



A journey

OF THREE CLASSIC LITERARY WORKS AND
THEIR ERA'S

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1. Introduction



My name is Vicky Koster, I am attending the class 4C6 and this year my paper will take a closer look into three classic literary works that we all already may know; firstly *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare; secondly *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott and at last *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. As each of these classic works were written in a different period, I will analyse the evolution of the perception of the women in these books and their writing.

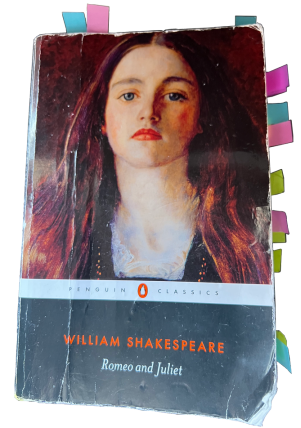
My paper aligns with my *projet personnel* for this year, which is to become an English teacher and since at least every teacher has at least once in their career talked about one of these classics in class or worked with these books. I would like to find out what made these books so great in their times. I'm going to analyse these works, their characters and the perception of women.

This essay will provide essential practice for analysing classic literary works in my future, whether in university or in my educational career as a teacher.



2. Romeo and Juliet

'Romeo and Juliet' written by William Shakespeare is by far one of his most famous works ever. Everyone knows Romeo and Juliet, they are the definition of romance and the play presents an idealised picture of love. A play about love and hate, two star-crossed lovers and a rivalry between their families. 'Romeo and Juliet' is full of passion, forbidden love, violence and death, the play is a combination of comedy and tragedy.



2.1 Presentation of the characters

As most people might already know the storyline of 'Romeo and Juliet', they must know that the family of both lovers are at feud and hold an ancient grudge toward each other.

The characters of Romeo and Juliet are divided by whom they serve or are related to which makes it easier to see who's on who's side.

The Prince of Verona, called Escalus, has two kinsmen, firstly Mercutio, who is a loyal friend to Romeo and secondly count Paris, who is a suitor of Juliet. Count Paris is being accompanied by his page.

The Montague family contains Lord Montague, the head of the family, currently at feud with the Capulets and Lady Montague, who is Montague's wife, and their son Romeo. Benvolio is the nephew of Montague and a friend of Romeo. Furthermore, there's Abram, a servant of Montague and Balthasar, another servant of Montague attending on Romeo.

The Capulet family contains Lord Capulet, head of the family, currently at feud with the Montagues and Lady Capulet, the wife of Capulet. Juliet is their daughter. Tybalt, the nephew of Lady Capulet, an unimportant character called Cousin Capulet, and an old man of the family are also mentioned. The foster mother of Juliet, called Nurse and Peter, servant of Capulet, attending on the Nurse. Sampson, Gregory, servant and serving men are also part of the Capulet household.

There are also two important friars: Friar Laurence who is a Franciscan, a member of a Christian order during the medieval times and Friar John, who also is a Franciscan. Some side characters include Members of the Watch, who are a group of watchmen who patrol the city at night. There are some other characters who are unimportant for this essay.

The play is focused on our main characters as the title already implies: Romeo and Juliet, but other characters such as the Nurse, Friar Laurence, Capulet, Mercutio and Tybalt are also important characters to the story as they help move it forward.

2.2 Summary of the play

The play begins with the prologue by the chorus summarising the story with a poem. However, the story truly begins with the serving men of the Capulet family, Sampson and Gregory entering the stage whilst chatting about laying women and fighting against the Montagues. During their stroll the serving men stumble upon Abram and a servant of the Montagues. The serving men Sampson and Gregory mock the Montague members by biting their thumb at them, which leads to a fight between the four men. Benvolio parts the men and scolds them until Tybalt enters and challenges Benvolio to a fight. Eventually the men fight, again. Other civilians start chanting and rooting for their side of the family. The head of the Capulet and Montagues as well as their Ladies enter ready to join the fight. Until the fight gets put an end when Prince Escalus enters and orders the civilians to stop, threatening banishment for the ones who disturb the streets of Verona ever again.

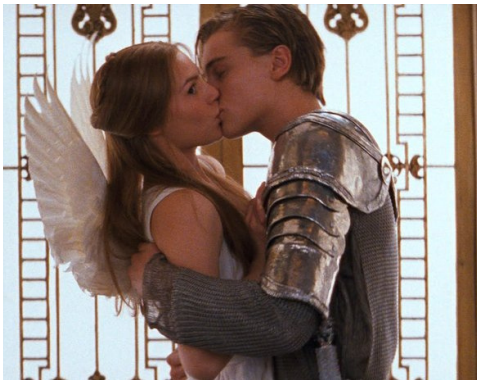
After the speech of the Prince, Romeo runs into his cousin Benvolio, who had earlier seen Romeo moping in the forest. Romeo confesses to Benvolio that he is in love with Rosaline, a woman who does not return his affections. Benvolio advises him to forget about her and to look for another woman, a more beautiful one.

Meanwhile Count Paris asks Lord Capulet for Juliet's hand in marriage. Lord Capulet approves of this arrangement, but asks Paris to wait another two years, as Juliet is still young and not even fourteen yet. Capulet does invite Paris to a feast in order for Paris and Juliet to meet each other and for Paris to win Juliet's heart. Capulet immediately orders a servant to bear the invitations and hands him a list.

Benvolio and Romeo encounter this very servant, struggling to read the list. Romeo reads the list out loud. As the servant leaves, Benvolio suggests attending the feast to find Romeo a new, better woman compared to Rosaline. Romeo agrees to go to the feast.

Romeo, Benvolio and Mercutio attend the feast and once Romeo sees Juliet from afar, he instantly falls in love with her and completely forgets about Rosaline. Meanwhile Tybalt recognises Romeo, he is enraged and prepares to attack, but Lord Capulet holds him back reminding him of the Prince's earlier warning. Eventually Romeo and Juliet start talking to each other and afterwards they kiss without knowing each other's name.

The moment they both learn the name of one another and find out that they are the enemies of their families they become very upset and distraught. Nevertheless, Romeo simply can't leave Juliet, therefore he hides in the garden and finds Juliet standing in a window. He calls out to her and they express their love for each other. Later that night Romeo comes to his friend and confessor Friar Laurence and tells him about the encounter with Juliet and his love for her. Friar Laurence agrees to marry both lovers in secret as he sees it as an opportunity to end the long-lasting feud between the Capulets and the Montagues.



Romeo and Juliet get married the next day and spend their wedding night in secret.

The next morning, Benvolio and Mercutio meet Tybalt, who was still enraged about Romeo attending Capulets feast. Tybalt challenges Romeo to a duel, Romeo arrives and does not accept and instead offers peace. Mercutio, disgusted by the peace offering fights Tybalt himself. Both fight, Romeo tries to break them apart by standing between them.

Tybalt stabs Mercutio and he dies in Romeos arms. In complete rage Romeo kills Tybalt and flees. Soon thereafter the prince declares Romeo banished forever from Verona.

Friar Laurence arranges for Romeo and Juliet to spend one last night together, before Romeo has to flee to Mantua.

In Juliet's room the Nurse enters and tells Juliet, that her husband Romeo killed Tybalt, while Juliet grieves about the loss of her cousin, she realizes that she still loves Romeo.

That night Romeo sneaks into Juliet's room, and they consummate their marriage. In the morning the lovers tell each other their goodbyes and not knowing if they'll ever see each other again.

Lord Capulet announces to Juliet that due to the recent events he decided to marry Juliet off to Count Paris immediately, more precisely in three days. Since Juliet is already married to Romeo, she becomes unsure of what to do, she is unable to tell her parents about the marriage, but she definitely does not want to marry Paris as she is married to Romeo. Juliet asks her Nurse for advice on how she should proceed next. To Juliet's disliking the Nurse counsels her to pretend as if Romeo were dead and to marry Paris, who in her opinion is a better match.

Juliet disregards her advice and goes off to Friar Laurence, together they plan to reunite both lovers in Mantua. Juliet returns home and learns that the wedding has been moved one day ahead, so she is supposed to marry Paris the following day. That night Juliet drinks a potion, which puts her into a deep sleep and makes her appear dead. In the morning the Nurse finds her seemingly dead body and the family entombs Juliet, which was part of the plan.

Romeo learns that Juliet had died, due to the fact that the message, containing the plan of the reunion of both lovers, of Friar Laurence never reached Mantua and because the bearer of the message, Friar John, got quarantined for being in contact with the plague. Romeo realizes he cannot live without Juliet and decides to kill himself, so he buys a poison and secretly returns to Verona. Arriving to Juliet's tomb, Romeo stumbles upon Paris, who is grieving Juliet. Romeo gets angry and starts attacking Paris, who falls in battle.

Romeo looks at Juliet's dead body, drinks the poison and dies. Right then Friar Laurence enters the tomb and realizes that Romeo has killed himself and in this exact moment Juliet awakens. Friar Laurence hears the Watch is coming and tries to convince Juliet to flee. Juliet refuses to leave Romeo, so Friar Laurence flees alone. Juliet kisses Romeo's poisoned lips in hopes the poison would kill her. It does not, instead she takes a dagger and stabs herself.

