The Great Gatsby Annotations

Summary of Chapter 1, pgs 1-21

Nick, the narrator, tells the reader about his family, his school, his career, and where he lives now, in West Egg. One day he drove over to East Egg to visit Tom Buchanan, who he knew in college, and his wife Daisy Buchanan, who was a relative of Nick’s. A friend of Daisy’s, Miss Baker, dines with them and they all have conversations. During dinner, a phone call comes in for Tom, which Miss Bakers tells Nick that it is Tom’s mistress. When Nick begins to leave, Daisy and Tom stop him to ask if it’s true that he was engaged, which angered Nick slightly. When he got home, Nick was outside when he saw Gatsby. He had made to call for him, but stopped. He looked across the water and when he looked back at Gatsby, he was gone.

Pg 14 vocab: extemporizing, verb- to perform an act or utter something in an impromptu manner; improvise.

Pg 19 vocab: libel, noun- anything that is defamatory or that maliciously or damagingly misrepresents.

Pg 1 quote: “Whenever you feel like criticizing any one, just remember that all the people in this world haven’t had the advantages that you’ve had.” This is an important quote from Nick’s father, which is the reason why Nick is slow to judge people, if he does so at all.

Pg 17 Lit elem personification: “Inside, the crimson room bloomed with light.”

Pg 17 quote and connection: “I’m glad it’s a girl. And I hope she’ll be a fool—that’s all a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.” By Daisy saying this, it explains her acting like an airhead and shows that in the culture of the 1920’s, a woman was only going to get by if she was beautiful and foolish.

Pg 13 comment/deduction: By Tom’s talking about race, I can tell he will make an ass out of himself as he seems blunt and not caring about being polite.
Tom takes Nick to a dusty town half-way between West Egg and New York, where Nick met his mistress, Mrs. Wilson. They walked around together in New York; Mr. Wilson thinking his wife was at her sister’s. Tom bought his mistress a dog before the four of them went to Tom and Myrtle’s apartment, where Tom met Myrtle’s sister, Catherine, and the McKees. At the small get together, Nick got drunk for only the second time in his life and he and Catherine talked about Tom and Myrtle’s affair. Tom and Myrtle had a bit of a row, and then in the early morning, Nick found himself lying half asleep in the Pennsylvania Station.

Pg 24 vocab: supercilious, adj – disdainful, arrogant

Pg 26 comment/deduction: Myrtle seems perfect for Tom as they have a lot in common in way of being rude and pretty bossy. If Mr. Wilson had a backbone and didn’t let her walk all over him, I don’t think she would be having an affair.

Pg 23-38 comment/deduction: It appears as if both Myrtle and Tom are unhappy with their marriages, so it isn’t too surprising that they are having an affair together.

Pg 30 vocab: hauteur, noun- haughty manner or spirit; arrogance.

Pg 29-38 comment/deduction: I really believe Nick when he said that he was drunk. Trying to read and understand what was happening through his eyes was slightly confusing and hard to understand.

Pg 38 comment/deduction: “… 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.” People in the 1920’s were really, really weird.
Nick had been invited to Gatsby’s party, though he was one of very few who had been invited. Out of feeling embarrassed because he had made a fool of himself while trying to find his host, he attached himself to Jordan Baker, as she was the only one he really knew at the party. There was much gossip about Gatsby going around about why he was so generous; one being that he had killed a man, another being that he had been a spy for Germany during the war. While on a hunt to find their host, Jordan and Nick went into a library occupied by a drunk man with large eyes, who appeared to be astounded that the library had actual books. After they left the library, Jordan and Nick sat at a table with a man who recognized Nick from the war. As Nick mentions that he had yet to meet the host, the man introduced himself as being Gatsby. Nick and Jordan discuss Gatsby until she is requested to speak with the host in private. As the party begins to dissipate, Jordan finally finishes her talk with Gatsby and says goodnight to Nick. The drunk man from the library drove his car into the ditch, resulting in the wheel coming off. During the summer, Nick met up with Jordan and they, for lack of a better word, dated.

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Pg 39 lit elem, simile: “In the blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars.”

Pg 39 lit elem, simile: “…while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains.”

Pg 41 vocab: erroneous, adj- containing error; mistaken; incorrect; wrong.

Pg 59 quote: “I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known.” Nick comes to this conclusion after seeing how many people in the world like, cheat, and double cross. He finds that the only one he can truly trust is himself, as everyone else in the world had something to hide.
Summary of Chapter 4, pgs 61-80

Nick describes the people who went to Gatsby’s home during the summer, all with the common factor of knowing absolutely nothing about their host. Nick knew several of the people from his past, or from them just attending the parties frequently. One day Gatsby had called upon Nick to take him out for lunch and on the way, Gatsby told Nick about his family, and how he had gotten wealthy from them all dyeing. He also told Nick about how he had tried to die in the war, but all he did was be a success. During lunch, Gatsby introduced Nick to his friend, Mr. Wolfsheim, who seemed to be a shrewd business man with a dealing in the more… illegal trade. Later on, Gatsby tells Nick that Mr. Wolfsheim had fixed the 1919 World Series. Tom and Nick meet up in the restaurant and as Nick goes to tell Tom that he was lunching with Gatsby, Gatsby had disappeared.

