is insignificant. For a short time, her love is rekindled for Gatsby, but only after she became aware of his elegantly furnished mansion and cars. To Daisy, Tom became replaceable as quickly, as she frivolously changed love interests. This was the kind of manner in which Daisy lived her life.

She did as she pleased, without taking the consequences into consideration. In fact, because of her flirtatious nature, she provoked Tom's anger and jealousy, which caused him to tell Wilson that Gatsby drove the car that killed Myrtle, Wilson's wife. This led to Gatsby's death, thus revealing Daisy's destructive influence due to her careless attitude. Nora comes across as a flirtatious character as well, seen by the confident way in which she revealed her silk stockings to Dr. Rank. When he observes it on her foot, she adds "Well, I'll allow you to look a little higher".

As a married woman she shouldn't be acting so revealingly, but her intentions are not the same as Daisy's. Whilst Daisy shows her interest in Gatsby, it is only because she hopes he can share his wealth with her. Nora

is simply acting like a child, proud of her new toy. She is playing with Dr. Rank, one of the rare people in the book who don't treat her as an inferior like her husband does. When the first private conversation between Nora and Dr. Rank takes place, Nora explains that she always has time to spend with him, whilst Dr. Rank replies " I'll enjoy that for as long as I can<sup>5</sup>". Respect like that is never sensed from Torvald towards Nora.

Nora's husband refers to her as " an expensive little person" as opposed to his wife, comparing her to a child. Nora has accepted that Torvald will never think more highly of her, but feels that deep in his heart, he does have genuine love for her. That is why she borrowed money from Krogstad, as she hoped that even if the truth comes out, her husband will understand her selfless action. Though she suspected his initial reaction would be anger. He would be so ashamed and humiliated if he knew he owed me anything<sup>6</sup>".

She knows that men in those times put their pride before anything, but had faith in him to sacrifice it for her. This is one of the main ways in which she differs from Daisy. She hopes and craves for genuinely happy relationships, whilst Daisy is satisfied with receiving money and status from her husband. Nora's ignorance of her husband's pride in turn leads to the complete controversial collapse of their relationship. Examining both characters carefully, major differences can be revealed between the two characters.

Daisy doesn't necessarily enjoy being a simple housewife, as she is constantly bored, but she believes nothing else can become of her. This can be observed when she discuss' her daughter. " And I hope she'll be a fool- that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool<sup>7</sup>". Daisy

shows her superficial outlook on life, believing that women shouldn't be exposed to the evils of the world, but live life under a fake facade of happiness. Nora lives in that way as well, not admitting to herself that nothing has been made out of her life since she married Torvald.

When Nora was discussing how she had to work very hard to save up money to pay back Krogstad's loan with Mrs. Linde, her true motivation in life is revealed. "I did get pleasure from sitting and working and earning money. It felt like... like being a man". Unlike Daisy, Nora doesn't want to accept the fact that she lives in a prevailing male-oriented society, and in the end her intellectual drive motivates her to break the barriers that society has placed upon women of the time. She felt respect was a necessity she deserved, and rebelled against this in almost unnoticeable ways.

Macaroons were forbidden to be eaten in their home, but Nora always ate them behind his back, whilst flirting with Dr. Rank, revealing her secret defiance. Both wives were motivated by their feelings of inadequacy to cause the disintegration of their marriage, that accumulated until the tension burst and exposed the hidden secrets of both Daisy and Nora. Daisy lived a life which required minimal mental stamina, thus she quickly got bored of her life. To escape the monotony, she had an affair with Gatsby to offer excitement in her life, whilst still enjoying the wealth and status with Tom.

She treated both men like her toys, to entertain herself. The world is Daisy's playground, where she makes the rules, and whatever disasters she causes, she leaves other people to clean up the chaos she left behind. To Daisy, her priorities lay in making herself happy, indifferently to Nora, who realised by

the end of the book that she had sacred duties to herself that outweighed her duties to her family. The problems begin surfacing when Gatsby, Tom, Daisy and Nick started socialising together, visiting Gatsby's parties or visiting town.

Daisy was unable to keep her lust hidden from the others, and uttered comments such as " You look so cool, you always look to cool" to Gatsby. Following that, she also announced that she loved Gatsby, whilst her husband and daughter were present. It shows not only her inconsiderate behaviour, seeing her daughter could be emotionally scarred by this, but she was oblivious to the possible reaction of Tom. A woman of some intelligence could've gathered that a husband would seek to avenge his wife's lover, which is what led to the end of Myrtle and Gatsby at the end of the book.

It is her juvenile and immoral characteristics that lead to the temporary ruin of her marriage, for a romance that she planned no long term commitment for. Rather than admit her marriage is corrupt and insincere, Daisy stays protected in her safe, superficial world where she is guaranteed a life of social status but lack of harmony. She accepts this, as her honesty to herself remains in the background. Tom see's his future from the same perspective, including the same priorities. He is just as corrupt as Daisy, and without thinking twice, they both travel to Europe to retreat to their money.

They attempt to fill the void in their lives, left by their dead lovers, as well as run away from the repercussions of their irresponsible actions. It is at this point where we realise that Daisy accepts the conventional life she is fated to live for future materialistic gains. In a century of dishonesty and



desperation for status, Daisy demonstrates perfectly how money can emotionally corrupt a person. Her careless actions have drastic consequences on every person in the book, marking her as a key figure in "The Great Gatsby".

Nora's realisation of her false life took place when Torvald realised that she borrowed money for him through illegal activity. He aggressively confronted her about acting like a "criminal"<sup>9</sup>, Nora was disillusioned about the depth of her husband's love, and came to terms with reality. "I have been performing tricks for you, Torvald. It's because of you that I've made nothing of my life"<sup>10</sup>. Nora must begin her plight to find her true purpose in life, and remove the fraudulent perception others have of her.

It is a difficult act for a woman to leave her conventional and sentimental feelings behind, and become a new person of precociousness. Nora was ready to slam the door behind her, and end her life as a fragile doll in the hands of a domineering chauvinist. She encapsulates all the characteristics needed in a heroine in the 1800-1900's, and introduced a new era when subordinated women can break social conventions. For this reason, she is the untimely key character in 'A Dolls House'. The unmistakable difference between the two wives is their contrasting perspectives and priorities in life.

Whilst Nora chooses the route of honesty and independence after realising her falsified life, Daisy remains the same immoral and superficial person she was at the beginning of the book, with a drive for money. After all, she was the golden girl. Overall, both books touched taboo subjects that attacked social conventions, by exposing the social and political complexities of

relationships through realism. Traditional values and sentimental ideals were ignored, to reflect upon the controversial realities that people face independently from the shackles that society imposes on them.