

FREDDIE FILLMORE. *(To us:)* Remember the Charleston and all the wild and carefree dance crazes that made the jazz-mad twenties roar? When fortunes were made overnight and young America went joyriding on homemade hooch? Prohibition brought with it new ways to make big money: Speakeasies, bootleggers and rumrunners . . . And out of the twenties came Jay Gatsby, who built an empire out of a dream in his heart. *(Beat.)* One of the people who knew Gatsby best was the young man who lived next door to him. Ladies and gentlemen, meet Nick Carraway . . .

(MUSIC #3: "Gatsby's Charleston" ends.)

NICK. *(To us:)* In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice . . .

NICK'S FATHER. Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone, just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had.

NICK. *(To us:)* In consequence I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, as a matter of infinite hope. *(Beat.)* When I came back from the East Coast last autumn I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby was exempt from my reaction—Gatsby, who represented everything for which I have unaffected scorn. There was something gorgeous about him, an extraordinary gift for hope as I have never found in any other person. 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. *(Beat.)* My family has been well-to-do for three generations. I graduated from Yale, and then participated in the Great War. *(Beat.)* I decided to go east and learn the bond business. It was a matter of chance that I should have rented a house in one of the strangest communities in North America. Twenty miles from New York City there are two unusual formations of land—a pair of what look like enormous eggs that jut out into Long Island Sound and are separated by a bay. I lived in West Egg. My house was squeezed between two huge places that rented for fifteen thousand a season. The one on my right was a colossal affair, with a tower and a marble swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was Gatsby's mansion . . .

(MUSIC #4: "Summer Evening" Underscore.)

NICK. The story of the summer began the evening I went across the bay to the more fashionable East Egg. I was invited to have dinner with the Buchanans—Daisy, my second cousin, and her husband, Tom, whom I knew in college. *(Beat.)* He was one of those men who

MYRTLE. It was on the train. I was going up to New York to see Catherine and spend the night. I couldn't keep my eyes off him but every time he looked at me I pretended to be looking at the advertisement over his head. When we came into the station he was next to me and his white shirt-front pressed against my arm—and so I told him I'd have to call a policeman, but he knew I lied. I was so excited that when I got into a taxi with him all I kept thinking about was, "You can't live forever, you can't live forever."

TOM. You can't. None of us can. (*Quick beat.*) Have another drink, Nick.

MYRTLE. I've been living over that garage for eleven years. And I want you for myself, Tom. But, no, there's *Daisy* . . .

TOM. Don't say her name, Myrtle.

MYRTLE. (*Shouting:*) Daisy! Daisy! Daisy! I'll say it whenever I want to! Daisy! Dai— (*Cut off under next SFX.*)

(*SFX: Tom Breaks Myrtle's Nose.*)

NICK. (*To us:*) With a short, deft movement Tom broke Myrtle's nose with his open hand. (*Quick beat.*) Then there were bloody towels and Myrtle wailing in pain. (*Quick beat.*) I kept drinking and next thing I knew I was lying half asleep in the lower level of Pennsylvania Station, staring at the morning *Tribune* and waiting for the train back home.

(*MUSIC #6: "Gatsby's Party Medley" Underscore.*)

NICK. (*To us:*) There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer nights. Caterers would come with several hundred feet of canvas, buffet tables, and enough colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. (*Quick beat.*) By seven o'clock the orchestra has arrived. The bar is in full swing and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden. (*Quick beat.*) The first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. A chauffeur crossed my lawn early that Saturday morning with a note from his employer—the honor would be entirely Gatsby's if I would attend his "little party" that night.

(*SFX/BIZ: Partygoers.*)

NICK. (*To us:*) I wandered around rather ill-at-ease among swirls of people I didn't know. I slunk off in the direction of the cocktail table on my way to get roaring drunk when Jordan Baker came out of the house.

JORDAN. Nick! I thought you might be here. I remembered you lived next door.

GATSBY. They can't get him, old sport. He's a smart man.

NICK. *(To us:)* I caught sight of Tom Buchanan headed in our direction.

TOM. *(Demanding eagerly:)* Nick! Where've you been? Daisy's furious because you haven't called up.

NICK. This is Mr. Gatsby, Mr. Buchanan.

GATSBY. *(To TOM:)* How do you do, old sport?

TOM. *(To GATSBY:)* Fine. Nice to meet you. *(To NICK:)* How'd you happen to come up this far to eat?

NICK. I've been having lunch with Mr. Gatsby. *(To us:)* I turned toward Gatsby, but he was no longer there. *(Beat.)* That afternoon, I met Jordan in the tea garden at the Plaza Hotel and she told me Gatsby's story . . .

(MUSIC #10: "Fall Flashback" Underscore.)

JORDAN. *(To NICK:)* One October day in 1917, I was walking in the neighborhood. The largest of the lawns belonged to Daisy Fay's house. She was eighteen, and the most popular girl in Louisville. All day long her telephone rang, and excited young officers demanded the privilege of monopolizing her that night. When I came to her house that morning she was sitting in her white roadster with a lieutenant I had never seen before. They were so engrossed in each other that she didn't see me at first.

