The Great Gatsby, by F. Scott Fitzgerald

CHAPTER 1

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

"Whenever you feel like criticizing any one," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

He didn't say any more, but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence, I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores. The abnormal mind is quick to detect and attach itself to this quality when it appears in a normal person, and so it came about that in college I was unjustly accused of being a politician, because I was privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men. Most of the confidences were unsought — frequently I have feigned sleep, preoccupation, or a hostile levity when I realized by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon; for the intimate revelations of young men, or at least the terms in which they express them, are usually plagiaristic and marred by obvious suppressions. Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat, a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth.

And, after boasting this way of my tolerance, I come to the admission that it has a limit. Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes, but after a certain point I don't care what it's founded on. When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction — Gatsby, who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles

Commented [1]:
Synopsis of Chapter 1
Narrator Nick Carraway discusses his family background and recent experiences, including college (university), the Great-War, moving to the East (of the USA), settling in his new house and going into the 'bond business'.
Nick having rented a small house on the promontory of West Egg, the action begins with his visit to the East Egg house of his distant cousin Daisy and her husband Tom Buchanan, whom Nick knew from College as a skilled footballer from a wealthy family. He also meets their guest Jordan Baker, who confides that Tom has a mistress. During the visit Nick observes and gains some insight into the nature of the Buchanans' relationship. When he returns to his rented house at night, he notices his neighbour, Jay Gatsby, making a mysterious gesture towards Daisy's house in the 'unquiet darkness'.

Commented [2]:
Examine the relationship between father s and sons. (Nick and his father, Gatsby and his father. What about Fitzgerald's relationship with his father?

Commented [3]: ...

Commented [4]:
Nick Carraway ...

Commented [5]:
What is the significance of Nick as the first-narrator?

Commented [6]:
victim … unjustly accused - The ineffectiveness of his father's advice is demonstrated by what has happene...

Commented [7]:
What does 'normal person' suggest?

Commented [8]:
What impression do you get of Nick?

Commented [9]: ...

Commented [10]:
How is hope presented in the novel? Consider the hopes of other characters.

Commented [11]:
Comment on this

Commented [12]:
What is Nick's tone?

Commented [13]:
What is your interpretation of this? 'Conduct may be dounded on the hard rock or the wet marshes…

Commented [14]:
Fitzgerald opens his novel by introducing Nick Carraway, the story's narrator. Nick has, by his own ...

Commented [15]:
See this for the Midwestern states http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Midweste...

Commented [16]: ...

Commented [17]:
Only Gatsby - In yet another change of direction, Nick then exempts Gatsby from this decision, introducing h...

away. This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the "creative temperament."— it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No — Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men.

My family have been prominent, well-to-do people in this Middle Western city for three generations. The Carraways are something of a clan, and we have a tradition that we're descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch, but the actual founder of my line was my grandfather's brother, who came here in fifty-one, sent a substitute to the Civil War, and started the wholesale hardware business that my father carries on to-day.

I never saw this great-uncle, but I'm supposed to look like him — with special reference to the rather hard-boiled painting that hangs in father's office. I graduated from New Haven in 1915, just a quarter of a century after my father, and a little later I participated in that delayed Teutonic migration known as the Great War. I enjoyed the counter-raid so thoroughly that I came back restless. Instead of being the warm centre of the world, the Middle West now seemed like the ragged edge of the universe — so I decided to go East and learn the bond business. Everybody I knew was in the bond business, so I supposed it could support one more single man. All my aunts and uncles talked it over as if they were choosing a prep school for me, and finally said, "Why — ye — es," with very grave, hesitant faces. Father agreed to finance me for a year, and after various delays I came East, permanently, I thought, in the spring of twenty-two.

The practical thing was to find rooms in the city, but it was a warm season, and I had just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees, so when a young man at the office suggested that we take a house together in a commuting town, it sounded like a great idea. He found the house, a weather-beaten cardboard bungalow at eighty a month, but at the last minute the firm ordered him to Washington, and I went out to the country alone. I had a dog — at least I had him for a few days until he ran away — and an old Dodge and a Finnish woman, who made my bed and cooked breakfast and muttered Finnish wisdom to herself over the electric stove.

Commented [18]:
What is Nick's presentation of Gatsby?

Commented [19]:
What is so unique about Gatsby?

Commented [20]:
What is the foul dust referring to?
Hoe are dreams and hopes presented?

Commented [21]:
What is the idea presented here? Consider the use of the word 'tradition' and wealth.

Commented [22]:
The East
The East of America seems to be a location associated with restlessness. Nick ends up there because he is no longer satisfied with the Mid West. Daisy and Tom are said to have 'drifted here and there unrestfully' and Nick comments that he doesn't know why they came East. He also doubts that they will remain there, as Tom is 'seeking, a little wistfully, for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game'. There is a clear parallel being set up here with Gatsby, who we discover later is also searching for something unattainable.

