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THE GREAT GATSBY

F. Scott Fitzgerald



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The American Classics Children's Collection: The Great Gatsby

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THE GREAT GATSBY

F. Scott Fitzgerald





Nick Carraway
Narrator



Jay Gatsby
Nick's neighbour



Daisy Buchanan
Nick's cousin



Tom Buchanan
Daisy's husband



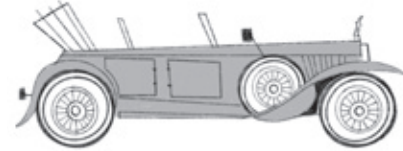
Myrtle Wilson
Tom's secret
girlfriend



George Wilson
Myrtle's husband



Jordan Baker
Daisy's friend



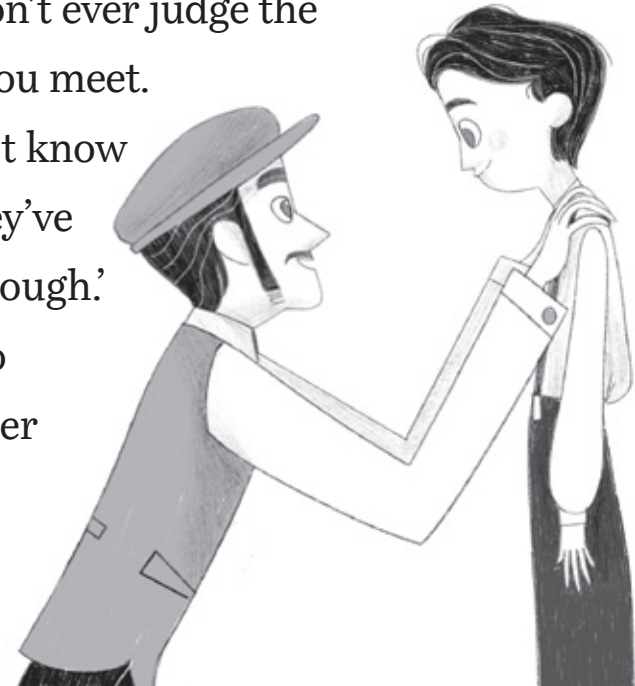
CHAPTER ONE

Let me tell you a story about a man who felt so empty he spent millions trying to fill the void. Gatsby was his name.

My father used to say to me, 'Nick, don't ever judge the people you meet.

You don't know what they've gone through.'

I tried to remember



that as I grew up, but it was hard not to judge Gatsby when I first met him. I will admit to you: I judged him instantly. His flamboyance seemed shallow to me at first.



I fought in World War 1 and when it ended, I went back to live in my hometown in the Midwest of America.

WORLD WAR 1 - Also known as The Great War. A global war that started in Europe between 1914 and 1918. Over 30 countries fought in this war.

MIDWEST - A group of states in America that are geographically situated in the west of the country. The Midwest is famous for farming.

But after the danger of the war, I grew restless. It is quite a contrast to go from fighting for the good of your country to returning to the family hardware business.

Many friends of mine worked in investment bonds. This was a business where rich people placed their money into companies so they could make even more money. It was dull, but much more interesting

HARDWARE - Items that you would find in a DIY store, typically tools: screwdrivers, hammers, nails, paint, ladders etc.

INVESTMENT BOND - A lump of money placed in a bank or finance company to save for the future.

than hardware. So I decided to move east, to New York, where this kind of business was booming.

It would have made sense to move to the inner city of Manhattan, where the hustle and bustle of investment life was alive. But the city was unbearably hot in the summer, and I was used to the countryside and open spaces.

A friend I would be working with suggested we rent a place together in the suburban area of Long Island. I thought it was a great idea. We found

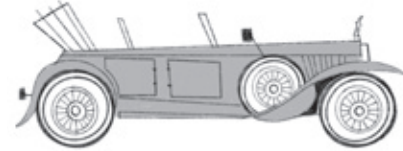
SUBURBAN - A spacious area of residential housing, geographically separate from inner cities.

a small bungalow that sat between two huge, luxurious mansions in a village called West Egg.

It was a fashionable community of millionaires, flash cars and fancy parties. A body of salt water separated two peninsulas of land that were joined at the south side. They were shaped like eggs, hence the name. Across the water from the tip of West Egg, lay the tip of East Egg.

