THE GREAT GATSBY Chapter 1 In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since. "Whenever you feel like criticizing any one," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had." He didn't say any more but we've always been unusually communi
ative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores. The abnormal mind is quick to detect and attach itself to this quality when it appears in a normal person, and so it came abo
ut that in college I was unjustly accused of being a politician, because I was privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men. Most of the confidences were unsought--frequently I have feigned sleep, preoccupation, or a hostile levity when I realized by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon--for the intimate revelations of young men
or at least the terms in which they express them are usually plagiaristic and marred by obvious suppressions. Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth. And, after boasting th
is way of my tolerance, I come to the admission that it has a limit. Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes but after a certain point I don't care what it's founded on. When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimp
ses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction--Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one
of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the "creative temperament"--it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. N
o--Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men. My family have been prominent, well-to-do people in this middle-western city for three generations. The Carraways are something of a clan and we have a tradi
tion that we're descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch, but the actual founder of my line was my grandfather's brother who came here in fifty-one, sent a substitute to the Civil War and started the wholesale hardware business that my father carries on today. I never saw this great-uncle but I'm supposed to look like him--with special reference to the rather hard-boiled painti
ng that hangs in Father's office. I graduated from New Haven in 1915, just a quarter of a century after my father, and a little later I participated in that delayed Teutonic migration known as the Great War. I enjoyed the counter-raid so thoroughly that I came back restless. Instead of being the warm center of the world the middle-west now seemed like the ragged edge of the un
iverse--so I decided to go east and learn the bond business. Everybody I knew was in the bond business so I supposed it could support one more single man. All my aunts and uncles talked it over as if they were choosing a prep-school for me and finally said, "Why--ye-es" with very grave, hesitant faces. Father agreed to finance me for a year and after various delays I cam
e east, permanently, I thought, in the spring of twenty-two. The practical thing was to find rooms in the city but it was a warm season and I had just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees, so when a young man at the office suggested that we take a house together in a commuting town it sounded like a great idea. He found the house, a weather beaten cardboard bun
galow at eighty a month, but at the last minute the firm ordered him to Washington and I went out to the country alone. I had a dog, at least I had him for a few days until he ran away, and an old Dodge and a Finnish woman who made my bed and cooked breakfast and muttered Finnish wisdom to herself over the electric stove. It was lonely for a day or so until one morning
some man, more recently arrived than I, stopped me on the road. "How do you get to West Egg village?" he asked helplessly. I told him. And as I walked on I was lonely no longer. I was a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler. He had casually conferred on me the freedom of the neighborhood. And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees--jus
t as things grow in fast movies--I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer. There was so much to read for one thing and so much fine health to be pulled down out of the young breath-giving air. I bought a dozen volumes on banking and credit and investment securities and they stood on my shelf in red and gold like new money from t
he mint, promising to unfold the shining secrets that only Midas and Morgan and Maecenas knew. And I had the high intention of reading many other books besides. I was rather literary in college--one year I wrote a series of very solemn and obvious editorials for the "Yale News"--and now I was going to bring back all such things into my life and become again that most li
mited of all specialists, the "well-rounded man." This isn't just an epigram--life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all. It was a matter of chance that I should have rented a house in one of the strangest communities in North America. It was on that slender riotous island which extends itself due east of New York and where there are, among othe