Commented [23]:
Business - Not only is education dominated by men but the business world was also exclusively male. Women in the novel are very limited in their choices of occupation, so Daisy is a wife and, to some extent, a mother. Jordan has her own sporting career but she is never seen pursuing this, so her principal identity in the novel is as a friend to Daisy and girlfriend to Nick. Myrtle is a wife and mistress. At this point, consider Fitzgerald's presentation of women. Read Kathleen Parkinson's guide.

Commented [24]:
Exact setting: The spring of 1922. Please remember this!

It was lonely for a day or so until one morning some man, more recently arrived than I, stopped me on the road.

"How do you get to West Egg village?" he asked helplessly.

I told him. And as I walked on I was lonely no longer. I was a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler. He had casually conferred on me the freedom of the neighborhood.

And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.

There was so much to read, for one thing, and so much fine health to be pulled down out of the young breath-giving air. I bought a dozen volumes on banking and credit and investment securities, and they stood on my shelf in red and gold like new money from the mint, promising to unfold the shining secrets that only Midas and Morgan and Maecenas knew. And I had the high intention of reading many other books besides. I was rather literary in college — one year I wrote a series of very solemn and obvious editorials for the "Yale News."— and now I was going to bring back all such things into my life and become again that most limited of all specialists, the "well-rounded man." This isn't just an epigram — life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all.

It was a matter of chance that I should have rented a house in one of the strangest communities in North America. It was on that slender riotous island which extends itself due east of New York — and where there are, among other natural curiosities, two unusual formations of land. Twenty miles from the city a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and separated only by a courtesy bay, jut out into the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western hemisphere, the great wet barnyard of Long Island Sound. They are not perfect ovals — like the egg in the Columbus story, they are both crushed flat at the contact end — but their physical resemblance must be a source of perpetual confusion to the gulls that fly overhead. To the wingless a more arresting phenomenon is their dissimilarity in every particular except shape and size.

I lived at West Egg, the — well, the less fashionable of the two, though this is a most superficial tag to express the bizarre and not a little sinister contrast between them. My house was at the very tip of the egg, only fifty yards from the Sound, and squeezed between two huge places that rented for twelve or fifteen thousand a season. The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard — it was a factual imitation of some

Commented [25]:
How so? How does it relate to the ending of the novel with reference to the Dutch sailors?

Commented [26]:
Does this spell out Nick's hopes?

Commented [27]:
so much fine health to be pulled down out of the young, breath-giving air - Nick's initial experiences are very positive and there is a strong sense of ambition ('high intention') to succeed at many things. However, this is immediately undercut with the phrase, 'that most limited of all specialists, the 'well-rounded man'' and the final comment:
This isn't just an epigram – life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all.

Commented [28]:
Midas and Morgan and Maecenas - Nick refers to:
King Midas for whom, according to Greek legend, everything he touched turned to gold
J.P.Morgan (April 17, 1837 – March 31, 1913), an American financier and banker of enormous wealth
Maecenas (29 April 70 BC – October 8 BC), a Roman politician whose name was a byword for wealth and generosity to the arts.

Commented [29]:
College – in the 1920s, increasing numbers of women were attending college (the equivalent of university in England) and F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote This Side of Paradise (1920) depicting college life in great detail. Nick's experience of college was completely male-dominated, and this is because he graduated from New Haven (Yale University) in 1915. Yale only admitted female students in 1969.

Commented [30]:
An epigram: a pithy saying or remark expressing an idea in a clever and amusing way.

Commented [31]:
Does this also refer to Nick's perspectives of the events?

Commented [32]:
Locations in the novel:
http://www.yorknotes.com/images/onlineguides/great-gatsby/Great-Gatsby-map.jpg

Commented [33]:
Columbus supposedly responds to the remark that other men could have made his voyage by challenging the company to stand an egg on end. When they failed, Columbus succeeded by flattened one end of the egg. The point of his demonstration was that after he had shown the way, others could follow.

Commented [34]:
What is the idea of dissimilarity in the novel?

Commented [35]:
Pay attention to the other details of Gatsby's house.

Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool, and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was Gatsby's mansion. Or, rather, as I didn't know Mr. Gatsby, it was a mansion inhabited by a gentleman of that name. My own house was an eyesore, but it was a small eyesore, and it had been overlooked, so I had a view of the water, a partial view of my neighbor's lawn, and the consoling proximity of millionaires — all for eighty dollars a month.

