

Chapter 1

As the first chapter begins, we are introduced the novel's narrator, Nick Carraway. Nick is in the process of writing a book about his experiences on the East Coast of America, and in particular about his dealings with a man called Jay Gatsby. Nick tells us very little about his own origins, except that he is a descendent of the Dukes of Buccleuch.

Nick tells us that he has served in the First World War and that it has had a major impact on his life. His move to the East Coast of America was triggered by returning home to the Mid-West to find it a place changed from the one he remembered before he left.

In turn, Nick moves to West Egg. It is here that he – and the audience – first becomes aware of Jay Gatsby who lives in a mansion next to Nick. Nick describes West Egg as full of 'white palaces'.

Nick recounts a visit to the house of Tom Buchanan, one of his old collegiate buddies from Yale, and Daisy, Nick's cousin once removed. Buchanan in an archetypal alpha male: he is physically strong, extremely wealthy and hides a burning aggression; he also holds racist attitudes.

As the evening draws to a close, Nick catches his first glimpse of Gatsby; the enigmatic protagonist of the novel is staring, almost transfixed, by a green light at the end of the Buchanan's dock.

Chapter 2

The narrator, Nick, describes the ‘Valley of Ashes’, which is desolate area between West Egg and New York. The Valley of Ashes sits beneath a massive advertising hoarding featuring Dr T.J. Eckleburg.

In the ‘Valley of Ashes’ we are introduced to Myrtle Wilson, the wife of a motor mechanic, who is having an affair with Tom Buchanan.

In this sequence of the narrative, Myrtle is accompanied on a shopping trip to buy cosmetics, magazines and a dog. This is followed by a visit to the apartment that is kept entirely for Myrtle and Tom’s adulterous liaisons. Here, they are joined by Catherine, (Myrtle’s sister), and a photographer and his wife.

As the group drink, they begin to speculate about Jay Gatsby.

Chapter 3

One summer evening Nick goes to Gatsby's house for the first time. He is invited by Gatsby's chauffeur and it ends up being a very large and crowded event. He knows no one at first, but sees Jordan and stays with her for the most of the evening. While he is there many guests talk about Gatsby. He is a very mysterious man to them and everyone has their speculations as to how he obtained his money. Some say he was a bootlegger, some say a spy during the war, and others think that he has the look of someone who's killed a man.

While moving through the party Nick finally meets Gatsby, although he wasn't aware of it at first. They make small talk and find out that they had seen one another during the war. But their talk is short lived because Gatsby has business to attend to. Jordan says that Gatsby is an Oxford man and Nick watches him curiously for the rest of the evening. He notes that Gatsby seems detached and distant from almost everyone.

Later in the evening Gatsby asks to speak to Jordan. After their meeting, she tells Nick that Gatsby has told her something amazing that she can't talk about right now but she asks Nick to look her up sometime.

Nick does end up calling on Jordan. They start to spend time with one another and he likes her company. But he says that he has to end his "tangle back home", the engagement misunderstanding, before he can start a relationship.

Chapter 4

Nick goes back to Gatsby's for another party. Nick gives a detailed list of all of those in attendance and just what kind of people he thought they were.

One morning Gatsby's car pulled up in Nick's driveway. Gatsby tells Nick that they are going to be going to lunch together and Nick agrees. As they are driving, Gatsby tells Nick that he would like to dispel any myths that Nick may have heard about him. Gatsby says that he came from a wealthy family from the midwest - San Francisco - to be exact. He said that his parents died and left him a lot of money. After that he went to war and lived in all of the great cities and later attended Oxford College. Although Nick is skeptical of this story Gatsby shows him a medal he earned from the war and a picture of himself at Oxford. Gatsby also tells Nick that he has a "big request" to make of him but that Jordan Baker will talk to him of it later. Nick is confused, but Gatsby will speak no more of it.

When they reach the city Nick is introduced to Gatsby's friend Meyer Wolfsheim, who they dine with. After Meyer leaves Gatsby tells Nick that he is a gambler and the man who fixed the 1919 World Series. As they are talking about Meyer, Nick sees that Tom has also come to the restaurant. Nick thinks that he will introduce the two men but when he turns around, Gatsby has disappeared.