Just before we moved in, my new housemate was sent to Washington

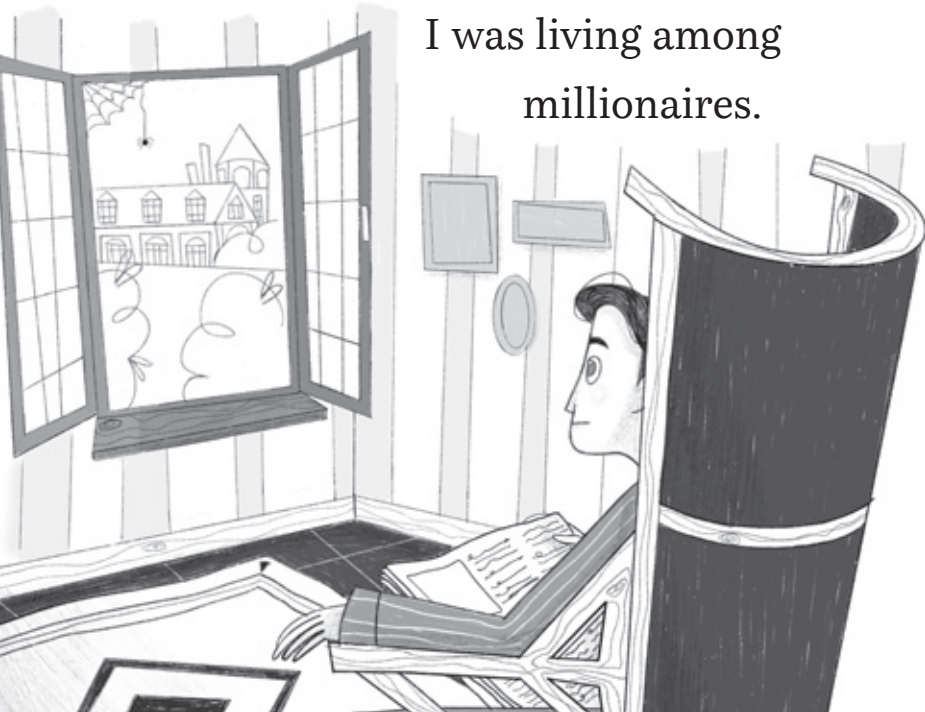
PENINSULA - An area of land that juts out into a body of water and is almost completely surrounded by the water.



CHAPTER TWO

by the company we worked for. I settled into the small, shabby bungalow alone, dwarfed by the magnificent houses either side. One of my neighbours even had an outside marble swimming pool, and his own private beach. That was Gatsby's house.

For eighty dollars a month,
I was living among
millionaires.



Before starting my job, I filled my days reading the books I'd bought about banking. I learnt as much as I could about the investment bond business. But the days were boring and I was lonely.

Luckily my cousin Daisy and her husband Tom lived over in East Egg, and invited me to dinner one night. When I was young my family used to holiday with Daisy's family, but it had been a long time since I'd last seen her.

Tom and Daisy's house was an enormous mansion that overlooked the water, with a vast garden that stretched down to the bay. They were incredibly rich – they even had a butler. It was over dinner that Daisy introduced me to her friend, Jordan Baker. Apparently, Jordan was quite a famous golf player. I thought she was quite strange. She lay across a sofa as though she was a statue placed specifically in the room for decoration.

‘Nick, darling, meet my good friend – Miss Jordan Baker.’
Jordan barely looked at me as

Daisy introduced us.

‘I know your neighbour,’ she told me. She didn't get a chance to say which one, though, as we were quickly called to the dining room for dinner.

Dinner was quite a different affair to the type of hurried experience I was used to back in the Midwest. There were candles and expensive drinks laid out for a long night. It was clear the two women were great friends. They chatted throughout the meal almost as if



Tom and I weren't there, giving us the odd word here and there out of politeness rather than interest. I felt awkward, as though I didn't belong there. There didn't seem to be much warmth between Daisy and her husband either.

'You make me feel uncivilised, Daisy. Can we talk about farming?' I half-joked.

Tom took my comment quite seriously. 'Uncivilised?! Civilisation's going to pieces anyway,' he moaned. 'Who can you trust these days? You've got to look out for yourself.'

