

AI-Generated Graded Readers

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About This Edition

This book is a simplified English adaptation created for extensive reading practice.

The text was generated using ChatGPT and prepared for intermediate English learners as part of an educational project.

Target reading level: CEFR A2-B1

This edition aims to support fluency development through accessible vocabulary, expanded narration, and improved readability while preserving the original story structure.

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F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (Simplified Edition, Adapted and Simplified by ChatGPT)

Part 1

In my younger and more uncertain years my father gave me a piece of advice that I have never forgotten.

“Whenever you feel like criticizing someone,” he said, “remember that not everyone in this world has had the advantages that you have had.”

He did not explain what he meant, but we always understood each other well even when we spoke very little. From that moment I tried to judge people less quickly. Because of this habit many people trusted me with their secrets. Some of them talked for hours about their hopes, their troubles, and their disappointments. Often I did not ask for these stories. They simply appeared, as if people believed that I would listen without condemning them.

Yet there are limits to tolerance. I learned that even the most patient observer must sometimes turn away. When I returned from the East one autumn I felt tired of people’s careless emotions and selfish dreams. I wanted the world to stand in order and behave properly. Almost everyone disappointed me.

Almost everyone—except Gatsby.

The man whose name gives this book its title was different from the others. I disliked many of the things connected with him, and the strange world around him often seemed empty and foolish. But Gatsby himself possessed something rare. He had an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness to believe in life. I have never met anyone else quite like him, and I doubt that I ever will again.

My own story begins in the Middle West. My family had lived in our city for three generations and was known as respectable and reasonably wealthy. According to family tradition we were descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch in Scotland, though the real founder of our branch of the family was my grandfather’s brother. He came to America in 1851 and started a successful wholesale hardware business. My father continued that business, and the family

lived comfortably.

I graduated from Yale in 1915, exactly twenty-five years after my father had studied there. A little later the Great War came, and like many young men I joined the army. The war changed my life. When I returned home I felt restless. The Middle West, which once seemed like the center of the world, now felt small and distant.

So I decided to go East and learn the bond business. Many men I knew were already working in finance, and it seemed like a practical career. My family agreed to support me for a year while I learned the trade. In the spring of 1922 I traveled to New York to begin a new life.

At first I thought I would live in the city itself. But it was summer, and I had just left a land of wide lawns and friendly trees. A young man in my office suggested that we rent a house together in a small town outside the city. It sounded pleasant. He found a small house that cost eighty dollars a month.

At the last moment his company sent him to Washington, and I went to the house alone.

The place was a weather-beaten wooden bungalow near the water. I had an old car, a temporary dog that soon ran away, and a Finnish woman who came each morning to cook breakfast and clean the house. For a few days the neighborhood felt lonely. Then one morning a stranger stopped me on the road and asked for directions.

“How do you get to West Egg village?” he asked helplessly.

I explained the way. As I continued walking I suddenly felt less alone. It was a small moment, but it gave me the strange feeling that life was beginning again.

The island where I lived was one of the strangest places in North America. About twenty miles east of New York two large pieces of land stretch out into the water of Long Island Sound. They are shaped like enormous eggs.

One of them is called East Egg. The other is West Egg.

Although they look similar from the air, they are very different. East Egg is the fashionable side, where old wealthy families live in large white houses along the shore. West Egg, where I lived, is less elegant. Many of the houses there belong

to people who have recently become rich.

My own little house stood at the very end of West Egg, only a short distance from the water. It was squeezed between two enormous mansions that rented for twelve or fifteen thousand dollars a season. My house was an eyesore compared with them, but it had been overlooked by the real estate agents, and because of that I enjoyed several advantages. I had a view of the water, a partial view of my neighbor's lawn, and the comforting presence of millionaires nearby.

The mansion next to mine was the largest house in the neighborhood. It looked like a French city hall, with a tower on one side and fresh ivy climbing the walls. The estate contained a marble swimming pool and acres of garden and lawn.

This was Gatsby's house.

At that time I had never met Mr. Gatsby. I knew only that some mysterious man lived there.

Across the water, on the shining shore of East Egg, stood the white palaces of the rich families. The story of that summer truly began on the evening when I drove across the bay to visit my cousin Daisy Buchanan and her husband Tom.

Daisy and I were distant relatives, and I had known Tom slightly in college. After the war I had spent two days with them in Chicago, so when I arrived in New York Daisy invited me to dinner.

Their house was even larger than I expected. It was a bright red-and-white mansion overlooking the bay, with a wide lawn that stretched down to the water. When I arrived Tom Buchanan was standing on the front porch.

He had changed since our college days. He was now a strong man of thirty with blond hair and a hard mouth. His eyes were bright and confident, and his body looked powerful and restless. Even his voice sounded aggressive, as if he expected people to obey him.

"I've got a nice place here," he said proudly.

He showed me the gardens and the motorboat and the wide lawn. Then we went inside the house.

The interior was bright and airy. Long windows were open to the warm afternoon wind, and white curtains moved softly in the breeze. Two young women

were lying on a large couch, their white dresses floating like sails.

One of them was Daisy.

She laughed when she saw me.

“I’m so happy to see you, Nick,” she said.

Her voice was low and musical, and people often leaned closer when she spoke. There was something in it that promised excitement and happiness.

The other woman was Jordan Baker, a professional golfer whom I had seen in newspapers. She sat quietly and watched us with calm, grey eyes.

We talked for a while about old friends and about Chicago. Daisy asked about people from our hometown and listened with bright curiosity.

Suddenly Tom left the room to answer the telephone. Daisy leaned toward me and whispered softly.

“I’ll tell you a family secret,” she said. “It’s about the butler’s nose.”

She began a long and amusing story about how the butler had once worked polishing silver for hundreds of guests and how the work had slowly changed the shape of his nose. Her laughter filled the room, but I felt that she was trying to hide something deeper behind the story.

When Tom returned his face looked tense. Daisy quickly changed the subject, and dinner was served outside on the porch as the sun began to set over the water.

