

Penguin



Readers

THE
GREAT
GATSBY
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FITZGERALD



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CHAPTER ONE

An evening at the Buchanans'

My name is Nick Carraway. My family has lived in the Middle West of America for many years. But, in the spring of 1922, I decided to go east to New York. I was a young man, and I wanted to live in an exciting city. People in New York worked hard, but they had lots of parties, too.

I got a job in New York selling **bonds**. But I did not want to live in the city, so I **rented** a house in a village on Long Island. The name of the village was West Egg, and it was next to a **bay**. Opposite West Egg, on the other side of the bay, was another village **called** East Egg. The people in both villages were rich, but the people in East Egg were more **fashionable** than the people in West Egg.

I lived in a small house, just beside the sea. It was next to a huge house with a **tower** and steps going down to a swimming **pool**. A man called Jay Gatsby owned this house. I did not know Gatsby, but I wanted to meet him.

One day, I had a telephone **call** from my cousin Daisy, asking me to dinner at her house. Daisy was married to a man called Tom Buchanan, and they lived in East Egg.

I did not know Tom and Daisy very well. When we were students, Tom and I were at the same college, but we were not friends. Tom's family was very rich, and he was very good at sport. He liked playing football and riding horses.

So, on a warm summer's evening, I drove to Tom and Daisy's house. It was very big, with a beach and an enormous **lawn**. Tom owned lots of horses and a boat.

Tom was standing outside on the **porch**. He was a big, handsome man. We talked for a few minutes, and then we went into the house. Tom took me into a huge sitting room. Daisy and another young woman were sitting on a sofa, both wearing white dresses.

"Hello, Nick," said Daisy, laughing. This is my friend, Jordan Baker. She's a tennis player."

Daisy started to ask me questions. She had a beautiful voice, and a lovely face with **bright** eyes. But sometimes she looked a little sad.

“What do you do, Nick?” asked Tom.

“I sell bonds,” I replied, but Tom did not sound very interested in my work.



“So you live in West Egg,” said Jordan Baker in a bored voice. “I know somebody there.”

“I don’t know anybody,” I said.

“Don’t you know Gatsby?” asked Jordan.

“Gatsby?” asked Daisy. “Who’s Gatsby?”

Just then, the **butler** said, “Dinner is ready.”

We ate dinner outside on the porch. It was a beautiful evening. The sun was going down, but there was still a pink light in the sky. Suddenly, we heard the telephone inside the house. Then, the butler came and said something quietly to Tom. Tom got up, pushed back his chair, and went inside.

A few minutes later, Daisy stood up. “Excuse me,” she said and followed Tom into the house. Jordan and I were still sitting at the table. Jordan **leaned** toward the house, trying to hear what they were saying.

“You were asking me about Mr. Gatsby,” I said. “He’s my **neighbor**.”

"Don't talk," said Jordan. "I want to listen."

"Is something happening?" I asked in surprise.

"Don't you know?" said Jordan. "Tom's gotten a girlfriend."

"Really?" I asked.

"Yes," said Jordan. "And she shouldn't call him at dinner time. It's not nice."

Tom and Daisy came back on to the porch and sat down. But, suddenly, we heard the telephone again. Daisy jumped up from her chair.

"Let's go for a walk, Nick," she said. I followed Daisy around the porch into the garden. She sat down, looking very sad.

"We're cousins, but we don't know each other very well, Nick," she said, suddenly. "Maybe you don't know, but I've had a very bad time. My life is terrible. I'm bored all the time. There's nothing new or interesting to see or do."

I did not say anything, but I was surprised. I did not think that Daisy was very **sincere**. I knew she and Tom had a very good life together.

Suddenly, she smiled brightly, and we went back into the house. Jordan and Tom were sitting on the sofa, reading.

“It’s ten o’clock,” said Jordan. “I’m going to bed. I’ve got an important tennis game tomorrow. Good night, Mr. Carraway. See you soon.”

“Of course you will,” said Daisy. Then, Jordan went upstairs.

“She’s a nice girl,” said Tom. “But her family don’t look after her.”

“She only has one old aunt,” said Daisy. “But Nick’s going to look after her. She’s going to be here for lots of weekends this summer.”

A few minutes later, I got up to go home. Tom and Daisy came to the door to say goodbye. They stood together side by side on the porch.