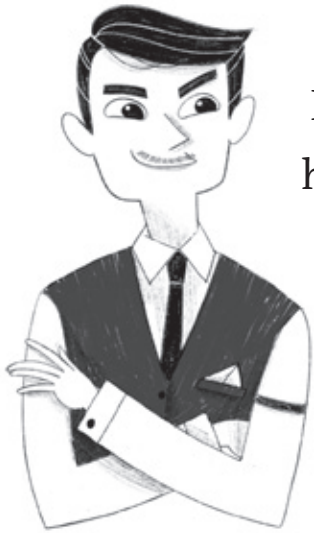
I was quite surprised by the sudden outburst. An awkward silence followed. Then the telephone rang for Tom. When he left to answer it, Daisy followed him out of the room.

When we were alone, Jordan turned and whispered to me: 'He has a secret girlfriend.'

'Who does? Tom?' I asked.

Jordan nodded. 'He has a girl in the city, called Myrtle, he's been seeing a lot.'

I wasn't surprised. I'd met Tom when I was in college. He was rich, sporty, good looking and arrogant.



His arrogance hadn't diminished over time, but had grown with him, giving him an edge of cruelty.

I felt small in his presence – he behaved as though I should be grateful that I was in his company.

Even though I wasn't Tom's biggest fan, I felt uncomfortable hearing this gossip. It was none of my business. I tried to talk with Jordan about other subjects, but she rudely shushed me so she could

listen to what was going on outside. Poor Daisy.

When dinner was over, Daisy and I were finally alone. While she had been talkative and full of life at the table, it was now as though her mask of happiness had been removed. A mix of emotions flickered across her face as she glanced around the room. When her eyes fell on me she looked sad.

'It's a shame we barely know each other, Nick. We're family,'



she said. 'You didn't even come to my wedding.'

'I was at war, Daisy,' I said, although I wondered whether her low mood was really about me at all, or something else.

A wave of great sadness seemed to wash over her. 'That's true,' she sighed. 'Well I've had a very bad time, Nick.'

She shook her head slightly as if she were trying to shake off her emotions, and the mask returned. I missed my moment to ask what she meant. Then a wicked grin grew across her face.

'What do you think of Jordan?' she asked. 'I know, I'll fling you two together – make a couple out of you.' She laughed.

'I'm too poor,' I told her as an excuse. In truth, I had no interest in marriage, especially not with a girl like Jordan. I couldn't give her the luxurious life she was used to.

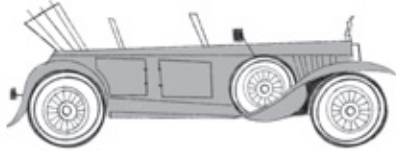
On my drive home I thought about Tom's secret, and how Daisy seemed unhappy one moment but fine the next. I wondered whether she knew her husband's secret, and if that was what made her unhappy.

I thought about Jordan too, and how she had mentioned that she knew my neighbour. I found myself wanting to know more about one of my neighbours – the mysterious Mr Gatsby. I had no idea if this was the neighbour Jordan knew, but he was the only one who intrigued me.

I parked my car in the garage and went to sit on the lawn. It was a clear night. Silver stars peppered the night sky. The air was filled with the sound of croaking frogs and the strings of crickets. The silhouette of a cat caught my eye. As I turned to look, I saw a man standing at the edge of the water.

He hadn't seen me – or, if he had, he didn't show it. He took his hands from his pockets and reached out towards the water. I looked in the direction he was reaching towards, and spotted a single green light, the edge of someone's dock, shining on the other side of the bay. I looked back towards the man, but he had vanished.





CHAPTER THREE

Day after day, I stood at the edge of my garden, near the water, watching the comings and goings from my neighbour's mansion. Music, from Gatsby's place, filled the summer nights. People came and went from his home from nine in the morning to past midnight. Gatsby's deluxe Rolls-Royce came and went, dropping people at the party throughout the day then collecting them later to take them

back to the city. This flashiness seemed so absurd to me, a boy from the quiet Midwest.

'Are you ready to dance?' said one guest to another as they walked across Gatsby's drive.

'Absolutely!'

My extravagant neighbour had five crates of oranges and lemons delivered every Friday. Caterers would turn up every two weeks and garnish buffet tables with mountains of food. There was ham, salads, pork and turkey. He was certainly making a big show of his wealth. Lights were strung up

around the huge garden and a brass bar was erected and stocked with hundreds of different types of drinks. Then an orchestra would turn up with oboes, trombones, saxophones, violas, piccolos and cornets.