Across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water, and the history of the summer really begins on the evening I drove over there to have dinner with the Tom Buchanans. Daisy was my second cousin once removed, and I'd known Tom in college. And just after the war I spent two days with them in Chicago.

Her husband, among various physical accomplishments, had been one of the most powerful ends that ever played football at New Haven — a national figure in a way, one of those men who reach such an acute limited excellence at twenty-one that everything afterward savors of anti-climax. His family were enormously wealthy — even in college his freedom with money was a matter for reproach — but now he'd left Chicago and come East in a fashion that rather took your breath away: for instance, he'd brought down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest. It was hard to realize that a man in my own generation was wealthy enough to do that.

Why they came East I don't know. They had spent a year in France for no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together. This was a permanent move, said Daisy over the telephone, but I didn't believe it — I had no sight into Daisy's heart, but I felt that Tom would drift on forever seeking, a little wistfully, for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game.

And so it happened that on a warm windy evening I drove over to East Egg to see two old friends whom I scarcely knew at all. Their house was even more elaborate than I expected, a cheerful red-and-white Georgian Colonial mansion, overlooking the bay. The lawn started at the beach and ran toward the front door for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sun-dials and brick walks and burning gardens — finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run. The front was broken by a line of French windows, glowing now with reflected gold

Commented [36]:
East and West Egg
These two fictional locations are very close together, twenty miles from New York, and jutting out into the Long Island Sound. West Egg is where Nick and Gatsby live, and East Egg is where Daisy and Tom live. The language used to introduce these two locations is rich with references to the extraordinary: 'strangest', 'riotous', 'curiosities', 'unusual', 'a source of perpetual wonder', 'bizarre and not a little sinister'. There is also a sense of social hierarchy expressed using these two locations. East Egg is the superior location, the more 'fashionable' and has 'white palaces', whereas West Egg has 'huge places', notable for their imitation of grandeur ('spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy'). However, their colossal size merely implies ambition and aspiration rather than assured and established success.

Commented [37]:
Tom Buchanan
Tom is characterised in physical terms, although he is also said to 'nibble at the edge of stale ideas'. Horses are used as symbols of masculine power – Tom brings 'a string of polo ponies' to the East and the description of his riding clothes accentuates his 'enormous power' and 'cruel body'.
Fitzgerald also uses a semantic-field of aggression: 'hard', 'supercilious', 'arrogant', 'dominance', 'aggressively' and 'brute', 'hulking', 'violently', which is combined with Tom's interest in supremacist texts. This is quite shocking, especially to a modern audience, and Fitzgerald perhaps uses the insecurity of the age to reflect Tom's inner anxieties about power and wealth. ...

Commented [38]:
Tom's riding clothes identify him as a member of the "old money" class: horseback riding was a hobby only of the rich who had great country estates. The more urban "new money" wouldn't ride horses. Yet Tom's ...

Commented [39]:
Tom comes from a traditionally rich background.

Commented [40]:
Was this reflective of the 1920s? Link to Fitzgerald and his wife and friends.

Commented [41]:
Daisy and Tom's house
Tom is extremely proud of his new home, introduced as 'a cheerful red-and-white Georgian colonial mansion'. His stance on the front porch implies his dominance over the space, as well as his wish for the location to ...

Commented [42]:
About Georgian architecture
http://www.wentworthstudio.com/historic-styles/georgian/

Commented [43]:
The story's first adventure, and the one that comprises a large portion of Chapter 1, is Nick's visit with his cousin, Daisy Buchanan, and her husband, Tom, at their mansion in East Egg. The visit not only introduces the other characters crucial to the story, but it also ...

Commented [44]:
Take note of the grand setting. Pay attention to how colours are used in this text.

and wide open to the warm windy afternoon, and Tom Buchanan in riding clothes was standing with his legs apart on the front porch.

He had changed since his New Haven years. Now he was a sturdy straw-haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave him the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward. Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body — he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing, and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat. It was a body capable of enormous leverage — a cruel body.

His speaking voice, a gruff husky tenor, added to the impression of fractiousness he conveyed. There was a touch of paternal contempt in it, even toward people he liked — and there were men at New Haven who had hated his guts.

"Now, don't think my opinion on these matters is final," he seemed to say, "just because I'm stronger and more of a man than you are." We were in the same senior society, and while we were never intimate I always had the impression that he approved of me and wanted me to like him with some harsh, defiant wistfulness of his own.

We talked for a few minutes on the sunny porch.

"I've got a nice place here," he said, his eyes flashing about restlessly.

Turning me around by one arm, he moved a broad flat hand along the front vista, including in its sweep a sunken Italian garden, a half acre of deep, pungent roses, and a snub-nosed motor-boat that bumped the tide offshore.

