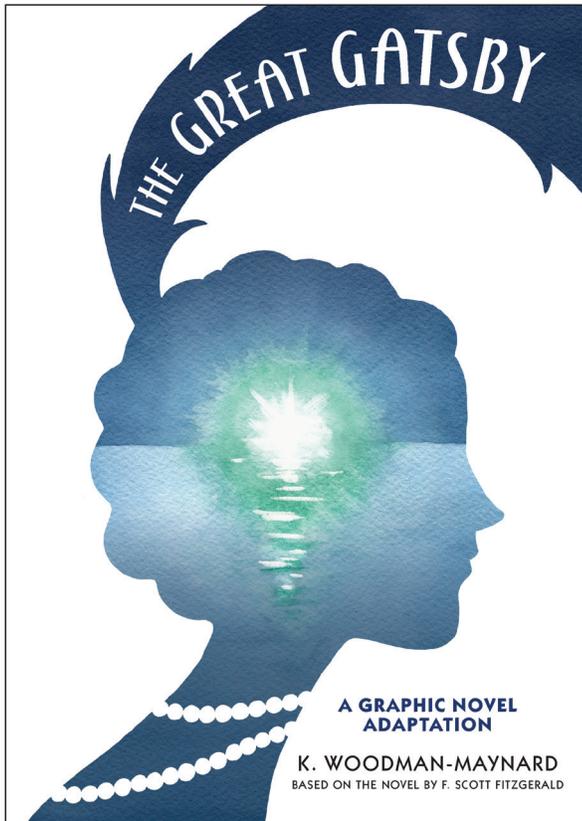


# THE GREAT GATSBY

## A GRAPHIC NOVEL ADAPTATION

BY K. WOODMAN-MAYNARD

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY F. SCOTT FITZGERALD



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### ABOUT THE BOOK

In this graphic novel adaptation, Woodman-Maynard's artwork captures the distinctive mood of the Jazz Age, providing a fresh, stylish backdrop against which Fitzgerald's American classic can unfold. The stunning illustrations take the reader into the mansions of Long Island and around New York City while meticulously expressing the emotions of the people who inhabit the world of *The Great Gatsby*.

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

K. Woodman-Maynard is a graphic designer and artist. She is also co-creator of TKAMI: Talk to Kids About Mental Illness, a free resource that helps adults talk to kids about mental illness through comics. K. Woodman-Maynard lives in Minnesota with her husband and cat. *The Great Gatsby: A Graphic Novel Adaptation* is her debut graphic novel.

### Common Core Connections

This discussion guide, which can be used with large or small groups, will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. These include the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL), as well as the speaking and listening standards for comprehension and collaboration and for presentation of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL). Questions can also be used in writing prompts for independent work.



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Gatsby is a mysterious figure, and only gradually do we get to know his real story. At the first Gatsby party that Nick attended, he heard various rumors about Gatsby: he killed a man; he was a German spy, maybe a bootlegger. How would you describe him? Discuss what you learned about him and how your opinion of him changed over the course of the book.
2. One of the themes of this book is the American Dream: the idea that we can be anyone we want to be, achieve anything we want. Gatsby rejected the person he was and devoted his life to reinventing himself. Talk about what this meant to him and whether this is still the American Dream.
3. Gatsby's parties are lavish, have unlimited food and drink, and are attended by many "important people." People drink too much and act outrageously. What is the allure of this kind of event? Do you think parties like this are still appealing today?
4. Nick, the narrator, says at the beginning on page 5, "Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men." What does he mean by this?
5. Nick describes Tom, his classmate at Yale, as "one of those men who reach such an acute limited excellence at twenty-one that everything afterwards savors of anticlimax" (page 8). Have you known people who were like this in high school or college? What kind of life do you think they will have?
6. Woodman-Maynard does some interesting things in her book design. For instance, she uses a wavy, cloud-like shape for all the speech bubbles from Daisy, while Tom's speech bubbles are rounded rectangles. Did you notice that? Why do you think she did that? For another thing, she often places text on a building or car or other inanimate object. Is this effective?
7. Tom mentions a book called *The Rise of the Colored Empires* by Goddard (page 16) and expresses his concern about white people falling out of power. Later, on page 160, he says, "Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions, and next they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white." Were you surprised to read these comments? Has racism in America changed since the original book was published in 1925?
8. When Daisy tells Nick about the birth of her daughter, she says, "When she was born and the nurse told me she was a girl—I wept. I said, 'I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool'" (page 21). What does Daisy mean by this? Do you think it was true then? Now?
9. When Nick and Tom get off the train at Wilson's garage on page 27, we see a billboard across from the garage. It is an advertisement for a Doctor Eckleburg and features a giant pair of eyes behind glasses. How did it make you feel? How does this figure into the book later? Is it an important image in the book?



10. Nick says that Jordan was “incurably dishonest” and that “dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply—I was casually sorry, and then I forgot” (page 64). What does this show he thinks about women?
11. To prove the stories about his past, Gatsby carries two souvenirs: a medal from Montenegro and a photo of him and some friends at Oxford. What does this tell you about the man?
12. Some people might say that Daisy had a lot: a rich and handsome husband, a baby, a gorgeous house, plenty of money to travel and live the high life. But on page 87, when trying to get Nick to invite Daisy and Gatsby over for tea at the same time, Jordan says, “Daisy ought to have something in her life.” What does she mean?
13. You have probably heard the expression “A picture is worth a thousand words.” The picture on the bottom of page 115 of Gatsby standing in the doorway of his mansion is a good example of that. What do you think that image says?
14. Gatsby is sure that he can win Daisy back, but Nick says, “You can’t repeat the past” (page 131). Can a person return to the past?
15. On pages 164–165, Daisy enters the speech bubble and folds in on herself. What do you think the scene says about her relationships with Tom and Gatsby at that point in the book?
16. Discuss Gatsby’s reaction to the hit-and-run accident that happened when Daisy was driving his car. What does Nick think?
17. Nick’s actions and words toward Gatsby are quite contradictory. What do you think he really thinks of him?
18. The green light at the end of Daisy’s dock is mentioned several times in the book, including on the next-to-last page: “Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us.” What is its significance?
19. In the author’s note in the back of the book, Woodman-Maynard says she was drawn to the metaphors in the book and was excited about depicting them literally. Thus, we have Daisy and Jordan floating over a couch on pages 10 and 11 and a famous actress at one of Gatsby’s parties depicted as a flower on page 126. What do you think of these renditions?
20. Now that you have read an adaptation of this famous book, why do you think it is regarded as a great American classic? Think about some of the major themes it explores: obsession, the American Dream, reinventing oneself, the allure of wealth, class divisions. Are these themes still relevant today?

These questions were prepared by Grace Worcester, former youth services consultant for the Vermont Department of Libraries. She has spent her entire professional life working with books and children and has served on the Newbery Medal, Caldecott Medal, *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Award, and National Book Award for Young People’s Literature committees.