That evening, sitting with Daisy and Tom and Jordan Baker, I began to understand that life in the East might be more complicated—and more dangerous—than I had imagined.

Later that night, when I returned home, I stood in my yard looking across the dark water.

A man had stepped out onto the lawn of the neighboring mansion.

He stood quietly with his hands in his pockets and looked toward the distant bay. Then he stretched out his arms toward the water, as if reaching for something invisible.

I followed his gaze and saw only a small green light shining at the end of a distant dock.

When I looked back, the man had disappeared.

That was the first time I saw Jay Gatsby.

Part 2

About halfway between West Egg and New York the road runs beside the railroad for a short distance. In that place the land becomes strange and unpleasant. It is called the valley of ashes.

The ground there is grey and dusty. Ashes lie in long ridges like fields of wheat. Old buildings and broken chimneys rise out of the powdery ground. The people who work there move slowly through the dust, their clothes and faces covered with the same grey ash that covers everything else.

Above this sad landscape stands a large and unusual sign. It shows a pair of enormous blue eyes behind yellow glasses. The sign once advertised an eye doctor named Doctor T. J. Eckleburg. The doctor has long since disappeared, but his painted eyes remain, looking out over the valley as if watching everything that happens there.

Trains often stop beside the valley of ashes while the drawbridge nearby is lifted to allow ships to pass. Passengers sometimes stare out of the windows at the grey land for several minutes. It was because of one of these stops that I first met Tom Buchanan's mistress.

Tom did not hide the fact that he had another woman. Many people in New York knew about it, and some were annoyed by the way he openly brought her to restaurants and cafés.

One afternoon I went to New York with Tom on the train. When we stopped beside the valley of ashes he suddenly stood up.

"We're getting off here," he said firmly.

Before I could answer he took hold of my arm and pulled me toward the door.

"I want you to meet my girl," he said.

I had no wish to meet her, but Tom's determination was strong. I followed him across a low fence and walked beside him along the dusty road.

The only building nearby was a small garage made of yellow brick. A faded

sign outside read:

George B. Wilson

Cars Bought and Sold

Tom walked inside as if he owned the place. I followed.

The interior of the garage was dark and empty. In one corner stood the dusty remains of an old Ford car. A thin, pale man appeared from a small office and wiped his hands on a cloth.

“Hello, Wilson,” said Tom cheerfully. “How’s business?”

“Not very good,” Wilson answered weakly. “When are you going to sell me that car?”

“Next week,” Tom replied.

Wilson looked tired and anxious. His pale blue eyes showed a brief flash of hope, but the hope faded quickly.

As Tom glanced around the garage I heard footsteps on a staircase. A woman appeared in the doorway.

She was in her middle thirties, a little heavy, but she carried herself with energy and confidence. Her face was not beautiful, yet there was something lively about her. Her eyes looked straight at Tom.

This was Myrtle Wilson.

She shook Tom’s hand warmly, almost ignoring her husband.

“Get some chairs,” she said casually to Wilson.

Wilson hurried away at once, as if he were used to obeying her.

Tom spoke quietly to Myrtle.

“I want to see you,” he said. “Take the next train.”

She nodded.

“Meet me by the newsstand in the station,” he added.

A moment later Wilson returned with two chairs. Myrtle moved away from Tom and stood beside her husband as if nothing unusual had happened.

Tom and I waited outside the garage until she came.

The air was dusty and hot. A thin Italian boy was placing small firecrackers along the railroad track nearby.

“Terrible place,” Tom said, looking around with disgust.

“Yes,” I agreed.

“It does her good to get away from here,” he added.

“Doesn’t her husband object?” I asked.

Tom laughed.

“Wilson? He thinks she goes to visit her sister in New York. He’s too stupid to know anything.”

Soon Myrtle appeared and joined us. We walked together to the train station and took the train into New York.

Myrtle sat in another car so that people from East Egg would not see them together. Tom always tried to hide the affair from certain members of society.

When we arrived in New York Myrtle had changed her dress to a brown one that fit tightly around her hips. She looked pleased and excited by the city.

At the newsstand she bought a magazine and some perfume. Then we took a taxi.

As we drove through the busy streets she suddenly tapped on the glass.

“Stop!” she said. “I want to buy a dog.”

The taxi stopped beside an old man who carried a basket full of small puppies.

Myrtle leaned forward eagerly.

“What kind are they?” she asked.

“All kinds,” said the man.

Myrtle chose one small brown puppy that wriggled helplessly in her hands.

“How much?” she asked.

“Ten dollars,” the man replied.

Tom paid him quickly.

“Here’s your money,” he said. “Go buy ten more dogs with it.”

The puppy settled in Myrtle’s lap while she stroked its soft fur happily.

Soon we arrived at a tall apartment building on the west side of the city. Myrtle gathered the dog and her packages and walked proudly into the building as if she owned it.

“I’m going to invite some people,” she announced as we entered the elevator.

“My sister Catherine will come. And some friends.”

The apartment was small: a living room, a dining room, a bedroom, and a bathroom. The furniture was too large for the space, and the room felt crowded.

Tom opened a locked drawer and brought out a bottle of whiskey.

That afternoon became the second time in my life that I became drunk.

Myrtle called several people on the telephone. Soon guests began to arrive.

Her sister Catherine appeared first. She was thin and fashionable, with red hair and many bracelets that made a constant clicking sound when she moved.

Then came a neighbor named Mr. McKee, a photographer, and his wife.

Myrtle had changed clothes again. She now wore an elaborate dress of cream-colored chiffon. The dress seemed to transform her personality. She moved around the room with great importance, laughing loudly and giving orders.

The whiskey flowed freely.

Catherine leaned close to me and whispered:

“Neither of them can stand the person they’re married to.”

“Really?” I said.

“They should both get a divorce and marry each other,” she continued confidently.

She explained that Tom’s wife Daisy was preventing the marriage.

“She’s a Catholic,” Catherine said. “Catholics don’t believe in divorce.”