"It belonged to Demaine, the oil man." He turned me around again, politely and abruptly. "We'll go inside."

We walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-colored space, fragilely bound into the house by French windows at either end. The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding-cake of the ceiling, and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea.

The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were

Commented [45]:
Fractious: causing trouble : hard to manage or control

: full of anger and disagreement

Commented [46]:
How Nick sees Tom? Note the physical description.

Commented [47]:
How does Nick's relationship with Tom affect his writing?

Commented [48]:
further description of the house and the wealth.

Commented [49]:
setting

Commented [50]:
what is the effect of this description (considering the characters who are introduced in the next paragraph?

Commented [51]:
Fitzgerald sets the women, Daisy and her friend Jordan Baker, in a dreamlike setting, emphasizing their inability to deal with reality. Both young women, dressed entirely in white (suggesting purity or, in contrast, a void of something such as intellectualism), are engulfed by the expansiveness of the room in which they are sitting. In one of Fitzgerald's many evocative and imagistic passages, he notes how both women's dresses are "rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house." As Tom shuts the windows and the breeze dissipates, "the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor." Hardly could a more languid image be created. These are not people who concern themselves with eking out a living.

both in white, and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and the caught wind died out about the room, and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor.

The younger of the two was a stranger to me. She was extended full length at her end of the divan, completely motionless, and with her chin raised a little, as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall. If she saw me out of the corner of her eyes she gave no hint of it — indeed, I was almost surprised into murmuring an apology for having disturbed her by coming in.

The other girl, Daisy, made an attempt to rise — she leaned slightly forward with a conscientious expression — then she laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh, and I laughed too and came forward into the room.

"I'm p-paralyzed with happiness." She laughed again, as if she said something very witty, and held my hand for a moment, looking up into my face, promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see. That was a way she had. She hinted in a murmur that the surname of the balancing girl was Baker. (I've heard it said that Daisy's murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming.)

At any rate, Miss Baker's lips fluttered, she nodded at me almost imperceptibly, and then quickly tipped her head back again — the object she was balancing had obviously tottered a little and given her something of a fright. Again a sort of apology arose to my lips. Almost any exhibition of complete self-sufficiency draws a stunned tribute from me.

I looked back at my cousin, who began to ask me questions in her low, thrilling voice. It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down, as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth, but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered "Listen," a promise that she had done gay, exciting

Commented [52]:
Read Kathleen Parkinson's guide on Fitzgerald's attitude towards women.

Commented [53]:
Initial impression of Daisy

Commented [54]:
Jordan Baker
Nick presents her as physically attractive, knowledgeable and independent. She is not married and seems to have the freedom to do as she pleases, prompting Tom to question the role of her family in restraining her

Commented [55]:
What is Nick's impression of Jordan?

Commented [56]:
Pay attention to Daisy's voice? ' Her voice is full of money.' Who says this later in the novel?

things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour.

I told her how I had stopped off in Chicago for a day on my way East, and how a dozen people had sent their love through me.

"Do they miss me?" she cried ecstatically.

"The whole town is desolate. All the cars have the left rear wheel painted black as a mourning wreath, and there's a persistent wail all night along the north shore."

"How gorgeous! Let's go back, Tom. To-morrow!" Then she added irrelevantly: "You ought to see the baby."

"I'd like to."

"She's asleep. She's three years old. Haven't you ever seen her?"

"Never."

"Well, you ought to see her. She's ——"

Tom Buchanan, who had been hovering restlessly about the room, stopped and rested his hand on my shoulder.

"What you doing, Nick?"

"I'm a bond man."

"Who with?"

I told him.

"Never heard of them," he remarked decisively.

This annoyed me.

"You will," I answered shortly. "You will if you stay in the East."

"Oh, I'll stay in the East, don't you worry," he said, glancing at Daisy and then back at me, as if he were alert for something more. "I'd be a God damned fool to live anywhere else."

At this point Miss Baker said: "Absolutely!" with such suddenness that I started — it was the first word she uttered since I came into the room. Evidently it surprised her as much as it did me, for she yawned and with a series of rapid, deft movements stood up into the room.

"I'm stiff," she complained, "I've been lying on that sofa for as long as I can remember."

"Don't look at me," Daisy retorted, "I've been trying to get you to New York all afternoon."

