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11/28/21

The Great Gatsby Choice Box Chapter 2

2. First of all, Valley of Ashes is a place of hopelessness and despair between West Egg and Manhattan where the Wilsons live. The Valley of Ashes represents the social decay of America in the 1920s and the detritus of society as seen with the amount of trash, unhappy people, and ashes. Ashes can be associated with death because when people are cremated, they are turned into ashes. The people who live in the Valley of Ashes have to work their whole lives and are exploited by the men who live in West Egg. The railroad tracks run parallel to the piles of ash heaps for some while, and then veer off as if it was attempting to avoid contact with the Valley of Ashes. The land is dusty, barren, and undistinguished. Also, this description of the land of the Valley of Ashes describes the people and buildings. Furthermore, in the text, the Valley of Ashes is described as, “…a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air.” This quote has many symbolic representations, for example, the fantastic farm being something from a fantasy world. Moreover, this fantasy “fantastic farm” grows ash instead of wheat. The pollution of this area makes the air powdery. It is also a very vulnerable place because the billboard of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg is overseeing the Valley of Ashes at all times. In contrast to the Eggs, the Valley of Ashes is void of colors, sunshine and is full of unhappy famers with unsuccessful gardens. The Valley of Ashes is just a depressing, dull location compared to the Eggs and symbolizes the negative reality in America, which contrasts the Eggs. It represents the real world for most of the people in the United States.

The Eggs in *The* *Great Gatsby* are peninsulas in Long Island that hold symbolism. For instance, the East Egg is a place where rich people inherited their wealth from family and don’t have to prove that they are wealthy, known as old money. These people don’t have to prove that they are wealthy because they are self-centered people who didn’t have to work for their money. Then, the West Egg symbolizes new money, where people had to work for their money and didn’t inherit wealth from their family. Though people in West Egg want to fit in with the people in East Egg because the people who live in East Egg had their homes inherited from one generation to another. For instance, although Gatsby is wealthy and earned all of his wealth himself, he can never amount to Tom Buchanan in terms of society because the Buchanans have been wealthy for a long time. The differences between the Valley of Ashes and the Eggs reveals about the setting that the Valley of Ashes represents reality for many people in America, a poor and industrial area. While the Eggs represent wealth and the best of society. It reveals, in terms of social classes, that average American citizens would live in the Valley of Ashes where they are supervised by Doctor T.J. Eckleburg, and the wealthy people who live in the Eggs have control over people who live in the Valley of Ashes.

3. The beginning of the chapter starts off with a description of the Valley of Ashes, an apathetically burden wasteland that is between West Egg and Manhattan. Amongst the heaps of ash and ruins, there is a decaying billboard of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg overseeing the entire area. The eyes are described as gigantic and blue, while his spectacles are yellow. The Valley of Ashes is where Nick first met Tom Buchanan’s mistress, Myrtle Wilson. While Nick and Tom were on the train to go to New York, Tom insists Nick to stop and get off the train so Tom can meet his girl. Then, Tom leads Nick to a proprietary garage owned by George Wilson. George Wilson is seen as obscure and lifeless, but also a handsome man who is married to Myrtle Wilson. While Tom and George were discussing about business matters, Myrtle walks over to the men in an anguished vitality. Nick finds Myrtle as a lady who acts and dresses sensuously. Then, Tom informs Myrtle that he wants to see her and orders Myrtle to get on the next train. Next, Tom, Myrtle and Nick go on the train to New York, while Myrtle sat in another car. While going to Tom and Myrtle’s apartment, Myrtle spots a man selling dogs and jovially insists on owning one. Moreover, when they arrive at the apartment, they have an unplanned party with Myrtle’s sister, Catherine and the McKees. Everyone has a good time, and everybody gets drunk. As Myrtle gets more drunk, she becomes more outspoken about her life and marriage. In one of Myrtle’s rambles, she mentions Daisy. Tom didn’t like when Myrtle mentioned Daisy, which made Myrtle mad, and she repeatedly screamed Daisy’s name. In a short and deft motion, Tom responds to Myrtle by breaking her nose. The party come to an end as people began leaving. Nick drives drunk with Mr. McKee, where one could ambiguously question Nick’s sexuality.