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Never-Lasting Love

In *The Great Gatsby*, a major theme that is represented throughout the book is love. Relationships play a key role in the book, because all of the main characters fall in love as the story progresses. However, none of the relationships in the book involved everlasting love because it doesn't exist. Regardless of whether the relationships last or not, the love between the two people dies or weakens because they either fall out of love, need a different person to fulfill their needs, or have problems with their lover. In the relationships that take place in *The Great Gatsby*, some characters fall out of love while others aren't satisfied with their lover and direct their attention towards someone new rather than who they were originally with. That is why although relationships can last, the strong love between the two individuals from the start tends to weaken or die down.

When two people are in love, they end up needing someone else rather than just staying with their one lover. In *The Great Gatsby*, Daisy wasn't satisfied with the way things were when Gatsby was away. Daisy's love for him was weak, as shown in when she went on "half a dozen dates with half a dozen men" (151) while he was still gone because she was unable to remain faithful to Gatsby in his absence, and instead continued to long for a relationship while she was already in one. This longing is what led her to marry Tom. Rather than just staying with Gatsby, she needed someone else and found satisfaction through a new lover. Many married couples in

The Great Gatsby also had affairs behind the backs of their significant others. Tom Buchanan and Myrtle Wilson were in a relationship, but according to Myrtle's sister Catherine, "Neither of them can stand the person they're married to." (33). Tom was married to Daisy and Myrtle was married to George Wilson (24-26). Although they were in lasting relationships, their love for their spouses was dead. They already had spouses that they could direct their love towards, but they still were not satisfied and had relationships with other people. This affair between Tom and Myrtle was unknown to Daisy and Wilson. But Daisy had an affair too, while she was married to Tom. She had a hidden relationship with Gatsby that Tom initially did not know about. These characters all were unloyal to their spouses, which damaged their love for each other.

Problems and arguments in relationships can also cause love to weaken. In *The Great Gatsby*, many problems occurred in some of the relationships due to unloyalty. Myrtle's affair with Tom damaged her relationship with Wilson. When Wilson had found out that she "had some sort of life apart from him in another world." (124), he became more possessive and watchful towards her. This shows how weak their love had become, because this problem had caused Wilson to lose his trust in her. According to Melanie Greenberg, Ph.D at Psychology Today, "Trust is the soil in which healthy relationships are grounded and the foundation for their growth. Breaking trust is like putting a big crack in that soil. The relationship may still survive but it will forever have a broken part.". Without trust, Wilson and Myrtle's relationship was damaged. Daisy's affair with Gatsby also caused damage to her relationship. When Tom found out about Daisy's affair with Gatsby, he lashed out in anger. Greenberg also states that anger is one of the top four causes of failure in relationships. Although Daisy and Tom's relationship did

not fail, their love certainly did, as shown by how they both had affairs. After the argument, as Nick passed by them while they ate dinner together, he noticed that “They weren’t happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale” (145). The argument’s damage on their relationship was seen in the tension between them as they ate together, shown by the untouched food, and also through their unhappiness with each other.

Whether or not cheating is involved in a relationship, it can still come to an end. Two people who used to be in love can fall out of love, thus putting an end to their relationship. People who are dating can break up, or if they are married they can divorce their spouse. According to the National Center of Health Statistics, there were 170,505 divorces in the 1920s, which was the time period of *The Great Gatsby*. During that time period, there was a divorce rate of 1.6 people per thousand. That many people ended their marriages with their spouses. In *The Great Gatsby*, Nick and Jordan Baker had a relationship that came to an end. Neither of them cheated on each other, but instead they were just no longer in love. When Nick was calling her during the time that was nearing the end of their relationship, he said “I don’t know which of us hung up with a sharp click, but I know I didn’t care.” (155). He no longer cared about ending the conversations that he had with the girl he loved. They stopped talking after that, but by then they had already fallen out of love. When he met with Jordan again, she had said to him “I don’t give a damn about you now,” (177) which shows that she really did not love him anymore. Nothing significant really happened between them, but instead their love just stopped.

Regardless of whether or not a relationship ends, the love between two individuals tends to die. Daisy and Tom’s relationship was an example of dead love in a living relationship. Although their relationship did not end, they had affairs or just in general were not satisfied with

their one lover. Nick and Jordan on the other hand ended their relationship once they no longer had love for each other. These relationships in *The Great Gatsby* are examples of how love can end or die out. They represent that strong love between two people does not last.

Works Cited

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