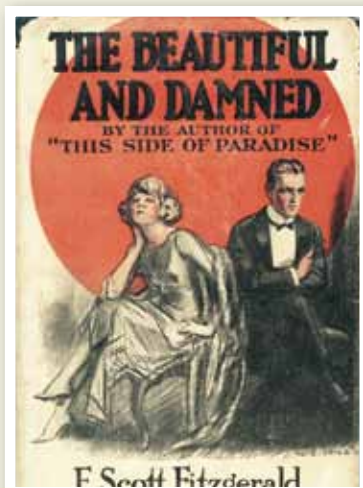


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA in 1896. His family were upper-middle class Irish Catholics. In 1913 he enrolled¹ at Princeton, a prestigious² university. While he was at university, he wrote his first novel. But it was rejected³ by publishers. Five years later he left university without graduating and joined the army.

In 1919, he met and fell in love with Zelda Sayre. She was 17 and very beautiful. Fitzgerald wanted to marry her but she was only interested in money and having a good time⁴. To please her, he left the army and moved to New York to look for a job.




ABOUT THE BOOK

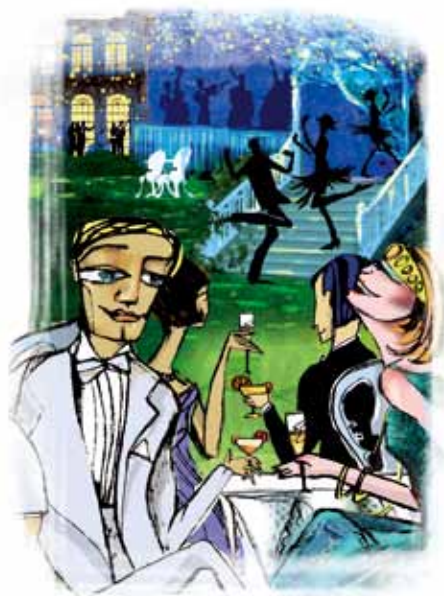
Many of the events from Fitzgerald's early life appear in his most famous novel, *The Great Gatsby*. It was his third novel and it was published in 1925, right in the middle of the period known as The Jazz Age. It has been called the first 'modern' American novel because it describes the new society after World War I and before the Wall Street Crash¹ and the depression of the 1930s. It is a love story but it is also about the end of the American Dream.



The story is set on the East coast, in New York, but the main characters in the story, Jay Gatsby, Nick Carraway, Tom and Daisy Buchanan, and Jordan Baker, all come from the Midwest – a rural, provincial part of America.

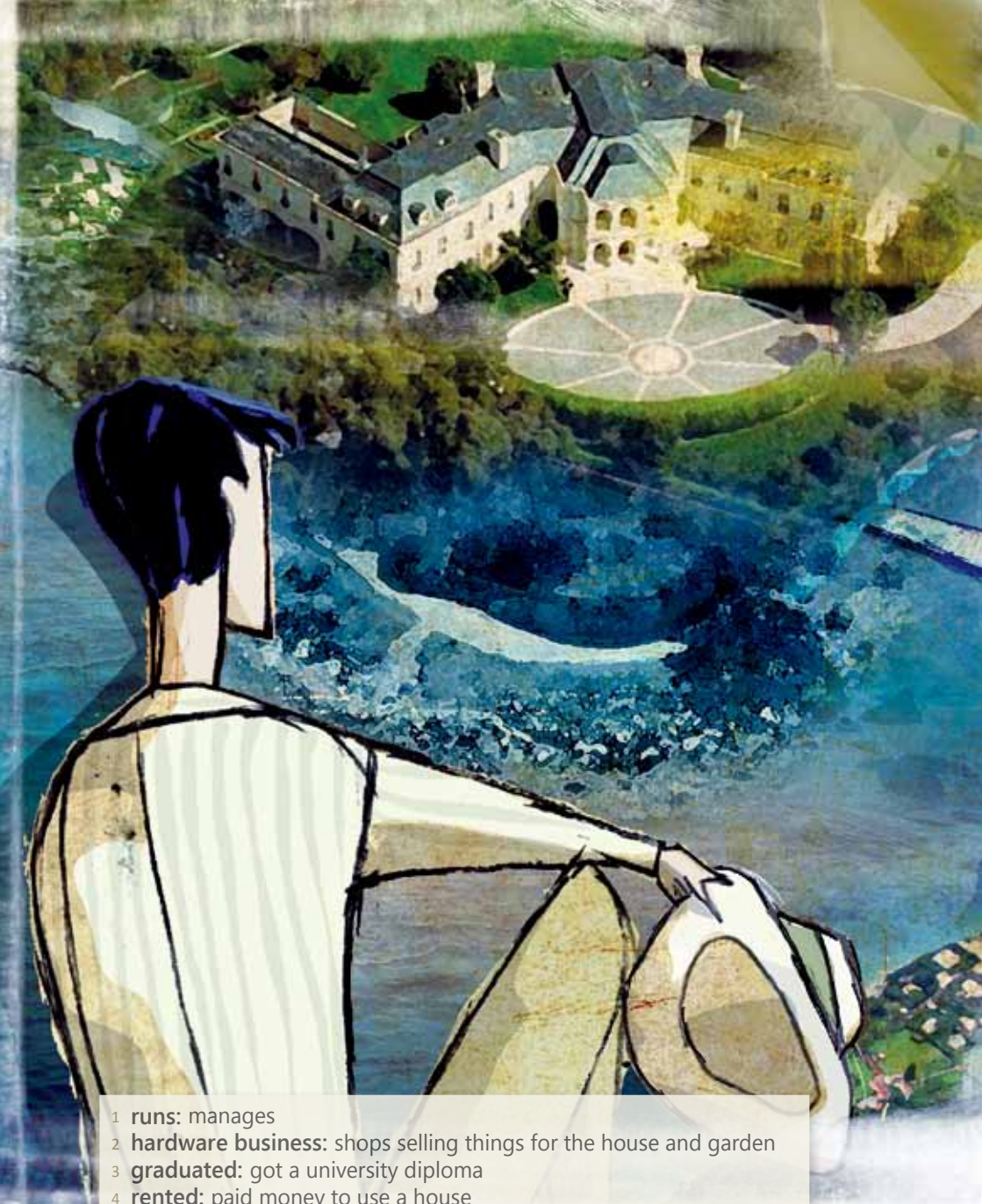
Gatsby represents the newly rich of the USA. He is a self-made man², although the story suggests that he