This was completely untrue, but Catherine seemed convinced.

As the evening continued the room grew hotter and noisier. People argued, laughed, and told long stories.

Myrtle sat beside me and described how she had first met Tom on a train. She spoke excitedly, repeating the same thought again and again:

“You can’t live forever,” she said. “You can’t live forever.”

The whiskey continued to circulate, and the apartment filled with smoke and loud voices.

Near midnight an argument suddenly began.

Myrtle started shouting Daisy’s name.

“Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!” she cried. “I’ll say it whenever I want!”

Tom stood up quickly.

In one sharp movement he struck her across the face with his open hand.

Myrtle's nose broke instantly.

Blood covered the towels in the bathroom while the women tried to comfort her. The room filled with angry voices and confusion.

Mr. McKee woke from his sleep and stared in shock. Then he quietly left the apartment.

I followed him down the elevator.

Soon afterward I found myself half asleep in the Pennsylvania Station, waiting for the early morning train back to Long Island.

That strange afternoon in the apartment was my first real glimpse into the reckless world surrounding Tom Buchanan—and into the careless cruelty that money and power sometimes create.

Part 3

During the summer nights there was always music coming from my neighbor's house. From my small lawn I could see the lights of Gatsby's enormous garden, shining across the water. Cars arrived every evening, bringing men and women dressed in bright colors. They moved through the garden like moths around the light, laughing and talking while music floated through the warm air.

In the afternoons many of Gatsby's guests swam in the water near his private beach. Others lay in the sun on the sand. Two powerful motorboats pulled people across the water on small boards, sending white foam high into the air.

On weekends Gatsby's large Rolls-Royce drove back and forth between Long Island and New York all day. It carried guests from the city in the morning and returned them late at night. A small yellow station wagon met the trains and brought more visitors to the house.

Every Monday morning the servants worked all day cleaning the damage from the weekend parties. They swept broken glass from the garden paths, repaired chairs, and trimmed the crushed flowers.

Every Friday crates of oranges and lemons arrived from New York. On Monday the empty rinds were thrown away in large piles behind the house. There was even a machine in the kitchen that could squeeze the juice from hundreds of oranges in a short time.

At least once every two weeks a large group of caterers arrived to prepare one of Gatsby's great parties. They set up long buffet tables in the garden, covered with shining silver dishes. There were baked hams, bright salads, pastries, and roasted turkeys. Inside the house a bar was prepared with many kinds of liquor—some drinks so old and rare that many young guests did not know their names.

Around seven o'clock the orchestra arrived. It was not a small band but a full group of musicians with drums, horns, violins, and saxophones. By the time the sun disappeared the house and garden were already filled with guests.

The lights grew brighter as the sky darkened. Music and laughter mixed with the sound of voices calling greetings across the garden. People met friends they had not seen for months and were introduced to strangers they would never see again.

Sometimes a young woman would suddenly step out onto the dancing floor and begin dancing alone. The orchestra would change its music to match her movements, and the crowd would gather around to watch.

The parties had begun.

Although the house stood beside mine, I had never attended one of these gatherings. Then one Saturday morning a chauffeur wearing a blue uniform walked across my lawn and handed me a letter.

The note was written in large, careful handwriting.

Mr. Gatsby would be honored if I would attend his little party that evening. He apologized for not calling on me sooner and said that circumstances had prevented him.

I was surprised. Most people simply arrived at Gatsby's house without an invitation. They came in cars from the city, or they came with friends who had already visited. Once they reached the door they behaved as if they had always been welcome.

That evening I dressed in white flannel clothes and walked across the lawn to Gatsby's house. The garden was already full of people.

I did not know anyone there.

For a while I walked through the crowd, trying to find the host. Whenever I asked someone where Gatsby was, they stared at me with surprise and said they did not know.

Feeling awkward, I moved toward the table where drinks were being served.

Just then I saw Jordan Baker standing on the steps of the house, looking down at the party with calm curiosity.

"Hello," I said loudly, approaching her.

"I thought you might be here," she replied.

She took my arm as if she intended to guide me through the evening. Two young women in identical yellow dresses approached and greeted her excitedly.

"You don't know who we are," one of them said, "but we met you here last month."

"You've dyed your hair since then," Jordan replied calmly.

The girls laughed and moved away.

Jordan and I walked slowly through the garden. A waiter passed carrying a tray of cocktails, and we each took one. We soon joined a small table where the two girls in yellow were sitting with three young men.

They all introduced themselves quickly, but their names disappeared from my memory almost immediately.

"Do you come to these parties often?" Jordan asked one of the girls.

"The last one was the one where we met you," the girl answered.

"I like to come," said her friend Lucille. "I never worry about what I'm doing. I just enjoy myself."

She told us a strange story. At a previous party she had torn her evening dress on a chair. A few days later she received a package containing a new dress from a fashionable shop in New York.

"Did you keep it?" Jordan asked.

"Of course," Lucille said. "It cost two hundred and sixty-five dollars."

“There’s something strange about a man who would do that,” said the other girl.

“Who?” I asked.

“Gatsby.”

The group leaned closer together.

“I heard he killed a man once,” whispered one girl.

“I heard he was a German spy during the war,” said one of the young men.

Another nodded seriously.

“I heard that too.”

The girls shivered with excitement.

“I bet he killed a man,” the first girl insisted softly.

We all looked around the garden, searching for Gatsby.

These rumors seemed to surround him everywhere. People who knew almost nothing about him spoke about him in whispers, as if he were part of a mystery.

Dinner was served around nine o’clock. Jordan invited me to join her group at another table in the garden. The people there seemed proud of being calm and respectable, unlike the louder guests dancing nearby.

After half an hour Jordan leaned toward me.

“This party is too polite,” she whispered. “Let’s find Gatsby.”

We stood up and walked toward the house.

Inside the large library the room was quiet and dark. Most of the guests were outside dancing or drinking. Only a few people remained there.

Jordan and I sat down at a table where a single man about my age was drinking quietly.

“Your face looks familiar,” he said suddenly.