The guards arrive, with the Prince, the Capulets and the Montagues. Montague declares that Lady Montague has died of grief due to Romeo's exile and seeing their dead children. Lord Capulet and Lord Montague agree to end their long-lasting feud and they both set up a golden statue of both children as a sign for peace between the families.

2.3 The Analysis of the book

Shakespeare's play 'Romeo and Juliet' is often called a hymn to youth, to passion, to speed and to danger. As Romeo and Juliet's relationship is full of passion, it develops very quickly and due to their family feud it becomes a dangerous secret.

Both lovers were quite young to get married even for the 16th century Elizabethan audience, or at least Juliet, as in the play Juliet was described as almost fourteen, meaning thirteen. Meanwhile Romeo's age was never disclosed, even though it is estimated that Romeo might be between fourteen and twenty-one years old. Juliet's age was first mentioned by Lord Capulet, on the day Count Paris asked for Juliet's hand in marriage. They agreed on waiting two more years before marrying him to Juliet, making Juliet fifteen to sixteen by then. At the time this would still be young for the English audience, as the usual age of marriage at that time was between 20 and 27 years old. Nevertheless, the play was set in Verona, Italy where the common age to get married was ten years old and up and the marriages were always arranged by the families. Suggesting, that Shakespeare adapted the Italian marriage culture with the alteration of Lord Capulet's intention to marry Juliet off to Paris when she would be older.

The relationship of Romeo and Juliet is definitely very fast paced, as their relationship lasted about five days. On the first night, the lovers meet, kiss and completely fall for each other. On the second day, Romeo and Juliet get secretly married and the next day Romeo's exile begins and the same night Juliet fakes her death. The fourth day Romeo returns to Verona and kills himself.

The fifth and last day, Juliet awakens, finding the love of her life dead next to her, so she kills herself. The end. It seems overly rushed and Juliet even states that in the beginning of act two, when both lovers confess their love for each other and plan to marry the next day. There Juliet quotes *'It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden; Too like the lightning, ...'* II.2 118-119. Meaning she acknowledges this rush and would like to slow down, as Romeo is mostly the one who rushes this, he sought this speed and passion. Romeo is described as a very passionate and a well-read character, he reads a lot of poetry, especially poems about love. He copies this love, trying to live out the passion he has read about in books and poems. After the lovers kiss for the first time Juliet said, *'You kiss by th'book'* I.5 110 Underlining how Romeo is imitating what he reads about love and life and tries to live this lifestyle.

The passion of both lovers is undeniable, their love is love at first sight, followed by the thrill of breaking the rules and their tragic death. Shakespeare portrays their passion as thrilling, powerful and brutal, their passion kills them and others. A love that came unexpected and threw everything into chaos. The only question is if it is true love or wild passion? Both terms may seem similar but there is a difference. *"Love and passion are two extremely powerful emotions. Although these two emotions overlap in some cases, there is generally a clear cut difference between love and passion. Passion refers to the sexual and romantic feeling. Love is strong affection we feel for someone close to us. When we talk about a couple, passion is part of the love..."**

To answer my question, Romeo and Juliet's love consisted partly of love and mostly of passion, as love at first sight might actually work out at first but after some time people get to know each other and take it a tad slower. However, Romeo and Juliet must have loved each other a bit, as leaving everything they knew and their family to be together is certainly not only because of passion it is because they felt love for one another. Which at the times was unusual to do so. So even if the young lovers rushed into their relationship and got themselves killed by their passion, both felt love for each other.

However, their passion and love also brought violence and death. Their relationship alone killed six people, including themselves. The most interesting part is that Romeo knew that their relationship could end violently and that it was very dangerous due to the family feud, but Romeo chose to ignore that. Friar Laurence even warned Romeo. *'These violent delights have violent ends'* II.6. 9

Friar Laurence predicted the fast ending of Romeo and Juliet's lives and still supported them knowing the consequences and the probable ending of this relationship.

*(Source: <https://pediaa.com/difference-between-love-and-passion/>)

The story of Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare leaves the answer to the question of whose fault the death of both lovers is open. In every story there is someone to blame and the audience has to decide whether it was due to their family feud or Romeo and Juliet's own doing. This question has multiple answers and opinions, as a lot of people think it was the family grudge that killed the lovers, but is that really true? Who is to blame for the tragic deaths of Romeo and Juliet?

One answer to this question is Romeo, Romeo is an impulsive character, he lets his emotions control him, this impulsive trait does not only apply to his anger, but also his love. The moment he sees Juliet he completely forgets about his heartbreak that Rosaline has caused. Romeo acts out of impulse and does not think about how his actions can hurt the ones he apparently loves. Romeo shows throughout the play how he can be a danger to himself and others. Both of their love and so said predestined tragedy would've never happened if Romeo never went to that party or if Romeo did not avenge the death of Mercutio by killing Tybalt, Romeo would've never been exiled, letting Juliet and Romeo live a good life. But that did not happen.

Friar Laurence is also one of the characters one could blame the death of both lovers on. Friar Laurence warned Romeo about the tragedy that would inevitably happen. Friar Laurence knew their story would end badly and did nothing to try and convince Romeo otherwise. Nevertheless, he still married them, knowing fully that this will go badly and end in tragedy. The plan of Friar Laurence was first of all planned badly, but also had no backup plan for the possibility that things would not go as planned. Friar Laurence never truly cared enough for the lovers' well-being and never did something that would help them survive.

The family feud is also one of the reasons the young lovers died. The hatred that both fueled their family and themselves destroyed them. Family feuds were quite common at that time in Italy. However this hate and violence also influenced the way Romeo and Juliet express their love for each other throughout the play. For example, on her wedding night Juliet looks forward to her own death and sees Romeo's face in the stars and how it will make heaven better. *'And when I shall die, Take him and cut him out in little stars. And he will make the face of heaven so fine'* (III.2. 21-22)

Juliet even uses a knife to threaten to kill herself in order to threaten Friar Laurence to find a way to reunite her and Romeo. *'Unless thou tell me how to prevent it... And with this knife I'll help it presently...I long to die'* (IV. 1. 52- 66) The way these lovers express their love is passionately but also brutal, they tell each other something about their love and passion, but this expression almost every time end violently or with a violent hint. For example, with the famous balcony scene Romeo says *'Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon'* (II. 2. 4) The sun symbolizing Romeo and the moon symbolizing Rosaline as in further lines Romeo describes the moon as a she.

Meaning Romeo would like for Juliet to come to him, love him passionately exactly as he read about it and at same time, he wants Juliet to kill the love he held for Rosaline making him only love Juliet and forget about Rosaline for once and for all. The way he tells his feelings are, as stated, rather violent. *'Along with these violent expressions of love both lovers die twisted with death and intimacy, Thus with a kiss I die'* (V. 3. 120) were Romeos last words after he killed himself with a last kiss from the love of his life. The moment Juliet awakens and realizes Romeo has killed himself, she kisses him in hopes of the traces of poison on his lips killing her.

Their love story was definitely a tragedy and Romeo's desire of experiencing this passion came true and eventually killed him. The thrill of their youth and passion kill them but to quote Lord Capulet *'Well, we were born to die indicating that living fast and dying with passion is what we were supposed to do.'* (III. 4. 4) In the end that is what Romeo and Juliet did.

2.4 My opinion

'Romeo and Juliet' is probably the most famous love story ever to exist, the star-crossed lovers and their tragic fate is what made it so popular. I had my doubts with this novel as Romeo was quite pushy and pressured Juliet to do things. Romeo forgot all about Rosaline, which was questionable for as it seemed like love was just an obsession to him. Juliet too was obsessed with him and the thrill of being in love, I think both lovers never really loved each other, they loved this new passionate experience and the thrill they it gave them. If the story took place today this could come across as obsessive and toxic. It might have been the ideal love story in the past, which is what I think we need to keep in mind, as this story was written a long time ago, when society worked differently. So to modern day readers this love story seems a bit ingenuine.

Something I cannot deny is Shakespeare's brilliance, the way he mixed complete opposites together and created a masterpiece is astonishing. Love and hate; Violence and intimacy; Comedy and tragedy. All of these topics and more coexisting and working together in this play was dramatic, it made the play unique and it added a sort of spice to the story.

The most fascinating part about this play is that Shakespeare did not even come up with the story himself, he was inspired by the book of Romeus and Juliet by Arthur Brooke, published around 1562, who most likely was inspired by a real story., I admire Shakespeare for these details sprinkled all over the play. I could analyze this play for hours. To conclude, my opinion about the book, I did not enjoy the story as much as I thought, because most people acted and handled situations rather foolishly. However, the storytelling and the small hidden meanings were truly fascinating and made the play very much enjoyable. So, in the end I actually liked the play and it amazed me. Shakespeare is a true storyteller.

