

Click to prove
you're human



One of the most important aspects of The Great Gatsby is the symbolism that is used throughout the novel. In particular, Fitzgerald uses symbolism to represent houses and cars. The houses in The Great Gatsby can be seen as symbols of the American Dream. The most impressive and expensive house in the novel belongs to Jay Gatsby, which represents his desire for wealth and status. Other characters, such as Tom Buchanan and Myrtle Wilson, also have houses that are symbolic of their wealth and status. However, as the novel progresses, it becomes clear that the American Dream is not all it is cracked up to be. The houses in The Great Gatsby come to represent a facade that hides the many problems that exist in society. The cars in The Great Gatsby can also be seen as symbols of the American Dream. The most expensive and impressive car in the novel is the Rolls-Royce that Tom Buchanan drives. This car represents his status and wealth. Other characters, such as Jay Gatsby and George Wilson, also drive expensive cars that are symbolic of their success. However, as the novel progresses, it becomes clear that the American Dream is not all it is cracked up to be. The cars in The Great Gatsby come to represent a facade that hides the many problems that exist in society. The houses and cars in F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby are full of symbolism, which is represented by the structures and automobiles in a variety of ways. One of the more significant features of symbolism in The Great Gatsby is how completely it is integrated into the plot and structure. Symbols such as Gatsby's home and automobile symbolize money. "A Tower on one side, spanning new under a thin beard of raw ivy" represents Gatsby's enormous illegal income, according to his house "[is] a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy" which contains "a tower one side, spanning new under a beard of raw ivy." The car that Gatsby buys to win over Daisy, a "circular tour of the country in his richly upholstered motor car" is also a symbol of Gatsby's wealth. The large number of symbols in The Great Gatsby and their interpretations are what make the novel so interesting. It is not simply a story about love and betrayal, but much more. The symbols give the reader a greater understanding of the characters and their motivations. The green light at the end of Daisy's dock is another important symbol in The Great Gatsby. The green light represents hope, and Gatsby's hope for a life with Daisy. In Chapter 1, Nick describes the green light as "a queer, phosphorescent quality that made it seem to me that the porch and the whole front of the house were peopled with creatures from another world who had crept out of the night." The symbolism of the green light is further developed in Chapter 9 when Gatsby makes a desperate attempt to reach it. The Nick of the green light ties in with Gatsby's desire for Daisy, his hopes and dreams, and his ultimate tragedy. The houses and cars in The Great Gatsby are symbols of wealth, hope, and desire. They play an important role in the development of the plot and help to reveal the characters' motives. The symbols in The Great Gatsby are fascinating and add to the richness of the novel. Gatsby's enormous earnings aren't enough to make him satisfied. He requires "The house that he feels he need in order to be happy," and it is also a perfect symbol of carelessness with money, which is a large part of his personality (Bewley 24). Gatsby's mansion, like his automobile, represents his vulgar and extravagant desire for attention. Gatz' home is characterized by a variety of styles and periods. Buchanan's residence represents their beliefs. The more well-known wealthy families reside on East Egg. The West Egg is where the new money lives. The people on the West Egg are not as established and have not been wealthy for very long. Gatsby's home is an example of this. The Valley of Ashes is a run-down and poverty stricken area that lies between West Egg and New York City. The Eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg are a pair of glasses without a face that look down upon the valley of ashes symbolizing God or a higher power looking down on the sinful acts that take place in this area. The Eggs also represent different lifestyles and ways people go about achieving their wealth. The Buchanans live a life of idleness while Gatsby works hard to achieve his dream of being with Daisy. The Eggs also have different morals, the people on the East Egg are established and proper while the people on the West Egg are new to money and believe that anything goes in order to achieve their goals. Cars also play a big role in The Great Gatsby. They are a symbol of status and wealth. The Buchanans have a number of expensive cars that they use to show off their wealth. Gatsby's car is also a symbol of his wealth. It is a