

The Great Gatsby

Final Exam Study Guide

Who is the narrator of the story?

- ◆ Nick Carraway

What did the narrator's father mean when he told him "that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you had"?

- ◆ His family has money, meaning he has opportunities available to him that others may not
- ◆ Also, he has a sense of decency that others don't possess, and that decency, not wealth, is the supreme value

What does the narrator say has opened him up to the curious natures of people?

- ◆ He is inclined to reserve all judgment of people

What part of the country is Nick from?

- ◆ The Midwest – a part of the country in touch with the soil and wholesome American values, as opposed to the apparent immorality of the East

Why has Nick moved to New York?

- ◆ Having returned from World War I, he is restless and looking for excitement he can't find in the Midwest, so he gets a job selling bonds in New York

How has Nick come to live next-door to Jay Gatsby?

- ◆ He rents a bungalow in West Egg with a friend who transfers to Washington, leaving him alone

What are the differences between East Egg and West Egg?

- ♦ East Egg is where the people with old money live, while West Egg has a mix of people, including the newly wealthy
- ♦ East Egg represents taste, aristocracy and the leisure of the truly wealthy, while West Egg represents gaudiness, showiness and lack of good taste

Where had Nick known Tom Buchanan before?

- ◆ They had attended Yale University together

How are Nick and Daisy Buchanan related? What is Jordan Baker's relationship to Daisy Buchanan?

- ◆ They are distant cousins
- ◆ The two had been friends in Louisville

What book has Tom been reading? What does this tell you about him?

- ◆ “The Rise of the Coloured Empire”
- ◆ That he is a racist

What does Nick learn from Jordan when Tom is called to the phone?

- ◆ Tom has a woman, or mistress, in New York

What does Daisy mean when she says she hopes her daughter will grow up to be a fool?

- ◆ She hopes her daughter will be foolish and not feel the same way she does, being stuck in a loveless marriage in which her husband cheats on her

What does Jordan Baker do for a living? What had Nick heard about her?

- ◆ She is a professional golfer
- ◆ That she had been involved in some kind of scandal, but he couldn't recall what it was

What is the “secret society” Nick refers to?

- ◆ It consists of people who live by a different set of rules than regular people simply because they are rich and have power

What does Nick see Gatsby doing at the end of Chapter 1, and what could this signify?

- ◆ He sees Gatsby stretching out his arms toward a green light at the end of a dock across the bay
- ◆ It signifies that he is so close to his dream (the green light symbolizes hope) that he could almost touch it

What is the “Valley of Ashes,” literally?

- ◆ It’s an area near West Egg that is a dumping ground for coal ashes and industrial waste
- ◆ Figuratively, it represents the moral and social decay that results from the pursuit of wealth at whatever costs
- ◆ It can also represent the poor (like George Wilson) who live among the waste and have lost their vitality, or will, as a result

Who or what is Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, and what could it symbolize?

- ◆ Eckleburg is an oculist from a bygone era whose ad appears on a billboard in the “Valley of Ashes”
- ◆ It symbolize the eyes of God casting judgment on people who have wasted their vitality for the pursuit of materialism

What is George Wilson's occupation?

- ◆ He owns and operates a garage in the Valley of Ashes

How does Tom treat Wilson?

- ◆ He completely disrespects and disregards him
- ◆ Examples:
 - ◆ When Wilson implies Tom is taking a while to sell him his car, Tom threatens to not sell it to him
 - ◆ He makes a date with Myrtle, George's wife, while George is nearby

What items does Myrtle purchase in the city? What's the purpose of this?

- ◆ *Town Tattle* magazine, cold cream, perfume and a puppy
- ◆ It shows that buying things is what is most important to her, and she knows Tom will pay for it

Who is Catherine?

- ◆ Myrtle's sister

What effect does the change in dress have on Myrtle?

- ◆ It enhances her vitality and her confidence – as her clothes change, so does her personality

How does Myrtle talk about the help at the hotel? What does this tell you about her?

- ◆ She refers to them as being inferior
- ◆ In essence, Myrtle, who is poor herself, has changed roles with the changing of her clothes

What rumor has Catherine heard about Gatsby?

- ◆ That he's the nephew or cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm, the former emperor of Germany

How does Catherine explain to Nick the affair between Myrtle and Tom?

- ◆ According to Catherine, Daisy is Catholic and refuses to give Tom a divorce. However, Nick knows she's not Catholic, meaning Tom lied to Myrtle because he has no intentions of divorcing Daisy for her

What does Myrtle say attracted her to Tom?

- ◆ His dress suit, his patent leather shoes and his white shirt-front pressing against her arm
- ◆ Just by looking at his clothes, she knows he is wealthy, which is the real attraction for her

Why does Tom break Myrtle's nose?

- ◆ Because she kept shouting Daisy's name after he told her to stop
- ◆ It's a way of asserting his control and authority over her and not have her remind him of his affair