



## Summary

The Great Gatsby, one of the classics of twentieth-century literature, brings to life America's Jazz Age, when, as The New York Times puts it, "gin was the national drink and sex the national obsession." Nick Carraway, a Yale graduate and veteran of the Great War, moves to Long Island in the spring of 1922, eager to leave his native Middle West behind. He rents a tiny house in West Egg, dwarfed by a mansion owned by the most celebrated host of the season, Jay Gatsby. Everyone loves to drink and dance at Gatsby's legendary parties, and everyone loves to gossip about Gatsby's secret past. Directly across the bay in the tonier town of East Egg lies the home of Nick's beautiful cousin and her millionaire husband: Daisy and Tom Buchanan. When Nick starts dating Daisy's friend, the famed but deceitful golfer Jordan Baker, he finds himself caught up in a different romance: Gatsby begs for a reintroduction to Daisy. Gatsby and Daisy fell in love years ago, but the war and Tom Buchanan came between them. As the love triangle of Daisy, Tom, and Gatsby resurfaces – and Tom's mistress, Myrtle, grows desperate with jealousy – Nick finds himself missing the plains of the Middle West, where hope can thrive in a wider landscape.



## About the Author

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald, widely known simply as Scott Fitzgerald, was an American novelist, essayist, and short story writer. He is best known for his novels depicting the flamboyance and excess of the Jazz Age, a term he popularized in his short story collection *Tales of the Jazz Age*.

## Discussion Questions

1. Gatsby believes he can achieve the American Dream by recreating his past love with Daisy. From your perspective, is his downfall more a result of societal barriers or his own unrealistic ambitions?
2. Many view Gatsby's reinvention from James Gatz into a wealthy socialite as a triumph of self-creation. Do you see his transformation as genuine success, or does it signify the destructive power of living for an illusion?
3. The era depicted in "The Great Gatsby" is characterized by a hedonistic pursuit of wealth and pleasure. Do you think love loses its authenticity in such a society, or can true romantic relationships exist despite the prevailing cultural values?
4. Nick Carraway moves to New York hoping to embrace the exhilarating lifestyle of the 1920s. By the end of the novel, do you believe his return to the Midwest represents personal failure, or is it a moral victory over the decadence he witnessed?
5. Tom and Daisy's marriage survives despite infidelity and deceit, unlike other relationships in the novel. Do you think their bond is a testament to enduring love, or does it highlight the emptiness that can exist within seemingly stable partnerships?
6. Nick Carraway ends up disgusted with the East Coast elite but maintains a sense of admiration for Gatsby despite his flaws. Do you think Nick's final judgment of Gatsby fair, or is he too lenient because of his own biases? Consider the nature of relationships amidst wealth and the notion of the American Dream when forming your perspective.
7. Jay Gatsby is seen as the embodiment of self-reinvention and the pursuit of the American Dream, yet his life ends in tragedy. Does Gatsby's fate reflect a fundamental flaw in the American Dream, or is it more a product of his personal choices and misconceptions about love and identity?

## Discussion Questions cont'd

8. Daisy Buchanan is often idealized by Gatsby, yet her actions reveal a much more complex character. Is Daisy a victim of her social circumstances and pressures, or should she be held accountable for her choices in love and life? Discuss her role as a symbol in the novel.
9. Tom Buchanan is portrayed as both a villain and a victim of his own insecurities and societal privileges. Do you believe his character is meant to show the inherent moral corruption of wealth, or does Fitzgerald offer him some redeeming qualities? Consider how this reflects on the social values of the 1920s
10. Jordan Baker's character challenges traditional gender norms and embodies the new freedoms and moral ambiguities of the 1920s. Do you view her as a progressive force in the novel, or does her duplicity undermine her independence? What does her portrayal add to the discussion of gender roles in the story?
11. The green light symbolizes Gatsby's dreams and, more broadly, the elusive American dream. Do you see Gatsby's relentless pursuit of this dream as admirable ambition or tragic delusion? Can dreams ever truly align with reality?
12. The valley of ashes starkly divides the wealthy from the poor. Do you think Fitzgerald is making a statement on the moral responsibility the rich have towards the impoverished, or is he highlighting the inevitability of social inequality? How does this theme resonate today?
13. Dr. T. J. Eckleburg's eyes loom over the valley of ashes, interpreted by some as the eyes of an indifferent God. How does this symbol challenge or support the characters' sense of morality and justice, and what does it imply about accountability in human conduct?

## Discussion Questions cont'd

14. Cars in "The Great Gatsby" represent both status and recklessness. How do you interpret the role of automobiles in the characters' lives, and do you think this reflects a broader critique of wealth and power, or merely a facet of the story's era?

15. The extravagant parties at Gatsby's mansion are filled with indulgence yet leave emptiness in their wake. How do you feel about Gatsby's method of chasing friendship and love—do you see it as a genuine attempt at connection or as a facade? What does this say about the allure and the pitfalls of social ambition?