r natural curiosities, two unusual formations of land. Twenty miles from the city a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and separated only by a courtesy bay, jut out into the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western Hemisphere, the great wet barnyard of Long Island Sound. They are not perfect ovals--like the egg in the Columbus story they are both crush
ed flat at the contact end--but their physical resemblance must be a source of perpetual confusion to the gulls that fly overhead. To the wingless a more arresting phenomenon is their dissimilarity in every particular except shape and size. I lived at West Egg, the--well, the less fashionable of the two, though this is a most superficial tag to express the bizarre and not a little s
inister contrast between them. My house was at the very tip of the egg, only fifty yards from the Sound, and squeezed between two huge places that rented for twelve or fifteen thousand a season. The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard--it was a factual imitation of some Hôtel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin bear
d of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was Gatsby's mansion. Or rather, as I didn't know Mr. Gatsby it was a mansion inhabited by a gentleman of that name. My own house was an eye-sore, but it was a small eye-sore, and it had been overlooked, so I had a view of the water, a partial view of my neighbor's lawn, and the co
nsoling proximity of millionaires--all for eighty dollars a month. Across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water, and the history of the summer really begins on the evening I drove over there to have dinner with the Tom Buchanans. Daisy was my second cousin once removed and I'd known Tom in college. And just after the war I
spent two days with them in Chicago. Her husband, among various physical accomplishments, had been one of the most powerful ends that ever played football at New Haven--a national figure in a way, one of those men who reach such an acute limited excellence at twenty-one that everything afterward savors of anti-climax. His family were enormously wealthy--even in c
ollege his freedom with money was a matter for reproach--but now he'd left Chicago and come east in a fashion that rather took your breath away: for instance he'd brought down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest. It was hard to realize that a man in my own generation was wealthy enough to do that. Why they came east I don't know. They had spent a year in France, f
or no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together. This was a permanent move, said Daisy over the telephone, but I didn't believe it--I had no sight into Daisy's heart but I felt that Tom would drift on forever seeking a little wistfully for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game. And so it
happened that on a warm windy evening I drove over to East Egg to see two old friends whom I scarcely knew at all. Their house was even more elaborate than I expected, a cheerful red and white Georgian Colonial mansion overlooking the bay. The lawn started at the beach and ran toward the front door for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sun-dials and brick walks and bu
rning gardens--finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run. The front was broken by a line of French windows, glowing now with reflected gold, and wide open to the warm windy afternoon, and Tom Buchanan in riding clothes was standing with his legs apart on the front porch. He had changed since his New
Haven years. Now he was a sturdy, straw haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining, arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave him the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward. Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body--he seemed to fill thos
e glistening boots until he strained the top lacing and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat. It was a body capable of enormous leverage--a cruel body. His speaking voice, a gruff husky tenor, added to the impression of fractiousness he conveyed. There was a touch of paternal contempt in it, even toward people he like
d--and there were men at New Haven who had hated his guts. "Now, don't think my opinion on these matters is final," he seemed to say, "just because I'm stronger and more of a man than you are." We were in the same Senior Society, and while we were never intimate I always had the impression that he approved of me and wanted me to like him with some harsh, defiant w
istfulness of his own. We talked for a few minutes on the sunny porch. "I've got a nice place here," he said, his eyes flashing about restlessly. Turning me around by one arm he moved a broad flat hand along the front vista, including in its sweep a sunken Italian garden, a half acre of deep pungent roses and a snub-nosed motor boat that bumped the tide off shore. "It belon
ged to Demaine the oil man." He turned me around again, politely and abruptly. "We'll go inside." We walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-colored space, fragilely bound into the house by French windows at either end. The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew throug
h the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding cake of the ceiling--and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea. The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anc