beautiful yellow car that attracts a lot of attention. The colour of the car is also significant, yellow often represents deceit and betrayal. The colour could be symbolic of Gatsby's character, he is not who he seems to be and he is hiding a lot of secrets. The car could also represent Gatsby's American dream, it is a symbol of his success. The green light at the end of Daisy's dock is also a symbol of the American dream. It represents hope and the possibilities that life has to offer. The green light is also symbolic of money, which is something that Gatsby is obsessed with. Houses and cars play a big role in The Great Gatsby and are used to symbolize different things. Gatsby's house is a symbol of his wealth and his attempts to win over Daisy. The Buchanans' house is a symbol of their established wealth and status. The Great Gatsby is a 1925 novel by American writer F. Scott Fitzgerald. Set in the Jazz Age on Long Island, near New York City, the novel depicts first-person narrator Nick Carraway's interactions with mysterious millionaire Jay Gatsby and Gatsby's obsession to reunite with his former lover, Daisy Buchanan.Set on the prosperous Long Island of 1922, The Great Gatsby provides a critical social history of Prohibition-era America during the Jazz Age. Fitzgerald's fictional narrative fully renders that period—known for its jazz music, economic prosperity, flapper culture, libertine mores, rebellious youth, and ubiquitous speakasies. Fitzgerald uses many of these 1920s societal developments to tell his story, from simple details like petting in automobiles to broader themes such as bootlegging as the illicit source of Gatsby's fortune. Faith: A Journey For All by 3.88 avg rating — 2,010 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2019) The Princess Diarist by 3.70 avg rating — 87,668 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2018) In Such Good Company: Eleven Years of Laughter, Mayhem, and Fun in the Sandbox by 3.84 avg rating — 7,543 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2017) A Full Life: Reflections at Ninety by 3.86 avg rating — 7,201 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2016) Diary of a Mad Diva by 3.40 avg rating — 2,936 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2015) America Again by 3.85 avg rating — 13,048 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2014) Society's Child: My Autobiography by 4.01 avg rating — 1,189 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2013) If You Ask Me by 3.78 avg rating — 48,302 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2012) Earth (The Book): A Visitor's Guide to the Human Race by 3.90 avg rating — 27,326 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2011) Always Looking Up: The Adventures of an Incurable Optimist by 3.82 avg rating — 24,961 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2010) An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It by 3.78 avg rating — 6,930 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2009) The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream by 3.83 avg rating — 168,058 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2008) With Ossie and Ruby: In This Life Together by 4.26 avg rating — 135 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2007) Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis by 3.90 avg rating — 4,049 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2007) Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance by 3.94 avg rating — 229,056 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2006) My Life by 3.74 avg rating — 49,591 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2005) Lies & the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair & Balanced Look at the Right by 3.82 avg rating — 29,636 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2004) A Song Flung Up to Heaven by 4.25 avg rating — 4,363 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2003) Q: The Autobiography of Quincy Jones by 4.14 avg rating — 973 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2002) The Measure of a Man: A Spiritual Autobiography by 3.75 avg rating — 13,318 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2001) The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr. by 4.34 avg rating — 23,587 ratings Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album (2000) < previous 1 2 3 4 next > edit descriptions of this character Home > Q&A by Experts > Literature > "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." The most famous among The Great Gatsby quotes is the novel's final sentence, restating its central theme. It reflects Jay Gatsby's inability to let go of the past. His efforts to bring it back are barely worth it. Detailed answer: The Great Gatsby is generally considered to be one of the main novels of the Roaring Twenties. That time is characterized by a widespread