**Plot summary**

Great GAtsby

In spring 1922, [Nick Carraway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Carraway)—a Yale alumnus from the [Midwest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midwestern_United_States) and a World War I veteran—journeys to [New York City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City) to obtain employment as a [bond salesman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bond_(finance)). He rents a bungalow in the [Long Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_Island) village of West Egg, next to a luxurious estate inhabited by [Jay Gatsby](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay_Gatsby), an enigmatic multi-millionaire who hosts dazzling soirées yet doesn't partake in them.

One evening, Nick dines with a distant cousin, [Daisy Buchanan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daisy_Buchanan), in the fashionable town of East Egg. Daisy is married to Tom Buchanan, formerly a Yale football star whom Nick knew during his college days. The couple has recently relocated from [Chicago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago) to a mansion directly across the bay from Gatsby's estate. There, Nick encounters Jordan Baker, an insolent flapper and golf champion who is a childhood friend of Daisy's. Jordan confides to Nick that Tom keeps a mistress, Myrtle Wilson, who brazenly telephones him at his home and who lives in the "[valley of ashes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flushing_Meadows%E2%80%93Corona_Park)", a sprawling refuse dump.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby#cite_note-Valley_of_Ashes-35) That evening, Nick sees Gatsby standing alone on his lawn, staring at a green light across the bay.

Days later, Nick reluctantly accompanies a drunken and agitated Tom to New York City by train. En route, they stop at a garage inhabited by mechanic George Wilson and his wife Myrtle. Myrtle joins them, and the trio proceed to a small New York apartment that Tom has rented for trysts with her. Guests arrive and a party ensues, which ends with Tom slapping Myrtle and breaking her nose after she mentions Daisy.

One morning, Nick receives a formal invitation to a party at Gatsby's mansion. Once there, Nick is embarrassed that he recognizes no one and begins drinking heavily until he encounters Jordan. While chatting with her, he is approached by a man who introduces himself as Jay Gatsby and insists that both he and Nick served in the [3rd Infantry Division](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3rd_Infantry_Division_(United_States)) during the war. Gatsby attempts to ingratiate himself with Nick and when Nick leaves the party, he notices Gatsby watching him.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Plaza_Hotel_New_York_City_Circa_1910.jpg)

The confrontation between Gatsby and Tom occurs in the twenty-story [Plaza Hotel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plaza_Hotel), a [château](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau)-like edifice with an architectural style inspired by the [French Renaissance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Renaissance).

In late July, Nick and Gatsby have lunch at a [speakeasy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speakeasy). Gatsby tries impressing Nick with tales of his war heroism and his [Oxford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Oxford) days. Afterward, Nick meets Jordan again, this time at the [Plaza Hotel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plaza_Hotel). Jordan reveals that Gatsby and Daisy met around 1917 when Gatsby was an officer in the [American Expeditionary Forces](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Expeditionary_Forces). They fell in love, but when Gatsby was deployed overseas, Daisy reluctantly married Tom. Gatsby hopes that his newfound wealth and dazzling parties will make Daisy reconsider. Gatsby uses Nick to stage a reunion with Daisy, and the two embark upon a sexual affair.

In September, Tom discovers the affair when Daisy carelessly addresses Gatsby with unabashed intimacy in front of him. Later, at a Plaza Hotel suite, Gatsby and Tom argue about the affair. Gatsby insists Daisy declare that she never loved Tom. Daisy claims she loves Tom and Gatsby, upsetting both. Tom reveals Gatsby is a swindler whose money comes from bootlegging alcohol. Upon hearing this, Daisy chooses to stay with Tom. Tom scornfully tells Gatsby to drive her home, knowing that Daisy will never leave him.