(MUSIC #10: "Fall Flashback" ends.)

DAISY. *(Unexpectedly:)* Hello, Jordan. Are you going to the Red Cross to make bandages?

JORDAN. I am.

DAISY. Would you tell them I can't come today?

JORDAN. *(To NICK:)* The officer looked at Daisy in a way that every young girl wants to be looked at. His name was Jay Gatsby. By the next year I had a few beaux myself, and I began to play in golf tournaments, so I didn't see Daisy very often. Wild rumors were circulating about her—how her mother had found her packing her bag one night to go to New York to say goodbye to a soldier who was going overseas. She was prevented, but after that she didn't play around with the soldiers anymore. The following June she married Tom Buchanan with more pomp and circumstance than Louisville ever knew before. He hired a whole floor of the Seelbach Hotel and the day before the wedding he gave her a string of pearls valued at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I was bridesmaid and

half an hour before the bridal dinner I found her lying on her bed as drunk as a monkey. She had a bottle of sauterne in one hand and a letter in the other.

DAISY. (*Muttering:*) Gratulate me. Never had a drink before but oh, how I do enjoy it.

JORDAN. (*To NICK:*) I was scared; I'd never seen her like that before. I asked what I could do.

DAISY. (*Groping around in a wastebasket on the bed and pulling out the string of pearls:*) Here, dearest. Take these pearls downstairs and give 'em back to whoever they belong to. Tell 'em all Daisy's change' her mine!" (*Cries.*)

JORDAN. (*To NICK:*) She cried and cried. I rushed out and found her mother's maid and we got her into a cold bath. She wouldn't let go of the letter and squeezed it up into a wet ball. We put ice on her forehead and hooked her back into her dress and half an hour later the pearls were around her neck and the incident was over. Next day she married Tom Buchanan and started off on a three months' trip to the South Seas. I saw them when they came back, and thought I'd never seen a girl so mad about her husband. If he left the room for a minute she'd look around uneasily and say . . .

DAISY. Where's Tom gone?

JORDAN. (*After a quick beat.*) The next April, Daisy had her little girl, and they came back to Chicago to settle down. They moved with a fast crowd, all of them young and rich and wild. (*Quick beat.*) Well, about six weeks ago, she heard the name Gatsby for the first time in years. It wasn't until then that I connected this Gatsby with the officer in her white car.

NICK. It was a strange coincidence.

JORDAN. But it wasn't a coincidence at all. Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay. (*Quick beat.*) He wants to know if you'll invite Daisy to your house some afternoon and then let him come over.

NICK. Did I have to know all this before he could ask such a little thing?

JORDAN. He thought you might be offended.. He wants her to see his house. And your house is right next door.

NICK. Oh! (*Quick beat.*) Does Daisy want to see Gatsby?

JORDAN. Gatsby doesn't want her to know. You're just supposed to invite her to tea.

GATSBY. I can't describe how surprised I was to find out I loved her, old sport. I even hoped that she'd throw me over, but she didn't, because she was in love with me too. (Quick beat.) On the last afternoon before I went abroad, I sat with Daisy in my arms for a long time. We had never been closer. (Beat.) I did well in the war. After the Armistice I tried to get home, but ended up at Oxford instead. I was worried—there was despair in Daisy's letters. She wanted to see me and be reassured that she was doing the right thing by waiting for me. (Beat.) But she wanted her life shaped immediately, and a decision made by some force—of love, of money—that was close at hand. (Beat.) That force took shape with the arrival of Tom Buchanan. There was a something about his person and position and Daisy was flattered. Her letter reached me while I was still at Oxford. (Quick beat.) I don't think she ever loved him. (Quick beat, gloomily:) Of course, she might have when they were first married—and loved me more even then, do you see?

NICK. *(To us:)* It was nine o'clock when we finished breakfast and went out on the porch. The gardener came to the foot of the steps.

GATSBY'S GARDENER. I'm going to drain the pool today, Mr. Gatsby. Leaves'll start falling pretty soon and then there's always trouble with the pipes.

GATSBY. Don't do it today. *(Turning to NICK, apologetically:)* You know, old sport, I've never used that pool all summer?

NICK. *(Looks at his watch.)* Twelve minutes to my train. *(To us:)* I didn't want to go to the city. I wasn't worth a decent stroke of work, but more than that—I didn't want to leave Gatsby. *(To GATSBY:)* I'll call you about noon.

GATSBY. Do, old sport. *(Anxiously, hoping for corroboration:)* I suppose Daisy'll call too.

NICK. I suppose so.

GATSBY. Well—goodbye.

NICK. *(After a beat.)* They're a rotten crowd. You're worth the whole damn bunch put together. *(To us:)* He nodded politely, then his face broke into that radiant smile. *(Quick beat.)* Now I want to go back a little and tell what happened at the garage after we left there the night before . . .

(MUSIC #25: "Tension Points [Reprise]" Underscore.)

NICK. Until long after midnight a changing crowd hung around the garage while George Wilson rocked himself back and forth on the couch inside. Michaelis sat with him. *(Beat.)* About three