disregard for tradition and the past. High on prosperity and freedom, Americans embraced materialism and hedonism. The novel sheds light on the shortcomings of this mentality. Fitzgerald demonstrates the powerful hold that the past has on its protagonist, Jay Gatsby. We will write a custom essay specifically for you by our professional experts a custom essay specifically for you Although wealthy, famous, and successful by the time standards, Gatsby is not a happy man. The driving purpose behind his pursuit of wealth and fame is his desire to be accepted by Daisy. She was his first love but has married another man. The symbolic literary device of the green light on Daisy's dock across the bay represents this hope. At the same time, it underlines the distance between Gatsby and its fulfillment. His efforts to resume their past relationship are futile because the currents of time have long since pulled them apart. The quote meaning becomes incredibly rich in this historical and personal context. As a man of the Roaring Twenties, Gatsby persistently pursues his personal objective. He doesn't lose hope despite harsh reality. He struggles against the current, but contrary to recent conviction, such a struggle is doomed to failure. Fitzgerald shows that, no matter how we struggle, the past remains in the past. The present is also doomed to become the past, putting the vanity of his generation into perspective. One of our experts with a specialization in literature has kindly provided an answer to this question. Feel free to rate the answer and let us know if you liked it. Reference IvyPanda. (2024, August 21). "So We Beat On, Boats Against the Current..." Explain the Quote. Work Cited ""So We Beat On, Boats Against the Current..." Explain the Quote." IvyPanda, 21 Aug. 2024. ivypanda.com/so-we-beat-on-boats-against-the-current/ References IvyPanda. (2024) ""So We Beat On, Boats Against the Current..." Explain the Quote." 21 August. References IvyPanda, 2024. "So We Beat On, Boats Against the Current..." Explain the Quote." August 21, 2024. . IvyPanda. ""So We Beat On, Boats Against the Current..." Explain the Quote." August 21, 2024. . Bibliography IvyPanda. ""So We Beat On, Boats Against the Current..." Explain the Quote." August 21, 2024. . Remember reading The Great Gatsby in high school? Even if you didn't, you can catch it now on the big screen. We collected the best baby names from The Great Gatsby and the 1920s to bring you baby name inspiration. As the movie adaptation of The Great Gatsby hits the big screen, take a look at some of the names from the classic novel and the year it takes place, 1922. These baby names from a bygone era still resonate. You may find the perfect name for your little one from the pages of F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous American novel. Female characters from The Great Gatsby The leading ladies and supporting characters from The Great Gatsby have old-fashioned, but charming names that are perfect for quirky, modern baby names. Related story The Best Anglic Names for Your Little Angel (Fingers Crossed!) Male characters from The Great Gatsby The male characters in The Great Gatsby have a mix of names that are common today and names that have fallen out of popularity. Draw inspiration whether you're looking for a popular baby name or an unusual baby name. Actors and actresses from The Great Gatsby The two most well-known big screen versions of The Great Gatsby are the 1974 version, starring Robert Redford, and the 2013 Baz Luhrmann version, starring Leonardo DiCaprio. We handpicked the best baby names from the actors and actresses who have brought Fitzgerald's characters to life. Popular baby names from 1922 Lastly, in the spirit of The Great Gatsby, we took a look at some of the top baby names from 1922, the year in which the novel took place. These vintage names have cycled in and out of popularity over the decades. This original version of The Great Gatsby is published in Noah Text(R), a proprietary evidenced-based method of presenting text. Noah Text(R) highlights critical word patterns to help struggling readers, striving readers, those with dyslexia, and English language-learners read with increased fluency, accuracy, and stamina. The Great Gatsby, read and revered by millions throughout the world since it was first published in 1925, is riveting from beginning to end. It is the story of an ultra-rich young man named Jay Gatsby who owns a mansion on Long Island, where he throws wildly extravagant parties. No one knows how he earned his wealth, so the rumors swirl. A timeless classic, the story explores the nature of social class in America during the Jazz Age of the 1920s. It has been adapted for the screen several times, including a 2013 version starring Leonardo DiCaprio. (Note to Educators: This unique print presentation enables students to see critical word patterns that make the text