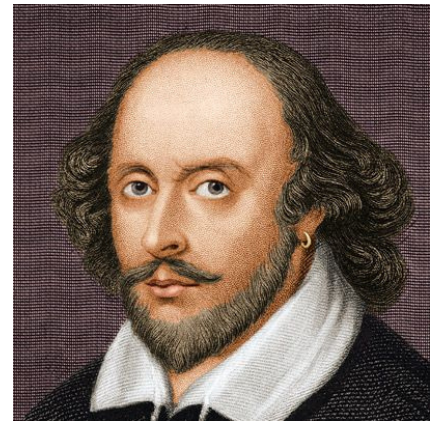
2.5 The life of William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare's exact date of birth is not recorded, but we know he was baptized on April 26, 1564, so it is believed that he was born around the 23rd of April 1564, which is officially celebrated as his birthday by scholars. Shakespeare was the third child of estimated eight children, his father John Shakespeare married Mary Arden, William's mother. John Shakespeare was originally a glovemaker and before William's birth, he had turned into a successful merchant and become an important figure in the town of Stratford. Due to this, William was able to attend the local grammar school.

On November 28, 1582, the 18-year-old William Shakespeare married the 26-year-old Anne Hathaway as Anne was pregnant and their daughter was born the 26th of May 1583. Later on, followed the birth of the twins Hamnet and Judith. Unfortunately, Hamnet died eleven years later.

Shakespeare's career began in London 1592, where his first printed works were published, two long poems. William also became one of the founding members of a company of actors called the Lord Chamberlain's Men. The Lord Chamberlain's Men soon renamed their company to King's Men because of the crowning of King James I.

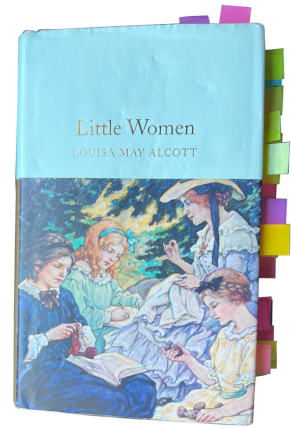
Even with Shakespeare's great success in London, he still regularly visited his native town, Stratford, which is also where he died the 23rd of April 1616 at the age of 52.



Shakespeare wrote approximately 38 plays, 154 sonnets and other poems. While there is no exactly known chronology as to when Shakespeare's work was published, it probably took place over two decades, between 1590 and 1610. Shakespeare's work is divided by four reoccurring genres, histories, comedies, tragedies, and tragicomedies. Romeo and Juliet being a tragedy with a few comedic references.

3. Little women

'Little women', the most beloved novel by Louisa M. Alcott, published 1868. The coming-of-age novel follows the March sisters Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy as they grow into well rounded women, being different and having different goals in life.



3.1 Summary of the novel

The story of 'Little women' is set in the 1860s, during the Civil War in the United States and the father of the March sisters, who we know as Mr. March, is away serving as a chaplain. A chaplain is a person who gives spiritual guidance to soldiers, they give them hope and pastoral support.

The novel starts a few days before Christmas with the sisters complaining about their poverty and how this year they are not able to afford presents. The March family used to be rich but lost their fortune as small children. Beth, the shyer and more selfless sister, reminds the others to be grateful for what they and their family have. In the end the sisters come to the conclusion to buy their mother or as they call her "Marmee" a gift together from their one-dollar allowance.

In this chapter the girls also describe what work they do to earn their money. Meg tutors rich children and Jo spends her rich Aunt March company and reads to her in hopes of one day joining Aunt March's travels to Europe. Beth helps the maid of the March family Hannah with chores around the house. Amy is the youngest and still goes to school.

The day of Christmas arrives, and the girls wake up with each a book underneath their pillow, a gift from Marmee. The sisters spend a half an hour reading before going downstairs for breakfast. Just a second before the sisters would start eating Marmee enters and asks the sisters to give up their breakfast and help the Hummels family, a poor family consisting of a mother, six children and a new-born baby. The sisters agree, they pack the food up and bring it to the Hummels. After returning from the Hummels the March sisters spend their day preparing for the play Jo wrote, which the girls will perform in the evening in front of other family friends. For dinner the March family is surprised by a big feast on the dining table, apparently the rich neighbour Mr Laurence has sent it as a Christmas gift to reward their charitable act donating their food to the poor family.

On New Year's Eve, Jo and Meg are invited to attend Megs wealthy friend Sally Gardiners party. As the girls get ready a few accidents and issues occur, for example the only gown Jo owns has a burning patch on the back and Jo's gloves are stained, as solution Meg and Jo switch out one of each glove, so each one of them have at least one acceptable glove to wear.

Furthermore, Meg's hair burns off while curling it and she is wearing uncomfortable high heels. Eventually both of the sisters are ready to go, Meg however explains to Jo how she should behave and if Meg raises her eyebrows if Jo is being either rude or not very ladylike and if Meg nods Jo is doing fine. Arriving at the party Meg joins the dancing while Jo remains awkwardly at the back of a wall to hide her burning patch on her dress. After some time, Jo finds the grandson of their neighbour Mr Laurence, Theodore Laurence, but he insists on being called Laurie because he does not like his name. Jo and Laurie spend their entire evening together, they talk and dance in the hallway where no one can see Jo's patch on her back. Soon Meg comes looking for Jo, Meg has sprained her ankle because of her tight high heels. Suddenly Hannah arrives to pick the girls up and scolds the girls, anyhow Meg cannot walk home with her injury and the sisters cannot afford a carriage, so Laurie offers his carriage as they live close to each other. After the holiday season the family regret to return to their duties and their routine.

One day Jo decides to visit the sick Laurie and tries to cheer him up. There Jo meets Mr Laurence, while Laurie is being examined by a doctor and accidentally insults a painting of Mr Laurence. The grandfather admires Jo's honesty and soon meets the whole March family. He particularly likes Beth, as she reminds him of his deceased granddaughter, this leads to Mr Laurence to gift Beth his granddaughter's piano, which Beth loves. Beth and Mr Laurence grow to have a beautiful friendship.

One day Meg and Jo are getting ready to go to the theatre with Laurie. Amy wants to join them but Jo refuses as they would have to buy a ticket for Amy at the theatre and Amy would sit alone to which Laurie, being the gentlemen as he is, he would give up his seat so Amy could sit next to her sisters. Jo simply wants to hang out with Laurie and does not want Amy there. Amy in a complete rage tells Jo she will regret this Jo just laughs this off. During the play Jo could not help but feel guilty for excluding Amy. When the girls arrive at home Jo finds her drawer with all her belongings on the floor, Amy must have done this often since Jo does not worry all too much. In the morning Jo tries to find her manuscript on which she worked several years on, she asks her sister and Amy admits that she burned it last night. Jo tries to attack Amy and goes up to the attic to cry. Amy apologizes to Jo, but she does not accept this apology and ignores Amy for the rest of the day.

The next day Jo returns home from a hard day at work and invites Laurie to go ice skating. Amy overhears that conversation and wants to join as Jo promised Amy earlier to take her ice skating the next time she would go. However, Jo still ignores Amy and already leaves while Amy is trying to find her skates.

Meanwhile Laurie tests the ice and tells Jo to stay close to the shore. Amy tries to catch up and does not hear Laurie's warning. Amy skates towards Jo when she suddenly falls through the ice. Jo and Laurie hurry to Amy and save her. They bring her back to the house and warm her up. Jo discusses with her mother how guilty she feels and how much she hates what her temper does to her. Marmee reassures Jo and tells her that she can try to control her anger since Marmee also has a big temper but learned to manage her temper. Jo from now on tries to tame her temper.



Over the next couple days, the girls have a few adventures and stories, for instance, they found the Pickwick club a family newsletter. Meg attends a party of the Moffats, the girls take a break from all their work for a few days and a few English friends of Laurie, the Vaughns, visit.

The day comes and the family receives a letter saying that Mr. March is sick. Mrs March needs to go to Washington. While Marmee is gone the girls neglect their housework all except for Beth, she takes care of everything and stops by the Hummels to take care of the sick new-born. The baby soon dies of scarlet fever and infected Beth. She gets extremely sick and is on the edge of dying, Meg and Jo already had scarlet fever and are immune to it Amy however never had it so to the extent that she needs to stay away from Beth to not get the disease as well. The family asks Aunt March to take Amy for a while.

During her stay at Aunt March's Amy starts to feel quite lonely, she befriends a French maid of Aunt March named Esther, Esther tells Amy that if she works hard Aunt March will reward her with a turquoise ring, from then on Amy tries her best and works hard. She also finds comfort in God and Christianity; she often prays and visits a chapel Esther and Amy built in one of Aunt March's spare rooms. After a few days Beth has recovered, not completely though, Amy now comes home again and even Mr March comes home again; together the family celebrates Christmas.

Over the course of the book Mr Brooke, Laurie's tutor has fallen in love with Meg and has planned to propose to her. He one day unexpectedly visits to get his umbrella, which he had forgotten. They start to talking; John confesses his feeling and that he is willing to wait for Meg. Meg gets offended by his confidence and asks John Brooke to leave her. John asks if she truly means that. Meg starts to feel bad, and they both look at each other for a long time, in this moment Aunt March enters the room and demands to know what is happening. John leaves the room, while Meg explains that John is a family friend, Aunt March already knows John and has heard about John's love to Meg. She threatens to disinherit Meg if she is to marry John, as she suspects that John only wants to marry Meg because he knows she will inherit a lot of money one day.

