**The Great Gatsby (1925)**

Excerpts from *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

"Whenever you feel like criticizing any one . . . just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had." Chapter 1

"…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." Chapter 1

"I hope she'll be a fool — that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool . . . You see, I think everything's terrible anyhow . . . And I know. I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything." Chapter 1

"Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock." Chapter 1

"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." Chapter 2

"He thinks she goes to see her sister in New York. He's so dumb he doesn't know he's alive." Chapter 2

"I married him because I thought he was a gentleman . . . I thought he knew something about breeding, but he wasn't fit to lick my shoe." Chapter 2

"He borrowed somebody's best suit to get married in, and never told me about it, and the man came after it one day when he was out . . . I gave it to him and then I lay down and cried . . . all afternoon." Chapter 2

"I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited — they went there." Chapter 3

"I've been drunk for about a week now, and I thought it might sober me up to sit in a library." Chapter 3

"I felt a haunting loneliness sometimes, and felt it in others — young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life." Chapter 3

"It takes two to make an accident." Chapter 3

"Everyone suspects himself of at least one of the cardinal virtues, and this is mine: I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known." Chapter 3

"I belong to another generation . . . As for me, I am fifty years old, and I won't impose myself on you any longer." Chapter 4

"'A phrase began to beat in my ears with a sort of heady excitement: 'There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy, and the tired.'" Chapter 4

"Gatsby, pale as death, with his hands plunged like weights in his coat pockets, was standing in a puddle of water glaring tragically into my eyes." Chapter 5

"Americans, while occasionally willing to be serfs, have always been obstinate about being peasantry." Chapter 5

"If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay . . . You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock." Chapter 5

"His parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people — his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all. The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God . . . and he must be about His Father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen year old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end." Chapter 6

"Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols weighing down their own white dresses against the singing breeze of the fans." Chapter 7

"I love New York on summer afternoons when everyone's away. There's something very sensuous about it - overripe, as if all sorts of funny fruits were going to fall into your hands." Chapter 7

"So we drove on toward death through the cooling twilight." Chapter 7

"It excited him, too, that many men had already loved Daisy — it increased her value in his eyes." Chapter 8

"When a man gets killed I never like to get mixed up in it in any way. I keep out. When I was a young man it was different . . . I stuck with them to the end . . . Let us learn to show friendship for a man when he is alive and not after he is dead." Chapter 9

"After Gatsby's death the East was haunted for me like that, distorted beyond my eyes' power of correction." Chapter 9

"They were careless people, Tom and Daisy — they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money of their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made." Chapter 9

"Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic 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." Chapter 9