



Scene Rubric

Version 1.0 – November 2021

Author: F. Scott Fitzgerald
Project Title: THE GREAT GATSBY
Chapter or Scene: Chapter 1 (last scene)
Length: 1,023 words
Date: December 7, 2021

In three sentences or less, what is happening in this scene?

Nick Carraway visits his cousin Daisy in East Egg (Long Island, New York) where he is introduced to the alluring love interest, Jordan Baker.

Why is this scene important? AND/OR What are you trying to say about life?

The “American Dream” is turning into a nightmare.

Fitzgerald explored the 1920s through the lens of disillusionment after World War I. He uses conflict between classes and what he perceives as the superficiality of the “upper class” as the downfall of America.

How do you want the reader to feel when they read the scene?

Disgusted. Carraway portrays Daisy and Tom Buchanan as unethical, selfish, and possibly immoral. The entire first chapter is designed to illustrate how wealth has begun to corrupt the upper class of America in the early 1920s.

What’s wrong with the protagonist’s personal world? What is the disruption?

Carraway struggles to navigate the conversation at dinner with Daisy, Tom, and Jordan. He deftly avoids sensitive topics, especially the conversation about white supremacy.

It’s important to note that Jay Gatsby is the novel’s protagonist, but he isn’t formally introduced to the reader until Chapter 3.

Who are the characters in the scene?

Character Name	Voice - How does a character sound? What words do they use? How is their speech paced? How do they modulate their voice in different situations? How do they sound different than other characters?	Emotional State - Is your character sad? Happy? Angry? Anxious? Excited?	Physical Condition - Is your character healthy or ill? What is their current state of well-being that is manifested physically?
+ Nick	Reserved	Curious	Normal
- Tom	Demanding	Slightly worried	Normal

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Daisy	Playful	Restless	Normal
Jordan	Flippant	Normal	Normal (tired)

+ protagonist

- antagonist

*Three other Socs are in this scene, but they do not speak.

What does the protagonist want (external pursuits)? Do they get it?

Want: To reconnect with his cousin Daisy and her husband Tom, a fellow member of Nick's social club at Yale. He succeeds.

Acquired: Yes/No

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
The want or external pursuit of the protagonist is unclear or undefined. Readers perceive the character's want as flat.	The want or external pursuit of the protagonist exists, but it is unclear or inexplicably inconsistent throughout the scene. Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it often defies logic.	The want or external pursuit of the protagonist is easily identified. Although it is defined, the protagonist does not always act consistently on the want. Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it is often too predictable.	The want or external pursuit of the protagonist is well-defined. Their external pursuit is obvious to the reader and understood by the other characters in the scene.

Notes:

What does the protagonist need (internal desires)? Do they get it?

Need: Nick needs to figure out where he fits in the communities on Long Island. He doesn't figure it out completely, but he is learning.

Acquired: Yes/No

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
The need or internal desire of the protagonist is unclear or undefined. Readers perceive the character's need as flat.	The need or internal desire of the protagonist exists, but it is unclear or inexplicably inconsistent throughout the scene. Readers understand the character's internal desire in the scene, but it often defies logic.	The need or internal desire of the protagonist is easily identified. Although it is defined, the protagonist does not always act consistently on the want. Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it is often too predictable.	The need or internal desire of the protagonist is well-defined. Their internal desire is obvious to the reader and understood by the other characters in the scene.

Notes:

What does the antagonist or force of antagonism want (external pursuits)? Do they get it?

Want: Tom loosely serves the role of force of antagonism in this scene, primarily because of his unconventional marriage with Daisy. He wants Nick to validate his ideas on race by talking to him about a book he's read called, "The Rise of the Colored Empires." Tom does not entirely succeed, but he's laying the groundwork.

Acquired: Yes/No

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
The want or external pursuit of the antagonist is unclear or undefined. Readers perceive the character's want as flat.	The want or external pursuit of the antagonist exists, but it is unclear or inexplicably inconsistent throughout the scene. Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it often defies logic.	The want or external pursuit of the antagonist is easily identified. Although it is defined, the antagonist does not always act consistently on the want. Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it is often too predictable.	The want or external pursuit of the antagonist is well-defined. Their external pursuit is obvious to the reader and understood by the other characters in the scene.

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Notes:

What does the antagonist or force of antagonism need (internal desires)? Do they get it?

Need: We don't know enough about Tom to identify his internal desires at this point in the story, although Daisy and Tom seem to have a need to get Nick and Jordan together romantically.

Acquired: Yes/No

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
The need or internal desire of the antagonist is unclear or undefined. Readers perceive the character's need as flat.	The need or internal desire of the antagonist exists, but it is unclear or inexplicably inconsistent throughout the scene. Readers understand the character's internal desire in the scene, but it often defies logic.	The need or internal desire of the antagonist is easily identified. Although it is defined, the antagonist does not always act consistently on the want. Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it is often too predictable.	The need or internal desire of the antagonist is well-defined. Their internal desire is obvious to the reader and understood by the other characters in the scene.

Notes:

What is the Conflict? (What single moment or circumstance pushes the protagonist out of the status quo?)

Conflict: Daisy tells Nick that Jordan is the Jordan Baker, a golf pro who has a tournament the next day. The Conflict in this scene is coincidental as Nick did nothing to directly cause it.

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
The protagonist does not face an initial Conflict. The event pushing the character out of the status quo is missing.	The initial Conflict is present but lacks the intensity to make a reader care. The protagonist can avoid or defuse the obstacle presented by the Conflict.	The initial Conflict propels the protagonist into a situation that forces a Choice. The character cannot go back to the previous state and cannot do nothing.	The initial Conflict catches the protagonist and reader by surprise. The event creates an unavoidable situation and should logically set the stage for a Choice.

Notes:

What is the Choice? (Best Bad Choice or Irreconcilable Good?)

Choice: Nick makes a Best Bad Choice, although its subtle. As Nick is leaving the dinner party, Daisy asks Nick if there is any truth to the rumor that he was engaged to a "girl out West." He can lie to Daisy which will back her off temporarily, but she'll eventually find out the truth, or he can tell the truth which will likely encourage Daisy and Tom to continue their matchmaking between him and Jordan.

Type: Best Bad Choice/Irreconcilable Good

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
The protagonist does not face a Choice. The character is completely passive or reactive, acting without agency.	The Choice is too easy for the protagonist. The stakes for all the consequences are not equally positive or negative.	The Choice posed to the protagonist is difficult. The character struggles to determine the best path forward.	The Choice becomes incredibly difficult for the protagonist. The character cannot see a way out of the predicament, and neither can the reader, which should set up a surprising but inevitable Consequence.

Notes:

What is the Consequence (What event occurs because of the protagonist's decision?)

Consequence: Nick is touched by their interest in his love life, despite being confused and disgusted by the fact that people were spreading rumors about him. Because of Jordan's mention of Gatsby at dinner, Nick is emboldened to call out to the man when he gets home. Jay Gatsby simply stretches "out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way," before going back inside of his house.

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
Because the protagonist is passive or reactive, the Consequence is dull and one that the reader anticipated, creating an unsatisfying ending to the scene.	Because the Choice is too easy for the protagonist, the Consequence is obvious and easily predicted by the reader, but there is minor satisfaction when the reader correctly guesses the outcome.	When the protagonist struggles to determine the best path forward, the Consequence is often unexpected, which delights the reader.	With an incredibly difficult Choice for the protagonist, the Consequence strikes the perfect balance of surprising but inevitable. The reader never sees the end of the scene coming, but once it does, they realize they should have seen it all along.

Notes:



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Thank you and best of luck with your story!

Sincerely,
J. Thorn