



Trimalchio by F. Scott Fitzgerald

CHAPTER VII

It was about this time that an ambitious young reporter from New York arrived at Gatsby's door one morning and asked him if he had anything to say.

"Anything to say about what?" inquired Gatsby politely.

"Why—any statement to give out."

It transpired after a confused five minutes that the man had heard Gatsby's name around his office in a connection which he either wouldn't reveal or didn't fully understand. It was his day off and with laudable initiative he had hurried out "to see."

It was an accident, and yet the reporter's instinct was right. Gatsby's notoriety, spread about by the hundreds who had accepted his hospitality and thus become authorities on his past, had increased all summer until he fell just short of being news. Contemporary legends such as the "underground pipeline to Canada" attached themselves to him, and there was one persistent story that he didn't live in a house at all but in a boat that looked like a house and was moved secretly up and down the Long Island shore. It was when curiosity was at the highest about him that his lights failed to go on one Saturday night—and as obscurely as it had begun his career as Trimalchio suddenly ended.

For several weeks I hadn't seen him and I perceived gradually that the automobiles that turned expectantly into his drive stayed only a minute and then drove rather sulkily away. Wondering if he were ill I went over to find out—an unfamiliar butler with a villainous face squinted at me suspiciously from the open door.

"Is Mr. Gatsby ill?"

"Nope," he answered, adding "sir" in a dilatory, grudging way.

"I hadn't seen him and I was rather worried. Tell him Mr. Carraway came over from next door."

"Who?" he demanded rudely.

"Carraway."

"Carraway. All right, I'll tell him."

Abruptly he slammed the door.

It was my Finn who informed me that Gatsby had dismissed every servant in his house a week ago and replaced them with half a dozen others who never went into the village and who never exchanged a word with the tradesmen except to order supplies over the telephone. The grocery boy reported that the

kitchen looked like a pigsty and the general opinion in the village was that the new people weren't servants at all.

After that I watched for Gatsby, and found him several evenings later, coming across my own lawn. He had lost a little of his tan and his eyes were bright and tired. We sat down on a bench in the yard.

"Going away?" I asked.

"No, old sport. Why?"

"I hear you fired all your servants."

He hesitated.

"Daisy comes over sometimes in the afternoon. And I wanted some people who wouldn't gossip—until we decide what we're going to do. These two towns are pretty close together."

"Where'd you find these?" I inquired, determined to show no curiosity about Daisy.

"They're some people Wolfshiem wanted to do something for," he said vaguely. "They're all brothers and sisters—they used to run a small hotel. What's the difference, so long as they can cook and make beds?"

This was a new note from Gatsby, whose household had been exemplary in its own extravagant way.

"You're depressed," I remarked.

"I'm very sad, old sport." He hesitated. "Daisy wants us to run off together. She came over this afternoon with a suitcase all packed and ready in the car." Gatsby shook his head wearily. "I tried to explain to her that we couldn't do that, and I only made her cry."

"In other words you've got her—and now you don't want her."

"Of course I want her," he exclaimed in horror. "Why—Daisy's all I've got left from a world so wonderful that to think of it makes me sick all over." He looked around him in wild regret. "But we mustn't just run away like we might have done five years ago," he said after a pause. "That won't do at all."

He seemed to feel that Daisy should make some sort of atonement that would give her love the value that it had before. Anyone might have come along in a few years and taken her away from Tom—he wanted this to have an element of fate about it, of inevitability—the resumption of an interrupted dance. And first Daisy must purify herself by a renunciation of the years between.

"But how can she do that?" I asked, puzzled.

"She can go to her husband and tell him that she never loved him. She can set that much right. Then we can go back to Louisville and be married in her house and start life over."

He jumped up and began walking back and forth frantically, as if the past that he wanted to repeat were lurking here under the very shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand. His impassioned sentimentality possessed him so thoroughly that he seemed to be in some fantastic communication with space and time—and they must have given him his answer then and there in the moonlight, for he sat down suddenly and put his face in his hands and began to sob.

"I beg your pardon, old sport," he said chokingly, "but it's all so sad because I can't make her understand."

I began patting him idiotically on the back, and presently he sat back and began to stare at his house.

"She even wants to leave that," he said bitterly. "I've gotten these things for her, and now she wants to run away."

"Take what you can get, Gatsby," I urged him. "Daisy's a person—she's not just a figure in your dream. And she probably doesn't feel that she owes you anything at all."

"She does, though. Why—I'm only thirty-two. I might be a great man if I could forget that once I lost Daisy. But my career has got to be like this——" He drew a slanting line from the lawn to the stars. "It's got to keep going up. I used to think wonderful things were going to happen to me, before I met her. And I knew it was a great mistake for a man like me to fall in love—and then one night I let myself go, and it was too late——"

They had been walking together down the street one autumn night five years ago when the leaves were falling, and they came to a place where there were no trees and the sidewalk was white with moonlight. They stopped here and turned toward each other. Now it was a cool night with that mysterious excitement in it which comes at the two changes of the year. The quiet lights in the houses were humming out in the darkness and there was a sort of stir and bustle among the stars. Out of the corner of his eye Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalk really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees—he could climb to it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder.

His heart beat faster and faster as Daisy's white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning-fork that

had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.

Through all he said, even through his appalling sentimentality, I was reminded of something—an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words that I had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to take shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man's, as though there was more struggling upon them than a wisp of startled air. But they made no sound and what I had almost remembered was incommunicable forever.

The thirtieth of August was a half holiday and I had promised Tom Buchanan to have lunch with them at East Egg. Daisy had invited "that man Gatsby" and Tom didn't know how they could go through with it unless I'd come over too.

It was a broiling day, almost the last, certainly the hottest of the summer. As the train emerged from the tunnel into sunlight the hot whistles of the National Biscuit Company broke the simmering hush of noon. The straw seats of the car hovered on the edge of combustion; the woman next to me perspired delicately for awhile into her white shirtwaist and then, as her newspaper dampened under her fingers, lapsed despairingly into deep heat with a desolate cry, her pocket-book slapping to the floor.

"Oh, *my!*" she gasped.

I picked it up with a weary bend and handed it back to her. I held it at arm's length and by the extreme tip of the corners to indicate that I had no designs upon it—but everyone nearby, including the woman, suspected me just the same.

