

# The Great Gatsby

## On a Famous American Novel from the Jazz Age

F. Scott Fitzgerald<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Original Author

September 2025 / Free Learner's School Conversations

# Outline

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# Introduction to A Celebrated American Novel

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- We Started a Serial Reading in September 2025 as A Part of Reading Requirements for Rujuta's High School English.
- These Are My (KM) Notes.
- Structure: Verbatim Passages (main bullet points), Thoughts (sub bullet points), Vocab (footnotes).
- Nothing Specific. I Like Doing This. Perhaps It Helps Retain, Even While Reading Fiction?

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  - Nick Carraway Starts The Novel as A First-person Narrative. *Gatsby* Is Introduced Soon.
- ...In Consequence, I’m Inclined to Reserve All Judgments, ...
- ...Reserving Judgments Is A Matter of *Infinite Hope*. I Am Still A Little Afraid of Missing Something If I Forget That, ...
- And, After Boasting *This Way of My Tolerance*, I Came to The Admission That It Has A Limit.



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  - Unusual Way to Introduce a Protagonist! He Was **That Sensitive!**
- ... The Actual Founder of My Line Was My Grandfather's Brother, Who Came Here in [18]Fifty-one, Sent A Substitute to The Civil War ...
  - During The American Civil War, A Provision Known as **Substitution Allowed Men Drafted into Military Service to Pay Someone Else to Serve in Their Place.**
  - Nick Looked Like This Great-Uncle of His.

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  - ... a Sarcastic Allusion Referring to The **Great War (World War I)** as a Belated and More Peaceful Version of Ancient German (Teutonic) Migrations into Europe.
- A **Weatherbeaten Cardboard Bungalow** at Eighty A Month ...
  - Shows A Sharp Economic Contrast w His Rich Neighbors ...
- ... And A Finnish Woman, Who Made My Bed And Cooked Breakfast And **Muttered Finnish Wisdom** to Herself Over The Electric Stove.
- I Lived at **West Egg**, The-Well, The Less Fashionable of The Two, ...
- So I Had A View of The Water, ... And **The Consoling Proximity of Millionaires**—All For Eighty Dollars A Month.

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  - This Is A Satirical Remark. Tom Clearly Represents The [Less Intellectual, And] Traditionally Wealthy Family Member (**The East Egg**) from The Mid-west Who Ventured to The East, A Land of The Neo-Rich (**The West Egg**).
- She Was Extended Full Length at Her End of The Divan ...
- The Other Girl, Daisy, ... “I’m P-paralyzed with **Happiness**”.
  - Tom, Daisy, Miss Baker–The **East Eggs**.
- The Object She [Baker] Was Balancing Had Obviously Tottered<sup>1</sup>... Almost **Any Exhibition of Complete Self-sufficiency Draws a Stunned Tribute from Me**.

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<sup>1</sup>Move, Walk Unsteadily.



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- Well, [Daisy, While Talking to Nick,] She [Daisy-Tom's Daughter] Was Less Than An Hour Old And Tom Was God Knows Where. [After Knowing She Delivered A Baby Girl] ... – That's The Best Thing a Girl Can Be in This World, **A Beautiful Little Fool.**

- Daisy Seems to Think That The World Is Brutal for Women!
- (Tom and Miss Baker Are Together) 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<sup>2</sup> of Slender Muscles in Her Arms.
- (Nick Is About to Leave after A *Strange* Party) As I Started My Motor Daisy Peremptorily<sup>3</sup> Called: "Wait!"

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<sup>2</sup>Quick Movement, Vibration.

<sup>3</sup>Decisively, Imperatively.

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- When I looked Once More for Gatsby He Had Vanished, And I was Alone Again in **The Unquiet Darkness**.
  - This is Fitzgerald's **Evocative Writing Style**. Though This Atmosphere is Alien to Me And I Am Ambivalent about Huge Mansions and Wealthy Lifestyles, I Feel Like Reading On.
  - We Are All a Little Strange, But These Characters, Tom, Daisy, Jordan Feel Even Stranger. One (Who's Not Wealthy And Isn't Attracted to Wealth) Cannot Escape a Feeling of Contempt for the Ultra-rich.

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## Strange Proceedings

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- (Things Are Taking A Sudden Turn. Tom Forces Nick to See **His Girl in New York!**)
  - What Followed Was a Boisterous Party (That Turned Bloody) in A Small Apartment. Nick, Tom, Myrtle (Tom's Mistress), Mr. George Wilson (Myrtle's Apparently Lame Husband), Catherine (Myrtle's Sister), Mr. & Mrs. McKee Were All Part of This Absolutely Strange Meeting.
- ...Then I Was Lying Half Asleep in The Cold Lower Level of The Pennsylvania Station, Staring at The Morning *Tribune*, And Waiting for The Four O'clock Train.

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- THERE Was Music from My Neighbor's House through The Summer Nights. In His Gardens **Men And Girls Came And Went Like Moths** among The Whisperings And The Champagne And The Stars.
- By Seven O'clock The Orchestra Has Arrived, No Thin Five-Piece Affair, But Whole Pitful (?) of Oboes And Trombones And Saxophones And Viols And Cornets And Piccolos, And Low And High Drums.
- On a Chance We Tried **an Important-looking Door**, And Walked into A High Gothic Library,...
- ...He Had Just Bought A Hydroplane<sup>4</sup> ...
- "This Is An Unusual Party for Me. I Haven't Even Seen The Host. ..."
- **"I'm Gatsby,"** He Said Suddenly.

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<sup>4</sup>A Plane That Lands on/Lifts off Water 

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- “Anyhow, He Gives Large Parties,” Said Jordan, **Changing The Subject with An Urban Distaste for The Concrete.** “And I Like Large Parties. They’re So Intimate. At Small Parties There Isn’t Any Privacy.”
- ... Girls Were Putting Their Heads on Men’s Shoulders in A Puppyish, Convivial<sup>5</sup> Way, Girls Were Swooning<sup>6</sup> Backward Playfully into Men’s Arms, ...
- ... **No French Bob Touched Gatsby’s Shoulder** ...
  - “French Bob” Signifies Physical Connection; Gatsby Was Drawn from The Crowd.
- ... There Was a Jauntiness<sup>7</sup> about Her Movements ...

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<sup>5</sup>Occupied with The Pleasures of Good Company.

<sup>6</sup>Pass Out.

<sup>7</sup>Stylishness, Dapperiness.



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## Gatsby's Great Party Starts Becoming Unbearable in Parts ...

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## Chapter 3

- I Looked Around. Most of The Remaining Women Were Now Having Fights with Men Said to Be Their Husbands. ...Resorted to Flank Attacks<sup>8</sup>—At Intervals She Appeared Suddenly ..., And Hissed: “You Promised!” into His Ear.
  - How Sad And Absurd All This Feels ...
  - Amid This, Gatsby Gets **Mysteriously Interested in Jordan** And Asks to See Her Alone.
- (And Then There’s An Accident as Everyone Leaves The Party ...) “But I Wasn’t Even Trying [to Drive],” He Explained Indignantly<sup>9</sup>, “I Wasn’t Even Trying.”

<sup>8</sup>Attack from Side, Rather Than Front.

<sup>9</sup>Angered by Something Wrong or Unjust       

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