The Great Gatsby – Chapter 5: Key Quotations and Symbols

**the weather:** What is the weather mostly during this chapter? What does water often symbolize?

How could this symbolism of water apply to Gatsby? How does the weather change? What might the

changing weather symbolize?

**Daisy**: Nick describes Daisy with, “Under the dripping bare lilac trees a large open car was coming up the

drive. It stopped. Daisy’s face, tipped sideways beneath a three-cornered lavender hat, looked out at

me with a bright ecstatic smile….A damp streak of hair lay like a dash of blue paint across her cheek

and her hand was wet with glistening drops as I took it to help her from the car” (85/90).

Analyze the style in this passage. Daisy is supposed to appear to be a flower in this passage. Discuss how the colors, the hat her hair, etc. create this effect. Why is a flower an appropriate image for Daisy?

**time references:** Look for references to hour, day, year, month, etc. including the song lyrics. What

are some of these references? Copy with context two or three examples. Why does Fitzgerald include

so many time details in this chapter in particular?

**Repetition of “too late”:** Fitzgerald repeats this phrase throughout the chapter in seemingly

insignificant lines. Examples include Nick’s line of “It’s too late”(81/86) after Gatsby asks him to go

to Coney Island and Gatsby’s line, “It’s too late!” (85/90) when he thinks Daisy is not coming. What

is the significance of this line given Gatsby and Daisy’s relationship? Explain.

**“defunct clock” symbol:** Read the passage where Gatsby knocks the defunct clock of the

mantelpiece. Then answer the questions that follow.

“Gatsby, his hands still in his pockets, was reclining against the mantelpiece in a strained counterfeit of

perfect ease, even of boredom. His head leaned back so far that it rested against the face of a defunct

mantelpiece clock, and from this position his distraught eyes stared down at Daisy, who was sitting,

frightened but graceful, on the edge of a stiff chair.

‘We’ve met before,’ muttered Gatsby. His eyes glanced momentarily at me, and his lips parted with an

abortive attempt at a laugh. Luckily the clock took this moment to tilt dangerously at the pressure of his head, whereupon he turned and caught it with trembling fingers, and set it back in place. Then he sat down, rigidly, his elbow on the arm of the sofa and his chin in his hand.

‘I’m sorry about the clock,’ he said. My own face had now assumed a deep tropical burn. I couldn’t muster up a single commonplace out of the thousand in my head.

‘It’s an old clock,’ I told them idiotically. I think we all believed for a moment that it had smashed in pieces on the floor” (86-87/91-92).

What does defunct mean? Why is this word choice significant? What else is significant about this

passage?