"Hot!" said the conductor to familiar faces. "Some weather!... Hot!... Hot!... Hot!... Is it hot enough for you? Is it hot? Is it... ?"

My commutation ticket came back to me with a dark stain from his hand. That anyone should care in this heat whose flushed lips he kissed, whose head made damp the pajama pocket over his heart!

... Through the hall of the Buchanans' house blew a faint wind, carrying the sound of the telephone bell out to Gatsby and me as we waited at the door.

"The master's body!" roared the butler into the mouthpiece. "I'm sorry madame but we can't furnish it—it's far too hot to touch this noon!"

What he really said was "Yes... Yes... I'll see."

Then he set down the receiver and came toward us, glistening slightly, to take our stiff straw hats.

"Madame expects you in the salon!" he cried, needlessly indicating the door. In this heat every extra gesture was an affront to the common store of life.

The room, shadowed well with awnings, was dark and cool. Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols, weighing down their own white dresses against the singing breeze of the fans.

"We can't move," they said together.

Jordan's fingers, powdered white over their tan, lay for a moment in mine.

"And Mr. Thomas Buchanan, the athlete?" I inquired.

Simultaneously I heard his voice, gruff, muffled, husky, at the hall telephone.

watched him and laughed, her sweet, exciting laugh;
a tiny gust of powder rose from her bosom into the
air.
"The rumor is," whispered Jordan, "that that's
Tom's girl on the telephone."
We were silent. The voice in the hall rose high
with annoyance: "Very well, then, I won't sell you
the car at all.... I'm under no obligations to you
at all... and as for your bothering me about it at
lunch time, I won't stand that at all!"
"Holding down the receiver," said Daisy cynically.
"No he's not," I assured her. "It's a verbatim
deal. I happen to know about it."
Tom flung open the door, blocked out its space
for a moment with his thick body, and hurried into
the room.
"Mr. Gatsby!" He put out his broad, flat hand.
"I'm glad to see you, sir.... Nick...."
"Make us a cold drink," cried Daisy.
As he left the room she got up and went over to
Gatsby and pulled his face down, kissing him on
the mouth.
"I love you," she murmured proudly.
"You forget that there's a lady present," said
Jordan.
Daisy looked around doubtfully.
"You kiss Nick too."
"What a low, vulgar girl!"
"I don't care!" cried Daisy, and began to clog
on the brick fireplace. Then she remembered the
heat and sat down guiltily on the couch just as a
freshly laundered nurse leading a little girl came
into the room.
"Blessed precious," she crooned, holding out
her arms. "Come to your own mother that loves
you."

(You know)

bona fide

again,

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Gatsby stood in the center of the crimson carpet and gazed around with fascinated eyes. Daisy watched him and laughed her sweet exciting laugh; a tiny gust of powder rose from her bosom into the air.

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"You kiss Nick too."

"What a low, vulgar girl!"

"I don't care!" cried Daisy and began to clog on the brick fireplace. Then she remembered the heat and sat down guiltily on the couch just as a freshly laundered nurse leading a little girl came into the room.

"Bles-sed prec-iouς," she crooned, holding out her arms. "Come to your own mother that loves you."

The child, relinquished by the nurse, rushed across the room and rooted shyly into her mother's dress.

"The bles-sed prec-iouς! Did mother get powder on your old yellowy hair? Stand up now, and say How-de-do."

Gatsby and I in turn leaned down and took the small reluctant hand. Afterward he kept looking at the child with a sort of surprise. I don't think he had really ever believed in its existence before.

"I got dressed before luncheon," said the child, turning eagerly to Daisy.

"That's because your mother wanted to show you off." Her face bent into the single wrinkle of the small white neck. "You dream, you. You absolute little dream."

"Yes," admitted the child calmly. "Aunt Jordan's got on a white dress too."

"How do you like mother's friends?" Daisy turned her around so that she faced Gatsby. "Do you think they're pretty?"

"Where's Daddy?"

"She doesn't look like her father," explained Daisy. "She looks like me. She's got my hair and shape of the face. I'm glad of that."

Tom came back into the room preceded by four gin rickeys that clicked full of ice.

"What did you say?" he demanded. "That Pammy doesn't look like me?"

"Well, she doesn't. She looks just like me."

"I know. But you say it as if she'd escaped some curse. What's the idea?"

Daisy sat back upon the couch. The nurse took a step forward and held out her hand.

"Come Pammy."

"Goodbye, sweetheart!"

With a reluctant backward glance the well-disciplined child held to her nurse's hand and was pulled out the door.

Gatsby took up his drink.

"They certainly look cool," he said with visible tension.

We drank in long greedy swallows.

"I read somewhere that the sun's getting hotter every year," said Tom genially. "It seems that pretty soon the earth's going to fall into the sun—or wait a minute—it's just the opposite—the sun's getting colder every year."

"Come outside," he suggested to Gatsby. "I'd like you to have a look at the place."

I went with them out to the veranda. On the green Sound, stagnant in the heat, one small sail crawled slowly toward the fresher sea. Gatsby's eyes followed it momentarily; he raised his hand and pointed across the bay.

"I'm right across from you."

"So you are."

Our eyes lifted over the rosebeds and the hot lawn and the weedy refuse of the dog days along shore. Slowly the white wings of the boat moved against the blue cool limit of the sky. Ahead lay the scalloped ocean and the abounding blessed isles.

"There's sport for you," said Tom, nodding. "I'd like to be out there with him for about an hour."

We had luncheon in the dining room, darkened, too, against the heat, and drank down nervous gayety with the cold ale.

"What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon?" cried Daisy, "and the day after that, and the next thirty years?"

"Don't be morbid," Jordan said. "Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall."

"But it's so hot," insisted Daisy, on the verge of tears, "and everything's so confused. Let's all go to town!"

Her voice struggled on through the heat, beating against it, moulding its senselessness into forms.

"I've heard of making a garage out of a stable," Tom was saying to Gatsby, "but I'm the first man who ever made a stable out of a garage."

"Who wants to go to town?" demanded Daisy insistently. Gatsby's eyes floated toward her. "Ah," she cried, "you look so cool."

Their eyes met, and they stared together at each other, alone in space. With an effort she glanced down at the table.

"You always look so cool," she repeated.