Nick and Jordan met up later that afternoon, and she told him all about Daisy and Gatsby being in love, but after he went to war Daisy found herself with another man and, with reluctance, married Tom Buchanan. Jordan had suggested that Gatsby and Daisy meet up in New York, but the man was insistent that they do not go too far out of the way. Still, he wanted nothing in the world more than to meet her.

Pg 61 lit elem, personification: “…the world and its mistress returned to Gatsby’s house and twinkled hilariously on his lawn.”

Pg 65 lit elem, idiom: “For a moment I suspected that he was pulling my leg…”

Pg 65 vocab: rajah, noun- Indian prince.

Pg 70-71 comment/deduction: Mr. Wolfsheim seems like a man one would only talk to if one wanted to dabble in illegal dealings. He seems untrustworthy.

Pg 73 connection: “The Black Sox Scandal”, as it was called, was players intentionally throwing a game so gamblers could win bets. Mr. Wolfsheim is based on a man named Arnold Rothstein, who was a gangster in New York and supplied money to the gamblers.
Nick and Gatsby ready themselves for the arrival of Daisy. Gatsby is nervous and appears to be close to the breaking point, but Nick calms him down until the arrival of Daisy. The two lovers birds of old meet in the living room, but the conversation is strained and awkward. As Nick tried to go into the kitchen, Gatsby comes with him and admits that he was frightfully embarrassed. Nick consoles him by saying that Daisy feels the same way. As Nick convinces Gatsby to go back and keep Daisy, Nick exits his house via the backdoor and stands under a tree for some time before he feels he should go back inside. As he enters the living room, he finds that Gatsby and Daisy both are in better moods, and Gatsby suggest they tour his house. They go through all the rooms, Gatsby trying and succeeding in impressing Daisy. As they look out across the ocean, Gatsby reveals that there is a green light visible from the end of Daisy’s dock, which to Gatsby had meant a way of being close to his love. As they tour the house, Nick tries to leave though the couple won’t allow him. It wasn’t until Gatsby and Daisy were complete absorbed in each other was Nick able to escape and let them be alone.

Pg 84 lit elem, hyperbole: “The flowers were unnecessary, for at two o’clock a green house arrived from Gatsby’s…”

Pg 90 vocab: postern, noun- a back door or gate, private entrance.

Pg 96 lit elem, metaphor: “…that voice was a deathless song.”
Summary of Chapter 6, pgs 97-111

A young reporter questions Gatsby about any type of rumors, for he had heard Gatsby’s around his office. The reader then finds out that Jay Gatsby’s real name is James Gatz, and how he had worked on a yacht for a man named Dan Cody until he died. Tom, Mr. Salone, a lady dropped by to Gatsby’s house. The lady invited herself and the rest of her group to Gatsby’s next party, and he agreed to let them come before he invited them to stay for dinner. The lady then invited both Nick and Gatsby to dine with her, though Nick says he can’t attend, she insists that Gatsby still go.

Tom and Daisy attended Gatsby’s next party and Daisy wasn’t having a good time, except for the half hour she spent alone with Gatsby. Tom seems interested in finding out how it was that Gatsby made all his money- it is obvious he doesn’t trust the man. Gatsby approaches Nick and says that Daisy didn’t like the party, though Nick disagrees. Then Gatsby tells of Nick of when he kissed Daisy five years earlier.

Pg 98 comment/deduction: I believe part of the reason Gatsby enjoyed hearing about the rumors is that it meant that meant his name was getting around, along with his mystery. I believe that he was hoping Daisy would hear about some the rumors and be drawn to him.

Pg 99 vocab: turgid, adj- excessively embellished in language or style

Pg 100 vocab: debauchee, noun- one who seduces or corrupts

Pg 110 lit elem personification: “He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house.”

Pg 110 lit elem personification: “The quiet lights in the houses were humming out into the darkness…”
Summary of Chapter 7, pgs 113-145

Nick finds out that Gatsby had fired all his old servants and hired new ones who wouldn’t gossip for Daisy was coming over often. He then is asked for and by Daisy to come to her house for lunch and that Jordan would be there. When Nick arrives at her house, Gatsby is there along with Daisy and Jordan; Tom is on the phone. Gatsby meets Daisy’s daughter, who looks like her mother. Later, when the group is going to New York, Daisy and Gatsby drive Tom’s car while Tom drives Nick and Jordan in Gatsby’s car. Mr. Wilson tells Tom that he and his wife are going to move West, and Nick realizes that Mr. Wilson found out about his wife’s affair.