hored balloon. They were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and the caught wind died
out about the room and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor. The younger of the two was a stranger to me. She was extended full length at her end of the divan, completely motionless and with her chin raised a little as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall. If she saw me out of the corner of her eyes
she gave no hint of it--indeed, I was almost surprised into murmuring an apology for having disturbed her by coming in. The other girl, Daisy, made an attempt to rise--she leaned slightly forward with a conscientious expression--then she laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh, and I laughed too and came forward into the room. "I'm p-paralyzed with happiness." She laug
hed again, as if she said something very witty, and held my hand for a moment, looking up into my face, promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see. That was a way she had. She hinted in a murmur that the surname of the balancing girl was Baker. (I've heard it said that Daisy's murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant crit
icism that made it no less charming.) At any rate Miss Baker's lips fluttered, she nodded at me almost imperceptibly and then quickly tipped her head back again--the object she was balancing had obviously tottered a little and given her something of a fright. Again a sort of apology arose to my lips. Almost any exhibition of complete self sufficiency draws a stunned tribute
from me. I looked back at my cousin who began to ask me questions in her low, thrilling voice. It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth--but there was an excitement in her voice that men
who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered "Listen," a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour. I told her how I had stopped off in Chicago for a day on my way east and how a dozen people had sent their love through me. "Do they miss me?" s
he cried ecstatically. "The whole town is desolate. All the cars have the left rear wheel painted black as a mourning wreath and there's a persistent wail all night along the North Shore." "How gorgeous! Let's go back, Tom. Tomorrow!" Then she added irrelevantly, "You ought to see the baby." "I'd like to." "She's asleep. She's two years old. Haven't you ever seen her?" "Nev
er." "Well, you ought to see her. She's----" Tom Buchanan who had been hovering restlessly about the room stopped and rested his hand on my shoulder. "What you doing, Nick?" "I'm a bond man." "Who with?" I told him. "Never heard of them," he remarked decisively. This annoyed me. "You will," I answered shortly. "You will if you stay in the East." "Oh, I'll stay in the E
ast, don't you worry," he said, glancing at Daisy and then back at me, as if he were alert for something more. "I'd be a God Damned fool to live anywhere else." At this point Miss Baker said "Absolutely!" with such suddenness that I started--it was the first word she uttered since I came into the room. Evidently it surprised her as much as it did me, for she yawned and wi
th a series of rapid, deft movements stood up into the room. "I'm stiff," she complained, "I've been lying on that sofa for as long as I can remember." "Don't look at me," Daisy retorted. "I've been trying to get you to New York all afternoon." "No, thanks," said Miss Baker to the four cocktails just in from the pantry, "I'm absolutely in training." Her host looked at her inc
redulously. "You are!" He took down his drink as if it were a drop in the bottom of a glass. "How you ever get anything done is beyond me." I looked at Miss Baker wondering what it was she "got done." I enjoyed looking at her. She was a slender, small-breasted girl, with an erect carriage which she accentuated by throwing her body backward at the shoulders like
a young cadet. Her grey sun-strained eyes looked back at me with polite reciprocal curiosity out of a wan, charming discontented face. It occurred to me now that I had seen her, or a picture of her, somewhere before. "You live in West Egg," she remarked contemptuously. "I k now somebody there." "I don't know a single----" "You must know Gatsby." "Gats
by?" demanded Daisy. "What Gatsby?" Before I could reply that he was my neighbor dinner was announced; wedging his tense arm imperatively under mine Tom Buchanan compelled me from the room as though he were moving a checker to another square. Slenderly, languidly, t heir hands set lightly on their hips the two young women preceded us o
ut onto a rosy-colored porch open toward the sunset where four candles flickered on the table in the diminished wind. "Why CANDLES?" objected Daisy, frowning. She snapped them out with her fingers. "In two weeks it'll be the longest day in the year." She lo oked at us all radiantly. "Do you always watch for the longest day of the ye
ar and then miss it? I always watch for the longest day in the year and then miss it." "We ought to plan something," yawned Miss Baker, sitting down at the table as if she were getting into bed. "All right," said Daisy. "What'll we plan?" She turn ed to me h el plessly. "What do people plan?" Before I could answer her eyes fast