She had told him that she loved him, and Tom Buchanan saw. He was astounded. His mouth opened a little and he looked at her and then at Gatsby and then back at Daisy as if he had just recognized her as someone he knew a long time ago.

"You look like the advertisement of the man," she went on innocently. "You know the advertisement of the man——"

"All right," broke in Tom quickly, "I'm perfectly willing to go to town. Come on—we're all going to town."

He got up, his eyes still flashing between Gatsby and his wife. No one moved.

"Come on!" His temper cracked a little. "What's the matter anyhow? If we're going to town let's start."

His hand, trembling with his effort at self control, bore to his lips the last of his glass of ale. Daisy's voice got us to our feet and out onto the blazing gravel drive.

"Are we just going to go?" she objected. "Like this? Aren't we going to let anyone smoke a cigarette first?"

"Everybody smoked all through lunch," said Tom truculently.

"Oh, let's have fun," she begged him. "It's too hot to fuss."

Tom didn't answer. She decided suddenly that it was best to go.

"Come on, Jordan."

They went upstairs to get ready while we three men stood there shuffling the hot pebbles with our feet. A silver curve of the moon hovered already in the western sky.

"Have you got your stables here?" asked Gatsby.

"About a quarter of a mile down the road."

"Oh."

A pause.

"I don't see the idea of going to town," broke out Tom savagely. "Women get these ideas in their heads——"

"Shall we take anything to drink?" called Daisy from an upper window.

"I'll get some whiskey," answered Tom. He went inside.

Gatsby turned to me, his voice trembling.

"I can't stand this," he said, "it's agony. I wanted to put my arms around her at luncheon when he began that talk. She's got to tell him the truth."

"She loves you. Her voice is full of it."

"Her voice is full of money," he said suddenly.

That was it. I had never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it... High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl...

Tom came out of the house wrapping a quart bottle in a towel, followed by Daisy and Jordan wearing small tight hats of metallic cloth and carrying light capes over their arms.

"Shall we all go in my car?" suggested Gatsby. He felt the hot green leather of the seat. "I should have left it in the shade."

"Standard shift?" asked Tom, looking at him quickly.

"Yes."

"Well, you take my coupe and let me drive your car to town."

"Of course, if you like to," said Gatsby stiffly. "I don't know how much gas there is——"

"Come on, Daisy!" Tom slipped his hand around her waist. "I'll take you in this circus wagon."

He opened the door for her but she moved out from the circle of his arm.

"Nick and Jordan'll go with you," she said lightly. "I'll take Gatsby for a thriller in the coupe."

She stood close to Gatsby, touching his coat with her hand. Unwillingly Tom got into the yellow car, making room for Jordan and me in the front seat. He pushed the unfamiliar gears tentatively, and we moved off toward the city through the oppressive afternoon while they followed far out of sight behind.

"I wonder where that man Gatsby learned his manners," broke out Tom suddenly.

"He went to Oxford," said Jordan maliciously. "Ever hear of it?"

"He did!" Tom was incredulous. "Like hell he did! He wears a pink suit."

"Nevertheless he's an Oxford man."

"Oxford, South Dakota," snorted Tom contemptuously, "Oxford, New Mexico, or something like that."

"Listen, Tom, if you're such a snob why did you invite him to lunch?" demanded Jordan crossly.

"Daisy invited him. She knew him before we were married—God knows where!"

We were all irritable now with the fading ale and, aware of it, we drove for awhile in silence. Then as Dr. T. J. Eckleburg's faded eyes came into sight down the road I remembered Gatsby's caution about gasoline.

"We've got half a gallon," said Tom carelessly, glancing at the gauge. "That'll probably get us to town."

"But there's a garage right here," objected Jordan. "I don't want to get stalled in this baking heat."

Tom threw on both brakes angrily and we slid to an abrupt dusty stop under Wilson's sign. After a moment the proprietor emerged from the interior of his establishment and gazed hollow-eyed at the car.

"Let's have some gas!" cried Tom boisterously. "What do you think we stopped for—to admire the view?"

"I'm sick," said Wilson without moving. "I've been sick all day."

"What's the matter?"

"I'm all run down."

"Well, shall I help myself?" demanded Tom impatiently. "You sounded well enough on the phone."

With an effort Wilson left the shade and support of the doorway and, breathing hard, unscrewed the cap of the tank. In the sunlight his face was green.

"I didn't mean to interrupt your lunch," he said. "But I need money pretty bad and I was wondering what you were going to do with your old car."

"How do you like this one?" inquired Tom. "I bought it last week."

"It's a nice yellow one," answered Wilson, straining at the handle.

"Like to buy it?"

"Big chance," Wilson smiled faintly. "No, but I could make some money on the other."

“What do you want money for all of a sudden?”

“I’ve been here too long. I want to get away. My wife and I want to go west.”

“Your wife does!” exclaimed Tom, startled.

“She’s been talking about it for ten years.” He rested for a moment against the pump, shading his eyes. “And now she’s going whether she wants to or not. I’m going to get her away.”

The coupe flashed by us with a flurry of dust and the flash of a waving hand.

“What do I owe you?” demanded Tom harshly.

“I just got wised up to something funny the last two days,” remarked Wilson. “That’s why I want to get away. That’s why I’ve been bothering you about the car.”

“What do I owe you?”

“Dollar twenty.”

It was evident that so far Wilson’s suspicions hadn’t alighted on Tom. He had discovered that Myrtle had some sort of life apart from him in another world and the shock had made him physically sick. I looked at him and then at Tom, who had made a parallel discovery less than an hour before—and it occurred to me that there was no difference between men, in intelligence or race, so profound as the difference between the sick and the well. Wilson was so sick that he looked guilty, unforgivably guilty—as if he had just got some poor girl with child.

“I’ll let you have that car,” said Tom. “I’ll send it over tomorrow afternoon.”

That locality always filled me with vague disquiet even in the broad glare of afternoon and now I turned my head as though I had been warned of something behind. Over the ashheaps the giant eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg kept their vigil but I perceived, after a moment, that other eyes were regarding us with peculiar intensity from less than twenty feet away.