While returning to East Egg, Gatsby and Daisy drive by Wilson's garage and their car accidentally strikes Myrtle, killing her instantly. Later Gatsby reveals to Nick that Daisy was driving the car, but that he intends to take the blame for the accident to protect her. Nick urges Gatsby to flee to avoid prosecution, but he refuses. After Tom tells George that Gatsby owns the car that struck Myrtle, a distraught George assumes the owner of the vehicle must be Myrtle's lover. George fatally shoots Gatsby in his mansion's swimming pool, then commits suicide.

Several days after Gatsby's murder, his father Henry Gatz arrives for the sparsely attended funeral. After Gatsby's death, Nick comes to hate New York and decides that Gatsby, Daisy, Tom, and he were all Midwesterners unsuited to [Eastern life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_United_States).[[c]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby#cite_note-East-West_Theme-36)

Nick encounters Tom and initially refuses to shake his hand. Tom admits he was the one who told George that Gatsby owned the vehicle that killed Myrtle. Before returning to the Midwest, Nick returns to Gatsby's mansion and stares across the bay at the green light emanating from the end of Daisy's dock.

Oliver Twist

is born into a life of poverty and misfortune, raised in a [workhouse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workhouse) in the fictional town of [Mudfog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mudfog_Papers). His unidentified mother, found on the street without a wedding ring, had [died in childbirth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maternal_death), and his father is not even mentioned. Lacking any background, he receives his name from the pompous parish [beadle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beadle) and hospice manager [Mr. Bumble](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mr._Bumble). Oliver falls under the "protection" of the "Poor Law", under which he is entitled to a meagre subsistence.

His first nine years are spent on a [baby farm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baby_farming), where he is supposed to be cared for by Mrs. Mann, who starves and bullies her boarders. Around Oliver's ninth birthday, Mr. Bumble removes Oliver from the farm and puts him to work picking and weaving [oakum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oakum) at the workhouse adjoining the hospice. The children working there receive very little food; after six months, they desperately draw lots, with the loser asking for another portion of [gruel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gruel). Oliver is designated, and so following his meal, he tremblingly approaches Mr. Bumble and humbly requests another serving.

A great uproar ensues at this perceived act of rebellion. The workhouse's board of directors offers £5 to any person wishing to take on Oliver as an apprentice. Oliver is eventually taken into the service of the parish undertaker [Mr. Sowerberry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mr._Sowerberry). He treats Oliver better and, because of Oliver's sorrowful countenance, uses him as a [mute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Funeral#Mutes_and_professional_mourners) at children's funerals. Oliver draws the jealousy of clumsy co-apprentice Noah Claypole, as well as the vindictiveness of the Sowerberrys' maidservant Charlotte, who is in love with Noah. One day, Noah insults Oliver's mother with an air of false compassion, and an enraged physical altercation ensues. Oliver flees from the Sowerberrys' house and later decides to run away to London to seek a better life.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dodger_introduces_Oliver_to_Fagin_by_Cruikshank_(detail).jpg)

[George Cruikshank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Cruikshank) original etching of the [Artful Dodger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artful_Dodger) (centre), here introducing [Oliver](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_Twist_(character)) (right) to [Fagin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fagin) (left)

Oliver encounters Jack Dawkins, a [pickpocket](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pickpocketing) known as the "[Artful Dodger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artful_Dodger)", and his sidekick, [Charley Bates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charley_Bates). The Dodger provides Oliver with a free meal and tells him of a gentleman in London who will "give him lodgings for nothing, and never ask for change". In this way, Oliver falls in with an infamous criminal known as [Fagin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fagin), who trains the boys as pickpockets.