ened with an awed expression on her little finger. "Look!" she complained. "I hurt it." We all looked--the knuckle was black and blue. "You did it, Tom," she said accusingly. "I know you didn't mean to but you DID do it. That's what I get for marrying a b rute of a man, a great big hulking physical specimen of a----"
"I hate that word hulking," objected Tom crossly, "even in kidding." "Hulking," insisted Daisy. Sometimes she and Miss Baker talked at once, unobtrusively and with a bantering inconsequence that was never quite chatter, that was as co ol as the ir w hite dresses and their impersonal eyes in the absence of
all desire. They were here--and they accepted Tom and me, making only a polite pleasant effort to entertain or to be entertained. They knew that presently dinner would be over and a little later the evening too would be over and casuall y put a way. I t was sharp ly different from the West where an eveni
ng was hurried from phase to phase toward its close in a continually disappointed anticipation or else in sheer nervous dread of the moment itself. "You make me feel uncivilized, Daisy," I confessed on my second glass of corky but rather impr essive c laret. "Can't you talk about crops or so
mething?" I meant nothing in particular by this remark but it was taken up in an unexpected way. "Civilization's going to pieces," broke out Tom violently. "I've gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things. Have you read 'The Rise of t he Col oured E mpires' by this man Goddard?" "Wh
y, no," I answered, rather surprised by his tone. "Well, it's a fine book, and everybody ought to read it. The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be--will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved." "Tom 's g ettin g very profound," said Daisy with an e
xpression of unthoughtful sadness. "He reads deep books with long words in them. What was that word we----" "Well, these books are all scientific," insisted Tom, glancing at her impatiently. "This fellow has worked out the wh ole t hin g. It' s u p to us who are the dominant ra
ce to watch out or these other races will have control of things." "We've got to beat them down," whispered Daisy, winking ferociously toward the fervent sun. "You ought to live in Califo rnia--" began Miss Baker but T om in terrupted her by sh ifting heavily in his chai
r. "This idea is that we're Nordics. I am, and you are and you are and----" After an infinitesimal hesitation he included Daisy with a slight nod and she winked at me again. "--and w e've produce d all the th ings that go to ma ke civilization--oh, science a nd art and all that. D
o you see?" There was something pathetic in his concentration as if his complacency, more acute than of old, was not enough to him any more. When, almost immediately, th e t elephone rang inside and the bu tl er left the porch Daisy seized u pon the momenta
ry interruption and leaned toward me. "I'll tell you a family secret," she whispered enthusiastically. "It's about the butler's nose. Do you want to hear about the butler's nos e? " "That's why I came over night." "Well, he wasn't always a b utler; he used
to be the silver polisher for some people in New York that had a silver service for two hundred people. He had to polish it from morning till night until finally it began to affect his nose----" "Th ings went fro m b ad to worse," suggested Miss Baker. "Yes. Thin
gs went from bad to worse until finally he had to give up his position." For a moment the last sunshine fell with romantic affection upon her glowing face; her voice c ompelled me forwar d breathlessly as I listened--then the glow faded, each li ght dies
erting her with lingering regret like children leaving a pleasant street at dusk. The butler came back and murmured something close to Tom's ear whereupon Tom f d, pushed back his chair and wit ho ut a word went inside. As if his ab sence qu icke
ned something within her Daisy leaned forward again, her voice glowing and singing. "I love to see you at my table, Nick. You remind me of a--of a rose, an absol ute ro se . Doesn't he?" She turned to Miss Baker for confirmat ion. "An a
bsolute rose?" This was untrue. I am not even faintly like a rose. She was only extemporizing but a stirring warmth flowed from her as if her heart was trying to com e out to you concealed in one of those breathless, t hril ling
words. Then suddenly she threw her napkin on the table and excused herself and went into the house. Miss Baker and I exchanged a short glance conscious y dev oid o f meaning. I was abou t to speak when sh e s at up
alertly and said "Sh!" in a warning voice. A subdued impassioned murmur was audible in the room beyond and Miss Baker leaned forward, unashamed, tryin g to he ar. The murmur trembled on t he verge of co h eren c
e, sank down, mounted excitedly, and then ceased altogether. "This Mr. Gatsby you spoke of is my neighbor----" I said. "Don't talk. I want to hear what happe n s. " "Is something happening?" I inq uired inn oce nt
ly. "You mean to say you don't know?" said Miss Baker, honestly surprised. "I thought everybody knew." "I don't." "Why----" she said hesitantly, "Tom's got some woman in New York." "Got some woman?" I repeat ed b la nkl y.