After this, Nick goes to meet Jordan for tea. She tells him the story of how she got to know Daisy when they were both younger back in Louisville. Daisy spent quite a bit of time with a young soldier in those days, and now Jordan realized that that soldier was Jay Gatsby. But he had to go to war, they lost contact and Daisy ended up getting engaged to Tom. Jordan was at the wedding and the day before they were to be married, Daisy received a mysterious letter. After reading it, she told Jordan that she wasn't going to get married, but went through with it anyway. Soon after the honeymoon, she and Tom were expecting a baby.

Daisy had forgotten all about Gatsby until she heard Jordan and Nick talking about him not long ago. Daisy asks about him and Jordan pieces together that he was the soldier Daisy had spent so much time with. Nick points out what a coincidence it is for them to be living near one another now but Jordan says that it is anything but. Gatsby bought the

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house to be close to Daisy. This is where Nick fits in. Gatsby would like for Nick to help him see Daisy again.

Chapter 5

When Nick returns from the city that evening he finds Gatsby admiring his house. He tells him that he plans to invite Daisy over for tea. Gatsby tries to act casual but it is obvious he is excited. During their exchange Gatsby tries to offer Nick some kind of job, but Nick sees it only as a polite gesture and turns it down.

The next day Nick invites Daisy to tea and tells her not to bring Tom. Gatsby comes over to inspect everything to make sure that the tea goes perfectly. Daisy finally arrives and Nick goes out to meet her. When they return inside Gatsby is nowhere to be found. A moment later there is a knock at the door and Gatsby walks in. He and Daisy look at one another in awkward surprise. Nick tries to make the afternoon go smoothly but realizes that the two would like to be alone. He goes out to his porch to let them catch up. When he returns the two seem relaxed but entranced with one another. Gatsby invites them over to see his house. While walking over, Nick asks Gatsby about how he made his money but is answered with a curt "that's my business". The group are given a tour and Gatsby tries to impress Daisy with all of the possessions he has filled his house with. Nick, again realizing that his presence is not needed, leaves the two alone.

Chapter 6

A reporter calls at Gatsby's home in attempt to learn more about him. This visit was fueled by Gatsby's status as a sort of celebrity. He asks questions about many of the myths surrounding Gatsby, but Nick gives us the truest account of Gatsby's life.

He was born James Gatz in North Dakota. His parents were poor farm people and to escape the blandness of his existence, Gatsby created a fantasy world. Part of this fantasy included the name Jay Gatsby. As a young man he worked along the shore of Lake Superior doing odd jobs. He tried a small college for a couple of weeks but quickly grew restless and went back to the shore. While walking the shoreline he spots a yacht owned by the wealthy Dan Cody. He warns Cody that he might have sailing troubles. Cody takes Gatsby under his wing. When Cody died Gatsby was supposed to receive a large portion of his fortune but was tricked out of it. However, Gatsby had created a persona and found something that he wanted to achieve at all costs.

After an absence of several weeks due to work, Nick goes over to see Gatsby one Sunday afternoon. While there, Tom Buchanan and two others arrive on horseback. Gatsby tries his hardest to be hospitable to the trio. They make an attempt to invite Gatsby with them somewhere but when he goes to get ready, they leave without him.

Tom and Daisy attend Gatsby's next party. Tom immediately dislikes the party and begins to question how Gatsby came into so much money. Daisy also seems to be unhappy at the party - which concerns Gatsby. He tells Nick that he will make things right with her and they will be able to go back to how they once were.

After hearing this, Nick tells the reader of an evening Gatsby and Daisy spent together in their youth. The moment was so perfect and beautiful to Gatsby that he has spent all of his time trying to recreate that moment. It is this recreation that he believes will make him happy.

Chapter 7

Nick goes to the Buchanans for an afternoon with Tom, Daisy, Gatsby, and Jordan. While they are there, the group - including Gatsby - sees Daisy's child for the first time. As the group talk, Daisy says she loves Gatsby. Being a hot and uncomfortable day, they all decide to go into the city to find something to do. Tom asks to take Gatsby's car. It seems odd to Gatsby but he lets him. Tom, Jordan and Nick drive off together with Daisy and Gatsby in Tom's blue sports car.

Tom stops at Wilson's garage to fill up the gas tank and speaks to Wilson. Wilson alludes to the idea that he thinks his wife is having an affair and that he wants to get some money to move out west. Nick thinks he sees Myrtle watching them from the window.

