

## **The Great Gatsby Quotes**

\*All page numbers listed first are for the paperback, Scribner books.\*

\*All page numbers listed second are for the hardcover blue/gray books.\*

### **Chapter 1**

"Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone, just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had" (1, 1).

"In consequence, I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores...Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat, a sense of the fundamental decencies is parceled out unequally at birth" (1-2, 1).

"All right...I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool – that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool" (17, 17).

"He stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward – and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far way, that might have been the end of a dock" (21, 21-22).

### **Chapter 2**

"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 ash-gray men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud" (23, 23).

"But above the gray land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg" (23, ?).

"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" (30, 30-31).

"Daisy was not a Catholic, and I was a little shocked at the elaborateness of the lie" (33, ?).

"Some time toward midnight Tom Buchanan and Mrs. Wilson stood face to face, discussing in impassioned voices whether Mrs. Wilson had any right to mention Daisy's name" (37, 37).

### **Chapter 3**

"I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited" (41, 41).

"Absolutely real – have pages and everything. I thought they'd be a nice durable cardboard. Matter of fact they're absolutely real. Pages and—here! Lemme show you"

"He smiled understandingly – much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced – or seemed to face – the whole eternal world for an instant, and then concentrated on *you* with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey" (48, 48).

"I see I have given the impression that the events...were all that absorbed me. On the contrary, they were merely casual events in a crowded summer, and, until much later, they absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs" (55-56, ?).

"Everyone suspects himself of at least one of the cardinal virtues, and this is mine: I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known" (59, 60).

#### **Chapter 4**

"He's a bootlegger...One time he killed a man who had found out that he..." (61, ?)

"He was never quite still; there was always a tapping foot somewhere or the impatient opening and closing of a hand" (64, 64).

"He looked at me sideways – and I knew why Jordan Baker had believed he was lying..." (65)

"She took it into the tub with her and squeezed it up into a wet ball, and only let me leave it in the soap-dish when she saw that it was coming to pieces like snow" (76, ?).

#### **Chapter 5**

"Well, this would interest you. It wouldn't take up much of your time and you might pick up a nice bit of money. It happens to be a rather confidential sort of thing" (83, 83).

"But there was a change in Gatsby that was simply confounding. He literally glowed; without a word or a gesture of exultation a new well-being radiated from him and filled the little room" (89, 90).

"It makes me sad because I've never seen such – such beautiful shirts before" (92, 93-94).

"If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay...You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock" (92, ?).

"He seemed absorbed in what he had just said. Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one" (93, 94).

"They had forgotten me, but Daisy glanced up and held out her hand; Gatsby didn't know me now at all. I looked once more at them and they looked back at me, remotely, possessed by intense life" (96, 97).

#### **Chapter 6**

"I wonder where in the devil he met Daisy. By God, I may be old-fashioned in my ideas, but women run around too much these days to suit me. They meet all kinds of crazy fish" (103, 104).

"Tom was evidently perturbed at Daisy's running around alone, for on the following Saturday night he came with her to Gatsby's party" (103-104, 105).

"He wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say: 'I never loved you.' After she had obliterated four years with that sentence they could decide upon the more practical measures to be taken" (109, 111).

“Can’t repeat the past?’ he cried incredulously. ‘Why of course you can!’ He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand. ‘I’m going to fix everything just the way it was before,’ he said, nodding determinedly. ‘She’ll see’” (110, 111).

“He talked a lot about the past, and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy” (110, 111).

## **Chapter 7**

“Gatsby has dismissed every servant in his house a week ago and replaced them with half a dozen others...‘I wanted somebody who wouldn’t gossip. Daisy comes over quite often – in the afternoons’” (113-114, 113-114).

“Her voice is full of money’...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...” (120, 120).

“She never loved you, do you hear?” he cried. ‘She only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me. It was a terrible mistake, but in her heart she never loved any one except me!’” (130, 131).