I studied him more closely.

“I think we were in the army together,” he continued. “Third Division, Ninth Machine-Gun Battalion.”

“That’s right,” I said with surprise. “I was there in 1918.”

We began talking about the war and discovered that we had indeed served in the same division. The man spoke politely and seemed genuinely interested in our conversation.

After a few minutes he smiled.

“I’m afraid I haven’t introduced myself,” he said. “I’m Gatsby.”

For a moment I stared at him.

This calm and friendly man was the mysterious host whose parties filled the entire neighborhood with music.

Gatsby smiled again, a warm smile that seemed to understand you completely. It made you feel that he believed in you and trusted you.

At that moment I understood why people were fascinated by him.

There was something rare in his manner—an unusual hopefulness, as if he believed that the future would bring something wonderful.

Before I could say anything more a servant approached him and whispered something in his ear. Gatsby excused himself politely.

“I hope you’re enjoying yourself,” he said. “If there’s anything you need, just ask.”

Then he disappeared into the crowd.

Later that night the orchestra continued playing while people danced beneath the bright lights of the garden. Laughter echoed across the lawn and the air smelled of flowers and wine.

Yet as I watched the party I felt a strange thought forming in my mind.

All of these people had come to Gatsby’s house to enjoy his wealth and his hospitality.

But very few of them knew the man himself.

Part 4

Jordan and I remained in the library for a few minutes after Gatsby left us. The music from the garden drifted through the open windows, mixed with the sound of laughter and glasses touching.

“Well,” Jordan said quietly, “now you’ve met him.”

“Yes,” I replied. “And I hardly know what to think.”

She smiled slightly.

“That’s exactly how everyone feels.”

A moment later Gatsby returned. His expression was friendly but a little serious, as if he were thinking about many things at once.

“I’m glad you came tonight,” he said to me. “I thought you might like the party.”

“It’s very impressive,” I answered.

Gatsby nodded politely, but he did not seem proud of the celebration. Instead he looked around the room almost nervously, as if he were searching for someone.

Then a tall man with glasses approached him and began speaking in a low voice. Gatsby listened carefully, nodded once, and excused himself again.

Jordan watched him leave.

“He asked me about you earlier,” she said.

“About me?” I asked, surprised.

“Yes. And he asked if I would speak with you later.”

I waited for her to explain more, but she only smiled mysteriously.

“I can’t tell you here,” she said. “Let’s walk outside.”

We returned to the garden where the party was now louder and brighter than before. The orchestra had begun playing faster music, and many couples were dancing on a large wooden platform.

Jordan led me toward the far end of the garden where the crowd was thinner. The lights from the house shone across the grass, and beyond them the dark water of the bay stretched quietly toward the horizon.

“Gatsby asked me to tell you something,” she said.

“What is it?”

She looked at me carefully before answering.

“He wants to see Daisy.”

I stopped walking.

“Daisy?” I repeated.

“Yes. Your cousin Daisy Buchanan.”

The connection surprised me so much that for a moment I could not speak.

“Gatsby knew Daisy before the war,” Jordan continued. “They were in love.”

The music from the party floated softly through the warm night while she told

me the story.

Five years earlier, before the war, Daisy had lived in Louisville, Kentucky. At that time Gatsby had been a young army officer stationed nearby. He was handsome and charming, and many girls admired him.

Daisy was one of the most beautiful young women in the city. Her house was always filled with visitors, officers, and friends.

Gatsby visited her often.

“They fell deeply in love,” Jordan said.

But Gatsby was poor, and Daisy came from a wealthy family. Her parents did not approve of the relationship. Soon Gatsby had to leave for the war in Europe.

Daisy promised to wait for him.

But time passed, and letters from the war arrived slowly. Meanwhile Daisy’s life in Louisville continued with parties and celebrations.

Then Tom Buchanan appeared.

Tom was rich, confident, and powerful. He arrived in Louisville with expensive horses and large amounts of money. Daisy began spending time with him, and soon he asked her to marry him.

At first Daisy hesitated. On the night before the wedding she became very upset.

“She drank too much champagne,” Jordan said. “She cried and said she had made a mistake.”

Daisy even held Gatsby’s last letter in her hand and refused to let it go.

But the next day she married Tom.

After the war Gatsby returned and learned what had happened. Daisy was already living with Tom in Chicago.

“He never stopped loving her,” Jordan said quietly.

I looked across the water toward East Egg where Daisy’s house stood somewhere beyond the darkness.

“So Gatsby bought this house to be near her?” I asked.

Jordan nodded.

“He knew that she lived across the bay. He hoped that someday she might come to one of his parties.”

Suddenly many strange details of the summer began to make sense. Gatsby's enormous parties, his beautiful house, the endless stream of guests—perhaps all of it existed for one reason.

Daisy.

Jordan continued speaking.

“Gatsby doesn't want to meet her at his house,” she said. “He thinks it might make her uncomfortable. He wants you to invite Daisy to tea at your house one afternoon.”

“And then Gatsby will come?” I asked.

“Yes.”

For a moment I considered the idea. It felt like participating in some quiet and dangerous secret.

“Does Daisy know anything about this?” I asked.

“No,” Jordan said. “She only knows that you live next door to a very rich man named Gatsby.”

The orchestra suddenly ended a song, and applause rose from the crowd.

“Well?” Jordan asked.

“All right,” I said slowly. “I'll invite Daisy.”

Jordan smiled.

“I thought you would.”

We walked back toward the house. The party was beginning to fade as midnight approached. Some guests were leaving, while others continued dancing with increasing excitement.

I searched the garden for Gatsby but did not see him again that night.

A few days later I received a telephone call from Jordan.

“Daisy will come to tea tomorrow afternoon,” she told me.

The next day the sky was grey and rainy. I spent the morning nervously preparing my small house for the visit. Flowers arrived from a shop in New York, and Gatsby himself appeared unexpectedly with a gardener to help cut my grass.

He looked pale and worried.

“Everything must be perfect,” he said.

The rain continued falling steadily.