Meg gets offended and says that she will marry whomever she wants, she goes on to talk about how great John is, showing that she does actually care about John. Aunt March tells Meg that she will wash her hands clean off this affair and that Meg will inherit nothing. John enters the room again and is happy to see that Meg does care about him. Meg realizes that she does like him and accepts his marriage proposal. The parents and the couple have a private conversation discussing the wedding matter. They agree to wait three more years until the marriage since Meg is too young to be married now.

Together both the Laurence and the March family celebrate the engagement

Three years have passed, and a lot has changed. The civil war is over and Mr March is now home permanently. Amy has replaced Jo as Aunt March's companion. Jo writes stories for a newspaper meanwhile Beth remains sick at home. Meg has spent the years learning how to become a good housewife and started on wedding preparations while John served the army for a year and now works as a bookkeeper for Mr Laurence. Laurie is enrolled in college and spends his days drinking and flirting.

The wedding day comes, the wedding is very simple and familiar. The family has a great time all the sisters wear a silver-grey dress and flower crowns. After the wedding the couple finally move into their small cottage called "Dovecote".

Jo has been working very hard on her manuscript over the years and after winning a prize in the newspaper, she decides to get her novel published. She visits several publishing houses and one of them agrees to publish her book if she would cut one third of the book. Unsure of what to do Jo asks her family and decides to publish it. However, her book gets mixed reviews a lot of silly one. Jo regrets her decision and wishes she could publish her whole book instead of cutting most part.

After their marriage Meg gets pregnant and births twins called Demi and Daisy. Although the couple are facing struggles regarding their marriage, money and raising the children, they manage to overcome these struggles often and learn from their mistakes.

Amy receives a letter from their other Aunt Carol, asking Amy if she wants to join the Carol family trip to Europe since Aunt Carol was very pleased with Amy's behaviour, manners and skills. Jo is disappointed since she originally thought she would be invited. Amy is very excited to join and immediately leaves the next day. They visit London, Paris, Heidelberg and Bern. In the letter that Amy writes to the family, she tells of her adventures and experiences. In one of her adventures Amy reunited with one of the Vaughn boys; Fred Vaughn, together they went sailing in the moonlight. It was beautiful, and a group of students they met, serenaded her and her cousin Flo. That night, after they came home, Fred and the students serenaded them again under their windows.

It was very romantic, and Amy and Flo threw flowers down to the men. The next day Fred shows Amy the flower she threw down last night and Amy realizes that Fred is interested in her. Amy tells in her letters that she is not really interested in Fred but if he were to ask for her hand in marriage, she would accept as she said one of the sisters had to marry rich and that she would have to do this. Meanwhile at home Jo is getting the idea that Laurie has fallen in love with her, and she hates this idea. Jo also sees Beth getting more and more depressed, so Jo has decided she needs to leave her hometown for a while. She goes to New York to work as a governess for a family friend. Even abroad Jo still writes for newspapers to earn money for her family and Beth. Jo soon meets a new friend Mr. Bhaer, a poor German teacher.

In the summer Jo returns home for Laurie's graduation, and after the graduation Laurie asks Jo to speak privately. Laurie confesses his feeling for Jo to her and tells her that he has loved her since they first met. Jo refuses to listen to this, but Laurie continues to ask her if she would be his wife. She refuses and says that she does not have these romantic feelings for him in fact she feels like she will never have romantic feelings for anyone at all. Laurie returns home sad and heartbroken, and his grandfather thinks it would benefit him to leave their home for a bit. Mr. Laurence suggests that by going to Europe, Laurie would be able to travel around independently and Mr. Laurence would stay in London and Paris to take care of some business. Laurie appreciates this offer and accepts and they both leave the next day.

Months have passed and in Nice, France, Laurie tries to find Amy since he is spending Christmas in Nice. Amy invites him to the Christmas party in their hotel and he accepts. They have a great night with a lot of fun. Laurie stays for a couple more months and he often spends time with Amy. Amy however, sees how lazy Laurie has gotten and despises him for this laziness and tells him that and lectures him how he never had to do any hard work. This lecture hits Laurie deep and he goes to Paris to his grandfather to work.

At home the family realizes the severity of Beth's suffering and the fact that she is dying. Beth asks Jo to replace her as the Angel of the house and to help her family. A few days later Beth peacefully passes away in her sleep.

As soon as Laurie hears the news of Beth he hurries to Amy. After they last time they saw each other they both stayed in contact through letters and Laurie has spent this time improving on himself as well as getting over Jo. Meanwhile Fred returned and asked for Amy's hand in marriage, she however refused his proposal as she wants to marry someone she truly loves.

Laurie arrives and finds Amy grieving Beth, the family has advised her to stay in Europe as she would be too late for the funeral so she should enjoy her stay.

Laurie comforts Amy and he stays over the next few weeks with Amy, and it becomes noticeable that both of them are falling in love with each other. Laurie soon asks Amy if she would like to spend the rest of their life together, she agrees and are now engaged. They send a letter to the family to which Jo is relieved that Laurie has found a person that loves him equally.

The couple soon returns home married, as it was easier to travel without a chaperone. A chaperone was a person who would accompany a young unmarried woman to social events in order to make sure that she behaved properly. The family celebrates the marriage and return of the couple and have a nice dinner together. In this instance Mr. Bhaer comes to visit Jo, he gets introduced to the family and they all adore him. He stays for a couple weeks and often visits Jo.

They would spend a lot of time together and the last night of Mr. Bhaer's stay he confessed his feelings for Jo and asks for her hand in marriage. She accepts and they both agree on waiting a few years to save some money.

A few years have passed, and Aunt March passed away in the meantime and left the Plumfield mansion to Jo. Instead of selling it she decides to turn it into a boarding school for boys. Mr. Bhaer came back home and planned to be wed in October. The family has a picnic together and reflect on the past years. The lives of the March girls and Laurie have turned out different from what they had expected but they are happy with how their life has turned out.

3.2 The Analysis

The thing that elevates the novel 'Little women' are the characters of the book. Each character is so three dimensional and realistic it feels like they could be real. There is no heroine, and the narrator also says that. '*Jo wasn't a heroine, she was only a struggling human girl like hundreds of others.*' (Chapter 42)

This made the novel successful, it felt real to people, it wasn't a story of a hero who was perfect and had no flaws. It was a story about four sisters who had struggles who had flaws and dreams. Sisters who underwent a great character development from the first part and the second part.

The readers, who were mostly girls, could relate to the story, the characters and their problems, it was fiction but realistic fiction.

Meg, she was described as a mature and responsible person. She always tries to set a good example for her sisters. Meg is also a very loving and caring person; she however is a quite materialistic person. Meg was the one who could remember the wealth they used to have, she yearns for this luxury, Meg is jealous of all her rich friends because they have what was taken from her and so she turns out to be a materialistic person. Meg dreams to marry a prince who could give her everything she needed.

Throughout the book Meg realizes that wealth and luxury does not make someone permanently happy. She noticed that during the party of the Moffats where Meg lets the other girls dress her up to the point where she can't recognize herself. Meg also behaves more flirtatious and overall just lets loose to the point where she's not herself anymore. Afterwards Meg gets ashamed of herself and for her behavior, she even overhears someone say that she looks like a doll which makes her realize that this version of her is not who she really is.

Meg learns to appreciate the things she has and the hard work her husband puts in to make her live an comfortable life, not luxurious but comfortable. The marriage with John made her value her family and his hard work to have the least amount of financial struggles. Meg grows up to become a very understanding wife and cares less about materialistic possession but about hard work and love.

Jo is a gifted writer, she adores literature and she has a vivid imagination making her very creative. Jo is pictured as a tomboyish girl which she embraces. She often wishes to be a man and to help her father during the civil war and at home she calls herself the man of the house during the time their father was gone. *'I'm the man of the family now Papa is away..., for he told me to take special care of Mother while he was gone'* (Chapter one) Jo admires the responsibility she has been given by her father and to be equal to a man.

Jo is a loyal character, she is incredibly loyal toward her family and friends, she would do anything to protect them and take care of them. Jo has quite a few flaws, as she is clumsy, blunt and proud. One of Jo's main flaws is her temper and anger, which cause her to get aggressive. For example, when Amy burned her manuscript Jo's first reaction is to attack Amy and cause her the pain she is feeling currently. Another example is the visit of the Vaughn's Jo notices Jo Fred Vaughn cheating during a game, he denies it which makes Jo even angrier. However, Jo calms down and controls her temper. Jo's character development started the moment she promised herself to learn how to control her temper as she actively tries to improve herself. Her development goes further by the second part of the book, where Jo became more feminine, by her behaviour and manners, she also became patient and forgiving. Jo has learned to control her temper and grows up to be a patient and passionate woman.

Beth is the shy and sensible sister, she is the so called "Angel in the House". Beth is a very caring person and tries to make everyone happy and comfortable even her dolls. Beth is also a talented pianist; music is her passion and love. Beth's flaws are her shyness and avoidance, she avoids difficult situation or to leave her comfort zone. Beth is even getting homeschooled due to her shyness. She likes to stay in the background, we don't hear from her dreams and desires in life, it was sort of destined for Beth to die, the readers somehow know that Beth will die because of this lack for desires. Nonetheless she did have a bigger impact on the people surrounding her, during her sickness a lot of people dropped by to check on Beth since they did care about her and her humble personality.