“I found out what your ‘drug-stores’ were...He and this Wolfsheim bought up a lot of side-street drug-stores here and in Chicago and sold grain alcohol over the counter. That’s one of his little stunts. I picked him for a bootlegger the first time I saw him, and I wasn’t far wrong...That drug-store business was just small change...but you’ve got something on now that Walter’s afraid to tell me about” (133-134, 134).

“You two start on home, Daisy...In Mr. Gatsby’s car...Go on. He won’t annoy you. I think he realizes that his presumptuous little flirtation is over” (135, 135-136).

## **Chapter 8**

“I felt that I had something to tell him, something to warn him about and morning would be too late” (147, 147).

“He wouldn’t consider it. He couldn’t possible leave Daisy until he knew what she was going to do. He was clutching at some last hope and I couldn’t bear to shake him free” (148, 148).

“It excited him, too, that many men had already loved Daisy – it increased her value in his eyes” (149, 148).

“She vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby – nothing. He felt married to her, that was all” (149, 149).

“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” (150, 150).

“They’re a rotten crowd...You’re worth the whole damn bunch put together.’ I’ve always been glad I said that. It was the only compliment I ever gave him, because I disapproved of him from beginning to end” (154, 154).

“I told her she might be able to fool me but she couldn’t fool God. I took her to the window...and I said ‘God knows what you’ve been doing, everything you’ve been doing. You may fool me, but you can’t fool God!’...he was looking at the eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg, which had just emerged, pale and enormous, from the dissolving night” (159, 160).

“No phone message arrived...I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn’t believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a

single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky...A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about...like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees" (161, 162).

"The laden mattress moved irregularly down the pool...The touch of a cluster of leaves revolved it slowly, tracing, like the leg of a transit, a thin red circle in the water" (162, 162-163).

## **Chapter 9**

"I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all – Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life" (176, 177).

"After Gatsby's death the East was haunted for me like that, distorted beyond my eyes' power of correction" (176, 178).

"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..." (179, 180).

"I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could barely fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night" (180, 182).

"Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter – to-morrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther....And one fine morning –" (180, 182).

"So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" (180, 182).

## **THEMES**

### **Past/Present/Future**

- The theme of the novel is that a person can't move ahead to the future without letting go of the past.
- The theme is that people can't live life looking in the rearview mirror.
- The theme is that one shouldn't live in the past, but always look to the future.
- The theme is that a person can't live in the past and be successful at the same time.
- The theme is that a person cannot live their life in the past, but instead should look ahead to the future.
- The theme is that a person should not hold on to the past, but strive for the future.
- The theme is that people cannot live in the past.
- The theme of the novel is that one cannot recapture the past; attempting to do so will only lead to failure.
- The theme of the novel is that dwelling in the past can only result in obsession and misfortune. One cannot transplant themselves into the past again and only has the future. The future misfortune can only be prevented by learning from the past.

### **Illusion/Reality**

- The theme is illusion and reality.
- The theme is that people can seem better in dreams than reality.

- The theme is that there is an illusion because to the outside viewer the wealthy life seems perfect, but on the inside there is lying, cheating, and murder. This is a theme because often in life things may not always be what they seem.
- The theme is that the illusion presented by the knowing is believed as reality by the unknowing.
- The theme is that anticipation is always perfect, but in reality satisfaction is never reached.

### **Dreams/Goals**

- The theme is that dreams may never be achieved, but they will always be pursued.
- The theme is that people should set high goals, but not too high.
- The theme is that in order for someone to achieve their goals and aspirations they have to look forward, not to the past.
- The theme is that when dreams become an obsession they fall out of reach.

### **Money/Wealth/Greed**

- The theme of the novel is that wealth does not complete the American Dream.
- The theme is that money doesn't show reality, but rather fakeness.
- The theme is that money cannot make one's life perfect.
- The theme is that being materialistic at first seems like everything is achieved, but in the end shows nothing is achieved.
- The theme is that materialism causes the decline or decay of the American Dream.
- The theme is that a materialistic lifestyle does not lead to happiness.
- The theme is that rich people live meaningless lives.
- The theme is that the ideal American society is fading.
- The theme of the novel is that the impurity and greed of individuals leads to the downfall of society.
- The theme of the novel is that greed can only lead to failure.