In one of the windows over the garage the curtains had been moved aside a little and Myrtle Wilson was peering down at the car. So engrossed was she that she had no consciousness of being observed and one emotion after another crept into her face like objects into a slowly developing picture. Her expression was curiously familiar—it was an expression I had often seen on women’s faces, but on Myrtle Wilson’s face it seemed purposeless and inexplicable until I realized that her eyes, wide with jealous terror, were fixed not on Tom but on Jordan Baker, whom she took to be his wife.

There is no confusion like the confusion of a simple mind and as we drove away Tom was feeling the hot whips of panic. His wife and his mistress, until an hour ago secure and inviolate, were slipping

precipitately from his control. Instinct made him step on the accelerator with the double purpose of overtaking Daisy and leaving Wilson behind, and we sped along toward Astoria at fifty miles an hour until, among the iron girders of the elevated, we came in sight of the easygoing blue coupe.

"Those big movies around Fiftieth Street are cool," suggested Jordan. "Anyhow, I love New York on hot summer afternoons when everyone's away. There's something very sensuous about it—overripe, as if all sorts of funny fruits were going to fall into your hands."

This had the effect of further disquieting Tom but before he could invent a protest the coupe came to a stop and Daisy's hand signalled us to draw up alongside.

"Where are we going?" Daisy cried.

"The movies I suppose."

"It's so hot," she complained. "You go. We'll ride around and meet you after."

"We can't argue about it here," said Tom impatiently, as a truck gave out a cursing whistle behind us. "You follow me to the south side of Central Park, in front of the Plaza."

Several times he turned his head and looked back for their car, and if the traffic delayed them he slowed up until they came into sight. I think he was afraid they would dart down a side street and out of his life forever.

"Women are funny people," he exclaimed, as we reached the Plaza. "By God, they'll do anything for a little excitement."

After a moment the coupe rolled by us with insolent leisure and parked ahead. Daisy and Gatsby showed no tendency to move so we got out and went up to them, and immediately the Buchanans were engaged in a restrained discussion as to who had suggested the trip to New York. Jordan and I bought popcorn at the park gate and sat munching it on the low wall.

"It was a mistake to come," she remarked. "It looks like a row to me."

We waited. It was so hot that truck-horses left deep hoof-prints in the pavement, so hot that my underwear kept climbing like a damp snake around my legs and intermittent beads of sweat raced cool across my back. There was something special about the day that I kept trying to remember, some anniversary or an important thing that I should do. But it hid itself persistently in the overpowering heat.

"Come on over!" called Daisy. "Everybody's got to help decide. Tom says I haven't any common sense."

We went over to the car.

"The nearest place is the Plaza," she continued facetiously. "We can take a room there and go to sleep. Or else we could engage five tiled bathrooms and take cold baths."

Tom was thoughtful for a moment.

"I'll tell you," he said. "We'll get a room there and have a mint julep and talk it over."

"Talk what over?" asked Daisy uneasily.

"What we're going to do." And he added casually, "Or whatever's on your mind."

"But I don't want to take a room. I think it's the silliest thing I ever——

"Whether you want to or not, that's what we're going to do," he interrupted grimly.

Gatsby looked questioningly at Daisy.

"If you don't want to——"

"She wants to," said Tom. "And I'm quite able to talk to her myself."

Daisy glanced quickly from one to the other, perceiving to her dismay that things had slipped a little. To avoid an immediate scene she must enclose herself and Gatsby into the same room with Tom for the afternoon.

"You come too," she appealed to Jordan.

"It's an insane idea," I said, but this came too late. I had only to look at Tom and Gatsby to see that it was too late. We took a sitting room on the tenth floor of the Plaza Hotel.

The room was large and stifling, and opening the windows admitted only a gust of hot shrubbery from the Park. Daisy went to the mirror and stood with her back to us fixing her hair.

"It's a swell suite," whispered Jordan respectfully, and everyone laughed. Our secondary preoccupation was with the conviction that this was all very funny.

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"Open another window," commanded Daisy, without turning around.

"There aren't any more."

"Well, we'd better put one in. We'd better telephone for an axe—"

Tom unrolled the bottle of "whiskey from the concealing towel and set it on the table, and simultaneously the portentous melody of Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" began to float up to the window. There was a wedding in the ballroom below. We listened and presently the music faded to low chords as the ceremony began.

"Do you recognize it, Daisy?" Tom inquired. "On the day they played it for us I didn't suspect that you were so devoid of common sense."

"Why not let her alone?" said Gatsby, not unpleasantly. "It was you who insisted we come to town."

There was a moment's silence. The telephone book slipped from its nail and splashed to the floor, whereupon Jordan whispered "Excuse me," and we all laughed again.

"I'll pick it up," I offered.

Dedicated
and Subsidized
by George

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"I'll pick it up," I offered.

"I've got it." Gatsby examined the parted string, muttered "Hum!" in an interested way and tossed it on a chair.

"Mr. Gatsby," said Tom. "Sometime I'd like to have a few words with you alone."

"Just as you say, old sport."

Tom laughed without smiling.

"That's a great expression of yours, isn't it?"

"What is?"

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"She wants to," said Tom. "And I'm quite able to talk to her myself."

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"The thing to do is to forget about the heat", said Tom impatiently. "You make it ten times worse by grubbing about it."

He unrolled the bottle of whiskey from the towel and put it on the table.

"Why not let her alone?" remarked Gatsby. "You're the one that wanted to come to town."

There was a moment of silence. The telephone book slipped from its nail and splashed to the floor, whereupon Jordan whispered "Excuse me" -- but this time no one laughed.

"I'll pick it up", I offered.