There also was never a real character development, once she was able to stand up for herself and refuse to perform for Aunt March and her friends. There was nothing more to Beth's character development. During the second part Beth was grieving her life and how she had no ambitions and no dreams.

Amy, the youngest sister, is described as a spoiled girl. Amy's fatal flaw is her vanity, which results in that she constantly seeks attention and admiration. She is also obsessed with high society and desires to marry rich. Amy tries her best to work on her manners and cultivates herself trying to please the standards of the high class. Amy is ambitious, determined and kind-hearted. Amy's true passion is Art, she dreams of becoming an artist in Rome and to be successful.

At the beginning of the book, she is a selfish girl who cares for her appearance and seeks attention. Nevertheless, Amy learns to become selfless and to work hard for her dreams

During the time she lived with Aunt March, she felt neglected and learned to stop being selfish. *'Beth isn't selfish, and that's the reason everyone loves her and feels so bad at the thoughts of losing her. People wouldn't feel so bad about me if I were sick...I'd like to be loved.'* (Chapter 20) Amy was very self-aware of her flaws, and it makes her deeply insecure. She wants to be loved as she probably felt the lack of love during her stay at Aunt March. This seek for love was her motivation to become more and more selfless, which her father also notices at the Christmas dinner. *'I observed that Amy took drumsticks at dinner, ran errands for her mother all afternoon, gave Meg her place tonight, and has waited on everyone with patience and good humor...she has learned to think of other people more and less herself.'* (Chapter 22)

Amy did by the end of the first part think more of the people around her and she did a lot to help her family.

She took it her duty to marry rich to help her family's financial situation as she said, *'One of us must marry well; Meg didn't, Jo won't, Beth can't yet, so I shall.'* (Chapter 31)

Amy hates poverty and wants to help to improve their situation, she would not marry someone she hates but would marry someone she likes but doesn't love.

Amy underwent a great character development from a self-absorbed to a self-aware person since Amy knows her flaws and is willing to work on them.

Another interesting observation in the novel is the mindset of the characters. The view of right and wrong, the view of women's rights and view of rich or poor. The March family is highly modern for the 19th century society. The family values moral and happiness over wealth and luxury. After each chapter of the book, it follows with a moral lesson, whether it is about following the rules, respecting opinions or to appreciate what you have. Marmee always teaches the girls valuable lessons about life, which all the girls take with them and use these lessons in their own life later on. The girls often recognize their mistakes and try to do better next time.

The March family protects their daughters and keeps their wellbeing in mind. For example, regarding with Meg and John's marriage, the family advises the couple to wait, which in the 19th century was no normality. Mrs. and Mr. March gave Meg the freedom of still breaking the engagement off if she wanted to. The three years of waiting were probably not just to wait until Meg was older but to see if Meg would be happy with John.

The March family also deeply cares about the rights of the poor and people in need. The March sisters learn to be generous and care for people who are in need. Through their loss of their wealth the March family learns how important it is to help people as they might had no one who helped them except for Aunt March. This might have motivated Marmee to help the Hummels family as she sees what her family could have become and therefore helped them as much as they would have wanted.

Even though the March family is a bit poor, they are happier than ever and know that wealth does not bring permanent joy. It becomes visible when Jo visits Laurie for the first time and sees his big house and luxury but sees how lonely he truly is '*Laurie was sick and lonely, and feeling how rich she was in home and happiness.*' (Chapter 5) Jo becomes grateful for her tiny home full of love and happiness, she sees that in fact they are rich in happiness.

Marmee and Mr. March have always been supportive of the dreams and desires, and they encourage their daughters to go their own path and to be independent. They want the girls to be happy rather than listening to the rules of society. Their views on society and its rules might have been shaped by their sudden loss of money and have realized how corrupt the high class is with their rules and manners. The way the March family sees the world has probably changed as they faced certain problems. With each difficulty they fought Mrs. and Mr. March saw what is truly important and gave this on to their daughters.

The novel was inspired by Louisa's own life with her sisters, Jo is actually supposed to be a representation of Louisa herself. It becomes clear that the struggles Jo has with writing and publishing her stories, were actual struggles Louisa has faced. I also noticed a reference in the book, that I liked a lot, and it's when Jo wrote a story for her family with the purpose not to earn money. Her father secretly sends it to a magazine, and it got a ton of positive reviews. Jo wonders how her little story could get such admiration and her mother said '*There is truth in it, Jo, that's the secret.*' (Chapter 42) Louisa's book became a huge success due to this truth and even though we humans love to fantasize a bit we still appreciate the truth, the naked truth. We like to have relatable stories to feel that we are not alone with our difficulties and issues, we feel better about our life if others have similar problems or worse. This hidden truth made Little women by Louisa May Alcott sensational.

The story of Little women has a deeper meaning that the author wishes to show, it is certainly not just a story of women in the 19th century who end up married and bearing children. It touches off the struggles of women who lost, gained and learned in and about life. Louisa May Alcott touches the struggles of missing and grieving a person who you love dearly. The March girls are ordinary people going through struggles many other people face too, whether it is grieving their family, missing their loved ones, working hard on something to end up disappointed or to make unreversible mistakes. Since Louisa based the story of her life, it influenced the way she described the story and the personal touch made the story so sensational.

3.3 My opinion

'Little Women' was one of the greatest classics I have read. The characters felt real and relatable. All of the characters were three dimensional and had depths to them. The characters had dreams and things to work for. This made all the characters likeable in the novel there was no character who was there to dislike. Aunt March might not be so likeable for the readers but even with her strict way she was always ready to help her family. My favorite March sister was Amy because she was portrayed as the vain sister but underneath, she just wanted to be and feel loved. She wanted people to like her. This was relatable and gave her more depth in the way she reacts and behaves throughout the novel. I over all liked all characters and the moral containing in each chapter. Each chapter felt like a little, short stories with a moral, it was a nice way to build the story and it didn't feel unnecessary to the plot. Louisa May Alcott truly did create a masterpiece in my opinion. At the beginning of the book, it seemed as if it were a book about women who grew up to become housewives and that the novel would mostly focus on the girls and their way to marriage. Since in the 19th century women were expected to marry and to marry well. However, the novel; Little women was so much more than that and it is hard to comprehend how this book was written in this period, it was truly way ahead of its time. Louisa was brilliant, this book was full of life lessons more people should know about.

3.4 The life of Louisa May Alcott

Louisa May Alcott was born November 29th, 1832, in Pennsylvania. She was the second daughter of four to the philosopher Amos Bronson Alcott. Her parents were part of the transcendentalist movement, which was a philosophical movement during the 1800's that intuitive and spiritual thinking instead of scientific thinking. Their political and religious beliefs inspired Louisa as a child.



Louisa began writing at an early age and helped her family financially by selling stories. Her first poem 'Sunshine' was published, 1851, in the Peterson's Magazine. She published many more short stories and poems. She did other various jobs to help the family, such as a teacher, washing laundry, seamstress and more. In 1854 Louisa's first book 'Flower Fables' was published. Two years later Louisa's sister Elizabeth caught scarlet fever and never fully recovered, Elizabeth died two years later. Louisa later made her come to life through her character Beth in Little women.

During the time of the civil war, Louisa served as a nurse in Washington DC. There she there contracted typhoid fever and never truly recovered from it. Her experience as a nurse inspired her book 'Hospital sketches' which brought her great success to her.

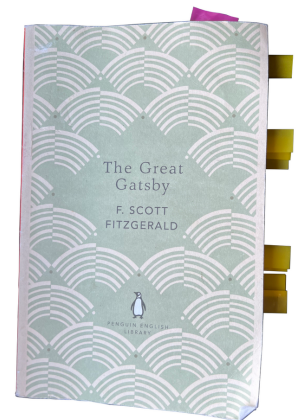
In 1868 her publisher asked her to write a book for young girls, she was hesitant as she was used to write in a rather gothic style, but she did write it, this book was called 'Little women' The novel had an instant success and made her write two sequels called 'Little men' and 'Jo's Boys' Over all did Louisa published more than thirty books and short stories.

Throughout her life did Louisa published stories promoting women's rights, she also joined the women's suffrage movement, which was a campaign in the 19th century to win passage of the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote and Louisa May Alcott was the first woman to vote in Concord Connecticut.

Louisa never married nor had any children. She moved to Boston Massachusetts and died due to her bad health the 6th of March 1888, two days after her father had passed. Louisa May Alcott was a brilliant and smart woman, her books would continue to become bestsellers throughout the world and translated into many languages.

4. The Great Gatsby

'The Great Gatsby' written by F. Scott Fitzgerald was published in 1925 and takes place in the roaring 20s, which are filled with parties, flappers and the big city lifestyle. The novel plays in Long Island near to New York city about a wealthy man named Jay Gatsby, who is famous for the huge parties he throws every so often. Gatsby is, always alone in the crowd, silently longing for the one thing he cannot have.



4.1 The summary of the book

The novel begins with our narrator and protagonist Nick Carraway, who recently moved to Long Island West Egg. A village populated by so called 'new rich', people who just made their fortune. Next to Nick's house lives the famous Jay Gatsby, who got popular for the gigantic parties he organizes every Saturday.

