

## **The Great Gatsby Notes & Quotes**

### **CHAPTER 1**

#### **SETTING: Long Island**



#### **East Egg**

- “Old Money”
- Home of Daisy and Tom Buchanan
- Classy/Sophisticated
- “White palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water”

#### **West Egg**

- “New Money”
- Home of Gatsby and Nick Carraway
- Showy/“Less Fashionable”

#### **Buchanan House:**

- We walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-colored space, fragilely bound into the house by French windows at either end. The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding cake of the ceiling—and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea. The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house.

## **CHARACTERS**

**Nick Carraway:** Narrator; From the Midwest, came to NY to “learn the bond business”

**Daisy Buchanan:** Nick’s cousin; married to Tom

**Tom Buchanan:** Went to Yale with Nick; having an affair

**Jordan Baker:** Daisy's best friend; Nick is interested

Sometimes she and Miss Baker talked at once, unobtrusively and with a bantering inconsequence that was never quite chatter, that was as cool as their white dresses and their impersonal eyes in the absence of all desire. They were here—and they accepted Tom and me, making only a polite pleasant effort to entertain or to be entertained.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **SETTING: The Valley of Ashes--Who lives there? What goes on there?**

- “This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the 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.”
- “The valley of ashes is bounded on one side by a small foul river, and when the drawbridge is up to let barges through, the passengers on waiting trains can stare at the dismal scene for as long as half an hour. There is always a halt there of at least a minute and it was because of this that I first met Tom Buchanan's mistress.”
- “The only building in sight was a small block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of the waste land, a sort of compact Main Street ministering to it and contiguous to absolutely nothing. One of the three shops it contained was for rent and another was an all-night The Great Gatsby restaurant approached by a trail of ashes; the third was a garage—Repairs. GEORGE B. WILSON. Cars Bought and Sold—and I followed Tom inside.”

### **SYMBOL ALERT! SYMBOL ALERT!**

- **The Eyes of TJ Eckleberg**
  - “But above the grey land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg. The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic—their retinas are one yard high. They look out of no face but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a nonexistent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sank down himself into eternal blindness or forgot them and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many paintless days under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground.”
  - “I followed him over a low white-washed railroad fence and we walked back a hundred yards along the road under Doctor Eckleburg's persistent stare.”
  - “‘Terrible place, isn't it,’ said Tom, exchanging a frown with Doctor Eckleburg.”

- **The Puppy--Tom buys a puppy for Myrtle--a cheap mutt passed off as a purebred...**
  - “‘That dog?’ He looked at it admiringly. ‘That dog will cost you ten dollars.’ The airedale—undoubtedly there was an airedale concerned in it somewhere though its feet were startlingly white—changed hands and settled down into Mrs. Wilson’s lap, where she fondled the weather-proof coat with rapture. ‘Is it a boy or a girl?’ she asked delicately. ‘That dog? That dog’s a boy.’ ‘It’s a bitch,’ said Tom decisively. ‘Here’s your money. Go and buy ten more dogs with it.’”
  - “A reluctant elevator boy went for a box full of straw and some milk to which he added on his own initiative a tin of large hard dog biscuits—one of which decomposed apathetically Free eBooks at Planet eBook.com in the saucer of milk all afternoon.”
  - “The little dog was sitting on the table looking with blind eyes through the smoke and from time to time groaning faintly.”

#### THEME: OBSESSION WITH RUMORS/GOSSIP

- **The awkward party at the apartment--people obsessed with status and rumors--**“Several old copies of *Town Tattle* lay on the table together...and some of the small scandal magazines of Broadway.”
  - **Rumors of Gatsby--**“he’s a nephew or a cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm’s. That’s where all his money comes from...I’m scared of him. I’d hate to have him get anything on me.”
  - “‘Neither of them can stand the person they’re married to...It’s really his wife that’s keeping them apart. She’s a Catholic, and they don’t believe in divorce.’ Daisy was not a Catholic, and I was a little shocked at the elaborateness of the lie.”

#### THINGS GET CRAZY

- **Nick getting drunk, sucked in:** “Yet high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life.”
- “Tom Buchanan and Mrs. Wilson stood face to face, discussing in impassioned voices whether Mrs. Wilson had any right to mention Daisy’s name. ‘Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!...I’ll say it whenever I want to! Daisy! Dai---’ Making a short deft movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand.”
- “‘Keep your hands off the lever,’ snapped the elevator boy. ‘I beg your pardon,’ said Mr. McKee with dignity, ‘I didn’t know I was touching it.’ ‘All right,’ I agreed, ‘I’ll be glad to.’ ... I was standing beside his bed and he was sitting up between the sheets, clad in his underwear, with a great portfolio in his hands. ‘Beauty and the Beast ... Loneliness ... Old Grocery Horse ... Brook’n Bridge ....’ Then I was lying half asleep in the cold lower level of the

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Pennsylvania Station, staring at the morning 'Tribune' and waiting for the four o'clock train."