The Dodger and Charley steal the handkerchief of an old gentleman named Mr. Brownlow and promptly flee. Mr. Brownlow sees Oliver running away in fright, and pursues him, thinking he was the thief. Mr Brownlow has second thoughts about the boy. He takes Oliver home and cares for him. As Oliver recovers, Brownlow and his housekeeper notice that Oliver resembles a woman depicted in a portrait hanging in Brownlow's home.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bill-sikes.jpg)

[Bill Sikes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Sikes) by [Fred Barnard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Barnard)

Fagin, fearing Oliver might tell the police about his criminal gang, sends a young woman named [Nancy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nancy_(Oliver_Twist)), and her abusive lover, the robber [Bill Sikes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Sikes), to bring Oliver back to Fagin's lair. Fagin forces him to participate in a burglary. The robbery goes wrong, and the people in the house shoot Oliver in his left arm. After being abandoned by Sikes, the wounded Oliver makes it back to the house and ends up under the care of the people he was supposed to rob: Miss Rose and her guardian Mrs. Maylie, both of whom treat Oliver well, moved by the tragic stories he tells them.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fagin_by_Kyd_1889.jpg)

Fagin by ['Kyd'](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Clayton_Clark) (1889)

"Monks", a man of whom nothing is known, teams up with Fagin, but reproaches him for failing to make a criminal out of Oliver and sully his reputation. Monks and Fagin agree to prevent Oliver from learning of his past, as Monks is related to Oliver in some fashion. Back in Mudfog, Mr. Bumble has married the local almshouse's wealthy governess Mrs. Corney, but their union is disastrously marred by their incessant quarreling. One day, Mr. Bumble encounters Monks and is bribed for information on Oliver. In a subsequent secret meeting between Monks, Bumble and Corney, they dispose of a ring and medallion that once belonged to Oliver's mother. Monks reports to Fagin of the deed, but Nancy, racked with guilt for her role in Oliver's kidnapping and having surreptitiously overheard their scheme to seize him, immediately leaves to inform Rose Maylie, who tells Mr. Brownlow. One evening, Sikes questions Nancy and forbids her from leaving the house when he fails to get a precise answer. Fagin grows suspicious of Nancy and decides to uncover her secret.

Meanwhile, Noah falls out with the Sowerberrys, steals a sum of money, and flees to London with Charlotte, who has become his fiancée. Under the pseudonym "Morris Bolter", he joins Fagin's gang, while Charlotte devotes herself to prostitution. During Noah's stay with Fagin, the Dodger is arrested for possession of a stolen silver snuffbox and is deported to Australia. Noah, assigned by Fagin to spy on Nancy, finds that Nancy regularly meets with the Brownlows and Maylies for the sake of Oliver's welfare. Fagin passes the information on to Sikes, who beats Nancy to death in a fit of rage and flees. Haunted by Nancy's ghost and increasingly consumed with fear as news of the murder spreads throughout the countryside, Sikes returns to London in search of a hiding place. He is quickly recognized by an angry mob and accidentally hangs himself in his attempt to escape via the rooftops.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cruikshank_-_Fagin_in_the_condemned_Cell_(Oliver_Twist).png)

[Fagin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fagin) in his cell, by British caricaturist [George Cruikshank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Cruikshank)

Mr. Brownlow forces Monks to divulge his secrets: his real name is Edward Leeford, and he is Oliver's paternal half-brother. Although legitimate, he is the fruit of a loveless marriage, as his father truly loved Agnes, Oliver's mother. Monks had spent years attempting to find and kill Oliver to secure their father's fortune. Brownlow begs Oliver to give half his inheritance to Monks and grant him a second chance, to which Oliver is more than happy to comply. Monks emigrates to America, but squanders his money, relapses into crime, and dies in prison. Fagin is arrested and sentenced to the gallows. The day before his execution, Oliver and Mr. Brownlow visit him in [Newgate Prison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newgate_Prison). Fagin, terrorized by the prospect of what awaits him, lies lost in a feverish world of daydreams.

Rose Maylie, who turns out to be Oliver's maternal aunt, marries Harry and enjoys a long life. Oliver lives happily with Mr. Brownlow as his adoptive son. Noah becomes a semi-professional police informant. The Bumbles lose their positions and are reduced to poverty, ending up in the workhouse themselves. All the members of Fagin's gang suffer unhappy endings, except for Charley Bates; revolted by Nancy's murder, he turns against Fagin and becomes an honest citizen, moves to the country, and eventually becomes prosperous.