

writers

Ms. Bishop

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Such Beautiful Shirts

F. Scott Fitzgerald explores the complex and doomed relationship of Daisy Buchanan and Jay Gatsby in his novel *The Great Gatsby*. At one point, the couple reunites after years apart and Gatsby shows Daisy the wealth he has accumulated to “deserve” her love. During the grand tour of his home, he proudly shares the expensive and ostentatious wardrobe he has accumulated. Nick reports that “he took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them one by one . . . shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel . . . with stripes and scrolls and plaids in coral and apple green and lavender and faint orange with monograms of Indian blue” (98). Surprisingly, Daisy begins to sob in response. Although she says “I’ve never seen such—such beautiful shirts before” (98), her emotion and the pause in her speech clearly show her deeper and more complicated feelings. This awkward and strange moment, including Gatsby’s [ability, inability] to understand her reaction, reveals important elements of their relationship which develop throughout the novel.

While Daisy may cry upon seeing Gatsby’s shirts for a variety of reasons, the most compelling interpretation is

Given his characterization throughout the novel, Gatsby likely [understands/does not fully understand] Daisy's reaction.

This interaction between Daisy and Gatsby reveals important elements of their relationship which develop throughout the novel.

Though a small and odd moment in the course of the novel, Daisy's unusual reaction reveals a greater depth and complexity to her feelings. With Gatsby's understanding of this reaction, the moment captures a revealing snapshot of this complex and doomed relationship.