

***Nick* by Michael Farris Smith Reading Group Guide**

- 1) What were your expectations of Nick Carraway, coming to this book? How did he echo your impressions of him from *THE GREAT GATSBY*, and did he not conform?
- 2) Is the novel *NICK* a love story?
- 3) Ella is a survivor, a believer in possibility. Why do you think Nick is unable to agree to run away with her? Why does she then hide from him after suffering personal trauma?
- 4) The war depicted in *NICK* is both familiar and jarring, dehumanizing on its scale and yet oddly specific and personal. What do you believe Michael Farris Smith was trying to tell us about America's involvement in World War I, and the young men who enlisted to fight there? Did they believe in what they were doing?
- 5) Nearly 100 years later, how does *NICK*'s vision of America compare with today? What parallels do you see between the 1920s and the 2020s?
- 6) What is it about America that makes Nick Carraway not wish to go home, or to spend time in a city or place other than New Orleans?
- 7) New Orleans is depicted both a startlingly dangerous and welcoming place, a city where criminal behavior defines almost every professional or personal relationship. What does Nick hope to get out of the city? What compels him to stay there?
- 8) Why is Nick drawn to Colette and Judah? Does his attraction to such extreme personalities lay the groundwork for what's to come?
- 9) Further to the above question, what defines Nick's sense of morality, and how do his opinions here presage his attitude about Jay Gatsby and other criminals in *THE GREAT GATSBY*?
- 10) How does the Paris we see in *NICK* differ from the Paris as described by the Lost Generation, or for that matter, historically depicted in contemporary books, film or TV?