‘Let’s get this party started!’ cried a man holding a saxophone.

By seven o’clock in the evening the cars were parked right up against each other. Feather boas draped around the necks of the glamorous ladies. Sparkly tassels hung from glitzy dresses and tickled the knees

FEATHER BOA - A clothing item popular in the 1920s, which women wore to parties. Made of feathers and very long, it drapes around the neck like a scarf.

of the wearers, while they drank from glasses larger than finger bowls. People covered the grounds. They filled the elaborate rooms and gathered in hoards on the many verandas and balconies. Everyone danced and laughed well into the night.

‘Pass me a drink from the bar,’ shouted one woman to another.

‘Come and meet this man I was just talking to. I can’t remember his name,’ said a feather-clad lady as she

VERANDA - An outside area that extends a house, usually bordered by a low wall or fence. They are usually entered onto through the house, by patio doors, and often have furniture on them.

dragged her husband towards the nameless gentleman.

‘No one needs an invitation to Gatsby’s, darling. One just turns up!’ cried another.



The first time I went to one of his parties I received a personal, handwritten invitation from Gatsby himself. His chauffeur handed me the invitation one morning. I was honoured and intrigued to finally be able to attend one of these gatherings, rather than watch from the sidelines.

CHAUFFEUR - A personal driver employed to take you to places in your own car.

As soon as I arrived, I attempted to find Gatsby. I thought it was rude not to thank the host.

‘Excuse me.’ I tapped a man on the shoulder. ‘Can you tell me where I can find Mr Gatsby?’

‘Sorry, I have no idea what he looks like, never mind where he is!’

I didn’t understand. How could people enjoy Gatsby’s generosity and not even know who he was?

Very quickly, I felt lost in a sea of glittering dresses and bow ties. The laughing faces seemed to mock my loneliness as I stood watching the party take place before me. I felt

like a spare part.

I grabbed a drink from the bar and stood on my own.

Then Miss Jordan Baker, the lady I met at my cousin Daisy's house, appeared by my side.



‘I thought I might see you this evening. I remembered you live next door,’ she said with a smile. Grateful that I was no longer on my own, I smiled back.

Jordan led me to a table and introduced me to some other guests; two men and two girls that were both dressed in yellow. They gossiped about our host, although none of them really knew him. One of the girls told us she tore her dress at the last party, and Gatsby asked for her name and address and sent her a very expensive new one.

‘Over two hundred dollars’ worth of dress, delivered straight to my door! The man doesn’t even know me,’ exclaimed one of the girls.

‘He’s clearly very generous,’ said the other.

‘I heard that he was a German spy in the war,’ whispered one of the men.

‘I heard that he’d killed a man,’ whispered the other.

I had heard none of these rumours before. Were any of them true? Could one person be all of these things? Generous, a traitor and a killer?

A little later on I found myself at a table with a man, about my age, who said he recognised me.

‘Weren’t you in the Third Division during the war?’

‘I was,’ I replied, surprised.

‘I knew I’d seen you somewhere before,’ he said. Before I had a chance to ask him if we had met, he continued: ‘I’m taking the speedboat out on the water tomorrow, do you want to come with me, old sport?’

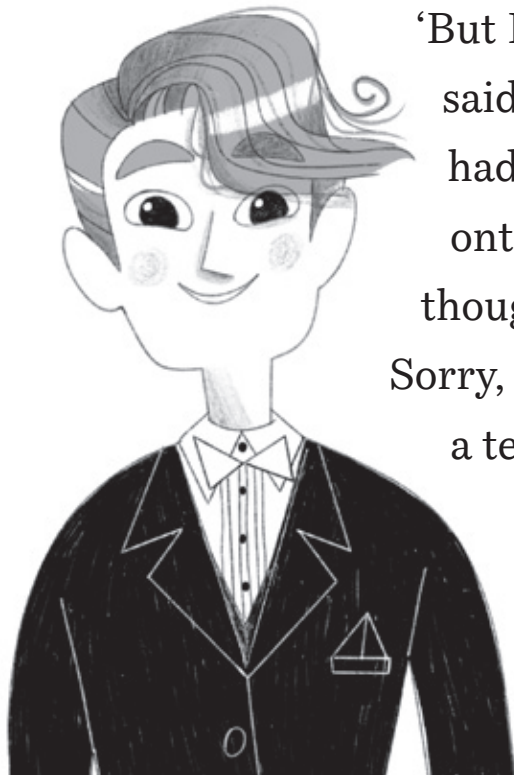
Of course I wanted to go for a ride on a speedboat! I wanted to

THE THIRD DIVISION (US) - A military group of the US army that fought in France in World War 1.