BEFORE READING

-  **1** Work with a partner. Look at this scene from *The Great Gatsby*. Make a list of the key words that you could use to describe it.



-  **2** Write a paragraph with your partner to describe the picture. Use the key words in your list. Compare your description with those of other pairs in the class.
-  **3** Look at the picture again. Would you like to be there? Why/why not? Explain your ideas to a partner.



- 1 runs: manages
- 2 hardware business: shops selling things for the house and garden
- 3 graduated: got a university diploma
- 4 rented: paid money to use a house
- 5 sound: long wide area of water
- 6 grand: impressive
- 7 second cousin: child of your parent's cousin
- 8 drifted: moved from place to place without a plan

CHAPTER ONE



The Carraways have been a respected family for three generations in the Midwestern city where we live. My father runs¹ a hardware business² that has been in the family since 1851.

I graduated³ from Yale University in 1915, and then fought in World War I. After that I decided to go to New York to work in the finance business. It was 1922.

I rented⁴ a small, ugly house on Long Island. It was on one of a pair of large egg-shaped pieces of land that faced Long Island Sound⁵. My house was at the end of West Egg, the less fashionable of the two 'eggs', and only 50 meters from the sea. It was between two huge houses that were rented for fifteen thousand dollars a year. The one on my right was especially grand⁶ and had 40 acres of garden. A gentleman called Gatsby lived there.

The story of the summer really begins on the evening I went to have dinner with the Buchanans. Daisy was my second cousin⁷, and I'd known Tom at university. He was an athletic type and had played in the football team at Yale. His family was extremely rich. The couple had spent a year in France, and then had drifted⁸ here and there, always mixing with rich people. This was a permanent move, Daisy said to me on the telephone, but I didn't believe her. Tom wasn't the kind of person to stay in one place for very long.



Anyway I drove to East Egg to see two people that I didn't really know very well. Their house was grander than I imagined – a red and white mansion¹ with a lawn² that stretched all the way down to the beach.

Tom had changed since I last saw him. He looked hard and arrogant now. The body under his riding clothes was muscular and powerful. It was a body that could hurt people, I thought.

We talked for a while on the porch³ and then we went inside. Two young women were sitting on a couch⁴. I didn't recognize the younger one but Daisy got up and came over to greet me. She held my hand and looked into my face.

'I'm so happy to see you,' she said.

She told me that the other girl's surname was Baker and that she was staying with them. Daisy's face was sad and lovely, with bright eyes and a passionate mouth.

'You must see the baby,' she said.

'I'd like to.'

'She's asleep. She's three years old.'

'What do you do, Nick?' asked Tom.

'I'm in finance.'

'Which bank?'

I told him.

'Never heard of it,' he remarked⁵.

'You will,' I answered. 'If you stay in the East.'

'Oh, I'll stay in the East,' he said looking at Daisy. 'I'd be a fool⁶ to live anywhere else.'

1 **mansion:** beautiful large house

2 **lawn:** area of short grass, usually in a garden

3 **porch:** covered area in front of a house

4 **couch:** sofa

5 **remarked:** said

6 **fool:** stupid person