more accessible and help them improve their reading skills. Thus, this book can be used as a stand-alone or in conjunction with audio support for multisensory, immersive learning.) Edit descriptions of this character Jump to ratings and reviewsAlternate covers of this ISBN can be found here and here.James L.W. West III to include the author's final revisions and features a note on the composition and text, a personal foreword by Fitzgerald's granddaughter, Eleanor Lanahan—and a new introduction by two-time National Book Award winner Jesmyn Ward.The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald's third book, stands as the supreme achievement of his career. First published in 1925, this quintessential novel of the Jazz Age has been acclaimed by generations of readers. The story of the mysteriously wealthy Jay Gatsby and his love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, of lavish parties on Long Island at a time when The New York Times noted "gin was the national drink and sex the national obsession," it is an exquisitely crafted tale of America in the 1920s. 76434 people are currently reading1912082 people want to readFrancis Scott Key Fitzgerald, widely known simply as Scott Fitzgerald, was an American novelist, essayist, and short story writer. He is best known for his novels depicting the flamboyance and excess of the Jazz Age, a term he popularized in his short story collection Tales of the Jazz Age. During his lifetime, he published four novels, four story collections, and 164 short stories. Although he achieved temporary popular success and fortune in the 1920s, Fitzgerald received critical acclaim only after his death and is now widely regarded as one of the greatest American writers of the 20th century.Born into a middle-class family in Saint Paul, Minnesota, Fitzgerald was raised primarily in New York state. He attended Princeton University where he befriended future literary critic Edmund Wilson. Owing to a failed romantic relationship with Chicago socialite Ginevra King, he dropped out in 1917 to join the United States Army during World War I. While stationed in Alabama, he met Zelda Sayre, a Southern debutante who belonged to Montgomery's exclusive country-club set. Although she initially rejected Fitzgerald's marriage proposal due to his lack of financial prospects, Zelda agreed to marry him after he published the commercially successful This Side of Paradise (1920). The novel became a cultural sensation and cemented his reputation as one of the eminent writers of the decade.His second novel, The Beautiful and Damned (1922), propelled him further into the cultural elite. To maintain his affluent lifestyle, he wrote numerous stories for popular magazines such as The Saturday Evening Post, Collier's Weekly, and Esquire. During this period, Fitzgerald frequented Europe, where he befriended modernist writers and artists of the "Lost Generation" expatriate community, including Ernest Hemingway. His third novel, The Great Gatsby (1925), received generally favorable reviews but was a commercial failure, selling fewer than 23,000 copies in its first year. Despite its lackluster debut, The Great Gatsby is now hailed by some literary critics as the "Great American Novel". Following the deterioration of his wife's mental health and her placement in a mental institute for schizophrenia, Fitzgerald completed his final novel, Tender Is the Night (1934).Struggling financially because of the declining popularity of his works during the Great Depression, Fitzgerald moved to Hollywood, where he embarked upon an unsuccessful career as a screenwriter. While living in Hollywood, he cohabited with columnist Sheila Graham, his final companion before his death. After a long struggle with alcoholism, he attained sobriety only to die of a heart attack in 1940, at 44. His friend Edmund Wilson edited and published an unfinished fifth novel, The Last Tycoon (1941), after Fitzgerald's death. In 1993, a new edition was published as The Love of the Last Tycoon, edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli.Displaying 1 - 30 of 120,539 reviewsMarch 17, 2023Oh Gatsby, you old sport, you poor semi-delusionally hopeful dreamer with some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life", focusing your whole self and soul on that elusive money-colored green light - a dream that shatters just when you are "this" close to it, Jay Gatsby, and poor F. Scott Fitzgerald - the guy who so brilliantly described it all, but who continued to live the life his character failed to see for what it was. The Great Gatsby is a story about the lavish excesses meant to serve every little whim of the rich and wannabe-rich in the splendid but unsatisfying in their shallow emptiness glitzy and gaudy post-war years, and the resulting suffocation under the uselessness and unexpected oppressiveness of elusive American dream in the time when money was