

# The Great Gatsby

F. Scott Fitzgerald

## Introductory Text

- new kind of novel: critics cannot categorize it and hence reject it
- radical change at the time: rise of wealth
- Americans: sense of alienation as the old values died
- Jay Gatsby and Nick Carraway both served abroad
- Gatsby's participation in battle makes his heroism unequivocal, as reflected in Nick's respect for his war service
- along with prohibition, the New York underworld was given new life
- 1920s: stock market reaches new highs, rich grow richer, seems to be no end to it
- Fitzgerald observed lavish parties
- Jazz Age ends abruptly with crash of stock market
- Nick is writing as part of his own struggle
- Chapter III: archetypal jazz-age extravaganza
- Gatsby patched himself together out of popular ideas
- Tom is powerful and corrupt; symbolizes the impenetrable wall of an older moneyed class from which Gatsby is barred
- novel is story of two men: Gatsby, who pursues his incorruptible dream, and Nick Carraway, who for much of the way does not clearly see or understand what is happening
- meaning of Gatsby's story: American democracy, individualism, heroism
- 450 words related to time: difficulty to locate any place, action, individual
- emphasis on vision: suggests how dependent the sense of the outer world is on how others see it
- eponymous novel: when novel has title of main character
- West Egg: newly rich, bad taste: Nick and Gatsby
- East Egg: white palaces, aristocracy, old established wealth: Buchanans
- New York City: money and party

## Chapter I

- "Gatsby turned out all right at the end"
- Nick's great-uncle started wholesale hardware business
- Nick graduated from New Haven in 1915; joins army little later (Great War)
- Nick lives in West Egg: less fashionable, Gatsby's mansion
- East Egg: Buchanans: fashionable, Tom's family is enormously wealthy
- Nick meets Jordan Baker at Buchanans
- "Tom's got some woman in New York." (p. 16)

## Chapter II

- Nick with Tom in Valley of Ashes: meets his mistress, Myrtle (p. 21)
- Nick gets drunk at Tom's 'party' with Myrtle and some others (p. 25/26)
- Nick: "I was within and without" (p. 30)
- Tom breaks Myrtle's nose when she mentions Daisy (p. 32)

## Chapter III

- party at Gatsby's is described
- Nick meets Gatsby: Gatsby recognizes him from the war
- car crash with 'Owl Eyes' after party (p. 44)
- Nick's personal reflections

## Chapter IV

- list of participants at Gatsby's party
- Gatsby takes Nick for lunch; tells him his past (p. 52)
- Nick meets Mr. Wolfshiem (p. 55)
- Jordan tells Nick about Gatsby's and Daisy's past (p. 59)
- Jordan tells Nick that Gatsby wants Nick to invite Daisy to tea (p. 62)

## Chapter V

- Daisy visits Nick for tea: she is introduced to Gatsby
- Gatsby, Daisy, Nick tour Gatsby's mansion

## Chapter VI

- history with James Gatz is told; relation to Dan Cody
- Tom and Daisy come to Gatsby's party
- Gatsby wants too much from Daisy; "You can't repeat the past."
- story of how Gatsby and Daisy kissed

## Chapter VII

- Gatsby, Daisy, Nick, Tom, Jordan go to New York
- Gatsby wants Daisy to say that she never loved Tom
- Myrtle is run over by a car (Daisy driving) (p. 109)

## Chapter VIII

- Nick goes to Gatsby; he tells him how he met Daisy
- story of what happened at the garage later on (p. 124)
- Wilson goes to Gatsby's house, shoots him and then himself (p. 128)

## Chapter IX

- Nick tries to organise funeral
- Gatsby's father arrives
- Nick visits Meyer Wolfshiem (p. 135); he won't come to funeral
- 'Owl Eyes' comes to funeral (p. 138)
- Nick decides to move back home (p. 140)
- Nick meets Tom (p. 141)
- Nick goes on Gatsby's property a last time; nostalgic tone