At three o'clock Daisy's car arrived.

She stepped out holding an umbrella, her voice bright and musical as always.

But when she saw Gatsby standing in the living room she stopped suddenly.

For a moment no one spoke.

Five years had passed since they had last seen each other.

Gatsby looked at her as if he had been waiting for this moment his entire life.

The long dream of Jay Gatsby was finally beginning.

Part 5

For a moment none of us moved.

Daisy stood in the doorway holding her umbrella. Gatsby stood beside the table, pale and nervous. I felt that I had brought together two people who were suddenly afraid of each other.

"This is Mr. Gatsby," I said.

Gatsby stepped forward quickly.

"We've met before," he said, trying to sound calm.

Daisy nodded politely.

"Yes," she said softly.

Then the three of us sat down in the small living room. The rain tapped steadily against the windows. Gatsby leaned forward awkwardly, and Daisy looked around the room as if searching for something to say.

I tried to help the conversation.

"It's raining hard today," I said.

"Yes," Daisy answered.

After that no one spoke.

Gatsby stood up suddenly.

"I'll go now," he said nervously.

"No!" Daisy cried quickly.

Her voice surprised all of us. She laughed a little to hide her emotion.

“Please stay,” she said.

But the silence returned.

I felt that my presence was making the situation worse. I stood up.

“I’ll make some tea,” I said. “Excuse me for a moment.”

When I returned a few minutes later the room had changed completely. Gatsby and Daisy were standing close together, talking quietly. Gatsby’s face was bright with happiness, and Daisy’s eyes were shining.

The awkwardness had disappeared.

Gatsby looked at me gratefully.

“We were just talking about old times,” he said.

Daisy smiled.

“It’s wonderful to see you again,” she told him.

The rain began to stop, and sunlight slowly returned to the sky. Gatsby suddenly looked around the room and laughed.

“I’m sorry about the weather,” he said.

“It’s not your fault,” Daisy replied.

He shook his head.

“It almost seems like it is.”

After a moment Gatsby stood up and looked at me excitedly.

“Nick, would you like to come over to my house?” he asked. “You and Daisy.”

Daisy hesitated only briefly.

“That sounds lovely,” she said.

We walked together across the lawn toward Gatsby’s enormous mansion. The clouds were breaking apart, and the sun was beginning to shine through them.

Gatsby opened the front door and led us inside.

The house was magnificent. The rooms were large and bright, filled with beautiful furniture and shining decorations. Daisy walked slowly through the rooms, looking at everything with amazement.

“You have such a beautiful house,” she said.

Gatsby watched her carefully.

“I had the house built so that I could see your home across the bay,” he

explained.

Daisy looked toward the window.

“Oh,” she said softly.

Gatsby led us upstairs into a large bedroom where many expensive shirts were stacked neatly in a cabinet. He began throwing the shirts onto the table—shirts of every color and fabric.

Daisy watched in silence.

Then suddenly she buried her face in the shirts and began to cry.

“They’re such beautiful shirts,” she said through her tears.

Gatsby stood beside her, confused and deeply moved.

I realized that Daisy was not crying about the shirts themselves. She was crying because she understood how much Gatsby had done for her—how many years he had spent dreaming about this moment.

After a while Daisy recovered and laughed lightly.

Gatsby led us out onto a balcony where we could see the entire garden and the shining water of the bay.

“If it wasn’t for the fog,” Gatsby said, “you could see your house clearly from here.”

Daisy leaned against the railing.

“You always have a green light burning all night at the end of your dock,” Gatsby added.

Daisy nodded.

Gatsby stared toward the water, remembering the many nights he had stood there alone watching that distant light.

Now Daisy herself was standing beside him.

The dream that had guided him for years was finally real.

As we walked back inside I noticed that Gatsby had changed. The nervous tension had disappeared from his face. He moved easily now, speaking with quiet confidence.

Yet I also sensed that something delicate had changed.

For many years Gatsby had imagined Daisy as a perfect vision, a shining dream

that could never fade. Now she was standing beside him in the ordinary light of day.

Reality had finally touched the dream.

Daisy and Gatsby continued talking happily while I watched them. Their voices were soft and excited as they remembered the past.

I began to feel that I was no longer necessary.

Quietly I stood up.

“I think I should go home,” I said.

Gatsby looked at me with deep gratitude.

“Thank you, old sport,” he said.

Daisy smiled warmly.

I walked back across the lawn toward my small house. Behind me I could hear their voices drifting through the open windows of Gatsby’s mansion.

As I reached my door I turned once more and looked back.

Gatsby’s enormous house shone brightly in the afternoon sun. Somewhere inside, the two people who had been separated for five long years were finally together again.

At that moment Gatsby seemed to possess everything he had ever wanted.

But dreams, I would later learn, can be fragile things.

Part 6

After that afternoon Daisy and Gatsby met often.

Sometimes Daisy drove across the bay to Gatsby’s house. Other times Gatsby visited her in the afternoons while Tom was away. Their meetings became quiet and secret, yet they filled Gatsby with a new happiness.

I saw him frequently during those weeks. His manner had changed. The anxious tension that had always surrounded him was gone. Now he moved calmly through his house and garden, speaking in a relaxed voice and smiling easily.

Yet the great parties at his mansion suddenly stopped.

One Saturday night I walked over to Gatsby’s house and found the garden

completely dark. The orchestra had disappeared. The long buffet tables were gone.

Gatsby himself answered the door.

“I’ve dismissed most of the servants,” he explained. “I don’t want strangers talking about Daisy.”

The explanation sounded simple, but it showed how carefully he protected their meetings.

A few days later Daisy invited me to lunch at her house. Gatsby would also be there.

When I arrived I noticed that Tom Buchanan seemed unusually restless. He moved around the room with nervous energy, glancing from Daisy to Gatsby and back again.

Tom had begun to suspect something.

Gatsby spoke politely, but his eyes rarely left Daisy’s face. Daisy seemed excited and happy, laughing more than usual.