Tom worries that he losing control of his wife and mistress. They all went to the Plaza Hotel, and Tom begins to question Gatsby much to Daisy’s dislike. Gatsby blurs out that Daisy never loved Tom, though Daisy disagrees and says that she had at once loved Tom, but admitted that she was leaving him. Tom reveals that he investigated into Gatsby’s past and found out he was bootlegger of sorts by selling alcohol in his many ‘drug-stores’. Gatsby and Daisy leave in Gatsby’s car.

Mrs. Wilson is hit by a car and killed. As Tom, Nick and Jordan drive past Wilson’s garage Tom believes there was just an accident and decides to stop in for a peak. When he sees that it Mrs. Wilson had been killed, Tom took Mr. Wilson up to his room and made sure someone watched him. As Tom, Nick and Jordan drove home, Tom cries and knows that it was Gatsby who had hit Mrs. Wilson. When they get back to Tom’s house, Nick goes to leave and runs into Gatsby who tells him that Daisy had been driving when they hit Mrs. Wilson.

Pg 113 vocab: dilatory, adj- tending to delay or procrastinate; slow; tardy.

Pg 114 vocab: caravansary, noun- an inn for caravans to rest, hotel

Pg 135 vocab: magnanimous, adj- showing a lofty and courageous spirit, noble, generous.

pg 140 vocab: truculent, adj- savage, aggressively self assertive.

Pg 144-145 comment/deduction: Gatsby has officially gone insane. Not only doesn’t he make Daisy stop the car after they smear a woman across the street, he stalks outside her window. The man just doesn’t know how to let go.
Nick was unable to get to sleep and went to go visit Gatsby. Nick tries to get him to leave for a week or so, but Gatsby refuses to leave Daisy. He tells Nick about when he had met Daisy before the war, and how much he had loved her and felt like he was married to her. When he went off to war, he did extraordinary, though when he tried to get home at the end of the war, he accidentally ended up in Oxford. Daisy couldn’t see why he couldn’t come home and she wanted to start a family immediately. While Gatsby was still in Oxford, she married Tom Buchanan. After Nick goes to work, he talks to Jordan, but they have a bit of a row. He then tries to call Gatsby, like he said he would, but no one answered.

Mr. Wilson was being held in his office to keep from doing anything stupid, and was being watched by neighbors who lived near him. They kept asking him questions to get his mind off the death of his wife. Wilson finds out that the car that hit his wife was Gatsby’s car, and goes off on foot in search of Gatsby’s house. When he finds it, he shoots Gatsby in the pool before killing himself.

Pg 148 lit elem, simile: “…it was as casual a thing to her as his tent out at camp to him.”

Pg 150 vocab: settee, noun- a bench or sofa with a back and arms.

Pg 154 quote: “‘They’re a rotten crow. You’re worth the whole damn bunch put together.’” Nick is saying this to show Gatsby that he isn’t alone, that he has at least one true friend in the world who thought he was a good person.

Pg 161 comment/deduction: Mr. Wilson finally got his revenge, and Gatsby paid the price for loving Daisy and protecting her.
Summary of Chapter 9, pgs 163-180

Reporters try to find out the whole story about Gatsby’s murder, though they just come to the conclusion that Wilson killed out of intense grief. Nick tries to find someone who will attend his funeral, other than himself, though no one is interested. He tried to call Daisy, but she and Tom had left with baggage and without leaving an address of where they were going. Nick received a wire from Henry C. Gatz, Jay’s father, who said he would be attending the funeral. He seemed proud of his son’s accomplishments. Nick tried to get others to attend Gatsby’s funeral, but no one attended except himself, Mr. Gatz, some servants, and the owl-eyed man Nick had found in the library.

After Gatsby’s death, Nick goes back West, though not before he met with Jordan Baker, who he found was engaged to another man. While out West, Nick ran into Tom who confessed to telling Mr. Wilson about Gatsby owning the yellow car. Talking about right before he left, Nick says that he went to Gatsby’s place and stared across the water, watching the green light like Gatsby used to do as he felt so close to Daisy.

Pg 175 quote: “The poor son-of-a-bitch.” This is said from the man with the owl-eyes. Although Nick didn’t see him very much, the man was still at the funeral. I believe the man said this because Gatsby had huge parties, but upon his death no one came to see him off. Gatsby was truly alone, except for Nick.

Pg 178 comment/deduction: Tom needs to be slapped across the face. He told Wilson that the yellow car was Gatsby- he was the reason that poor Gatsby was dead and gone. Tom was a selfish, arrogant man who didn’t care about anyone except himself.

Misc comment:

To me, the owl-eyed man appeared to be the living form of Gatsby’s feelings, the imminent future, and feelings of those around him. When he was drunk in the library, Gatsby was drunk on thoughts of Daisy and her being real, and close. When the wheel came off his car, I think it represented that Gatsby was going to lose control and he was going to lose a very important part of himself. When the man said “The poor son-of-a-bitch”, I think it represented the feelings Nick shared because of Gatsby being alone in his funeral when he used to be so popular while living.