"I've got it, ~~old sport~~". Gatsby examined the parted string,

"Mistered when" in our telephone box, and "where's the nearest?"
"That's a great expression of yours, isn't it?" said Tom.
"What is?"
"All this 'old sport' business. Where'd you pick that up?"
"Now see here, Tom," said Daisy, turning around from the mirror.
"If you're going to make personal remarks I won't stay here a minute.
Call up and order some ice for the mint julep."
As Tom took up the receiver the compressed heat exploded into
sound and we were listening to the portentous chords of Mendelssohn's
Wedding March from the ballroom below.
"Imagine marrying anybody in this heat!" cried Jordan dismally.
"Still -- I was married in the middle of June", Daisy remembered,
"Louisville in June! Somebody fainted. Who was it fainted, Tom?"
"Biloxi", he answered shortly.
"A man named Biloxi. Bioks' Biloxi, and he made boxes -- that's
a fact -- and he was from Biloxi, Tennessee."
"They carried him into my house", appended Jordan, "because we
lived just two doors from the church, and he stayed three weeks,
until daddy told him he had to get out. The day after he left
Daddy died." After a moment she added, "There wasn't any connection."
"I used to know a Bill Biloxi from Memphis", I remarked.
"That was his cousin. I knew his whole family history before he
left. He gave me an aluminium putter that I use today."
Gatsby and Tom took no part in this conversation. I don't think
either of them moved but I heard them murmur somehow, that they
were both walking rapidly round and round the room. The music had
died down at the ceremony began and now a long cheer floated in at
the window, followed by intermittent cries of "Yea - ea - ea!" and
finally by a burst of jazz as the dancing began.
"We're getting old", said Daisy, "If we were young we'd rise
and dance."
"Remember Biloxi", Jordan warned her. "Here'd you know him,
Tom?"
"Biloxi?" He concentrated with an effort, "I didn't know him.
He was a friend of Daisy's."
"He was not", she denied. "I'd never seen him before. He came
down in the private car."
"Well, he said he knew you. He said he was raised in Louisville
and Bird brought him around at the last minute and take if we had
room for him."
Jordan smiled.

"All this 'old sport' business. Where'd you pick that up?"

"Now see here, Tom," said Daisy, turning around from the mirror. "If you're going to be rude and unpleasant I'm not going to stay here a minute, do you understand? I'm going to walk right out of here and go to—and go to a movie. You call up and order some ice and things for your mint julep. That's what we came here for."

As Tom picked up the phone a long cheer drifted in from the ballroom followed by intermittent cries of "Yea-ea-ea!" and finally by a burst of jazz as the dancing began. Hilariously we danced, Daisy and I, Gatsby and Jordan, while Tom at the telephone watched us with unrestful eyes.

"I want to get out," whispered Daisy. "Can't you fix it? If Tom has much to drink I don't know what he'll do."

I tried and so did Jordan. We tried intermittently for an hour, and perhaps we might have succeeded had not Gatsby inopportunely decided to try himself. He pointedly disregarded Tom and

turned to me.

"Let's go, old sport. There's no reason why we should swelter up in this room."

We all got up except Tom.

"Wait a minute," Tom said quietly. "Before we go I want to ask Mr. Gatsby one question."

"Well?"

"What kind of a row are you trying to cause in my house anyhow?"

We all stood there perfectly still. Gatsby was a little pale but there was a joyous exaltation in his eyes as though he were glad it was to happen at last.

"He isn't causing a row," said Daisy. "You're causing a row. Please have a little self control."

"Self control!" repeated Tom incredulously. "I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. Well, if that's the idea you can count me out... Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions and next they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white."

Flushed with his impassioned gibberish he forgot Daisy for a moment and saw himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilization.

"We're all white here," murmured Jordan. "Except possibly Tom."

"Oh, I know I'm not very popular. I don't give big parties. I suppose you've got to make your house into a pigsty in order to have any friends—in the modern world."

Angry as I was, as we all were, I was tempted to laugh whenever he opened his mouth. The transition from libertine to prig was so complete.

"We can talk about my house later," said Gatsby steadily, "when there are no ladies present. What I want to——"

"Who are you anyhow?" broke out Tom. "You're one of that bunch that hang around with Meyer Wolfshiem—that much I happen to know."

"I won't stand this," cried Daisy. "Oh, please let's go out. I want to go home."

"All right," Tom agreed, and for a moment I thought she was going to get him away. "Just as soon as he realizes that his presumptuous little flirtation is over."

Averting her eyes from both of them Daisy moved toward the door and Jordan and I followed.

"Wait a minute, Daisy," Gatsby said. "He calls it a presumptuous little flirtation... Is it?"

She looked around helplessly.

"Is it?" he repeated.

She wanted to evade the question but even for that it was too late.

"No," she admitted in a low voice.

"Come on over" called Daisy. "Everybody's got to help decide. Tom says I haven't any common sense."

We went over to the car.

"The nearest place is the Plaza," she continued facetiously. "We can take a room there and go to sleep. Or else we could engage five tiled bathrooms and take cold baths."

Tom was thoughtful for a moment.

"I'll tell you," he said, "we'll get a room there and have a mint julep and talk it over."

"Talk what over?" asked Daisy uneasily.

"What we're going to do." And he added casually: "Or whatever's on your mind."

"But I don't want to take a room. I think it's the silliest thing I ever—"

"Whether you want to or not, that's what we're going to do," he interrupted grimly.

Gatsby looked questioningly at Daisy.

"If you don't want to—"

"She wants to," said Tom. "And I'm quite able to talk to her myself."

Daisy glanced quickly from one to the other, perceiving to her dismay that things had slipped a little. To avoid an immediate scene she must enclose herself and Gatsby into the same room with Tom for the afternoon.

"You come too," she appealed to Jordan.

"It's an insane idea," I said, but this came too late. I had only to look at Tom and Gatsby to see that it was too late. We took a sitting-room on the

"He was probably buming his way home. He told me he was President of your class at Yale."

Tom and I looked at each other blankly.

"Biloxi?"

"First place we didn't have any President --" Gatsby's foot beat a short restless tattoo and Tom eyed him suddenly.

"By the way, Mr. Gatsby, I understand you're an Oxford man."

"Not exactly."

"Oh, yes, I understand you went to Oxford".

"Yes -- I went there".

A pause. Then Tom's voice, incredulous and insulting: "You must have gone there about the time Biloxi went to New Haven."

Another pause. A waiter knocked and came in with crushed mint and ice; the silence was unbroken by his "Thank you" and the soft closing of the door. ~~I was glad that~~ This tremendous detail was to be cleared up at last.

"I told you I went there", said Gatsby.

"I heard you, but I'd like to know when."

"It was in nineteen-nineteen, ~~when~~ I only stayed five months. That's why I can't really call myself an Oxford man."

Tom glanced around to see if we mirrored his disbelief. But we were all looking at Gatsby.

"It was an opportunity they gave to some of the officers after the armistice", he continued, "to could go to any of the universities in England or France".