The tension between the three of them filled the room like heavy air before a storm.

After lunch Tom suddenly suggested that we all drive into New York together.

“Let’s go to town,” he said.

It was a hot afternoon in the middle of summer. The sky looked pale and empty, and the heat pressed down on everything.

We left in two cars. Tom drove Gatsby’s yellow car with Jordan and me. Gatsby drove Tom’s car with Daisy beside him.

As we drove through the valley of ashes the dust rose around us in slow grey clouds. The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg looked down silently from their tall sign.

When we passed Wilson’s garage I noticed that George Wilson looked even weaker than before. His face was pale, and he seemed sick.

“What’s the matter with him?” I asked Tom.

“He’s found out something,” Tom replied grimly.

We stopped briefly at the garage. Wilson spoke to Tom in a low voice.

“I’m taking my wife away,” Wilson said. “We’re going West.”

Tom looked surprised.

“When?” he asked.

“As soon as I can get enough money.”

As we drove away Tom looked thoughtful.

I knew that Wilson’s decision meant that Myrtle’s secret meetings with Tom might soon end. The idea clearly annoyed him.

When we reached New York the heat had become unbearable. The streets shimmered in the sun, and even the air seemed to tremble.

Tom rented a large room in a hotel where we could sit and talk. We gathered inside, trying to escape the heat.

At first the conversation moved slowly. Everyone seemed uncomfortable.

Gatsby sat quietly beside Daisy. Their closeness was obvious now.

Tom watched them carefully.

Finally he spoke.

“I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife,” he said angrily.

The words filled the room like a sudden explosion.

Daisy looked frightened.

Gatsby stood up.

“Your wife doesn’t love you,” he said calmly. “She never loved you. She loves me.”

Daisy stared at him.

Tom laughed harshly.

“You must be crazy,” he said.

But Gatsby continued.

“Daisy,” he said softly, “tell him the truth.”

Daisy hesitated.

The room felt hotter than ever.

“Tell him you never loved him,” Gatsby insisted.

Daisy looked from Gatsby to Tom and back again.

“I... I did love him once,” she said weakly.

Gatsby's face changed. The certainty that had always guided him suddenly trembled.

Tom smiled with satisfaction.

"You see?" he said.

But Gatsby refused to give up.

"You loved me too," he said desperately.

Daisy began to cry.

The dream that Gatsby had built for five long years was beginning to break apart.

Tom moved closer to him.

"I suppose you think you can just take my wife away," Tom said.

Gatsby said nothing.

Tom's voice became harder.

"I know all about you," he continued. "Your drugstores. Your business with criminals."

Daisy looked shocked.

Gatsby remained silent, but his face grew pale.

The room fell quiet again.

At last Tom turned to Daisy.

"Go home with Gatsby," he said suddenly. "Take his car."

Daisy stood slowly.

Gatsby followed her out of the room.

A few minutes later Jordan, Tom, and I left in the other car.

The terrible heat still hung over the city as we began the drive back toward Long Island.

None of us knew that before the night ended everything would change.

Part 7

The drive back from New York began quietly.

Tom sat beside me in the front seat of the car. Jordan was behind us. The

evening light had begun to fade, and the air felt slightly cooler than before.

None of us spoke for several minutes.

The argument in the hotel room had shaken everyone. I kept thinking about Daisy's face when Gatsby asked her to say that she had never loved Tom. For years Gatsby had believed that she would say exactly those words. But when the moment arrived, she could not.

At last Tom broke the silence.

"That fellow's finished," he said confidently.

I did not answer.

Tom continued driving steadily toward Long Island. The road stretched ahead through fields and small towns, glowing faintly in the evening light.

As we approached the valley of ashes we saw a group of people gathered beside the road.

Tom slowed the car.

"Something's happened," he said.

A police officer stood near the crowd, holding up his hand to stop traffic. Another man waved us past slowly.

As our car moved closer I saw a terrible sight.

A woman's body lay in the road.

Her dress was torn and covered with dust. Her mouth was open, and dark blood had spread across the ground.

Jordan gasped quietly.

Tom stopped the car and jumped out. I followed him.

A man pushed through the crowd toward us. It was Michaelis, the owner of a small restaurant near the garage.

"It's Myrtle Wilson," he said breathlessly.

For a moment I could not speak.

Myrtle had been struck by a car.

Michaelis explained what had happened. Myrtle had suddenly run out into the road, waving her arms wildly. A large yellow car had come speeding down the highway. It had not stopped.

The car had hit her and continued driving.

Tom's face changed color.

"Did you see the car?" he asked quickly.

"Yes," Michaelis said. "It was yellow."

Tom looked at me.

Gatsby's car was bright yellow.

A terrible thought formed in my mind.

Had Gatsby been driving?

Tom pushed through the crowd and entered Wilson's garage. I followed him.

George Wilson stood in the center of the room, shaking with grief. His pale face looked almost grey in the dim light.

"My God," he whispered again and again.

Tom placed a hand on Wilson's shoulder.

"Wilson," he said gently, "I'm terribly sorry."

Wilson lifted his head slowly.

"Someone killed her," he said.

Tom nodded.

"Yes."

Wilson's voice became harder.

"I'll find the man who did it," he said.

Tom looked at him carefully but said nothing more.

Soon we returned to the car and continued driving toward East Egg.

The sun had completely disappeared now, and darkness spread across the road.

When we reached Daisy's house Tom stopped the car. He and Jordan went inside.

I remained outside for a moment.

The night was quiet and warm. A single light burned inside the Buchanan house.

As I stood there I noticed a figure standing in the shadows beside the hedge.

It was Gatsby.

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

"Just waiting," he said.

His voice sounded calm, but his eyes were tense.

“Was Daisy driving the car?” I asked quietly.

Gatsby hesitated only briefly.

“Yes,” he said.

The truth struck me with sudden force.

Daisy had been driving Gatsby’s car when Myrtle ran into the road.

Daisy had killed Myrtle Wilson.

Gatsby looked toward the house.

