

Background on Gatsby

- Fitzgerald views Gatsby as a condemnation of the rich society he himself is intricately involved with. The rich spend money on elaborate parties and expensive acquisitions.
- Profits are made legally and illegally, and postwar era has a whirlwind pace to it.
- The ability to mass-produce goods led to “stabilization” and prosperity. The term “The Jazz Age” was coined by Fitzgerald.
- Jazz Age began soon after WWI and went to the crash of 1929. Economy boomed, women became more independent socially and economically.

1 The First Chapter

- Nick as a narrator is somewhat reliable but is not completely so. He lies, but only in omission. He is biased but honest about it. Tries not to judge Gatsby. Says Gatsby is everything for which he has an unaffected scorn, but that Gatsby turned out alright in the end.
- Description of Gatsby is vague, mysterious in this chapter.
- We learn of Nick that his house is a small eyesore in the proximity of West Egg millionaires. The summer began when he went to the Tom Buchanans.
- Nick goes on to explain the relationship between Tom and Daisy Buchanan. Cousins with Daisy, went to college with Tom.
- Daisy and Jordan are there on the couch, the “only stationary object in the room.”
- Describes Daisy’s voice in a bit of detail, people don’t forget it. She is depressed but putting on a very good act (?)
- Daisy says “That’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.” In this, she sees that women are forced to be subordinate

and wants her daughter to be able to deal with that. She doesn't want her daughter to have to be as cynical and miserable as she.

- Daisy has turbulent emotions, thinks everything is terrible, says she has experienced everything and was sophisticated. But she says this insincerely.
- Nick sees across the lawn Jay Gatsby who reaches off for the (incredibly symbolic) green light and trembles, so Nick doesn't call to him and then Gatsby just vanishes.

2 The Second Chapter

- The valley of ashes, gray depressing place full of ash. T.J. Eckleburg's eyes on a billboard are blue, gigantic, and behind enormous **yellow** glasses. This is full of symbolism in addition to being a setting.
- Tom wants Nick to meet his mistress, which is kind of weird. Everyone knows that Tom has a mistress. Tom gets a bit drunk, and insists on Nick following along. The only building in sight is the small yellow building at the edge of the wasteland. This has Wilson's car shop.
- People are kind of asses to Wilson. Tom assesses George as "so dumb he doesn't know he's alive."
- Myrtle, faintly stout but sensuous without beauty in her face but a perceptible vitality about her.
- Myrtle is somewhat of a foil to Daisy.
- Tom invites Nick (much to Nick's dismay) to his apartment, and they get drunk off their asses.
- Myrtle changes dresses, and she transforms (becomes fake.)
- The remainder of the chapter follows the party at the apartment.
- The party in chapter 1 was a lot more formal but personal. The main difference between the two parties is in the fact that people are far more honest at the party in chapter 2.

- The parties also share drama from Tom's combination of women.
- The first party has awkwardness, and lower emotions, where at the apartment feelings seem to be running higher.

3 The Third Chapter

- This chapter focuses on the lavish parties thrown by Gatsby, and the one of them that Nick is invited to.
- Chapter opens and describes the amount of citrus Gatsby goes through every weekend. Several Crates, enormous amounts of orange juice. This is because of the scale of Gatsby's parties.
- Nick is invited to the party, which is something unusual in its own right, as people usually just show up or are brought by someone else.
- Owl-eyed man, having been drunk for a week, is in the library because he thinks it may sober him somewhat. He makes note of the fact that the books in the library are real, but that they haven't been read as the pages are still connected at the ends (as books used to be when they were new)