***The Great Gatsby* Study Guide Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Chapter 1: Introduction to Nick, Tom, Daisy and Jordan**

Allusions

Midas—A legendary king—everything he touched turned to gold.

J. P. Morgan—American financier and philanthropist noted for his consolidation of the U. S. Steel Corporation (1901) and the establishment of the Morgan Library in New York City, which was donated to the public (1924) by his son.

Maecenas—Roman Politician

Questions

1. What is the difference between East and West Egg?
2. How does Nick describe Gatsby’s mansion? How does Nick describe Gatsby in the first few pages? Does he seem to admire or pity Gatsby?
3. Describe the wealth of Tom and Daisy Buchanan. Where does their money come from? How does their wealth compare to the other characters? Are Daisy and Tom drifters? Do they seem to have a purpose?
4. What might the “green” light symbolize?
5. Daisy states, “All right…What’ll we plan? She turned to me helplessly. What do people plan?” What does this statement say about Daisy?
6. What color is associated with Daisy and Jordan? What might this color symbolize?

**Chapter 2: Myrtle and the Ash Heaps**

This setting takes place halfway between West Egg (West Egg being less fashionable than East Egg) and New York.

1. Why do you think Fitzgerald placed the billboard with the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg in the valley of the ashes? What might the ash symbolize?
2. “With the influence of the dress her personality had also undergone a change. The intense vitality that had been so remarkable in the garage was converted into impressive hauteur…”I like your dress’….Mrs. Wilson rejected the compliment by raising her eyebrow in disdain. “It’s just a crazy old thing,” she said. “I just slip it on sometimes when I don’t care what I look like”. Why does Myrtle change her attitude and behavior?
3. “The only crazy I was when I married him. I knew right away I made a mistake. He borrowed somebody’s best suit to get married in and never even told me about it…but I gave it to him (gave the suit back to the owner) and then I lay down and cried to beat the band all afternoon” . Why is Myrtle so upset that George wore a borrowed suit at their wedding?
4. What is Tom’s attitude toward Myrtle? How does Tom treat George? What does this say about Tom? Explain your thinking.

**Chapter 3: Gatsby’s Party**

## Allusions

Belasco--David Belasco was a Portuguese-Jewish actor, playwright and manager who found his earliest successes as a stage manager for "realistic" drama in New York City and San Francisco. He was well-known at the turn of the century, was regarded as convening a flamboyant personality and having a flair for "total theatricity." Noted as a "pioneer of realism," he often used the most current of technologies in his stage direction. (Kaufmann 31).

John L. Stoddard—Travel writer who wrote an illustrated series of travel lectures. Travel writing was very popular before movies were made.

“After that they conducted themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with amusement parks”

1. Why would Daisy, Tom, and Jordan be repulsed by the behavior of the people at Gatsby’s party?
2. Explain what we now know about Gatsby, based on the information the party guests provide.
3. “The bored haughty face that she turned to the world concealed something—most affectations conceal something eventually even though they don’t in the beginning—and one day I found out it what it was.”What is Jordan concealing/hiding?
4. There is a conversation about carelessness between Jordan and Nick. (Driving is a metaphor for carelessness.) What does this conversation say about Jordan, Nick and their relationship? What might Fitzgerald be saying about carelessness with this scene (think about wealthy people vs. poor people)?

**Chapter 4: Gatsby’s Request**

# Allusions

Gilda Gray—Famous film star

Morgan—J.P. Morgan, one of the richest men in the world

David Belasco—Famous theatrical producer of the 1920s

Herman Rosenthal—Might be a reference to Rosy Rosenthal, a gangster associated with the Mafia

# Questions

1. Why doesn’t Nick at first believe Gatsby’s story about his background? What convinces him the story is true?
2. What can we infer about Meyer Wolfsheim’s activities and character based on what he says and does?
3. When does Jordan first meet Gatsby? When does Daisy first meet Gatsby?
4. What was Daisy’s wedding like? Why was she so upset the night of her bridal dinner? Tom was in a car accident shortly after he and Daisy were married. Who was in the car with him?
5. Why would Gatsby want Daisy to see his house?
6. Based on the knowledge that the green light is at the end of Daisy’s dock and Gatsby has met Daisy before, what do you think is Gatsby’s aspiration?

# **Chapter 5 - The Meeting**

1. Is Gatsby’s job offer to Nick legal or illegal? Why would he offer him a job?
2. Why is Gatsby so afraid to see Daisy?
3. Explain this quote: “He hadn’t once ceased looking at Daisy, and I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes”.
4. “There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything”. Is Gatsby’s perception of Daisy an illusion or reality? How do you know?
5. How has Gatsby’s wealth influenced Daisy’s perception of him?

