



"Anybody who believes that the war is over when the enemy surrenders and the troops come home needs to read Michael Farris Smith's masterful new novel *Nick*. Its stark, unvarnished truth will haunt you."

Richard Russo, Pulitzer Prize winning author of *Empire Falls* and *Chances Are...*

www.michaelfarrissmith.com



@MichaelFarrisSmith

#nicknovel

<https://www.littlebrown.com/titles/michael-farris-smith/nick/9780316529754/>

Praise for Nick

"An evocative glimpse into life amidst World War I... Smith sculpts Carraway's life in the most remarkable of ways."

Southern Living

"Nick is so pitch-perfect, so rich in character and action, so remarkable a combination of elegance and passion, so striking in felt originality that I am almost tempted to say—book gods forgive me—that *The Great Gatsby* will forever feel like Nick's splendid but somewhat paler sequel."

Robert Olen Butler, Pulitzer Prize winning author of A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain and Paris in the Dark

"Nick is, sentence by sentence, scene by scene, an atmospheric masterpiece of imagination and prose. With scenes that take your breath away and forget to give it back, Smith takes us on an immersive and redemptive journey that travels from the trenches of the Great War, to Paris, to New Orleans and beyond."

Patti Callahan, New York Times bestselling author of Becoming Mrs. Lewis

"Nick offers a soul for the ages, one that finally and deftly slips into the canon."

Jeffrey Lent, New York Times bestselling author of In the Fall and A Slant of Light

"Stylish, evocative, haunting and wholly original, Michael Farris Smith has paid tribute to a classic and made it his own. Nick is a remarkable achievement."

Chris Whitaker, author of We Begin at the End

"A dark and often gripping story that imagines the narrator of *The Great Gatsby* in the years before that book began ...The new Nick is a man fully realized, with a mind tormented by the war and by a first love that waned too fast to a fingernail moon of bitter memory...A compelling character study and a thoroughly unconventional prequel."

Kirkus Reviews

Discussion Questions

- 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?