Commented [57]:
As the scene unfolds and they begin conversation, the superficial nature of these socialites becomes even more pronounced. Daisy speaks in a voice known for its ability to draw people in (a voice that Gatsby later defines as having money in it). She appears she hasn't a care in the real world, with fulfilling her own whims. The conversation at the dinner furnishes a few key details: This collection of East Eggers focuses on matters of little practical or significant importance and when they do speak of what they perceive to be weighty and meritorious matters, the parts of themselves they reveal are not flattering. For instance, when Tom chooses to discuss politics, he reveals himself not just as one who discriminates against people on the basis of class (a classicist), but also a racist. He comes from a land of privilege and unlike Nick, doesn't subscribe to the adage about withholding judgment because not everyone has had the same advantages. For Tom, all that matters is that he has had advantages; everything he does in the book comes from his selfish attempt to keep himself in a certain strata while denying anyone else access, even his mistress, who is introduced in Chapter 2.

Commented [58]:
Frivolous and shallow

Commented [59]:
Foreshadowing the accident

Commented [60]:
Tom's arrogant nature

Commented [61]:
restlessness

"No, thanks," said Miss Baker to the four cocktails just in from the pantry, "I'm absolutely in training."

Her host looked at her incredulously.

"You are!" He took down his drink as if it were a drop in the bottom of a glass. "How you ever get anything done is beyond me."

I looked at Miss Baker, wondering what it was she "got done." I enjoyed looking at her. She was a slender, small-breasted girl, with an erect carriage, which she accentuated by throwing her body backward at the shoulders like a young cadet. Her gray sun-strained eyes looked back at me with polite reciprocal curiosity out of a wan, charming, discontented face. It occurred to me now that I had seen her, or a picture of her, somewhere before.

"You live in West Egg," she remarked contemptuously. "I know somebody there."

"I don't know a single ——"

"You must know Gatsby."

"Gatsby?" demanded Daisy. "What Gatsby?"

Before I could reply that he was my neighbor dinner was announced; wedging his tense arm imperatively under mine, Tom Buchanan compelled me from the room as though he were moving a checker to another square.

Slenderly, languidly, their hands set lightly on their hips, the two young women preceded us out onto a rosy-colored porch, open toward the sunset, where four candles flickered on the table in the diminished wind.

"Why *candles*?" objected Daisy, frowning. She snapped them out with her fingers. "In two weeks it'll be the longest day in the year." She looked at us all radiantly. "Do you always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it? I always watch for the longest day in the year and then miss it."

"We ought to plan something," yawned Miss Baker, sitting down at the table as if she were getting into bed.

"All right," said Daisy. "What'll we plan?" She turned to me helplessly: "What do people plan?"

Before I could answer her eyes fastened with an awed expression on her little finger.

"Look!" she complained; "I hurt it."

We all looked — the knuckle was black and blue.

Commented [62]:
How Nick perceives Jordan.

Commented [63]:
First mention of Gatsby. Pay attention to frame narratives (story within a story). Read up on this literary technique.

Commented [64]:
Does Tom impose on Nick? How do you think their relationship will affect Nick's perception of Tom and also the narration.

Commented [65]:
Note how Daisy is presented early in the novel. Is this presentation consistent?

Commented [66]:
restlessness

"You did it, Tom," she said accusingly. "I know you didn't mean to, but you *did* do it. That's what I get for marrying a brute of a man, a great, big, hulking physical specimen of a ——"

"I hate that word hulking," objected Tom crossly, "even in kidding."

"Hulking," insisted Daisy.

Sometimes she and Miss Baker talked at once, unobtrusively and with a bantering inconsequence that was never quite chatter, that was as cool as their white dresses and their impersonal eyes in the absence of all desire. They were here, and they accepted Tom and me, making only a polite pleasant effort to entertain or to be entertained. They knew that presently dinner would be over and a little later the evening too would be over and casually put away. It was sharply different from the West, where an evening was hurried from phase to phase toward its close, in a continually disappointed anticipation or else in sheer nervous dread of the moment itself.

"You make me feel uncivilized, Daisy," I confessed on my second glass of corky but rather impressive claret. "Can't you talk about crops or something?"

I meant nothing in particular by this remark, but it was taken up in an unexpected way.

"Civilization's going to pieces," broke out Tom violently. "I've gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things. Have you read 'The Rise of the Colored Empires' by this man Goddard?"

"Why, no," I answered, rather surprised by his tone.

"Well, it's a fine book, and everybody ought to read it. The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be — will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved."

"Tom's getting very profound," said Daisy, with an expression of unthoughtful sadness. "He reads deep books with long words in them. What was that word we ——"

"Well, these books are all scientific," insisted Tom, glancing at her impatiently. "This fellow has worked out the whole thing. It's up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out or these other races will have control of things."

"We've got to beat them down," whispered Daisy, winking ferociously toward the fervent sun.

"You ought to live in California —" began Miss Baker, but Tom interrupted her by shifting heavily in his chair.

Commented [67]:
presentation of Tom

Commented [68]:
examine the relationship between Tom and Daisy. Take note of dialogue as a literary technique.

