

Myrtle Wilson > Nick Carraway

Quote 1

"I told that boy about the ice." Myrtle raised her eyebrows in despair at the shiftlessness of the lower orders. "These people! You have to keep after them all the time."

She looked at me and laughed pointlessly... (2.69-70)

Myrtle thinks that acting like a snob makes her sound fancy—but it just makes her sound even more like herself: a vulgar, common, cheating woman. You're not fooling anyone, honey.

Nick Carraway

Quote 2

"You see," cried Catherine triumphantly. She lowered her voice again. "It's really his wife that's keeping them apart. She's a Catholic, and they don't believe in divorce." Daisy was not a Catholic, and I was a little shocked at the elaborateness of the lie. (2.98)

It's an elaborate lie, but it probably never even occurred to Tom to tell the truth. He seems to hold one standard for people like Gatsby, and another for himself. It's fine for *Tom* to lie to get a girl, but not for anyone else.

Myrtle Wilson > Tom Buchanan

Quote 3

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.

"Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!" shouted Mrs. Wilson. "I'll say it whenever I want to! Daisy! Dai —"

Making a short deft movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand. (2.125-127)

Women have words. Men have fists. Guess who wins? (Hint: sticks and stones can break your bones, and ... yeah. It pretty much ends there.)

Nick Carraway

Quote 4

The fact that he had one [a mistress] was insisted upon wherever he was known. His acquaintances resented the fact that he turned up in popular restaurants with her and, leaving her at a table, sauntered about, chatting with whomever he knew. (2.3-4)

Tom is just the worst. It's one thing to have a mistress; it's quite another to embarrass your wife and friends by rubbing that mistress in their face. Right? Right.

Nick Carraway

Quote 5

About half way between West Egg and New York the motor road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain

desolate area of land. 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. (2.1)

West Egg is connected to New York by a road and a set of train tracks. It's *not* isolated: in fact, the things that happen in the city end up having effects back at West Egg. Trains and other technology like automobiles *seemed* to decrease isolation throughout the nineteenth century—but did they? Or, like Facebook, do they just give the appearance of togetherness while making us all more and more isolated?

Nick Carraway

Quote 6

It was on the two little seats facing each other that are always the last ones left on the train. I was going up to New York to see my sister and spend the night. He had on a dress suit and patent leather shoes, and I couldn't keep my eyes off him, but every time he looked at me I had to pretend to be looking at the advertisement over his head. When we came into the station he was next to me, and his white shirt-front pressed against my arm, and so I told him I'd have to call a policeman, but he knew I lied. I was so excited that when I got into a taxi with him I didn't hardly know I wasn't getting into a subway train. All I kept thinking about, over and over, was 'You can't live forever; you can't live forever.' (2.121)

YOLO: just as dumb in the 1920s **as it is now**.