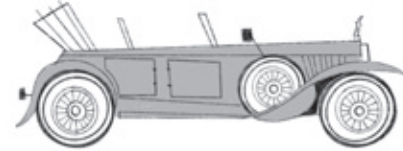
ask the friendly man his name, but Jordan interrupted our conversation.

‘Are you enjoying yourself, Nick?’

‘Yes, I am,’ I said. ‘Although I still haven’t met the host. Mr Gatsby’s chauffeur handed me the invite, but I don’t know how to find him to thank him.’



‘But I’m Gatsby!’
said the man who
had invited me
onto his boat. ‘I
thought you knew.
Sorry, old sport, I’m
a terrible host.’



CHAPTER FOUR

During dinner one evening, Jordan told me how she knew Gatsby and my cousin Daisy.

Jordan had met Daisy at the beginning of her golf career. The year was 1917. Daisy was a rich, popular girl, a couple of years older than Jordan. She had a group of friends that Jordan admired and looked up to, and Jordan was desperate to join their clique.

‘I was flattered that she wanted to speak to me,’ said Jordan. ‘I admired her so much – more so than any of the other girls. It was wartime and there were many soldiers that sought Daisy’s affections. But there was only one soldier that Daisy liked.’

One October afternoon, Jordan went to visit Daisy. She found her friend sitting in her white car with a soldier.

‘He was a lieutenant, and was very handsome in his uniform. I could see why Daisy was so taken with him,’ Jordan grinned. ‘She was

so engrossed in her conversation with the man that she hadn’t noticed me arrive.’

The two friends were supposed to be going to the Red Cross to make bandages for the war effort, but Daisy decided not to go.

‘Tell them I can’t make it!’ she had laughed.

‘I never saw the soldier again,’ said Jordan. ‘But I heard that Daisy’s mother caught her trying to sneak out and wave her soldier off. He was scheduled to go overseas and join the war. She never saw him again either.’

‘Then Daisy met Tom Buchanan, a rich, boisterous man from New Orleans. Daisy fell in love, and was soon to marry Tom.

‘I found her in a flood of tears the night before her wedding, sobbing into a soggy letter,’ Jordan told me. ‘I’d never seen anyone so distraught before. “Tell them I’ve changed

my mind! Daisy’s changed her mind!” she cried. ‘Her mother’s maid helped me get her into a cold bath and put her to bed.’



Jordan said she’d had no idea who the letter was from, and the following day Daisy married Tom. Nothing more was said about it. But six weeks ago, after Daisy heard Jordan mention Gatsby’s name, she asked Jordan about him.

‘That must be the Gatsby I used to know,’ she had said to Jordan, and suddenly Jordan connected my neighbour to the man in Daisy’s car all those years ago.

‘It must be a coincidence that he’s here, living in the same place as Daisy. How funny,’ I said.

‘But it isn’t a coincidence at all,’
replied Jordan.

Gatsby had bought the house
across the bay from Daisy on
purpose. He wanted to be near
to the woman he had loved five
years ago.

‘He wants to know if you’ll
invite Daisy to your house and let
him come too,’ Jordan went on.

I wondered why Gatsby hadn’t
asked me himself, during our trip
on his speed boat the morning
after his party. I’d felt honoured
that he’d invited me, and I had
enjoyed the experience. But I

supposed I still hadn’t learnt much
about the mysterious man who
attracted hundreds of people to his
house most weekends.

‘He’s afraid he’s waited too long
to get back in touch with Daisy,’
explained Jordan. I couldn’t
imagine Gatsby being afraid of
anything.

Gatsby had hoped Daisy would
wander into one of his parties
over the years, but of course she
never had. She wasn’t the kind
of lady that would walk into one
of Gatsby’s parties. Daisy was
elegant and was used to quiet

dinner parties, not raging wild affairs full of hundreds of people. Gatsby would continuously ask his guests about her, to find out if anyone knew her. Jordan was the first person he met that did. When Gatsby had told Jordan he wanted to meet Daisy, Jordan had suggested lunch.

‘What did he say?’ I asked.

