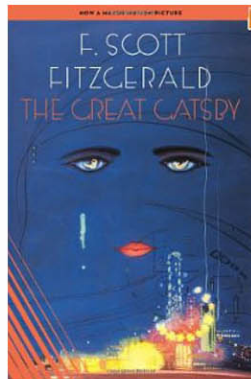


THE GREAT GATSBY

by F. Scott Fitzgerald



Now that Hollywood is coming out with a new—and hopefully improved—version of *The Great Gatsby*, it's time to take a look at the classic literary novel that the movie is based upon. F. Scott Fitzgerald penned *Gatsby* during the robust economy of the post-war, early 1920s, when the newly rich were crowding into mansions on Long Island, across the bay from the old money rich, steeped in tradition, who were the true wielders of power, not pretenders to the throne. Among the newly rich is Jay Gatsby, whose source of wealth is dubious, and his taste in clothing tending toward the garish. He's "great" because he has seemingly been able to acquire all the trappings a person should need to be fabulously wealthy and happy—but he's not happy. The one prize that still eludes him is Daisy Buchanan, who lives with her husband, Tom, across the bay where the old money is entrenched.

Through Nick Caraway, the narrator of the story and admirer of Gatsby, a meeting is a social is arranged that brings Daisy over to meet her former beau, Jay Gatsby. Their love is rekindled, and she confesses her disappointment at her husband's superficiality. He's not who or what she was expecting to marry. Following an argument with Daisy's husband, she accidentally runs down a woman on the road who is the paramour of Daisy's husband, a commoner Tom is contemptuous of: "He thinks she goes to see her sister in New York. He's so dumb he doesn't know he's alive." Gatsby wants to protect Daisy, so he takes the blame for the death, while Daisy goes back to her husband. Tom informs the recent widow that it was Gatsby who killed his wife (not Daisy, and the man assumes it must have been Gatsby she had been having the affair with. He goes up to Gatsby's mansion, finds and kills him, and then kills himself. Then despite the lavish parties Gatsby held with hundreds of guests, hardly anyone shows up to his funeral. The lesson appears to be that old East Coast money in entrenched and quite capable of protecting itself, even against criminal acts, while leaving suffering and retribution to those not in their club, such as mid-westerners who are newly rich.

This is a timeless classic that has aged well. It continues to be one of my most favorite novels and has been honored as one of the top tier novels in American Literature. I give it FIVE stars and am looking forward to the movie version.