Commented [69]:
Presentation of the two female characters

Commented [70]:
Does Nick feel part of the group?

Commented [71]:
Apparently an allusion by F Scott Fitzgerald to Lothrop Stoddard's The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy, published in 1920.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lothrop_Stoddard

Commented [72]:
Nordics are thought to be a superior race.

“This idea is that we’re Nordics. I am, and you are, and you are, and ——” After an infinitesimal hesitation he included Daisy with a slight nod, and she winked at me again. “— And we’ve produced all the things that go to make civilization — oh, science and art, and all that. Do you see?”

There was something pathetic in his concentration, as if his complacency, more acute than of old, was not enough to him any more. When, almost immediately, the telephone rang inside and the butler left the porch Daisy seized upon the momentary interruption and leaned toward me.

“I’ll tell you a family secret,” she whispered enthusiastically. “It’s about the butler’s nose. Do you want to hear about the butler’s nose?”

“That’s why I came over to-night.”

“Well, he wasn’t always a butler; he used to be the silver polisher for some people in New York that had a silver service for two hundred people. He had to polish it from morning till night, until finally it began to affect his nose ——”

“Things went from bad to worse,” suggested Miss Baker.

“Yes. Things went from bad to worse, until finally he had to give up his position.”

For a moment the last sunshine fell with romantic affection upon her glowing face; her voice compelled me forward breathlessly as I listened — then the glow faded, each light deserting her with lingering regret, like children leaving a pleasant street at dusk.

The butler came back and murmured something close to Tom’s ear, whereupon Tom frowned, pushed back his chair, and without a word went inside. As if his absence quickened something within her, Daisy leaned forward again, her voice glowing and singing.

“I love to see you at my table, Nick. You remind me of a — of a rose, an absolute rose. Doesn’t he?” She turned to Miss Baker for confirmation: “An absolute rose?”

This was untrue. I am not even faintly like a rose. She was only extemporizing, but a stirring warmth flowed from her, as if her heart was trying to come out to you concealed in one of those breathless, thrilling words. Then suddenly she threw her napkin on the table and excused herself and went into the house.

Miss Baker and I exchanged a short glance consciously devoid of meaning. I was about to speak when she sat up alertly and said “Sh!” in a warning voice. A subdued impassioned murmur was audible in the room beyond, and Miss Baker leaned forward

Commented [73]:
Why did he not wish to include Daily initially?

Commented [74]:
The restlessness that we have already seen

Commented [75]:
What does this action suggest?

unashamed, trying to hear. The murmur trembled on the verge of coherence, sank down, mounted excitedly, and then ceased altogether.

"This Mr. Gatsby you spoke of is my neighbor ——" I said.

"Don't talk. I want to hear what happens."

"Is something happening?" I inquired innocently.

"You mean to say you don't know?" said Miss Baker, honestly surprised. "I thought everybody knew."

"I don't."

"Why ——" she said hesitantly, "Tom's got some woman in New York."

"Got some woman?" I repeated blankly.

Miss Baker nodded.

"She might have the decency not to telephone him at dinner time. Don't you think?"

Almost before I had grasped her meaning there was the flutter of a dress and the crunch of leather boots, and Tom and Daisy were back at the table.

"It couldn't be helped!" cried Daisy with tense gaiety.

She sat down, glanced searchingly at Miss Baker and then at me, and continued: "I looked outdoors for a minute, and it's very romantic outdoors. There's a bird on the lawn that I think must be a nightingale come over on the Cunard or White Star Line. He's singing away ——" Her voice sang: "It's romantic, isn't it, Tom?"

"Very romantic," he said, and then miserably to me: "If it's light enough after dinner, I want to take you down to the stables."

The telephone rang inside, startlingly, and as Daisy shook her head decisively at Tom the subject of the stables, in fact all subjects, vanished into air. Among the broken fragments of the last five minutes at table I remember the candles being lit again, pointlessly, and I was conscious of wanting to look squarely at every one, and yet to avoid all eyes. I couldn't guess what Daisy and Tom were thinking, but I doubt if even Miss Baker, who seemed to have mastered a certain hardy scepticism, was able utterly to put this fifth guest's shrill metallic urgency out of mind. To a certain temperament the situation might have seemed intriguing — my own instinct was to telephone immediately for the police.

The horses, needless to say, were not mentioned again. Tom and Miss Baker, with several feet of twilight between them, strolled back into the library, as if to a vigil

Commented [76]:
The bird immortalized by Keats in his Romantic Ode is not found in America, so Daily imagines one to have travelled the Atlantic to a British Ocean liner.