I wanted to get up and slap him on the back. I had one of those renewals of complete faith in him that I'd experienced before. Daisy rose, smiling faintly, and went to the table.
"Open the whiskey, Tom", she ordered. "And I'll make you a mint julep. Then you won't seem so stupid to yourself... Look at the mint!"
"Wait a minute", snapped Tom. "I want to ask Mr. Gatsby one more question."
"Go on", Gatsby said politely.
"What kind of a row are you trying to cause in my house anyhow? They were out in the open at last and Gatsby was content.
"He isn't causing a row", Daisy looked desperately from one to the other. "You're
(from the Imperial audience on gallery 9c)

At this point Jordan and I tried to go. Human sympathy has its curious limits and we were repelled by their self absorption, appalled by their conflicting desires. But we were called back by a look in Daisy's eyes which seemed to say: "You have a certain responsibility for all this too." Tom and Gatsby considered that we were leaving out of delicacy. They both insisted with competitive eagerness that we remain, as though neither of them had anything to conceal and it would be a privilege to partake vicariously of their emotions.

Tom made a small O with his mouth and leaned back in his chair, tapping his thick fingers together like a clergyman while his shining arrogant eyes darted at each of us in turn.

"Sit down, Daisy," he said with an unsuccessful attempt at the paternal note. "What's been going on? I want to know."

We all sat down again.

"I'll tell you," Gatsby's eyes met Tom's. "Your wife doesn't love you. Do you Daisy?"

"No." Her answer was almost inaudible.

"Why of course she does!" exclaimed Tom.

Even Gatsby wasn't satisfied with her answer.

"Please say right out whether you love him or not."

"I don't love him."

But her reluctance was so perceptible that Gatsby stood up as if he had been betrayed.

"I don't understand you," he said with less confidence. "I didn't know there was any doubt about it." No one spoke. "If there is, of course—I'll go away."

That there should be the faintest reluctance in Daisy's admission had so startled him that he took a step toward the door.

"Oh, don't go!" she cried in distress. "I love you too."

He turned slowly around, his face wrinkling up, his eyes opening and closing rapidly.

“You love me *too*,” he repeated.

“I didn’t mean that.”

The assertion was too shocking, too incredible for him to grasp—it slipped away from him as he clutched with relief at its retraction.

“Of course Daisy loves me,” said Tom with gruff assurance. “The trouble is she doesn’t know it. Sometimes she gets foolish ideas in her head, that’s all.” He nodded sagely. “And I love Daisy too. Once in awhile I go off on a spree and make a fool of myself but I always come back and in my heart I love her all the time.”

“You’re revolting,” said Daisy. Her voice fell an octave lower and filled the room with thrilling scorn.

But now that Tom knew that this was no obscure blow at him from a revengeful heaven, but only a comprehensible phenomenon of desire his confidence reasserted itself.

“You came near making a serious mistake, Daisy. It’s a good thing I found out in time.”

“Why should you care?” she demanded.

“Of course I care. And I’m going to take better care of you from now on.”

“You don’t understand,” Gatsby said excitedly. “You’re not going to take care of her any more.”

“Really?” Tom opened his eyes wide and laughed. He could afford to control himself now. “Why not?”

“Because she’s leaving you.”

“Nonsense.”

“I am, though,” said Daisy with a visible effort.

Tom considered, looking from one to the other and finding the idea incredible.

“Daisy wouldn’t leave me,” he said, after a moment. “She could never love anybody but me.”

She was listening and Gatsby saw that she was; he blinked continually now, as if the world were slipping sideways before his eyes.

To my surprise Tom began to talk with husky tenderness about their honeymoon, while from the ballroom below muffled and suffocating chords drifted in on hot waves of air.

“Do you remember how we used to swim in the early morning at Kapiolani, Daisy?”

“Please don’t.” All the rancor and scorn was gone from her voice. Her hand as she lit a cigarette was trembling.

"And the day I carried you all the way down from the Punch Bowl in my arms because you wanted to keep your shoes out of the rain——

"I want to speak to you alone, Daisy," interrupted Gatsby quickly. "You're all excited——"

The sudden panic which made him willing to take her on her own terms, to run off with her tonight, was visible in his face. He was telling her that with every word and she knew it. But her courage was gone.

"You want too much," she said in a pitiful voice. "I can't say I never loved Tom. It wouldn't be true."

"Why there are things between Daisy and me that you'll never know," said Tom, "things that neither of us will forget."

Gatsby kept looking at Daisy.

"I don't ask you to say anything. I only want *you*, Daisy." She didn't answer and he turned miserably to Tom. "She never loved you. I have a way—I have reasons for knowing she never loved you. Good reasons. She only married you because you were rich and she was tired."

Those tragic eyes of Gatsby's were the criterion of Tom's triumph but the dead dream fought on while the afternoon slipped away, striving to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undesperingly, toward that lost voice across the room.

"She's never stopped loving me," said Tom and his words seemed to lean down over Gatsby. "Certainly not for a common swindler who'd have to steal the ring he put on her finger."

But Gatsby was too stunned to hear or care and Tom, who wasn't a bully except when he was drunk, saw that he had gone far enough. He could be magnanimous, and a little contemptuous now——

"It's pretty late. You two start on home"—he indicated his wife and Gatsby—"in the circus—in Mr. Gatsby's car. You wanted to talk to her and here's your chance. But I think you understand now that you're talking to my wife."

They were gone, with scarcely a word, with Daisy's inattributable tears. After a moment Tom got up and began wrapping the unopened bottle of whiskey in a towel.

"Want any of this stuff? Nick?... Jordan?"

"No thanks."

He looked at me, a little wistfully.

"Mr. Gatsby seemed unhappy," he remarked.

"What's that?"

"Weren't you listening?"

"I just remembered this is my birthday."

I was thirty. Before me stretched the portentous menacing road of a new decade.

It was seven o'clock by my watch when we got into the coupe with him and started for Long Island. Tom talked incessantly, boasting and laughing, but his voice was as remote as the voices of children on the sidewalk or the tumult of the elevated overheard. Jordan and I were driving out into the fresh country together and their tragic arguments were fading with the city lights behind. Thirty—a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know, a thinning assortment of illusions, thinning hair. As we passed over the dark, silky bridge all that remained to be said between Jordan and me was said in a whisper and the pressure of a hand.

So we drove on toward death through the cooling twilight.