**Chapter 6: Gatsby’s History**

1. What is Gatsby’s real name? Where is Gatsby from? Who were Gatsby’s parents?
2. Who is Dan Cody? What role does he play in Gatsby’s current life?
3. What is Fitzgerald demonstrating about Daisy and Gatsby when he wrote, “And she doesn’t understand…She used to be able to understand”?
4. “He wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say I never loved you”. Why would Gatsby want Daisy to do this? Is it a realistic demand?
5. If Gatsby has a tragic flaw, what would it be?
6. Notice all the moonlight and moon imagery. What might the moon symbolize?

## Chapter 7: The Confrontation and Carelessness

Allusions

Trimalchio—A vulgar upstart whose low origins are shown by his extravagance and ostentation.

1. What makes Gatsby a Trimalchio?
2. “Gatsby and I in turn leaned down and took the small reluctant hand. Afterward he kept looking at the child with surprise. I don’t think he had ever really believed in its existence before.” How does this quote reveal Gatsby’s illusions about Daisy?
3. “What’ll we do with ourselves this afternoon? And the day after that and the next 30 years?” What does this quote say about Daisy, Tom, and Jordan?
4. “You always look so cool…She had told him that she loved him and Tom Buchanan saw. He was astounded…You resemble the advertisement of the man…You know the advertisement of the man”. How do we know that Daisy has illusions of Gatsby, and what are they?
5. “Her voice is full of money, he said suddenly. That was it. I’d never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals’ song of it…High in a white Palace the King’s daughter, the golden girl”. Who said this and what is the significance of this realization?
6. How does Tom condescend (talk down to) Gatsby when he says “And if it runs out (of gas) I can stop at a drug-store. You can buy anything at a drug-store nowadays.” Why can’t Daisy leave Tom? How do we know that Gatsby has lost Daisy?
7. How are the reactions of Tom and George different when they discover that their wives are having an affair? What do these two different reactions say about them?
8. “There is no confusion like the confusion of a simple mind and as we drove away Tom was feeling the hot whips of panic. His wife and his mistress, until an hour ago secure inviolate, were slipping precipitately from his control”. How does the following quote make evident Tom’s attitude that Daisy and Myrtle are his possessions?
9. “Self-control!” repeated Tom incredulously. “I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. Well, if that’s the idea you can count me out…Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions, and next they’ll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white”. How does the following quote reveal Tom’s hypocrisy and snobbery?
10. How is the wedding in the hotel ironic?
11. What happens to Myrtle? Who was driving the car? Why does Myrtle run toward the car? Who does she think is in it? How does Gatsby maintain a sense of honor?

**Chapter 8: The Divine Goal**

Allusion

### Grail—a cup or plate that, according to medieval legend, was used by Jesus at the last supper and later became the object of many chivalrous quests.

Benediction—a divine blessing

Questions

1. “There was an inexplicable amount of dust everywhere, and the rooms were musty, as though they hadn’t been aired for days.” What does the dust symbolize?
2. “Told it to me because Jay Gatsby had broken up like glass against Tom’s hard malice”. How has Tom beaten Gatsby?
3. “Now he had committed himself to the following of a grail”. What is Gatsby’s grail? Can he ever reach/achieve his grail?
4. “Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves of the freshness of many clothes, and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor”. What does this say about Daisy and Gatsby’s opinions of her?
5. “For Daisy was young and her artificial world was redolent (scented) of orchids and pleasant cheerful snobbery…She wanted her life shaped now, immediately—and the decision must be made by some force—of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality—that was close at hand”. What do you think of Daisy?
6. They’re a rotten crowd, I shouted across the lawn. “You’re worth the whole damn bunch put together”. Why does Nick think this? Is he still reserving judgment (like he said he did in chapter 1)?

**Chapter 9: The Tragic Hero**

1. Where do Tom and Daisy go?
2. “You said a bad driver was only safe until she met another bad driver? Well, I met another bad driver, didn’t I? I mean it was careless of me to make such a wrong guess. I thought you were rather an honest, straightforward person. I thought it was your secret pride.” “I’m thirty,” I said. “I’m five years too old to lie to myself and call it honor”. How is Nick a careless person?
3. “What if I did tell him? That fellow had it coming to him. He threw dust into your eyes like he did in Daisy’s, but he was a tough one. He ran over Myrtle like you’d run over a dog and never even stopped his car”. What did Tom tell George Wilson? What does dust symbolize in this quote? Did Gatsby throw dust in Daisy’s and Nick’s eyes or is Tom unwilling to see his own corruption?
4. “They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together and let other people clean up the mess they had made”. Describe how Tom and Daisy are careless.