plenty and the alluring seemingly dream life was just around the corner, just within reach.But first and foremost, it is a story of disillusionment with dreams that prove to be shallow and unworthy of the dreamer - while at the same time firmly hanging on to the idea of the dream, the ability to dream big, and the stubborn tenacity of the dreamer, "an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again". This is why Gatsby is still so relevant in the world we live in - almost a hundred years after Fitzgerald wrote it in the Roaring Twenties - the present-day world that still worships money and views it as a substitute for the American dream, the world that hinges on materialism, the world that no longer frowns on the gaudiness and glitz of the nouveau riche. In this world Jay Gatsby, poor old sport, with his huge tasteless mansion and lavish tasteless parties and in-your-face tasteless car and tasteless pink suit would be, perhaps, quietly sniggered at - but would have fit in without the need for aristocratic breeding - who cares if he has the money and the ability to throw parties worthy of reality show fame??? Because in the present world just the fact of having heaps of money makes you worthy - and therefore the people whose voices are "full of money", who are "gleaming like stars and proud above the hot struggles of the poor", people who genuinely believe that money makes them worthy and invincible are all too common. Tom and Daisy Buchanan would be proud of them. And wannabe Gatsbys put their capacity to dream into chasing the shallow dream of dollar signs, nothing more. 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." This book somehow hit the right note back when I read it when I was fourteen, and hit even truer note now, deeply resonating with me now, almost a full century since it was written. If you read it for school years ago, I ask you to pick it up and give its pages another look - and it may amaze you. Five green-light stars in the fog at the end of a dock.----- Also posted on my blog.2013-reads 2021-reads I-also-saw-the-film September 16, 2021This is a good book, though it is so ridiculously overrated. There are so many great books out there that will never get the attention they deserve. They will be forgotten and their wisdom heard by only a select few who are willing to go looking for it. So it annoys me when books like this are acclaimed by critics and readers alike as the best pieces of fiction in existence (when they are not.) There's so much more out there!Anyway, rant over. The thing I like most about The Great Gatsby is the language, the subtlety's and the suggestions, the things that are not directly said but are said nevertheless. It's a true feat of writing and at times it reminded me of a stage piece. The dialogue does not give the answers, but it is the character's actions and movements (so fantastically narrated) that give the game away. It reveals their internal worlds. As such this is a book that can easily be skimmed over. The plot is basic and relatively unengaging and consequently I think an inattentive reader has a lot to miss here. It's all about illusions and false appearances just like real life. The way people perceive us is not how we truly are and sometimes individuals actively work towards creating a desired appearance for the outside world. It's easily done with enough time, effort and money. What Gatsby creates for the outside is current, no one is left aloft. It is an ethical massacre, and Fitzgerald spares no lives; there is perhaps not a single character of any significance worthy even of a Sportsmanship Award from the Boys and Girls Club.In a word, The Great Gatsby is about deception. Fitzgerald tints our glasses rosy with gorgeous prose and a narrator you want so much to trust, but leaves the lenses just translucent enough for us to see that Gatsby is getting the same treatment. And if Gatsby represents the truth of the American Dream, it means trouble for us all. Consider it the most pleasant insult you'll ever receive.April 14, 2025Fitzgerald, you have ruined me. Fitzgerald can set a scene so perfectly, flawlessly, He paints a world of magic and introduces one of the greatest characters of all time, Jay Gatsby. Gatsby is the embodiment of hope, and no one can dissuade him from his dreams. Have you ever had a dream that carried you to heights you could never have dreamed otherwise? When Gatsby is reunited with Daisy Buchanan, he fills the space to the brim with flowers, creating a living dream. How is anyone supposed to compete with that?The Great Gatsby perfectly makes use of a narrator, Nick. Why is Gatsby so great? Because Nick tells us. If Gatsby told us, we would just think that he is a braggart, the least humble person in the world. This book is wildly addictive, so intricate yet perfectly woven together, a brilliant literary masterpiece. I have to keep going back to