In the evening, Nick drives to his cousin Daisy Buchanan in East Egg, the village next to West Egg which is considerate to be more fashionable than West Egg. He visits his cousin and her husband, Tom. Nick and Tom already know each other from their days at Yale. At Daisy's house Nick meets Jordan Baker a dear friend of his cousin, who is a golf champion. During dinner, the guests have a pleasant conversation about Daisy and Tom's baby. Suddenly Tom receives a phone call which makes his wife angry and leads her to start yelling at him. It reveals itself that the caller was Tom's mistress, a mistress who is tactless enough to often call him at his house. After dinner Nick returns home and catches a glance of Mr. Gatsby in his yard.

The next day Nick and Tom go on a trip to New York as Tom wants to show Nick his mistress, Myrtle Wilson. They first stop at a garage of George Wilson, Myrtle's husband, he does a job for Tom and George believes his wife is visiting her sister every time she meets up with Tom. The couple and Nick go to an appartement, which Tom has purchased for his affair. On their way to the appartement, Myrtle wants to buy a puppy and like the gentleman Tom is, he buys her the puppy. At the appartement they meet up with a certain Mr. McKee and Catherine, Myrtle's sister. They drink a lot of whiskey and get drunk, during this sort of party, Nick hears about the glorious parties his neighbour throws.

Catherine reveals to Nick that apparently both Tom and Myrtle hate their spouses, which is not completely true. The gathering soon escalates when Myrtle taunts Tom by mentioning Daisy all of the time, he tells her to stop saying her name, however Myrtle doesn't stop and continues to yell her name until Tom breaks her nose.

Throughout the summer Nick observes a few parties of Gatsby and notices how most people are not invited, only a few people get invited including Nick. The night of the party Nick is eager to meet the host of the party as he has never seen him closely. At the party Nick encounters Jordan Baker with a group of other girls. Together they speculate what Mr Gatsby must have done to have suddenly become so rich. Nick wanders off and explores the mansion. Nick soon goes back outside and has a conversation with a guy about their time as soldiers in the first World War. This guy later reveals himself as Jay Gatsby, this surprises Nick since he thought Mr Gatsby would be older than Nick, who is about thirty years old. Mr Gatsby asks Jordan for a private chat inside. Through Jordan Nick finds out that Gatsby and Daisy were in love in 1917, Jay Gatsby was an officer during that time and had to leave for the war. Daisy's parents were not convinced of the match and did not let her say goodbye to her love. A few years later she marries Tom. Jordan tells Nick that the night before her wedding Daisy drinking heavily after receiving a letter from Gatsby. Years later, Gatsby found Daisy and only purchased the mansion to be closer to Daisy. Gatsby wanted Jordan to convince Nick to reunite the past lovers, because Gatsby is afraid that she will refuse to see him. The plan is to invite Daisy for tea at Nick's house and inviting Gatsby too without telling Daisy. Jordan and Nick start spending time together more often and develop feelings for each other.

Nick and Gatsby execute this plan well and after an awkward reunion Daisy and Gatsby rekindle their feelings and they start an affair.

More and more people are starting to become interested in the history and the rumours surrounding Jay Gatsby. Even an article is published of Gatsby's story and the origin of his wealth. Jay Gatsby used to go by James Gatz and grew up on a farm in North Dakota, he went to college in Minnesota for two weeks until he dropped out. Next summer James worked as a fisher, one day he saw a yacht owned by a Dan Cody, James rowed out to the yacht in order to warn Dan Cody about a storm coming soon. Dan took James onboard and made him his personal assistant, during this time James changed his name to Jay Gatsby. Jay travelled with Dan and fell in love with wealth and luxury. Unfortunately, Dan Cody died a few years later, he left Jay 25 000 dollars, but Dan's mistress prevented him from claiming this inheritance. Jay from then on swore to himself that he was going to get rich and become successful.

Nick hasn't visited Gatsby after the reunion of Gatsby and Daisy, so he decides to stop by. At Gatsby's house, Tom and a man called Sloane with his girlfriend arrive. Gatsby tells Tom he knows his wife, Daisy. Tom gets suspicious of that statement and dislikes that Daisy visits Gatsby alone.

Tom and Daisy attend the next party of Gatsby, none of the characters have a good time, Tom upsets Daisy by speculating how Gatsby won his fortune one of his main theories is that Gatsby was bootlegging, which is a person who makes or sells liquor or illegal goods.



Daisy states that Gatsby probably owns a drugstore chain. The couple leaves unhappy, and Gatsby seeks Nick out. He tells Nick, he wants to do everything exactly the same as last time with Daisy and wants her to leave Tom. Nick however reminds him that he cannot re-create the past. Gatsby protests and insists he can and thinks his money can accomplish this.

The following week Gatsby does not throw a party, he also fires all of his servants and hires new ones who don't gossip.

On the hottest day of summer, Nick goes to visit Daisy and finds Jordan as well. Both women are sitting in the living room and listening to Tom in the other room, who is talking to his mistress. Suddenly Gatsby shows up, Daisy then sends Tom to the other room and proceeds to declare her love for Gatsby. Tom returns with cocktails and notices the passion between the two of them and decides to break the tension by going to the city. Tom insists on taking Gatsby's yellow car with Nick and Jordan, while Daisy and Gatsby take Tom's blue car. During their car ride to the city Tom realizes his wife has an affair and that Nick and Jordan knew this. They stop at Wilson's garage where George tells Tom he found out about his wife's affair; he just doesn't know the name of the affair. Nonetheless the Wilsons plan to leave town as soon as possible and to move to the West. Tom is now losing mind as his wife and his mistress are most likely leaving him. Nick sees Myrtle from the window upstairs staring at Jordan, who she thought was Tom's wife. The group leaves the garage and go to the Plaza Hotel to cool off. The tension is building up between Tom and Gatsby. Tom accuses Gatsby of lying about attending Oxford. Gatsby reveals that he did attend Oxford however only for a few months. Tom finally calls out the affair between Daisy and Gatsby. Gatsby is enraged and tells Tom that his wife never loved him. Tom questions that statement and insists that he loves her, and she loves him. Daisy calls Tom revolting and asks him how she could love him now. He asks her if she has ever loved him and lists small but sweet gestures, he did for her and asks if in that moment she didn't love him. Daisy struggles to say that she never loved Tom and eventually she breaks down, admitting that she did love him for a while. Gatsby still insists that Daisy is leaving Tom. In this heated argument Tom reveals that Gatsby is in fact a bootlegger, Gatsby tries to deny, but can't hide the truth.

Daisy and Gatsby leave and go back to the Buchanans' house with Gatsby's yellow car. The others go back to the Wilsons' garage, and it seems as if something tragic has happened. The neighbour of the Wilsons explain that Myrtle has been ran over and killed by a yellow car, the driver, however, sped off without stopping. Apparently, she came running down the street as soon as she saw the yellow car, she probably thought it was Tom's car as she saw him and his "wife" inside the car earlier. It was believed that Gatsby was driving the car, but when the others arrive back in Long Island, Nick finds Gatsby hiding in the bushes of Daisy and Tom's house.

Gatsby explains he is hiding in case Tom gets violent with Daisy, he also says that Daisy was the one to drive the car but Gatsby is willing to take the blame for the accident. Nick then goes inside to check on Daisy, he finds the couple eating cold fried chicken and talking about their differences. Nick then leaves and heads home. The next morning Nick visits Gatsby, who had been hiding in the bushes of the Buchanans until four o'clock in the morning. Nick advises Gatsby to forget about Daisy and to leave town for a while. He refuses this idea and wants to stay close to Daisy. He proceeds to tell Nick about their history together, Gatsby was courting Daisy, which is sort of dating someone with the intention to marry them later, in Louisville 1917. Gatsby idolized her social class, wealth, and popularity. He also says that she was the first nice girl he had ever met and after sleeping with Daisy, Gatsby felt as if he was already married to her. However, Gatsby mislead Daisy, making her believe he had the financial security to keep her safe and take care of her. All he had for her was his love.

Gatsby left for the war and promised to return as soon as possible. After the war Gatsby was sent to Oxford by mistake. Meanwhile Daisy got impatient and decided to marry Tom who had the approval of her parents and was financially secure. Gatsby's story gets interrupted by a servant asking Gatsby if he should drain the pool as autumn was soon coming and leaves would fall, potentially clogging the drain. He tells the servant to do this the following day, because he would like to take a swim since he did not use the pool all summer. Nick leaves for work is however too distracted to work but also refuses to go on a date with Jordan, during the whole Daisy and Gatsby drama, Jordan and Nick are having difficulties in their relationship, and they soon break up.

In the meantime, we see through George Wilson's view and his grief of the death of Myrtle. George stayed up all night to talk to his neighbour about Myrtle, he tells him that he had confronted Myrtle about her affair and told her that she could not hide her sin in the eyes of god. The morning after the accident George is convinced that the driver of the car behind the accident is also his deceased wife's lover. He believes God would want him to take revenge and tracks down the car. George goes looking for Tom, he must have know the driver since he had driven it before the accident but used a different car after the accident. He ends up at Gatsby's house where George finds Gatsby lying on an air mattress in the pool. He shoots Gatsby, killing him instantly and then George shoots himself.