Miss Baker nodded. "She might have the decency not to telephone him at dinner-time. Don't you think?" Almost before I had grasped her meaning there w as of a dress and the crunch of leather b oots an d T o m an d
Daisy were back at the table. "It couldn't be helped!" cried Daisy with tense gayety. She sat down, glanced searchingly at Miss Baker and then at me and c looked outdoors for a minute and it's v ery romantic outd o or s. Th e
re's a bird on the lawn that I think must be a nightingale come over on the Cunard or White Star Line. He's singing away----" her voice sang "----It's romanti c, isn't it, T om ?" "Very romantic," he said, and then miserably to me: " If i t's li g
ht enough after dinner I want to take you down to the stables." The telephone rang inside, startlingly, and as Daisy shook her head decisively at Tom the s ubject of t h e sta bles, in fact all subj ects, vanished into air. Among t he b roken fr
agments of the last five minutes at table I remember the candles being lit again, pointlessly, and I was conscious of wanting to look squarely at every one and y et to avoid all eyes. I couldn't guess what Daisy and Tom wer e thinkin g
but I doubt if even Miss Baker who seemed to have mastered a certain hardy skepticism was able utterly to put this fifth guest's shrill metallic urgency ou t of m i nd. To a certain temperam ent the situation might hav e s e
d intriguing--my own instinct was to telephone immediately for the police. The horses, needless to say, were not mentioned again. Tom and Miss Baker, w ith s everal feet of twil ight be tween them strolled back int o t h
e library, as if to a vigil beside a perfectly tangible body, while trying to look pleasantly interested and a little deaf I followed Daisy around a chain of conne c ti ng v e randas to the p orch in front. In its deep gloom w
e sat down side by side on a wicker settee. Daisy took her face in her hands, as if feeling its lovely shape, and her eyes moved gradually out into the velvet d us k. I sa w that turbul ent em otions possessed her , s o l
asked what I thought would be some sedative questions about her little girl. "We don't know each other very well, Nick," she said suddenly. "Even if we are co us ins. You didn't com e to my w edding." "I wasn't ba ck fr o m
the war." "That's true." She hesitated. "Well, I've had a very bad time, Nick, and I'm pretty cynical about everything." Evidently she had reason to be. I waited b ut she didn't say any more, and a fter a moment I retur ne d ra t he
r feebly to the subject of her daughter. "I suppose she talks, and eats, and everything." "Oh, yes." She looked at me absently. "Listen, Nick; let me tell you wh at I said when she wa s bor n. Wo uld you like to hear? " " Ver y m u ch ."
"It'll show you how I've gotten to feel about--things. Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up out of the ether with an utte r ly abandoned feel ing a nd as ked the nurse right away if i t w
as a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'All right,' I said, 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool--that's the bes t thing a girl can b e in t his wo rld, a beauti ful little f ool.'" "Y o u se
e I think everything's terrible anyhow," she went on in a convinced way. "Everybody thinks so--the most advanced people. And I KNOW. I've been everywhere and seen everything a nd do ne ever ything." Her eyes fla shed ar o und h
er in a defiant way, rather like Tom's, and she laughed with thrilling scorn. "Sophisticated--God, I'm sophisticated!" The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to comp el my attention, my belief , I felt the basic insinceri ty of wh at she had
said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a momen t she looked at me wit h an absolu te smirk on her lovel y fa ce as if sh
e had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged. Inside, the crimson room bloomed with light. Tom and Miss B aker sat at either end o f the long co uch and her head ra ud to him from t
he "Saturday Evening Post"--the words, murmurous and uninflected, running together in a soothing tune. The lamp-light, bright on his boots and dull on the autumn-lea f yellow of her hair, glin ted along the pap er as she turne d a page wi t h a flutter of slender
muscles in her arms. When we came in she held us silent for a moment with a lifted hand. "To be continued," she said, tossing the magazine on the table, "in our very ne xt issue." Her body asserted itself with a re stless mov em ent of he r knee, and she stood
up. "Ten o'clock," she remarked, apparently finding the time on the ceiling. "Time for this good girl to go to bed." "Jordan's going to play in the tournament tomorrow," e xplained Daisy, "ove r at Westchester." "O h,--yo u r e JOR d an u'r e Baker." I knew now why
her face was familiar--its pleasing contemptuous expression had looked out at me from many rotogravure pictures of the sporting life at Asheville and Hot Springs and P alm Beach. I had hea rd some story of her t oo, a c r itical, un pl easant story, but what it was I
had forgotten long ago. "Good night," she said softly. "Wake me at eight, won't you." "If you'll get up." "I will. Good night, Mr. Carraway. See you anon." "Of course you w ill," confirmed Daisy. "In fact I think I'll arran ge a marr iage. C om e o ver often, Nick, and I'll sort of--oh--fling
you together. You know--lock you up accidentally in linen closets and push you out to sea in a boat, and all that sort of thing----" "Good night," called Miss Baker from th e stairs. "I haven't hea rd a word." "She's a ni ce g irl," said T om after a moment. "They oughtn't to let her run aro
und the country this way." "Who oughtn't to?" inquired Daisy coldly. "Her family." "Her family is one aunt about a thousand years old. Besides, Nick's going to look after h er, aren't you, Nick? S he's going to spend lo ts of w eek-e n d s o u t here this summer. I think the home influence will be very g
ood for her." Daisy and Tom looked at each other for a moment in silence. "Is she from New York?" I asked quickly. "From Louisville. Our white girlhood was passed tog e ther there. Our beau tiful white----" "Did you gi ve N ick a little hea r t to h ea rt talk on the veranda?" demanded Tom suddenly. "Did I?"