reconnect with Jay Gatsby, a naïve but beautiful and charming hero, perfectly imperfect, a relentless dreamer.2025 Reading ScheduleJan A Town Like AliceFeb BirdsongMar Captain Corelli's Mandolin - Louis De BerniereApr War and PeaceMay The Woman in WhiteJun AtonementJul The Shadow of the WindAug Jude the ObscureSept UlyssesOct Vanity FairNov A Fine BalanceDec GerminalConnect With Me!Blog Twitter BookTube Facebook Insta My Bookstore at PangoMay 26, 2010Jay Gatsby, you poor doofus bastard. You were ahead of your time. If you would have pulled your scam after the invention of reality TV, you would have been a huge star on a show like The Bachelor and a dozen shameless Daisy-types would have thrown themselves at you. Mass media and modern fame would have embraced the way you tried to push your way into a social circle you didn't belong to in an effort to fulfill a fool's dream as your entire existence became a lie and you desperately sought to rewrite history to an ending you wanted. You had a talent for it, Jay, but a modern PR expert would have made you bigger than Kate Gosselin. Your knack for self-promotion and over the top displays of wealth to try and buy respectability would have fit right in these days. I can just about see you on a red carpet with Paris Hilton. And the ending would have been different. No aftermath for rich folks these days. Lawyers and pay-off money would have quietly settled the matter. No harm, no foul. But then you'd have realized how worthless Daisy really was at some point. I'm sure you couldn't have dealt with that. So maybe it is better that your story happened in the Jazz Age where you could keep your illusions intact to the bitter end.The greatest American novel? I don't know if there is such an animal. But I think you'd have to include this one in the conversation.100 famous-books favorites April 11, 2025Once upon a time, I had a very long, very passionate review of this book uploaded, with very long, very passionate pages of comments, and generally it was one of my favorite reviews (and one of my favorite books) with one of my favorite ensuing discussions.today I realized goodreads deleted itread the only one of my 2000+ reviews that goodreads has simply straight up taken down here, where it's safe: beautifully-written classics September 17, 2024Our fantasies of grandeur are always restricted by our aesthetic tastes and The Great Gatsby is literally an anthem to vulgarity and fraudulence...But his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain while the clock ticked on the washstand and the moon soaked with wet light his tangled clothes upon the floor. Each night he added to the pattern of his fancies until drowsiness closed down upon some vivid scene with an oblivious embrace.The grotesque aesthetic stupidity and the fabulously bad taste of the characters are outright shocking... Instead of wishing for variety and quality, they just want to get more of everything that glitters...He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them, one by one, before us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel, which lost their folds as they fell and covered the table in many-colored disarray. While we admired he brought more and the soft rich heap mounted higher - shirts with stripes and scrolls and plaids in coral and apple-green and lavender and faint orange, with monograms of Indian blue. Suddenly, with a strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily. They're such beautiful shirts," she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. "It makes me sad because I've never seen such - such beautiful shirts before."Gatsby is a fraud and the narrator doesn't have much sympathy for him but in the end the raconteur finds out that the respectable members of society are just hypocrites and that they are even more fake than Gatsby.Honesty and intellect don't mean a thing, all that counts is the art of pretending and the greatest pretender takes all.a-hundred-of-the-best-novelsJuly 31, 2007After six years of these heated and polarized debates, I'm deleting the reviews that sparked them. Thanks for sharing your frustrations, joys, and insights with me, goodreaders. Happy reading! In love and good faith, always,SavannahMay 9, 2023 Bright lights, big city When I avowed my disenchantment with Tender Is the Night, a few GR friends urged me to read The Great Gatsby to truly appreciate F. Scott Fitzgerald. I cannot but admit The Great Gatsby was a far more exhilarating read than I had expected it to be, its tight composition and restless pace a remarkable contrast with the muddled slow mess that made Tender Is the Night hard for me to get through, the exquisite, visual opulent writing more than in The Curious Case of Benjamin Button unfolding in all its grandeur, alternating the scrumptious and the gritty, just like the narrative unfolding more coherently. Reading The Great Gatsby immediately