

Character Descriptions for The Great Gatsby

Jay Gatsby The protagonist who gives his name to the story. Gatsby is a newly wealthy Midwesterner-turned-Easterner who orders his life around one desire: to be reunited with Daisy Buchanan, the love he lost five years earlier. His quest for the American dream leads him from poverty to wealth, into the arms of his beloved and, eventually, to death.

Nick Carraway The story's narrator. Nick rents the small house next to Gatsby's mansion in West Egg and, over the course of events, helps Gatsby reunite with Daisy (who happens to be Nick's cousin). Nick's Midwestern sensibility finds the East an unsettling place, and he becomes disillusioned with how wealthy socialites like the Buchanans lead their lives.

Daisy Buchanan Beautiful and mesmerizing, Daisy is the apex of sociability. Her privileged upbringing in Louisville has conditioned her to a particular lifestyle, which Tom, her husband, is able to provide her. She enraptures men, especially Gatsby, with her diaphanous nature and sultry voice. She is the object of Gatsby's desire, for good or ill, and represents women of an elite social class.

Tom Buchanan Daisy's hulking brute of a husband. Tom comes from an old, wealthy Chicago family and takes pride in his rough ways. He commands attention through his boisterous and outspoken (even racist) behavior. He leads a life of luxury in East Egg, playing polo, riding horses, and driving fast cars. He is proud of his affairs and has had many since his marriage. Myrtle Wilson is merely the woman of the moment for Tom.

Jordan Baker Professional golfer of questionable integrity. Friend of Daisy's who, like Daisy, represents women of a particular class. Jordan is the young, single woman of wealth, admired by men wherever she goes. She dates Nick casually, but seems offended when he is the first man not to fall for her charms. Although she is savvy, she comes off as somewhat shallow in her approach to life.

Myrtle Wilson Married lover of Tom Buchanan. Myrtle serves as a representative of the lower class. Through her affair with Tom she gains entrée into the world of the elite, and the change in her personality is remarkable. She conducts a secret life with Tom, wherein she exhibits all the power and dominance she finds lacking in her everyday life. She eventually suffers a tragic end at the hands of her lover's wife.

George Wilson Myrtle's unassuming husband. He runs a garage and gas station in the valley of ashes and seems trapped by his position in life. Eventually, he finds out about his wife's double life and his response to it helps drive her to her death. Distraught at what happens, Wilson becomes Fitzgerald's way of expressing the despair prevalent in the seemingly trapped lower-middle class.

Meyer Wolfshiem Gatsby's business associate and link to organized crime. A professional gambler, Wolfshiem is attributed with fixing the 1919 World Series. Wolfshiem helped build Gatsby's fortune, although the wealth came through questionable means.

Mrs. Michaelis George Wilson's restaurateur neighbor who witnesses the car accident resulting in Myrtle's fatal car accident and then comforts Wilson after Myrtle is killed. One of the few charitable people to be found in the story.

Mr. Mckee A 'pale feminine man from the flat below'. He is married to Lucille McKee and is in the 'artistic game', which is revealed as his work as a photographer. He is also asking for Tom's support to develop his business.

Mrs. Mckee Married to Chester McKee, and described 'shrill, languid, handsome, and horrible', Mrs McKee is notable for her attempts to get her husband to notice potential photographic subjects to which Mr McKee barely responds or rudely silences her when she offers further suggestions.

Dancers Appearing in various party scenes throughout the play.

Policeman Investigates the death of Myrtle, who is killed as the victim of a hit and run.