Commented [77]:
Consider Nick's reliability as the narrator

Commented [78]:
Myrtle

beside a perfectly tangible body, while, trying to look pleasantly interested and a little deaf, I followed Daisy around a chain of connecting verandas to the porch in front. In its deep gloom we sat down side by side on a wicker settee.

Daisy took her face in her hands as if feeling its lovely shape, and her eyes moved gradually out into the velvet dusk. I saw that turbulent emotions possessed her, so I asked what I thought would be some sedative questions about her little girl.

"We don't know each other very well, Nick," she said suddenly. "Even if we are cousins. You didn't come to my wedding."

"I wasn't back from the war."

"That's true." She hesitated. "Well, I've had a very bad time, Nick, and I'm pretty cynical about everything."

Evidently she had reason to be. I waited but she didn't say any more, and after a moment I returned rather feebly to the subject of her daughter.

"I suppose she talks, and — eats, and everything."

"Oh, yes." She looked at me absently. "Listen, Nick; let me tell you what I said when she was born. Would you like to hear?"

"Very much."

"It'll show you how I've gotten to feel about — things. Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling, and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'all right,' I said, 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool — that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool."

"You see I think everything's terrible anyhow," she went on in a convinced way. "Everybody thinks so — the most advanced people. And I *know*. I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything." Her eyes flashed around her in a defiant way, rather like Tom's, and she laughed with thrilling scorn. "Sophisticated — God, I'm sophisticated!"

The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face,

Commented [79]: Why?

Commented [80]: Why?

Commented [81]: http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/07/the-i-great-gatsby-i-line-that-came-from-fitzgeralds-life-and-inspired-a-novel/277476/

as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged.

Inside, the crimson room bloomed with light.

Tom and Miss Baker sat at either end of the long couch and she read aloud to him from the *Saturday Evening Post*. — the words, murmurous and uninflected, running together in a soothing tune. The lamp-light, bright on his boots and dull on the autumn-leaf yellow of her hair, glinted along the paper as she turned a page with a flutter of slender muscles in her arms.

When we came in she held us silent for a moment with a lifted hand.

"To be continued," she said, tossing the magazine on the table, "in our very next issue."

Her body asserted itself with a restless movement of her knee, and she stood up.

"Ten o'clock," she remarked, apparently finding the time on the ceiling. "Time for this good girl to go to bed."

"Jordan's going to play in the tournament to-morrow," explained Daisy, "over at Westchester."

"Oh — you're Jordan *Baker*."

I knew now why her face was familiar — its pleasing contemptuous expression had looked out at me from many rotogravure pictures of the sporting life at Asheville and Hot Springs and Palm Beach. I had heard some story of her too, a critical, unpleasant story, but what it was I had forgotten long ago.

"Good night," she said softly. "Wake me at eight, won't you."

"If you'll get up."

"I will. Good night, Mr. Carraway. See you anon."

"Of course you will," confirmed Daisy. "In fact I think I'll arrange a marriage. Come over often, Nick, and I'll sort of — oh — fling you together. You know — lock you up accidentally in linen closets and push you out to sea in a boat, and all that sort of thing ——"

"Good night," called Miss Baker from the stairs. "I haven't heard a word."

"She's a nice girl," said Tom after a moment. "They oughtn't to let her run around the country this way."

"Who oughtn't to?" inquired Daisy coldly.

"Her family."

Commented [82]: Nick's impression of this group. Did he feel part of the group?

Commented [83]: a widely read magazine, to which Fitzgerald was a regular and well-paid contributor

Commented [84]: an exclusive northern suburb of New York City.

Commented [85]: Rotogravure (roto or gravure for short) is a type of intaglio printing process, which involves engraving the image onto an image carrier. In gravure printing, the image is engraved onto a cylinder because, like offset printing and flexography, it uses a rotary printing press.

Commented [86]: Fashionable resorts in Northern Carolina, Arkansas and Florida respectively.

Commented [87]: What is this story?

Commented [88]: How Tom perceives women

“Her family is one aunt about a thousand years old. Besides, Nick’s going to look after her, aren’t you, Nick? She’s going to spend lots of week-ends out here this summer. I think the home influence will be very good for her.”

Daisy and Tom looked at each other for a moment in silence.

“Is she from New York?” I asked quickly.

“From Louisville. Our white girlhood was passed together there. Our beautiful white ——”

“Did you give Nick a little heart to heart talk on the veranda?” demanded Tom suddenly.

“Did I?” She looked at me.

“I can’t seem to remember, but I think we talked about the Nordic race. Yes, I’m sure we did. It sort of crept up on us and first thing you know ——”

“Don’t believe everything you hear, Nick,” he advised me.

I said lightly that I had heard nothing at all, and a few minutes later I got up to go home. They came to the door with me and stood side by side in a cheerful square of light. As I started my motor Daisy peremptorily called: “Wait!”