She looked at me. "I can't seem to remember, but I think we talked about the Nordic race. Yes, I'm sure we did. It sort of crept up on us and first thing you know----" "Don 't believe everything you hear, Nick," he ad vised me. I said lightly that I had he ard nothing at all, and a few minutes later I got up to go ho
me. They came to the door with me and stood side by side in a cheerful square of light. As I started my motor Daisy peremptorily called "Wait! "I forgot to ask you somet hing, and it's im portant. We heard y ou were eng aged t o a girl out West." "That's right," corroborated Tom kindly. "
We heard that you were engaged." "It's libel. I'm too poor." "But we heard it," insisted Daisy, surprising me by opening up again in a flower-like way. "We heard it from three p eople so it must be true." Of c ourse I knew wh at they were refe r ring to , but I wasn't even vaguely engaged. The fact that gossip ha
d published the banns was one of the reasons I had come east. You can't stop going with an old friend on account of rumors and on the other hand I had no intention of bein g rumored into m arriage . Thei r interest rathe r touc hed me and made them less remotely rich--nevertheless, I w
as confused and a little disgusted as I drove away. It seemed to me that the thing for Daisy to do was to rush out of the house, child in arms--but apparently there were no suc h intentions in her head. As f or Tom, the fact th at he "had some woman in New York" was really less surpris
ing than that he had been depressed by a book. Something was making him nibble at the edge of stale ideas as if his sturdy physical egotism no longer nourished his pere mptory heart. Alre ady it was dee p su mmer on roadhouse roofs and in front of wayside garages, w
here new red gas-pumps sat out in pools of light, and when I reached my estate at West Egg I ran the car under its shed and sat for a while on an abandoned grass roller in t he yard. The w ind had ceased and the trees in
nd a persistent organ sound as the full bellows of the earth blew the frogs full of life. The silhouette of a moving cat wavered across the moonlight and turning my head to watch it I sa w the dark water in a c
ghbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Something in his leisurely movements and the secure position o f his feet u nd f, leaving a loud bright night with wings beating in the trees a
our local heavens. I decided to call to him. Miss Baker had mentioned him at dinner, and that would do for an introduction. But I didn't call to him for he gave a sudden intimatio ty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of my nei
urious way, and far as I was from him I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward--and distinguished nothing except a single green light, mi n ute and . Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of
d vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness. Chapter 2 About half way between West Egg and New York the motor-road hastily joins the railroad and r uns be alone--he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a c
a valley of ashes--a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys a nd risi the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he ha
umbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of grey cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak and comes to rest, and immediately t h e ash as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land. This is
s their obscure operations from your sight. But above the grey land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, th e e ye s o h a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already cr
etinas are one yard high. They look out of no face but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a nonexistent nose. Evidently som e w ild w a leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud which screen
nk down himself into eternal blindness or forgot them and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many paintless days under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic--their r
en the drawbridge is up to let barges through, the passengers on waiting trains can stare at the dismal scene for as long as half an hour. There is always a halt there of at l ea here to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sa
he had one was insisted upon wherever he was known. His acquaintances resented the fact that he turned up in popular restaurants with her and, leavin g he r at a table, saun ey of ashes is bounded on one side by a small foul river, and wh
re to meet her--but I did. I went up to New York with Tom on the train one afternoon and when we stopped by the ashheaps he jumped to his feet and taki ng ho ld of my elbo use of this that I first met Tom Buchanan's mistress. The fact that
I think he'd tanked up a good deal at luncheon and his determination to have my company bordered on violence. The supercilious assumption was that o n S unday af te omsoever he knew. Though I was curious to see her I had no desi
e and we walked back a hundred yards along the road under Doctor Eckleburg's persistent stare. The only building in sight was a small block of yellow br ic k sitting on t ar. "We're getting off!" he insis ted. "I want you to meet my girl."