After Gatsby's death, his mansion is swarmed by photographers, reporters and policemen, Nick is in charge of the funeral. He tries to contact a few friends of Gatsby who all do not show up, one even asked if Nick could send him his shoes he left. He also tries to visit Daisy and check on her only to find out that the Buchanans have moved away and left no address. Nick deals with Gatsby's death all alone and finds out more about his life. It is confirmed that Gatsby made his money illegally.

One day Mr Gatz, Gatsby's father arrives, he talks about Gatsby as a child. Who already idolized the rich lifestyle and the desire to become rich as a young boy.

The funeral takes place on a terrible rainy day the only people attending are Nick, Mr Gatz and a man Nick has met during one of Gatsby's parties. It gets clear that Gatsby only had one friend, Nick. The anonymous man from the party, called Owl eye, even says how horrible it is that so many people came for Gatsby's parties but none for his funeral.

He meets Tom again and after some chatting Tom reveals, that he told George the car belonged to Gatsby. Nick comes to the realization that Daisy and Tom are uncaring people and know that their money would protect them from any consequences. Nick has had enough of this lifestyle and moves back to the Midwest which is his true home.

4.2 Analysis of the book

The novel 'The Great Gatsby' talks about the American dream: a dream that everyone can achieve great success through hard work regardless of what class they were born in. Gatsby represents that achievement; he achieved his dream of wealth and high society. The novel touches on the obsession with wealth and the illusions it creates, which is often not real.

Already at a young age, Gatsby had dreamed of becoming successful, he even had a schedule he stuck to every day. He believed with hard work he could climb up the social ladder and therefore win Daisy back. Gatsby's only resolution was to get rich, the desire to come back for Daisy only strengthened this ambition.

He wanted to achieve his dream so badly, he turned to illegal business with a gambler Meyer Wolfshiem. Due to his recent fortune Gatsby is considered new money, people who have earned their wealth instead of inheriting it, unlike old money, which consist of families who have inherited their fortune. These types of money come with stereotypes and characteristics, one main difference we also see in the book, is the spending habit of people.

Old money families are known for their smart spending and saving, they save most of their fortune for the next generation. Old money people also do not talk about their wealth and do not show their fortune. Meanwhile new money families spend their money on expensive things to show their wealth.

Gatsby visibly represents new money, and the stereotypes align with how he handles his money, he shows off his fortune to everyone by throwing these lavish parties. He wants to impress people with the fortune he earned.

Daisy and Tom come from old money and also show the characteristics of old money families. They are educated people and wealthy; people know the Buchanans have a lot of money it doesn't get mentioned as much as Gatsby's fortune.

Just one time by Nick, Tom and Daisy- *they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made...* (Chapter 9)

Nick describes how Tom and Daisy used their money to protect themselves and let others clean their mess up. This quote alternately shows the downside of old money stereotypes, as old money families are described as arrogant and often looking down on people. Tom often looks down on George Wilson and Gatsby and flat out insults them. I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. (Chapter 7) Tom indicates with this statement that no matter how much money Gatsby makes, he will never be worthy of Daisy.

Gatsby on the other hand may seem like an arrogant character by showing off his wealth, but behind all of that is he an innocent and hopeful young person. He is also naïve, as it is shown when Tom and his friend, Mr Sloane with his girlfriend visited Gatsby, Jay was invited to join dinner only to be polite. Gatsby was actually not welcome at all but his naïve personality did not catch that. Gatsby is pictured as an arrogant successful businessman who seems like could belong to a stereotypical old money family. The more the story develops we can see he is a restless, innocent, and dreaming child. This sort of fits his new money personality, his restlessness shows his constant need of working or doing something and he is a good-hearted man with great loyalty, he hid in the bushes in case Tom would get violent after their fight.



Gatsby symbolizes the contrast between old and new money. This contrast between these kinds of rich is also shown by the location in which Gatsby and the Buchanans live, West Egg is considered a less fashionable place where the people who have recently earned their wealth live. Meanwhile East Egg the more fashionable village is, and the citizens come from old money. During the 1920s a lot of people from generational

wealth moved to the Northeast, New York, Virginia, and New England were in the early 20th century the states from where the wealthiest people came from. People who were not born wealthy often moved to the West to get rich there, whether it was to find a workplace, land, or gold during the goldrush. In our modern world it is also visible, in New York, Broadway is known for its timeless theatre flair and the good classical musical for young and old. On the West coast Hollywood is famous for its new movies directed towards the younger audience with fast aging filmography and by investing in better CGI or quality film material to make more money and become more famous.

Broadway and Hollywood, a timeless theatre experience and an improving movie experience. The West is modern and new while the East is more traditional and classier.

This is a subtle detail that made the readers and characters question how Gatsby gained his wealth, because the beauty of the American dream is that it is achievable for certain people, people who play dirty and people are lucky that their hard work paid out. Which is what Gatsby did, he sold illegal goods, and this got him his fortune. Gatsby is the representation of what corrupt people, who don't care about the laws, get from our society instead of hard working and good-hearted people.

Nick Carraway is described as a quiet and a non-judgmental person; he was raised to never judge other without knowing the whole story. *'Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages you've had'* (Chapter 1) From the beginning on, readers believe Nick is the perfect narrator for the story of Jay Gatsby, as he will not state a clear opinion on the whole story. Nick however is a sharp and judgmental, he is an honest man and is not afraid to say that Nick judges at least each character, but he doesn't seem to realize that he was influenced by the world he is describing until the end of the novel.

Nick is the protagonist, but at the same time is he a side character. This is not Nick's story; it is the story of Gatsby and his love Daisy. Nick is in fact just the key element for Daisy and Gatsby to reunite, he has no further purpose in the book. Nick was the observant; he watched the story unfold the moment Daisy and Gatsby found each other again. Nick was an object to Gatsby's advantage and Gatsby knew that. Gatsby knew the only value he had in Nick was his connection to Daisy. Gatsby's and Nick's friendship was solely based on his obsession with Daisy.

The one question left is, was Nick and Gatsby's friendship and the fact that Nick moved next to the old lover of his cousin who wanted to reunite with his old love since years coincidence? Was it coincidence that the moment Nick moved that suddenly Gatsby's plan to meet Daisy again worked? Was all of this a coincidence?

'It was a strange coincidence', I said

'But it wasn't a coincidence at all'

...'Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay' (Chapter 4)

It is no secret that Gatsby was obsessed with Daisy and this obsession killed him eventually. Gatsby was obsessed with the past, with the past he and Daisy had, he was in love with the Daisy he met in 1917, not with the current version of Daisy. Jay wanted to recreate the past and make up for the time he wasn't there. *'Can't repeat the past?...Why of course you can!... I'm going to fix everything just the way it was before.'* (Chapter 6) He wanted to continue where Daisy and Gatsby stopped before, which of course he couldn't. Daisy grew up and changed and is not the same person she was in the old days. This is what Gatsby didn't want to accept and what destroyed him. Gatsby couldn't forgive himself for letting Daisy marry another man and wanted to correct that. He believed Daisy would throw away her marriage just because he came back, and he didn't consider the child Daisy and Tom had. He wanted to create an alternative past, the what could've been if...

'He talked a lot about the past, and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly...' (Chapter 6) It was not just an obsession with Daisy but also with the past and the regret he felt for not being there for Daisy. Gatsby lived in the past. His life's purpose was to end up with Daisy and with this wish unfulfilled he died. The Great Gatsby is a reflection of what an obsession can do to you and what can happen if you let your desire take control of your life. Gatsby's longing for Daisy took full control of his life leaving no room for him to make friends or have a good relationship with his family. He lived for Daisy and died for her.

4.3 My opinion

'The Great Gatsby' in my opinion was a fine book, the story is very interesting and original. The writing was quite simple, so it is easy to read for intermediate English speakers. The thing that made the book so great to me was the many themes the story touched. I could analyse this book for hours beginning with the importance of the West and the East, how Gatsby was obsessed with the past and full of regret for how his life has turned out, how Tom and George have the same fate and why that is so, and so much more. The book is full of hidden details that you only see when you either read the novel again or if you read other analyses. The way Fitzgerald makes something so ordinary such as an advertisement for an eye doctor on a billboard symbolize the eyes of God, is fascinating. The tiny details that reappear frequently are the ones who make a big impact of how we view and perceive the book.

Fitzgerald may have written an average book with an average story but every detail is placed so well which makes it amazing. I enjoyed the novel, it was to be honest an simple book to me, it wasn't great but also not bad. The details, the themes and symbols were the most interesting part of the book and I think these details and room for interpretation made the book so popular.

This novel showed me that I can't change the past and also that sometimes the yearning for something or someone can lead to self-destruction and death. The Great Gatsby sets this example to the world and taught us the valuable lesson of letting go.

4.4 The life of F. Scott Fitzgerald

Francis Scott Fitzgerald was born on September 24th in 1896 in Minnesota. He was the eldest child to Edward Fitzgerald and Molly McQuillan. In his young years Fitzgerald attended the St. Paul Academy where he published his first stories in the school newsletter. Afterwards Fitzgerald attended Princeton in 1911, studying literature. He there joined the theatre group called "Triangle club" and spend most of his time writing plays and stories instead of studying. Fitzgerald soon dropped out of college in 1917 and joined the army, where he became second lieutenant. After the war Fitzgerald was stationed to Camp



Sheridan in Alabama and met Zelda Sayre and fell in love. In 1919 Fitzgerald moved to New York to work for an advertisement business, he by then was engaged to Zelda but this engagement soon was broken off due to the lack of stable income for the couple. A year later Fitzgerald published his first novel called "This side of paradise" this book made Fitzgerald very successful.