“I forgot to ask you something, and it’s important. We heard you were engaged to a girl out West.”

“That’s right,” corroborated Tom kindly. “We heard that you were engaged.”

“It’s libel. I’m too poor.”

“But we heard it,” insisted Daisy, surprising me by opening up again in a flower-like way. “We heard it from three people, so it must be true.”

Of course I knew what they were referring to, but I wasn’t even vaguely engaged. The fact that gossip had published the banns was one of the reasons I had come East. You can’t stop going with an old friend on account of rumors, and on the other hand I had no intention of being rumored into marriage.

Their interest rather touched me and made them less remotely rich — nevertheless, I was confused and a little disgusted as I drove away. It seemed to me that the thing for Daisy to do was to rush out of the house, child in arms — but apparently there were no such intentions in her head. As for Tom, the fact that he “had some woman in New York.” was really less surprising than that he had been depressed by a book. Something

Commented [89]:
a town in Kenticky, in the American South.

Commented [90]:
What is Tom implying?

Commented [91]:
Nick obviously knows about the affair.

Commented [92]:
Another key idea introduced at the dinner party is that of societal expectation. Much of The Great Gatsby centers on appearances and the rift between who or what one is and who or what society wishes or expects. Fitzgerald has already given a sense of this dichotomy when first introducing the Buchanans: They're expected to be gracious and generous, but instead seem shallow and superficial. Just as Nick prepares to head home for the night, Daisy calls for him to wait because she "forgot to ask [him] something, and it's important." "We heard you were engaged to a girl out West," Daisy begins. Nick denies the rumor flatly: "It's a libel. I'm too poor" (curiously, his response also brings home another of the story's key ideas — wealth — and as the story unfolds, money and marriage are at its heart). Daisy insists, "But we heard it . . . we heard it from three people, so it must be true." Nick, aware of what they are referring to, reveals that the hometown gossip over his engagement was, in fact, part of what brought him East; he had "no intention of being rumored into marriage." Nick, strong enough to withstand social pressure, becomes a striking contrast to the people introduced throughout the rest of the story who will, time after time, succumb to the power of suggestion, oftentimes to dire ends.

Commented [93]:
What is the significance of this line?

Commented [94]:
in phrase banns of marriage (late 12c., spelling with double -n- attested from 1540s), from Old English bannan "to summon, command, proclaim" (see ban (v.)). Also probably partly from Old French ban "announcement, proclamation, banns, authorization," from Frankish *ban or some other Germanic cognate of the Old English word.

Commented [95]:
What is the role of gossips and rumours in this novel?

was making him nibble at the edge of stale ideas as if his sturdy physical egotism no longer nourished his peremptory heart.

Already it was deep summer on roadhouse roofs and in front of wayside garages, where new red gas-pumps sat out in pools of light, and when I reached my estate at West Egg I ran the car under its shed and sat for a while on an abandoned grass roller in the yard. The wind had blown off, leaving a loud, bright night, with wings beating in the trees and a persistent organ sound as the full bellows of the earth blew the frogs full of life. The silhouette of a moving cat wavered across the moonlight, and turning my head to watch it, I saw that I was not alone — fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet upon the lawn suggested that it was Mr. Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of our local heavens.

I decided to call to him. Miss Baker had mentioned him at dinner, and that would do for an introduction. But I didn't call to him, for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone — he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward — and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness.

Commented [96]:
Note that Gatsby wants the lawn to look presentable before their meeting

Commented [97]:
What could this allude to? Hope? Dreams?

Commented [98]:
Stars, heaven?

Commented [99]:
Gatsby's larger-than life presentation

Commented [100]:
Why heavens?

Commented [101]:
But why did Nick 'secure position of his feet in the earlier paragraph?

Commented [102]:
Significance of the green light. The Green Light and the Color Green
The green light at the end of Daisy's dock is the symbol of Gatsby's hopes and dreams. It represents everything that haunts and beckons Gatsby: the physical and emotional distance between him and Daisy, the gap between the past and the present, the promises of the future, and the powerful lure of that other green stuff he craves—money. In fact, the color green pops up everywhere in The Great Gatsby. Long Island sound is "green"; George Wilson's haggard tired face is "green" in the sunlight; Michaelis describes the car that kills Myrtle Wilson as "light green" (though it's yellow); Gatsby's perfect lawn is green; and the New World that Nick imagines Dutch explorers first stumbling upon is a "fresh, green breast." The symbolism of green throughout the novel is as variable and contradictory as the many definitions of "green" and the many uses of money—"new," "natural," "innocent," "naive," and "uncorrupted"; but also "rotten," "gullible," "nauseous," and "sickly."