

# The great gatsby- jay gatsby v

Literature, American Literature



Jay Gatsby, the title character of *The Great Gatsby*, is really not all that the title might suggest. First of all, his real name is James Gatz. He changed it in an effort to leave behind his old life as a poor boy and create an entirely new identity. He is also a liar and a criminal, having accumulated his wealth and position by dishonest means. But he is still called great, and in a sense he is. Gatsby is made great by his unfaltering hope, and his determination to live in a perfect world with Daisy and their perfect love. Gatsby has many visible flaws: his obvious lies, his mysterious way of avoiding straight answers. But they are shadowed over by his gentle smile and his visible hunger for an ideal future. The coarse and playful Jay Gatsby who throws wild parties and spends lavishly on friends and strangers doesn't hold as much reality as the quiet Gatsby who dreams of happiness with Daisy and the relationship they once had.

He also has the power to make his dreams reality. He dreamed as a boy of a luxurious life of riches and high society, and he got it. Later he dreams of Daisy and their future together, which he has in reach for a time before it falls away. He loses it because his love for Daisy is all in the relationship they used to have; he wants to recreate the past, not make a future. His love for her isn't really based on her, he doesn't even see her efforts to hide herself under an unfeeling shallowness. He is more in love with what she represents, and what he wants: wealth, power, respect. He needs a dream to focus on, and she is everything he has always wanted for himself. Gatsby is a dreamer, he lives for and in his dreams. But his amazing ability to focus on and achieve his dreams makes him great.

Nick Carraway describes himself in the first chapter as reserved in

judgement and tolerant of other people, even when subjected to their unwanted and boring secret confessions. He is indeed more tolerant than most, and holds judgement even when faced with huge and unmistakable character flaws. For instance, he makes no solid judgement on Tom Buchanan when he sees him openly displaying his extramarital affair with Myrtle and holding no shame or guilt about cheating on Daisy. His unwillingness to criticize leads to his having double feelings about several characters, because he sees their faults but wants to keep an open mind. He is especially reserved in holding judgement against Gatsby, which causes him to go so far as to create a sort of blind spot towards him. He criticizes Gatsby's obsession with wealth and luxury, and is very aware of his criminal behavior, yet he sees more in Gatsby the man who would do anything for his love and worked towards his dreams all his life.

Nick is still, however, an honest and good man. He is not extravagantly rich, but unlike Gatsby he earned all of his high social connections fairly. He is rather disgusted with the East and its empty values by the end of the book. But he is still intrigued by it all, as he demonstrates through his relationship with Jordan Baker. He holds an almost subconscious curiosity about the flashy Eastern life, but unlike Gatsby his curiosity has its limits. He does not become obsessed with the life or ideals of high society. In the end, he returns to the life he was born into, in the Midwest where people have morals and life is not such a shallow game.

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