The young Greek, Michaelis, who ran the coffee joint beside the ash-heaps was the principal witness at the inquest. He had slept through the heat, until after five, when he strolled over to the garage and found George Wilson sick in his office—really sick, pale as paste and shaking all over. Michaelis advised him to go to bed but Wilson refused, saying that he'd miss a lot of business if he did. While his neighbor was trying to persuade him a violent racket broke out overhead.

"I've got my wife locked in up there," explained Wilson calmly. "She's going to stay there till the day after tomorrow and then we're going to move away."

Michaelis was astonished; they had been neighbors for four years and Wilson had never seemed faintly capable of such a statement. Generally he was one of these wornout men: when he wasn't working he sat on a chair in the doorway and stared at the people and the cars that passed along the road. When anyone spoke to him he invariably laughed in an agreeable, colorless way. He was his wife's man and not his own.

So naturally Michaelis tried to find out what had happened, but Wilson wouldn't say a word—instead he began to throw curious, suspicious glances at his visitor and ask him what he'd been doing at certain times on certain days. Just as the latter was getting uneasy some workmen came past the door bound for his restaurant and he took the opportunity to get away, intending to come back later. But he never did. He didn't know why he didn't, he supposed he forgot it, that's all. When he came outside again a little after seven he was reminded of it because he heard Mrs. Wilson's voice, loud and scolding, downstairs in the garage.

"Beat me!" he heard her cry. "Throw me down and beat me, you dirty little coward!"

A moment later he saw her rush out into the dusk, waving her hands and shouting; before he could move from his door the business was over.

The "death car," as the newspapers called it, didn't stop; it came -out of the gathering darkness, wavered tragically for a moment and then disappeared around the next bend. Michaelis wasn't even sure of its color—he told the first policeman that it was light green. The other car, the one going toward New York, came to rest a hundred yards beyond, and the driver hurried back to where Myrtle Wilson, her life violently extinguished, knelt in the road and mingled her thick, dark blood with the dust.

Michaelis and this man reached her first but when they had torn open her shirtwaist still damp with perspiration they saw that her left breast was swinging loose like a flap and there was no need to listen for the heart beneath. The mouth was wide open and ripped a little at the corners as though she had choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long.

We saw the three or four automobiles and the crowd when we were still some distance away.

"Wreck!" said Tom. "That's good. Wilson'll have a little business at last."

He slowed down, but still without any intention of stopping until, as we came nearer, the hushed intent faces of the people at the garage door made him half unconsciously put on the brakes.

"We'll take a look," he said doubtfully, "just a look."

I became aware now of a gasping, moaning sound which issued incessantly from the garage, a sound which as we got out of the coupe and walked toward the door resolved itself into a hollow wail of "Oh, my God!" uttered over and over.

"There's some bad trouble here," said Tom excitedly.

He reached up on tiptoes and peered over a circle of heads into the garage, which was lit only by a yellow light in a swinging metal basket overhead. Then he made a harsh husky sound in his throat and with a violent, thrusting movement of his powerful arms pushed his way through.

The circle closed up again and there was a running murmur of expostulation; it was a minute before I could see anything at all. Then new arrivals disarranged the line, and Jordan and I were pushed suddenly inside.

Myrtle Wilson's body, wrapped in a blanket and then in another blanket as though she suffered from a chill in the hot night, lay on a work table by the wall and Tom, with his back to us, was bending over it, motionless. Next to him stood a motorcycle policeman taking down names with much sweat

and correction in a little book. At first I couldn't find the source of the high, groaning words that echoed clamorously through the bare garage—then I saw Wilson standing on the raised threshold of his office, swaying back and forth and holding to the doorposts with both hands. Some man was talking to him in a low voice and attempting from time to time to lay a hand on his shoulder, but Wilson neither heard nor saw. His eyes would drop slowly from the swinging light to the laden table by the wall and then jerk back to the light again and he gave out incessantly his high horrible call:

“O my Ga-od! O my Ga-od! O Ga-od! O my Ga-od!”

Presently Tom lifted his head with a jerk and after staring around the garage with glazed eyes addressed a mumbled incoherent remark to the policeman.

“M-a-v—” the policeman was saying, “—o—”

“No, —r—” corrected the man, “M-a-v-r-o—”

“Listen to me!” muttered Tom fiercely.

“R—” said the policeman, “o—”

“G—”

“G—” He looked up as Tom's broad hand fell sharply on his shoulder. “What you want, fella?”

“What happened?—that's what I want to know.”

“Auto hit her. In'santly killed.”

“Instantly killed,” repeated Tom, staring.

“She ran out ina road. Son of a bitch didn't even stop'z car.”

“There was two cars,” said Michaelis. “One comin', one goin', see?”

“Going where?” asked the policeman keenly.

“One goin' each way. Well, she—” his hand rose toward the blankets but stopped halfway and fell to his side, “—she ran out there an' the one comin' from N'York knock right into her goin' thirty or forty miles an hour.”

“What's the name of this place here?” demanded the officer.

“Hasn't got any name.”

A pale well dressed negro stepped near.

“It was a yellow car,” he said. “Big yellow car. New.”

“See the accident?” asked the policeman.

“No, but the car passed me down the road, going faster'n forty. Going fifty, sixty.”

“Come here and let's have your name. Look out now. I want to get his name.”

Some words of this conversation must have reached Wilson swaying in the office door for suddenly a new theme found voice among his gasping cries.

“You don’t have to tell me what kind of car it was! I know what kind of car it was!”

Watching Tom I saw the wad of muscle back of his shoulder tighten under his coat. He walked quickly over to Wilson and standing in front of him seized him firmly by the upper arms.

“You’ve got to pull yourself together,” he said with soothing gruffness.

Wilson’s eyes fell upon Tom; he started up on his tiptoes and then would have collapsed to his knees had not Tom held him upright.

“Listen,” said Tom, shaking him a little, “I just got here a minute ago, from New York. I was bringing you that coupe we’ve been talking about. That yellow car I was driving this afternoon wasn’t mine, do you hear? I haven’t seen it all afternoon.”

Only the negro and I were near enough to hear what he said but the policeman caught something in the tone and looked over with truculent eyes.

“What’s all that?” he demanded.

“I’m a friend of his.” Tom turned his head but kept his hands firm on Wilson’s body. “He says he knows the car that did it... It was a yellow car.”