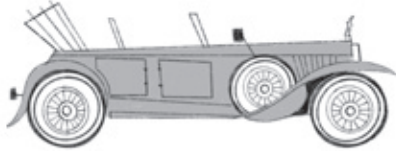
Jordan explained that Gatsby wanted Daisy to see his luxurious house, so lunch in the city wouldn’t work. But he’d insisted they meet at my house, because if Gatsby invited Daisy to his own

place, it would be too obvious that he was so desperate to see her.

‘Daisy ought to have some excitement in her life,’ said Jordan thoughtfully.

‘Does Daisy want to see him?’ I asked.

‘Oh, Daisy isn’t to know about the meeting. You’re to ask her to tea – but don’t mention Gatsby’s name.’

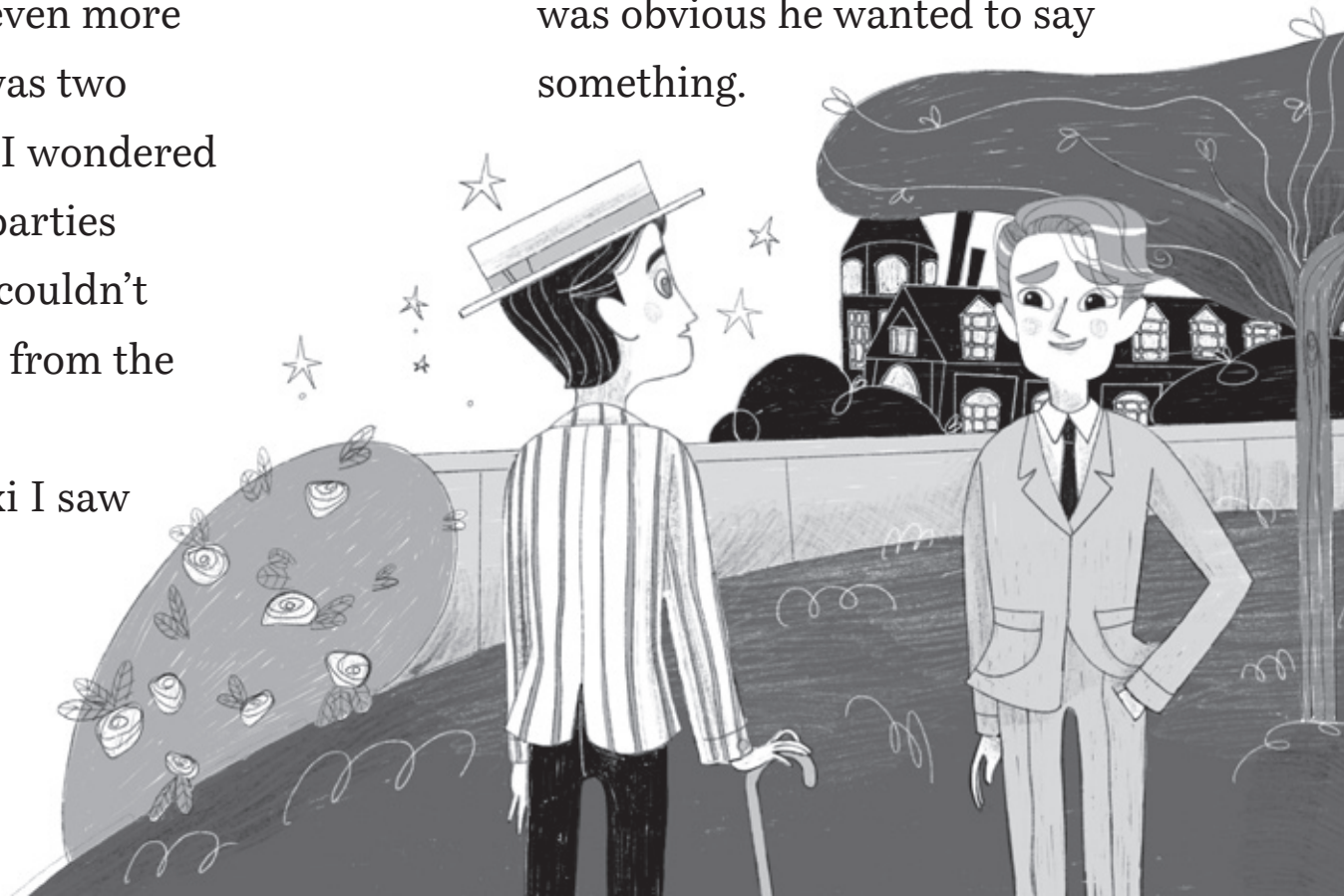


CHAPTER FIVE

When I got home one night, Gatsby's house was lit up like a fairground. What was even more surprising was that it was two o'clock in the morning. I wondered if one of Gatsby's wild parties was taking place, but I couldn't hear any sound coming from the mansion.