In the same year Fitzgerald and Zelda Sayre got married and had a daughter named Frances Scott "Scottie". The couple gained extreme success and became a famous couple, living their best life in New York. In 1920 Fitzgerald's second novel "The Beautiful and the Damned" was published. The family moved to France, Riviera, a couple years later. In France, Fitzgerald met Ernest Hemmingway and both authors became good friends. During his stay Fitzgerald developed a drinking problem and became an alcoholic. In 1925 Fitzgerald published his most famous work "The Great Gatsby" Five years later Zelda had a nervous breakdown and was put in a clinic in Switzerland in order to pay for the treatment of his wife, Fitzgerald published a few short stories. 1931 the family returned to the United States. In spring 1932 Zelda relapsed into a second breakdown, she got turned in the John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore and stayed as a resident for the rest of her life. Meanwhile Fitzgerald moved to a house in Baltimore and finished his fourth novel "Tender is the Night". He published this book in 1934 and it was a huge failure. Due to his drinking problems Fitzgerald's success decreased and moved to Los Angeles in 1937. At the west coast he met his new girlfriend, Sheila Graham, a movie columnist. Fitzgerald from then on worked as a freelance author and published a few short stories and scripts. The relationship of Graham and Fitzgerald lasted until his death, Fitzgerald died of a heart attack the 21st December 1940 in Grahams appartement. He was working on his last novel "The last Tycoon" he had finished about a third of the book, the novel was however published in 1941.

His wife Zelda died in 1948 in a fire of the hospital she was staying.

Nonetheless was Fitzgerald's popularity revived in the 1950's, he was by then considered one of America's enduring writers, with his bestselling novel "The Great Gatsby".

5. The perception of women

During the time of these books' the equality between men and women were not as present as in today's society. Women were viewed as fragile beings with the sole purpose of marrying well and bearing sons. The books discussed, show how the author viewed women by their acts, their behaviour, and their personality.

5.1 Romeo and Juliet by Shakespeare

'Romeo and Juliet' is the oldest book in this collection of novels and is therefore expected to have the most old-fashioned view of women, women who are shown with no opinion, no personality and shown with the sole purpose to become a housewife and a mother. To check if these stereotypes are true the Bechdel test was invented in 1985. The Bechdel test was officialised by the cartoonist Alison Bechdel with her comic strip named 'The rule'. The Bechdel test consists of three basic requirements for equal representation of women in fiction. The first rule is that in the story there must be at least two women, secondly the characters need to talk to each other at least once and lastly, they have to talk about something besides men. These are the basic rules for the equal representation of women, of course in modern days there has to be done a lot more than the Bechdel test. However, for Romeo and Juliet this test is enough proof to see how women were perceived then.

In my view, half of the women in the play are generic characters, they do not bring much to the story except for Juliet and the Nurse. Lady Capulet and Lady Montague were replaceable and not important for the story, they were simply there. Lady Capulet and Lady Montague represent how women were supposed to be in the 16th century, quiet, have an opinion that the husband can control, be able to bear children and to never outshine the husband. Both Ladies were exactly what society wanted of women during their time. The only female character with any depth was Juliet, the Nurse was just a witty advisor only a servant of the Capulets, a servant that was a better parent to Juliet than Lady Capulet. The Nurse was Juliet's mother and that was her purpose of the play, the Nurse was the true mother of the play. Juliet however was a little bit naïve but also a girl filled with love and passion and with rage towards her parents. Juliet at first seemed like a basic girl, with no opinion, dreams or desires, but the more one thinks about everything that happens in the play, it becomes clear Juliet is still naïve, but she is angry at her life, which is why she acts on her impulse. Shakespeare for his time might have been modern and advanced, but for our century his representation of women is unfulfilled, the female characters seem on first look just flat and boring.

5.2 Little women by Louisa M. Alcott

'Little women', a novel of women, written by a woman, novel shows how differently men and women see women and how women portray them and how men do. The Bechdel test will also show if a female author can too fail this test. 'Little Women' passes the first part of the test, as there are give or take 16 female characters of about 24 characters. These women talk to each other and often about something other than men, for example their wealth, Beth's sickness etc.

So Little women passes the Bechdel test fully, this is no surprise as Louisa was an aspiring feminist and fought for women rights, she passed the Bechdel test. Nonetheless is Little women for our modern day society not entirely perfect, because there are still a few things that bother me personally, about how the women lived and how the March girls ended up. The story seems to be about sisters who grow up to become housewives, then while reading, the author builds up the hope of something different than four housewives just to end the novel with three sisters married and becoming housewives. Of course, this is overdramatically put, but still true. Meg plans to marry rich and not be a hard-working housewife, for her character development it is fine that she marries and ends up as a housewife as she married for love and learns to appreciate working. Amy doesn't really plan to marry, she wants to become a successful painter and simply wants to live a cosy life. Then again it is fine that she marries as Amy realizes that a career as a painter is not possible and she sort of felt obliged to marry, that she marries someone whom she loves is luck. Jo however, her marriage felt forced, Jo often says she feels that she will become a single maid and has no intention of marrying. Her marriage to Mr Bhaer felt forced and unnatural and makes the novel end with no diversity between the sisters. All of the girls have the same fate, except for Beth, they all married and ended up with children, it is a shame that all these different women with different opinions and dreams end up the same.

5.3 The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

'The Great Gatsby', the closest book to our century of the collection, however written by a man, it is unclear whether this book would be the middle ground of the collection or due to the timeline has better female representation. As previously used, the Bechdel test is there to clear these questions up. Beginning with the first rule, there are about three women in the novel, Daisy Buchanan, Jordan Baker and Myrtle Wilson. All of these women talked to each other, mostly about men, however Jordan and Daisy one time talked about the heat and the weather. In conclusion, did The Great Gatsby barely pass the Bechdel test, nonetheless is mostly what the female characters talk about was Gatsby or Tom. Jordan and Daisy's conversation were not often mentioned or shown, they were mostly shown sitting in the salon wearing white dresses and simply existing. The relationships between the women and men in the novel are how stereotypical 1920s couple are depicted, a husband and a wife, the husband has an affair with another woman who is the life of the party and makes the man feel young and fresh again, meanwhile the wife sits at home alone. The relationship of Daisy and Tom is toxic, as Tom feels he is the man meaning he is in power of his wife and girlfriend. He feels as if he can do no wrong by having an affair and sleeping with another woman, but as soon as Daisy has an affair, it's wrong and ruins their marriage. The power the men hold over women even choosing what and when something is right or wrong.

While the female characters all had different personalities and opinions they depended on a man, Daisy portrayed as the Damsel in distress, who is stuck with her cheating husband and needs a man to make a decision in her life. Jordan, the careless athlete, she seemed independent at the beginning, however she so clearly looked for a careful man to protect her from herself, she wanted a man she could depend on. *'You said a bad driver was only safe until she met another bad driver? Well, I met another bad driver didn't I?'* (Chapter 9)

Myrtle too depended on a man, she hated her husband but couldn't leave him, he was everything she had and Tom was the big strong man that would save her from her miserable marriage. The female characters were nothing other than women who needed to be saved by men. That is all they were, the most important thing a female character did for the plot of the story was Daisy choosing whether to leave Tom or stay with Tom. Something else a woman did to bring the plot further was Myrtle and all she needed to do is die. Other than that the female characters had no other use than to be there. And that shows again how society viewed women in the past and in the point of view of men, women with no bigger worries than which man to choose or which white dress to wear. While the female characters had personalities, they still didn't feel three dimensional, the women didn't have any dreams, opinions or desires, they felt flat and it's impressive to write women with personalities and flaws, but still make them feel flat and shallow.

6. Conclusion

To start off my conclusion, a reminder that this whole analysis is from my point of view and how I perceived the novel and female characters. The beauty of literature and interpretation is that everyone can have their own view and opinion of it, and this is mine.

I wanted to include more of my thoughts and interpretations, as there was so much more to discuss in the books. I truly enjoyed reading and analysing the novels and after rereading or discussing the novel I often had changed my perspective and wanted to include this new point of view. That is what makes these books so great and famous, it stays in mind, especially if you write a paper about them. Learning how to sort my thoughts in an analysis helped me a lot and made me try to be more organized in my mind. I also now understand why we still discuss books that are centuries old, they might be old, but these books give us insight how the world was before our generation came, it showed what people were interested in years ago, these books have history behind it and you can see what has changed in time and how people thought.

Especially with the perception of women, these novels show how they were perceived and with the way men and women saw women and their rights. It is fascinating how in the novels written by men, only showed little progress in feminism.

These novels are truly great books and should be a must read, particularly in class as these books are not only linguistically very helpful but also give cultural and historical knowledge.

I am happy I did this work it gave me a lot of knowledge and insights of the past.

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