“Of course I’ll say I was driving,” he added quickly. “Daisy must never know anything about this.”

I stared at him.

Even now his only concern was protecting Daisy.

“Is she all right?” he asked anxiously.

“I think so,” I replied.

Gatsby continued watching the house.

“She was very frightened,” he said. “But the accident wasn’t her fault. That woman ran out in front of the car.”

For a moment neither of us spoke.

Then I glanced toward the bright window of the Buchanan house.

Inside I could see Tom and Daisy sitting together at a table. They were talking quietly, leaning toward each other in serious conversation.

They looked calm.

Watching them, I suddenly understood something about the world they belonged to.

Tom and Daisy were careless people. They broke things and hurt people, and then they retreated into their wealth and comfort, leaving others to deal with the damage.

Gatsby remained standing beside the hedge, still watching the house.

“I’m going to stay here tonight,” he said. “In case Daisy needs me.”

I nodded slowly.

Then I walked back across the lawn toward my own small house.

Behind me Gatsby continued his silent watch in the darkness.

The dream he had pursued for so many years was now balanced on the edge of disaster.

Part 8

The next morning I woke early.

The events of the previous night returned to my mind slowly, like dark shapes rising from deep water. Myrtle Wilson was dead. Daisy had been driving Gatsby's car. And Gatsby himself had remained outside the Buchanan house all night, waiting in case Daisy needed him.

I dressed quickly and walked across the lawn toward Gatsby's mansion.

The house, which had once been filled with music and laughter, now stood silent. The enormous garden looked empty and strangely lifeless in the morning sunlight.

Gatsby himself was standing beside the swimming pool.

He had not slept.

"Good morning, old sport," he said quietly when he saw me.

His voice sounded calm, but his face showed the exhaustion of a long night.

"Did Daisy ever come out?" I asked.

Gatsby shook his head.

"No," he said.

He explained that he had waited outside until almost dawn. No one had come out of the house. Finally he had walked home through the early morning fog.

We sat down together beside the pool.

For a while neither of us spoke.

At last Gatsby began telling me about his past.

His real name, he said, was James Gatz.

He had been born on a small farm in North Dakota. His parents were poor farmers who worked hard but never earned much money.

Even as a boy Gatsby had dreamed of a different life. He imagined success,

wealth, and adventure far beyond the simple world where he had grown up.

“I knew I was meant for something better,” he said.

When he was seventeen he left home and began traveling across the country, working at different jobs. One day he met a wealthy man named Dan Cody.

Cody owned a large yacht and spent his life sailing around the world. Gatsby worked for him for several years, learning how wealthy men lived and spoke.

“That’s when James Gatz became Jay Gatsby,” he said.

Cody planned to leave Gatsby a large amount of money when he died. But Cody’s relatives took the money for themselves, and Gatsby received nothing.

Soon after that he joined the army and went to war in Europe.

It was during that time that he met Daisy in Louisville.

Gatsby’s voice softened when he spoke her name.

“She was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen,” he said.

Gatsby fell deeply in love with her. But he knew he was still poor, and Daisy belonged to a world of wealth and comfort.

After the war Gatsby decided that he must become rich if he ever wanted Daisy again.

Over the next few years he built his fortune through business dealings that were sometimes questionable. Eventually he had enough money to buy the enormous house beside the bay.

“I wanted to be close to her,” he said.

For many nights Gatsby had stood at the edge of his lawn looking across the water toward the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock.

That small light had become the symbol of everything he hoped for.

Now, at last, Daisy had returned to his life.

Yet something in Gatsby’s expression told me that he sensed the dream beginning to slip away.

After a while I stood up.

“I have to go to work,” I said.

Gatsby nodded.

“Of course.”

I walked toward the gate but then turned back.

“They’re a rotten crowd,” I said. “You’re worth the whole group put together.”

Gatsby smiled.

It was the only compliment I ever gave him, and I believe he understood how sincerely I meant it.

Later that morning I went into the city as usual. But I could not concentrate on my work. My thoughts kept returning to Gatsby and to the terrible events of the previous night.

Around noon I received a telephone call from Jordan Baker.

She spoke quickly, her voice tense.

“Have you heard what happened?” she asked.

“Yes,” I said.

“Tom says the woman ran into the road,” she continued. “But the newspapers are already talking about the yellow car.”

I knew what she meant.

Gatsby’s car was easily recognizable.

When the afternoon ended I returned to West Egg. As I walked along the quiet road toward Gatsby’s house I noticed that the garden was still empty.

The enormous mansion looked strangely lonely.

A servant answered the door and told me that Gatsby was outside by the pool again.

I walked through the garden and found him lying on a small mattress beside the water. The sunlight reflected from the pool and danced across the white walls of the house.

“You should rest,” I said.

Gatsby shook his head.

“I’m waiting for a telephone call,” he replied.

“From Daisy?”

“Yes.”

He believed that Daisy would call him and tell him what to do next.

But as the afternoon slowly passed, no call came.

The sun moved lower in the sky, and the garden grew quiet.

Gatsby remained beside the pool, still watching the telephone, still waiting for the voice that might save his dream.

In another part of Long Island, a different man was also waiting.

George Wilson sat in the dark garage beside his wife's body.

And somewhere in his grief and confusion a terrible idea was beginning to form.

Part 9

While Gatsby waited beside the swimming pool, another drama was unfolding in the valley of ashes.

George Wilson had not slept since Myrtle's death.

The small garage was dark and silent. Wilson sat in a chair with his head in his hands. His neighbor Michaelis stayed with him through the night, trying to comfort him.

Wilson spoke very little at first. He simply repeated the same words again and again.

"Oh, my God," he whispered.

But as the hours passed his grief slowly changed into something darker.

Late in the night Wilson stood up suddenly and began walking around the room. His pale eyes looked wild.

"I know what happened," he said.

Michaelis tried to calm him.

"You need rest," he said.

Wilson shook his head.

"God sees everything," he continued.

He pointed toward the large sign outside the garage—the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg staring down from their tall metal frame.