As I got out of my taxi I saw Gatsby making his way across the lawn.

'Good evening, Gatsby. That's a lot of lights!' I said. He looked back at his property, acting as if he hadn't noticed. He appeared on edge, as though he was desperate to keep me outside talking. It was obvious he wanted to say something.



‘I spoke with Miss Baker,’ I told him, and Gatsby visibly relaxed. I had mentioned the thing that had been keeping him awake and pacing around his house until I had come home.

Since our conversation, I had thought about what Jordan had told me about Gatsby and Daisy. Surely it couldn’t do any harm, uniting two old friends over tea?

‘Oh, I don’t want to put you to any trouble,’ Gatsby said, trying to make it sound as though the tea wasn’t a big deal. I nodded, but I knew that people don’t

spend most of the night waiting for their neighbour to come home over something that they aren’t bothered about.

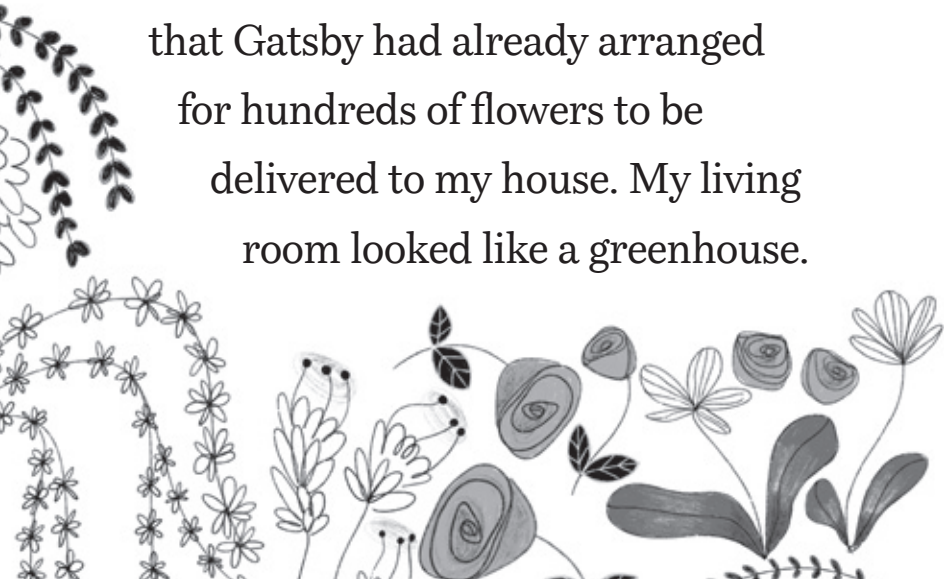
Gazing at my lawn, Gatsby said that the grass would need cutting before Daisy came over. Appearances were clearly important to Gatsby; his lawn was immaculate.

The next morning, I called Daisy and invited her to tea. I told her not to bring Tom – if she was surprised by this comment, she didn’t show it.



It was pouring with rain on the day we had planned to have tea, but Gatsby had still arranged for my lawn to be cut. A poor gentleman turned up wearing a raincoat and proceeded to cut the grass in the rain.

I drove into West Egg village to buy flowers and cakes for tea. However, when I got home I found that Gatsby had already arranged for hundreds of flowers to be delivered to my house. My living room looked like a greenhouse.



Gatsby turned up at three o'clock, a whole hour before Daisy was due to arrive. He wore a white suit, a silver shirt, and a gold tie.



The bags under his eyes were so big that he looked like he hadn't slept in a week.

'Is everything alright?' he asked, nervously.

I took him through to the kitchen. He was very jittery and couldn't keep still. He scrutinised the lemon cupcakes I had bought, examining

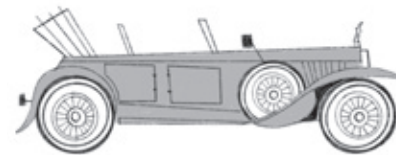
them for so long that I started to worry they weren't good enough.

