

Contemporary Classics Study Questions

Chapter One

1. Why is Nick Carraway made the narrator?
2. What kind of relationship exists between Nick and the Buchanans?
3. Why does Daisy always speak in such exaggerated phrases?
4. What is the significance of Tom's reference to the book he is reading?
5. Why does Daisy hope her child will be a beautiful fool?
6. Why does Nick feel that Daisy is trying to show off her cynicism?
7. Why does Daisy describe her youth as a "white girlhood"?
8. Why does Gatsby reach out to the water?

Chapter Two

1. Why is Wilson covered with dust from the ashes?
2. Why does Myrtle Wilson behave with such hauteur, both toward her husband and in the city apartment?
3. Why does Nick see himself as both on the outside and inside of the apartment?
4. What is ironic about Myrtle saying "You can't live forever"?
5. What two facets of Tom's personality are revealed when he breaks Myrtle's nose?

Chapter Three

1. What is revealed when Nick says that people aren't actually invited to Gatsby's parties, that they just sort of go there?
2. Why is Jordan Baker again described as looking contemptuous?
3. What is the significance of the "owl-eyed" man?
4. Why does the owl-eyed man describe Gatsby as a real Belasco?

5. What is the contrast between Gatsby and his party?
6. What is the significance of Jordan's lies?

Chapter Four

1. Why is the catalog of Gatsby's guests included?
2. Why does Gatsby call Nick "old sport"?
3. Why does Wolfsheim mourn the passing of the Metropole?
4. What is ironic about Gatsby's appraisal of Jordan?
5. What is significant in Jordan's remark that Daisy's voice has an amorous tinge?
6. Why does Gatsby want Daisy to see his house?

Chapter Five

1. Why is Gatsby dressed in a gold tie and silver shirt?

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2. Why does Nick reject Gatsby's offer of business?

3. What is significant about Nick's embarrassment during the tea, and the fact that he leaves and walks around the house?

4. What hint is given in the story of how Gatsby's house was built?

5. What is ironic about the cottage owners' refusal to put thatched roofs on their homes?

6. Does Gatsby really believe, as he tells Daisy, that his house is always full of interesting, famous people?

7. What is significant about Klipspringer's song?

Chapter Six

1. Why does Fitzgerald reveal the truth about Gatsby's background at this particular point in the novel?

2. What is ironic about Dan Cody?

3. What parallel is suggested by the fact that Gatsby never gets the inheritance bequeathed to him by Cody?

4. Compare the attitudes of Gatsby and the visiting trio which includes Tom Buchanan.

5. What is the irony of Tom's remark that women run around too much and meet the wrong kind of people?

6. Why does Daisy say she's giving out "green" cards?

7. How does Tom sense immediately that Gatsby is a bootlegger?

8. What is the meaning of the ladder that Gatsby imagines he saw in the blocks of the sidewalk?

9. What finality does he create when he first kisses Daisy?

Chapter Seven

1. Why does Fitzgerald emphasize the heat?

2. Why does Gatsby view Daisy's child with surprise?

3. What is significant about Tom's inaccuracy about the sun?

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14. Why does Tom's defense of family life and traditional institutions amuse Nick?
15. What is the alien but recognizable look that comes over Gatsby's face several times in this chapter?
16. What is the significance of Nick's thirtieth birthday?
17. Why does Tom insist that Daisy and Gatsby drive home together?
18. How does Nick compare Daisy and Jordan?
19. Why does Nick change his feelings toward Jordan?
20. What is Nick's attitude toward Gatsby?
21. Why are Tom and Daisy reconciled?
22. Why is Gatsby left standing outside his mansion "watching over" nothing?
23. How does Nick react when he realizes Gatsby's innocence?

Chapter Eight

1. How has Gatsby's house changed?
2. Why does Fitzgerald choose this point in the novel to present a detailed discussion of the initial love affair between Gatsby and Daisy?
3. Why is Gatsby's love for Daisy described in religious terms?
4. Why does Daisy's wealth always remain in the foreground of Gatsby's feelings and memories of her?
5. What was the basis of Daisy's decision to marry Tom?
6. What is the significance of Gatsby's grudging acceptance that if Daisy did love Tom once, it was "just personal"?
7. Why does Daisy always seem mysterious to Gatsby?
8. How does Nick leave Gatsby?
9. What is Gatsby's response to Nick's compliment?

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10. What is the irony of the reference to Gatsby's "ancestral home"?
11. Why is it important that Nick thanks Gatsby for his hospitality?

Chapter Nine

1. What is the significance of Nick's taking charge of Gatsby's funeral arrangements?
2. Why do Tom and Daisy leave?
3. How does Nick react to the phone call revealing Gatsby's criminal activities?
4. What is the significance of Mr. Gatz's arrival?
5. What is the irony of Mr. Gatz's admiration of the house?
6. What is the pathos of Gatsby's youthful resolutions?
7. What two emotions are pulling at Mr. Gatz?
8. What is the irony of Mr. Gatz's comment about James J. Hill?

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9. What is the significance of the owl-eyed man's attendance at the funeral?

10. What is the significance of Jordan's comment about the "bad driver"?

11. How does Tom cling to his image of himself just as Gatsby clings to his dream of Daisy?

12. Why does Nick finally shake hands with Tom?

13. Why does Nick feel that Gatsby's tragedy is a contrast between East and West?