"Those eyes see everything," Wilson said.

His mind had turned the old advertisement into a symbol of divine judgment.

Wilson believed that someone must pay for Myrtle's death.

During the morning he learned from Tom Buchanan that the yellow car belonged to Gatsby.

Tom did not say that Daisy had been driving. Instead he allowed Wilson to believe that Gatsby himself had killed Myrtle.

Wilson accepted the idea immediately.

His grief hardened into determination.

That afternoon he left the garage and began searching for the owner of the yellow car.

Meanwhile Gatsby remained beside his swimming pool.

The day had grown warm again, though the terrible heat of the previous afternoon had passed. The sky was clear and bright above the enormous garden.

I visited him once more before going home for the evening.

Gatsby was lying quietly on the mattress beside the water.

“Has Daisy called?” I asked.

He shook his head.

“Not yet.”

But his voice still carried hope.

I looked around the silent garden.

Only a few days earlier hundreds of guests had filled this place with music and laughter. Now the mansion seemed empty and strangely unreal, like a stage after the actors have left.

“Maybe you should leave town for a few days,” I suggested.

Gatsby shook his head again.

“I can’t,” he said.

His eyes turned toward the house where the telephone stood.

“Daisy might call.”

I wanted to say more, but something stopped me. Gatsby’s hope was so strong that it felt cruel to challenge it.

So I simply nodded and walked back toward my own house.

That evening passed quietly.

As darkness fell I thought again about Tom and Daisy. I wondered what they

were saying to each other inside their large house across the bay.

The next morning I went to work in New York as usual. Yet I felt uneasy all day.

Shortly after noon the telephone rang in my office.

A voice spoke quickly.

“Is this Mr. Carraway?”

“Yes.”

“This is the police.”

For a moment the room seemed to tilt around me.

“What is it?” I asked.

“You should come to Mr. Gatsby’s house at once.”

I left the office immediately and took the first train back to West Egg.

When I reached the mansion several police officers were already standing in the garden. A small crowd had gathered near the swimming pool.

My heart began to beat faster as I pushed through the people.

Gatsby’s body lay floating in the blue water.

His arms moved slowly with the gentle motion of the pool.

A gun rested on the grass nearby.

A few feet away another body lay beside the hedge.

It was George Wilson.

Wilson had found Gatsby and shot him beside the pool. Then he had turned the gun on himself.

The terrible chain of events had reached its end.

Gatsby, who had spent his life chasing a beautiful dream, had died alone in his enormous house.

The dream was finished.

But the strange sadness of Gatsby’s life was not yet over.

The world that had filled his parties with laughter would now reveal how little it truly cared for the man himself.

Part 10

News of Gatsby's death spread quickly through New York and Long Island.

Reporters arrived at the mansion almost immediately. They asked many questions and wrote long stories about the mysterious millionaire who had died beside his swimming pool.

Yet most of the stories were wrong.

The reporters spoke about Gatsby's wealth, his parties, and the strange rumors that had always surrounded him. But they understood very little about the man himself.

I felt responsible for arranging Gatsby's funeral.

After all the excitement and noise of his parties, I expected that many people would come to say goodbye to him.

But I soon discovered that this was not true.

I telephoned Daisy and Tom Buchanan first.

Their house in East Egg was already empty.

A servant told me that they had left early that morning and had not said where they were going.

I called several people who had attended Gatsby's parties during the summer. Most of them answered politely, but none seemed eager to come.

Some said they were busy. Others avoided giving a clear answer.

I realized that the hundreds of guests who had once filled Gatsby's garden had known only his wealth and his generosity. Very few had cared about him as a person.

The next day Gatsby's father arrived.

His name was Henry Gatz, a thin old man with a proud expression. He had traveled all the way from Minnesota after reading about Gatsby's death in the newspaper.

When I met him he seemed both sad and deeply proud.

"My son made something of himself," he said. "He did very well."

He showed me an old book that Gatsby had owned as a boy. Inside the book young James Gatz had written a list of personal rules for self-improvement.

The list included things like rising early in the morning, studying carefully, exercising regularly, and saving money.

Gatsby's father held the book gently.

"He always had big dreams," he said.

I felt a deep sadness listening to him. The man who had believed so strongly in his son would soon bury him.

On the morning of the funeral the sky was grey and cold. A light rain fell over West Egg.

I waited outside the mansion with Gatsby's father and a few servants.

No one else came.

I had telephoned many people, but none had arrived.

The silence felt strange and painful.

Finally a single car drove slowly up the long road toward the house.

The passenger who stepped out surprised me.

It was the man who had once shown me Gatsby's library during the party—the one with the large glasses who had been amazed that the books were real.

His name, I remembered, was Owl Eyes.

He looked around the empty garden with disbelief.

"Nobody came?" he asked.

I shook my head.

"It's a shame," he said quietly.

The funeral itself was short and simple.

The small group walked together through the rain toward the cemetery. The grey sky and the cold wind made the scene feel lonely and distant.

Gatsby's father stood beside the grave, holding the old book in his trembling hands.

Owl Eyes removed his hat.

"The poor son-of-a-bitch," he murmured softly.

After the funeral I returned to the empty mansion one last time.

The rooms felt hollow and lifeless. Dust already began to gather on the furniture. The gardens were silent without the music and laughter of summer.

I walked down to the edge of the lawn and looked across the water toward East Egg.

Somewhere in the distance stood Daisy's house.

Gatsby had once stood here night after night watching the green light at the end of her dock.

That light had represented everything he believed in—hope, love, and the promise of a beautiful future.

But the dream had never truly belonged to reality.

Gatsby had believed that the past could return exactly as it once had been. He believed that with enough hope and determination he could recreate the perfect moment he had lost.

Yet time moves forward, never backward.

Standing beside the dark water, I understood that Gatsby's dream was part of a much larger human hope—the belief that the future will bring something better than the past.

We move forward through life with that hope always in front of us, like a distant light shining across the water.

And even though the current of time constantly pulls us backward, we continue reaching toward that light.