guous to absolutely nothing. One of the three shops it contained was for rent and another was an all-night restaurant approached by a trail of ashes; th e t hir d was a ga to do. I followed him over a low white-washed railroad fenc
Tom inside. The interior was unprosperous and bare; the only car visible was the dust-covered wreck of a Ford which crouched in a dim corner. It had oc cu rred to me t hat a sort of compact Main Str eet ministerin g to it and conti
mantic apartments were concealed overhead when the proprietor himself appeared in the door of an office, wiping his hands on a piece of waste. He w as a blonde, spiritles B. WILSON. Cars Bought a n d Sold- -and I followed
am of hope sprang into his light blue eyes. "Hello, Wilson, old man," said Tom, slapping him jovially on the shoulder. "How's business?" "I can't com p la in ," answere d must be a blind and that s um ptuous and ro
to sell me that car?" "Next week; I've got my man working on it now." "Works pretty slow, don't he?" "No, he doesn't," said Tom coldly. "And if you f e el th at way abo u y a handsome. When he sa w u s a damp gle
ean that," explained Wilson quickly. "I just meant----" His voice faded off and Tom glanced impatiently around the garage. Then I heard footsteps on a st air s and in a m son unconvincingly. "Wh en are you going
office door. She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face, above a sp ot te d dress of dar k blue crepe- tter sell it somewhere els e after all." "I don't m
was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering. She smiled slowly and walking throug h h er husba nd a s if he wer e a h figure of a woman bloc ked out the light from the
en she wet her lips and without turning around spoke to her husband in a soft, coarse voice: "Get some chairs, why don't you, so somebody can sit do w n." agreed W de-chine, contained no fa cet or gleam of beauty but there
with the cement color of the walls. A white ashen dust veiled his dark suit and his pale hair as it veiled everything in the vicinity--except his w ife, w h to Tom. "I w ghost shook hands with Tom, looking him flush in the eye. Th
"I'll meet you by the news-stand on the lower level." She nodded and moved away from him just as George Wilson emerged with two chair s from h We waited for her down the road and o ut of sight. It was a few d ilson hurriedly and went toward the little office, mingling immediately
ting torpedoes in a row along the railroad track. "Terrible place, isn't it," said Tom, exchanging a frown with Doctor Eckleburg. "Awful." "It d o get away." "Doesn't her husband o bject?" "Wilson? He thinks ant to see you," said Tom intently. "Get on the next train." "All right."
w he's alive." So Tom Buchanan and his girl and I went up together to New York--or not quite together, for Mrs. Wilson sat discreetly in a n eferred that much to the sensibilit ies of those East Eggers wh ays before the Fourth of July, and a grey, scrawny Italian child was set
muslin which stretched tight over her rather wide hips as Tom helped her to the platform in New York. At the news-stand she boug ht a c opy of "Town Tattl e" and a moving-picture maga zine and, in the station drug s we slid out from t he mass of the station into the glowing sunshine. But imme she goes to see her sister in New York. He's so dumb he doesn't kno
olemn echoing drive she let four taxi cabs drive away before she selected a new one, lavender-colored with grey upholstery, an d in t hi dog." We backed up to a grey old man wh o bore an absurd resemblance to Jo o might be on the train. She had changed her dress to a brown figured
on the front glass. "I want to get one of those dogs," she said earnestly. "I want to get one for the apartment. They're nice to hav e --a store, some cold cream and a small flask of perfume. Upstairs, in the s diately she turned sharply from the window and leaning forward tapped
hn D. Rockefeller. In a basket, swung from his neck, cowered a dozen v