after Tra donne sole (among women only) by Cesare Pavese, featuring also some bored socialites as seen by an outsider who almost unwillingly turns into an insider, it struck me how little difference living in 1922 New York or fifties Turin seemed to make, at least for a certain class of people, the ones leisured and wealthy - however Pavese's women seem more despondent and philosophical, responding to the shallowness of their lives by cynicism, nihilism or suicide. F. Scott Fitzgerald paints brightly lit places, populated by shady people. Daisy and Tom Buchanan, Jay Gatsby, Jordan Baker and the outsider-insider narrator Nick Carraway are a fine fleur of unlovable, amoral and superficial characters, representatives of old and new money being equally dreadful, reducing friendships and loving relationships to commodities, cheating and lying themselves through their lives, crooks, dishonest to the core, whether in golf, in business or in relationships, so corrupt that even the narrator who conspicuously prides himself on his honesty makes himself untrustworthy by doing so. These are people who are moved to tears by a soft rich heap of beautiful shirts ordered from England, in the meantime thoughtlessly wrecking other people's lives without even blinking (Pavese's novel also pivots around haute couture). They were careless people... they smashed up things and creations and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness... and let other people clean up the mess they had made.Among many other things, the Great Gatsby is also tale of the ludicrous things we do for love (and which inevitably will leave us with empty hands), a painful story about holding on to illusions against one's better judgment and a cautionary tale on the (at that time perhaps) quintessential American belief in the malleability of the individual, the American dream, at which I am aware as a European I can only look at from an unbridgeable distance, bemused at a cultural trope which feels alien to me. Reading The Great Gatsby as a trenchant commentary on this belief however, Fitzgerald to my surprise struck me as a sheer visionary, illustrating sharply the downsides and dangers of this belief and capitalist ethos even if he couldn't foresee how this pseudo-meritocratic mentality would spread and spill over times and oceans, how it would change societies and poison individuals with it all over the world in the wake of capitalism and neo-liberalism, which would make it into a personal vocation and permanent responsibility to remodel and market oneself to be a worthy individual in a hyper competitive society (and on the flipside blame oneself if one fails to succeed or succumbs under the pressure to achieve and be happy) - an ethos conditioning individuals who are made to think of themselves as one-person enterprises, judging by (and judging themselves) by what they have and do rather than what they are. If you are so smart why aren't you rich? No wonder people are lonely and struggle with a warped view of the self and feelings of failure (Paul Verhaeghe, What about Me? The Struggle for Identity in a Market-based Society). By Jay Gatsby's fate, Fitzgerald exposes the vicious lie that we can be what and who we want to be if we only work on ourselves and that we will be loved if doing so. (Illustration: Michelle Lagasca)As a counterpoint to all the extravagant and baffling materialism of the world he evokes, F. Scott Fitzgerald gently invites the reader to contemplate past, present and future in a burst of melancholic beauty that will glow in my mind for a long time. "Most of the big shore places were closed now and there were hardly any lights except the shadowy, moving glow of a ferryboat across the Sound. And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transient enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.And as I sat there, brooding on the old unknown world, 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 hardly 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 flocks of the republic roled on under the night.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—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning—So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."2021 20th-century american-literature November 5, 2024So this was a weird little story about people with too much money.The main characters just kind of flopped around drinking cocktails, smoking, and complaining about the heat. When they weren't cheating on their spouses—that is. The gist is that this guy Nick, who is the only person with normal human emotions in the entire book, is recounting his special summer with The Great Gatsby.Gatsby is this ultra-mysterious man with gobbs of money who likes to throw lavish windlings. Everyone who is anyone shows up to drink his booze, eat his food, and party till they puke.BUT! He has a secret and he needs Nick's help.He's in love.