Some dim impulse moved the policeman to look suspiciously at Tom.

“And what color’s your car?”

“It’s a blue car, a coupe.”

“We’ve come straight from New York,” I said.

Someone who had been driving a little behind us confirmed this and the policeman turned away.

“Now if you’ll let me have that name again correct——”

Picking up Wilson like a doll Tom carried him into the office, set him down in a chair and came back.

“If somebody’ll come here and sit with him!” he snapped authoritatively. He watched while two men standing closest glanced at each other unwillingly and went into the room. Then Tom shut the door on them and came down the single step, his eyes avoiding the table. As he passed close to me he whispered, “Let’s get out.”

Self consciously, with his authoritative arms breaking the way, we pushed through the still gathering crowd, passing a hurried doctor, case in hand, who had been sent for in wild hope half an hour ago.

Tom drove slowly until we were beyond the bend—then his foot came down hard and the coupe raced along through the night. In a little while I heard a low husky sob and saw that the tears were overflowing down his face.

“The God Damn coward!” he said. “He didn’t even stop his car.”

The Buchanan house floated suddenly toward us through the dark, rustling trees. Tom stopped beside the porch and looked up at the second floor where two windows bloomed with light among the vines.

“Daisy’s home,” he remarked. As we got out of the car he glanced at me and frowned slightly.

“I ought to have dropped you in West Egg, Nick. There’s nothing we can do tonight.”

A change had come over him and he spoke gravely, and with decision. As we walked across the moonlit gravel to the porch he disposed of the situation in a few brisk phrases.

“I’ll telephone for a taxi to take you home. And while you’re waiting you and Jordan better go in the kitchen and have them get you some supper—if you want any.”

He opened the door.

“Come in.”

“No thanks. But I’d be glad if you’d order me the taxi. I’ll wait outside.”

Jordan put her hand on my arm.

“Won’t you come in, Nick?”

“No thanks.”

I was feeling a little sick and I wanted to be alone. But Jordan lingered for a moment more.

“It’s only half past nine,” she said.

I’d be damned if I’d go in; I’d had enough of all of them for one day and suddenly that included Jordan too. She must have seen something of this in my expression for she turned away suddenly and ran up the porch steps into the house. I sat down for a few minutes with my head in my hands, until I heard the phone taken up inside and the butler’s voice calling a taxi. Then I walked slowly down the drive away from the house intending to wait by the gate.

I hadn’t gone twenty yards when I heard my name and Gatsby stepped from between two bushes into the path. I must have felt pretty weird by that time because I could think of nothing except the luminosity of his pink suit under the moon.

“What are you doing?” I inquired.

“Just standing here, old sport.”

Somehow that seemed a despicable occupation. For all I knew he was going to rob the house in a moment; I wouldn’t have been surprised to see sinister faces, the faces of “Wolfshiem’s people,” behind him in the dark shrubbery.

“Did you see any trouble on the road?” he asked after a minute.

“Yes.”

He hesitated.

“Was she killed?”

“Yes.”

“I thought so. I told Daisy I thought so. It’s better that the shock should all come at once. She stood it pretty well.”

He spoke as if Daisy’s reaction was the only thing that mattered.

“I got to West Egg by a side road,” he went on, “and left the car in my garage. I don’t think anybody saw us but of course I can’t be sure.”

I disliked him so much by this time that I didn’t find it necessary to tell him he was wrong.

“Who was the woman?” he inquired.

“Her name was Wilson. Her husband owns the garage.”

“It was very hard luck,” he said thoughtfully.

“What was the matter?” I demanded. “How’d you happen to hit her?”

“Well, I tried to swing the wheel——” He broke off, and suddenly I guessed at the truth.

“Was Daisy driving?”

“Yes,” he said after a moment, “but of course I’ll say I was. You see, when we left New York she was nervous and she thought it would calm her down if she drove, and it did for awhile, until just as we passed a car coming the other way this woman rushed out at us. It was all very quick but I got the impression that she wanted to speak to us, she thought we were somebody she knew. Well, Daisy isn’t a very good driver and she did the instinctive thing, turned away from the woman toward the other car, and lost her nerve and turned back. The minute my hand reached the wheel I felt the shock—it must have killed her instantly.”

“It ripped her open——”

“Don’t tell me, old sport.” He winced. “Anyhow—Daisy stepped on it. I tried to make her stop but she couldn’t, and didn’t until I pulled on the emergency brake. Then she collapsed into my lap. So I

drove on."

"She'll be all right tomorrow," he said presently. "I'm just going to wait here and see if he tries to bother her about that row this afternoon. She's locked herself into her room and if he tries any brutality she's going to turn the light out and on again."

"He won't touch her," I said. "He's not thinking about her."

"I don't trust him."

"How long are you going to wait?"

"All night if necessary. Anyhow till they all go to bed."

He hadn't said a word about going away with Daisy, but I gathered he hadn't wanted her to come home at all. And another point of view occurred to me. Suppose Tom found out that Daisy had been driving. He might think he saw a connection in it—he might think anything. I looked at the house: there were two or three bright windows downstairs and the pink glow from Daisy's room on the second floor.

"You wait here," I said. "I'll see if there's any sign of a commotion."

I walked back along the border of the lawn, traversed the gravel softly and tiptoed up the veranda steps. The drawing room blinds were up and I saw that the room was empty. Crossing the porch where we had dined that June night three months before I came to a small rectangle of light which I guessed was the pantry window. The curtain was drawn but I found a rift at the sill.

Daisy and Tom were sitting opposite each other at the kitchen table with a plate of cold fried chicken between them and two bottles of ale. He was talking intently across the table at her and in his earnestness his hand had fallen upon and covered her own. Once in awhile she looked up at him and nodded in agreement.

They weren't happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale—and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together.

As I tiptoed from the porch I heard my taxi feeling its way along the dark road toward the house. Gatsby was waiting where I had left him in the drive.

"Is it all right up there?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes, it's all right." I hesitated. "You'd better come home and get some sleep."

He shook his head.

"I want to wait here until Daisy goes to bed. Good night, old sport."

He put his hands in his coat pockets and turned back eagerly to his scrutiny of the house, as though

my presence marred the sacredness of his vigil. So I walked away and left him standing there in the moonlight, watching over nothing.

Next: [chapter 8](#)

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