

The Great Gatsby, Ch. 1

Chapter 1 Summary, Courtesy of Shmoop.com

- We meet our narrator, [Nick Carraway](#). Hello, narrator!
- First thing he does is pass along some of his [father's advice](#): "Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone, just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had" (1.2).
- Great, we love a book that begins with a lecture.
- We learn that our narrator is non-judgmental. As a result, people tell him their life stories like he's a bartender.
- We find out that he is "a Carraway," which apparently means that he's got wealth and class. And he went to [Yale](#). Ooh, fancy.
- This Carraway fellow introduces us to [the setting](#): New York City and the twin villages of West Egg and East Egg in Long Island.
- Please note that West Egg, where Carraway lives, is not as fancy-shmancy as East Egg. But it's still pretty fancy-shmancy compared to the rest of the world.
- On this "less fashionable" Egg, Nick Carraway lives next to a huge mansion inhabited by a mysterious [Mr. Gatsby](#). More on him later.

- By the way, Nick Carraway is "bond man." Not, like, posting bail, but trading stocks and bonds. In other words, he's a [stockbroker](#)/ financier type.
- Nick heads over to East Egg to have dinner with Daisy, his second cousin once removed, and her husband, Tom Buchanan, an old college buddy.

- The Buchanans have tons of money, and Nick likes to tell us all about it.
- We see that [Tom](#) is a rather large and "aggressive" former football player. In other words, this guy is not the sensitive, lyric-writing type.
- We then meet two women dressed in white – Daisy, of course, and her friend, [Jordan Baker](#).
- Daisy and Tom have a child, who spends the majority of her two-year-old time sleeping in the other room. How convenient.
- When, in friendly cocktail conversation, Nick casually mentions Gatsby, Daisy gets particularly interested.
- In general, Daisy spends Chapter 1 being happy and excited about life and having a bruise that Tom accidentally gave her.
- There's also talk of the peculiar qualities of her excited little voice.
- The following is a rather dramatic scene: Tom gets a phone call, Daisy freaks out and goes to yell at him, and Jordan reveals that Tom is messing around on the side.
- Not only that, but he's messing around with a woman tactless enough to call his house all the time to ask what's up. We get the feeling that the tactless bit is the real problem.
- Daisy comes back and talks about when her daughter was born: Tom wasn't there, and she wished that her daughter would be a "beautiful little fool"—i.e., too dumb to know any better.

- It turns out that Jordan is an athlete (golf). Nick feels like he's heard about her before, but he can't remember the story. You guess it: more on that later.
- Daisy then jokes about Jordan and Nick getting together. LOL!
- When Nick finally gets home to West Egg, he notices that his neighbor, Mr. Gatsby, is out chilling on the lawn and maybe contemplating the addition of some plastic flamingoes to his "blue lawn." Why is the lawn always blue? Good question.
- Except that Gatsby is not just chilling and thinking about flamingoes. He stares across the water at a lone green light before stretching his arm out towards it oh-so-symbolically.