The groups meet up in the city and decide to take a hotel suite to enjoy a few cold drinks. While there, Gatsby and Daisy begin to act more obvious about their affections in front of everyone. Tom begins to get angry and starts shouting at them. As the fight continues, Gatsby tells Tom that Daisy has never loved him but that she has always loved him – Gatsby. Daisy quietly agrees. Tom, enraged, says that he has investigated Gatsby and found out that he earned his money through being a bootlegger. The argument dies down and Gatsby and Daisy decide to leave in his car. The rest of the group quietly exit with Tom.

Meanwhile, a neighbour of Wilson's, stops by to see him and finds him very ill in his office. Wilson tells him that he has locked his wife up and that they will be leaving tomorrow. Wilson never tells Michaelis why they are leaving or why Myrtle is locked up. Michaelis leaves Wilson alone.

Later, he comes out of his restaurant and hears Wilson and Myrtle fighting. During the fight, she runs into the road just as two cars are approaching. She is hit and killed but the car does not stop.

Tom pulls up a little later when he sees all of the commotion around Wilson's. It is established that the car was Gatsby's. Wilson believes that it was Tom who hit his

wife since Tom was driving Gatsby's car earlier in the day. Tom assures him it wasn't. When the group arrives back at Tom's, Nick decides to wait outside for a cab. While waiting, Gatsby appears from behind a bush. He admits that Daisy was driving the car. Nick asks Gatsby to come back with him but Gatsby wants to wait outside the house to make sure that nothing happens to Daisy.

Chapter 8

Early the next morning Nick goes over to check up on Gatsby. He has been at Daisy's all night just watching to see if she was safe. He and Nick stay up talking about Gatsby's past. Gatsby is being very honest with Nick and tells him that Daisy was the first nice girl he had ever really met. He was in love with her and planned on marrying her but the War split them apart. When it was over, he intended to go back and marry her but ended up at Oxford instead. When he finally makes it back to America and goes to Louisville, he cannot find Daisy. She is on her honeymoon with Tom Buchanan. Nick has to leave Gatsby to go to work. He is concerned about him, but Gatsby insists that he will be fine. After Nick leaves, Gatsby decides to use his pool and relax.

Nick narrates what happened at Wilson's following Myrtle's death. Michaelis stayed with Wilson in order to look after him. Wilson tells Michaelis that someone killed Myrtle on purpose – the person who was having the affair with her. Michaelis thinks it is all nonsense and tries to talk reasonably to Wilson. He ends up staying there until late. A man Michaelis recognized from the day of the accident offers to stay with Wilson. When Michaelis returns, both Wilson and the man are gone. Wilson tries to locate the yellow car, and therefore, its owner. By early afternoon, he is on his way to Gatsby's house. Wilson shoots Gatsby in his pool and then kills himself.

Chapter 9

In this chapter, Nick's narration takes place two years later when he recalls the events of Gatsby's death.

Nick calls Daisy's house to speak to her but she and Tom have left and cannot be contacted. He also tries to contact Meyer Wolfsheim but fails. Wolfsheim sends a letter later saying that he cannot come to Gatsby's side. A few days later, Henry Gatz - Gatsby's father - comes to the house. He had heard about Gatsby's death in the paper and came at once.

On the day of the funeral, Nick goes into the city to see Wolfsheim. Nick has to force himself into Wolfsheim's office, but Meyer refuses to come to the funeral saying that he can't get mixed up in another man's death.

When Nick returns to the house, Mr. Gatz describes Gatsby when he was younger. Gatz shows Nick a schedule that Gatsby wrote out. It suggests a very driven and determined young Gatsby.

The minister arrives at the house and is ready to start the funeral but Nick asks him to wait for more people to arrive. No one does. When the small group goes to the cemetery, another man arrives for the service. He was a man who came to Gatsby's party that summer and thought he should be there out of respect. He is the only one who does so.

Nick goes to see Jordan. She claims that she is engaged to another man and, although not surprised, Nick pretends to be.

In October, Nick sees Tom on a street in the city. Tom admits to telling Wilson that it was Gatsby who owned the car that killed Myrtle.

Nick decides to move to the Midwest. Nick's narration becomes one of contemplation as he recalls the house, the parties and Gatsby's faith and hope.