The Great Gatsby

Chapter 5: Characterization and Symbols
Characterization: the representation of persons in a narrative work. This may include direct methods like the attribution of qualities in description or commentary, and indirect methods inviting inference from the reader. (Baldick 2008)

Based on what you have read so far, would your perceptions of any characters, since Chapter 1 and 2, have changed drastically?
In this chapter, Nick agrees to invite Daisy over to his house for tea in order to arrange a meeting between Gatsby and Daisy. This becomes a pivotal point in the novel as Gatsby and Daisy become reacquainted with each other. We are able to learn more about Gatsby and Daisy through their interaction.
Chapter 5: Characterization of Gatsby

- Gatsby’s main motivation in this chapter is to have the perfect reunion (and re-introduction) with Daisy.
- Besides his relationship with Nick, we have not seen the ‘genuine’ side of Gatsby.
- This chapter gives readers the evidence to infer that Gatsby uses his wealth to bring himself closer to Daisy, and that he is really more simple than he leads on.
Chapter 5: Characterization of Gatsby

At two in the morning, Nick notices Gatsby’s house is still brightly lit, and despite Nick mentioning he is tired, Gatsby suggests they, “...go to Coney Island old sport. In my car.”

Gatsby also suggests, “...[they] take a plunge in the swimming pool?”

Why would this late night exchange be important for Gatsby’s character development?
Chapter 5: Characterization of Gatsby

Gatsby also goes to great lengths to make himself and Nick’s place presentable, “The flowers were unnecessary, for at two o’clock a greenhouse arrived from Gatsby’s, with innumerable receptacles to contain in it. An hour late the front door opened nervously, and Gatsby, in a white flannel suit, silver shirt and gold coloured tie, hurried in.”

Gatsby also makes sure his mansion is filled with anything imaginable (books, treasures, a piano player).

What does this preparation say about his character?
Chapter 5: Characterization of Gatsby

Gatsby the War Hero meets his match:

“‘Is everything alright?’ he asked immediately.”

“Gatsby looked with vacant eyes through a copy of Clay’s Economics…”

“You’re acting like a little boy,’ I broke out impatiently. ‘Not only that, but you’re rude. Daisy’s sitting in there all alone”

“‘ I want [Nick] and Daisy to come over to my house’, he said, ‘I want to show you around.”
Chapter 5: Characterization of Gatsby

Why might these quotes characterize Gatsby in a concerning way? What might this foreshadow in the rest of the story?

“‘Five years next November.’ The automatic quality of Gatsby’s answer set us all back at least another minute.”

“..I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes.”

“You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock.”

“Daisy tumbled short of his dreams - not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion.”
Chapter 5: Characterization of Daisy

Daisy has thought about her relationship with Gatsby over the years (see Chapter 1 for her reaction to his names) but probably not nearly to the extent that Jay has. In chapter 5, many inferences can be made about Daisy’s personality and values.
“‘Are you in love with me,’ she said low in my ear, ‘or why did I have to come alone?’”

Is Daisy being serious when she asks this question?

“‘We haven’t met for many years,’ said Daisy, her voice as matter-of-fact as it could ever be.”

How does this ‘calculation’ of lost time differ from Jay’s?
“‘That huge place there?’ she cried pointing. ‘Do you like it?’ ‘I love it, but I don’t see how you live there all alone’”

“‘They’re such beautiful shirts,’ she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. ‘It makes me sad because I’ve never seen such - such beautiful shirts before.’”

What does Gatsby’s attempt to impress Daisy with his riches reveal about Daisy’s character to the reader?
Chapter 5: Characterization of Daisy

“...he was consumed with wonder at her presence.”

“His hand took hold of hers, and as she said something low in his ear, he turned towards her with a rush of emotion. I think that voice held him most, with its fluctuating, feverish warmth, because it couldn’t be over-dreamed - that voice was a deathless song.”

While Nick thinks Jay has really set the bar high for Daisy, what quality does Daisy have that explains why Jay is attracted to her?
Chapter 5: Symbols

In pairs, brainstorm what the following symbols could mean:

The Defunct clock at Nick’s house

Daisy’s Name

The English Shirts

The Weather

The Green Light

Gatsby’s Room:
Chapter 5: Symbols

**The English Shirts:** these are a symbol of how Gatsby has changed from an honest war hero to a rich socialite (much to Daisy’s dismay).

**The Weather:** the rain ceases once Gatsby and Daisy become more comfortable with each other, thus the sun represents their renewed love.

**The Green Light:** symbolised a hope or dream of a new life with Daisy that Gatsby thought was distant, but is now realized since he is reunited with Daisy (“colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever”).

**Gatsby’s Room:** described as the simplest room in the house, thus representing how Gatsby is really a simple man at heart and is using his wealth in an ultimate goal to have Daisy back in his life.
Gatsby: Ultimate Stalker or True Hopeless Romantic?