'They're fine, old sport,' he told me.

For the next hour, he paced my small bungalow and stared out of the window. At two minutes before four, he stood up from his chair.

'I'm going home – she's not coming,' he announced loudly into the room.

It surprised me to see what a frenzied state he'd gotten himself into.



CHAPTER SIX

Before Gatsby had time to leave the house, four o'clock struck. Daisy arrived bang on time. As we heard her car arrive outside, I thought Gatsby's head would hit the ceiling. He jumped out of his chair like a cat would jump to pounce on a mouse.

I stepped outside to meet Daisy, and saw her sat in the back of the car wearing a lilac hat and a welcoming smile. She told her driver to pick her up in an hour.

‘Why did you tell me to come alone?’ she asked as I took her hand and helped her out of the car.

‘It’s a secret,’ I grinned.

I walked Daisy through the house into my living room, expecting Gatsby to be stood there, smiling. But I was surprised to find there was no one there. There was a knock at my front door, so I excused myself to answer it. Gatsby was stood in a puddle, his hands shoved deep into his pockets. He looked so pale I feared he would pass out.

He strode past me without a word – straight into my living room. As soon as she recognised Gatsby, Daisy’s mouth dropped open in surprise.

Gatsby nervously tried to make conversation, stating it had been five years since they last met. But Daisy did not speak.



Feeling extremely awkward, I excused myself from the room. Being in their company while neither person knew what to say to the other was almost unbearable. Gatsby followed me.

‘This is a terrible mistake,’ he said. He paced the length of my small kitchen and shook his head.

‘Get back in there and talk to her!’ I said. ‘It’s rude leaving her on her own.’

Gatsby nodded reluctantly and headed back into the room with Daisy. I left the house to give them some privacy. I stood under the

canopy of the trees in my garden, atop the newly cut grass. In the pouring rain, I stared at Gatsby’s house. I wasn’t sure whether to go back inside or not.

Half an hour later, the rain finally stopped. I decided to venture back into my home.

I could hear conversation coming from the living room and was glad they had managed to get over their awkwardness. Daisy had clearly been crying, and was using a handkerchief to dab her face. But she seemed happy – truly happy. Gatsby looked radiant,

his face beaming with joy. It was quite the contrast to the man I had left in my home half an hour earlier.

‘I want you and Daisy to come over to my house,’ Gatsby declared. ‘It’s a grand house, isn’t it, Nick?’

I nodded in agreement.

Together, the three of us walked through Gatsby’s gardens in full bloom. The smell of plum blossom filled the air as we climbed the marble steps up to the house.



The steps that, during Gatsby's parties, were filled with laughing people in fabulous outfits.

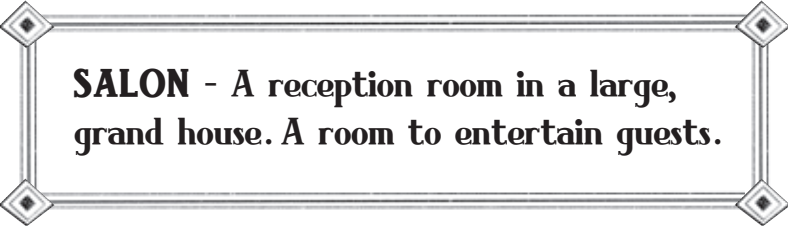
We toured the magnificent house, through the music rooms, the reception rooms, the salons, and up the stairs. It felt strange being in the house when it was empty and silent, with no brass band playing or dancing girls in glitzy dresses.

Gatsby showed us elaborate bedrooms swathed in rose and lavender silk, bathrooms with huge sunken baths, poolrooms and dressing rooms. The more delight

Daisy showed, the more Gatsby glowed. It seemed as though Daisy's opinions gave or took away the value Gatsby himself placed on his possessions and on himself. I began to realise the flamboyant Gatsby was just an act, hiding many layers of self-doubt.

Surprisingly, the simplest rooms were the rooms Gatsby lived in. The one exception was his bathroom, which had a gold toilet seat and two huge cabinets full of suits, shirts, dressing gowns and ties.

'I have them shipped in from England,' boasted Gatsby as he



SALON - A reception room in a large, grand house. A room to entertain guests.

brought each item out from the cupboard. Daisy swore she had never seen shirts so beautiful. ‘It took me three years to earn the money to build all of this,’ he said, looking around the room. Pride was painted across his face.

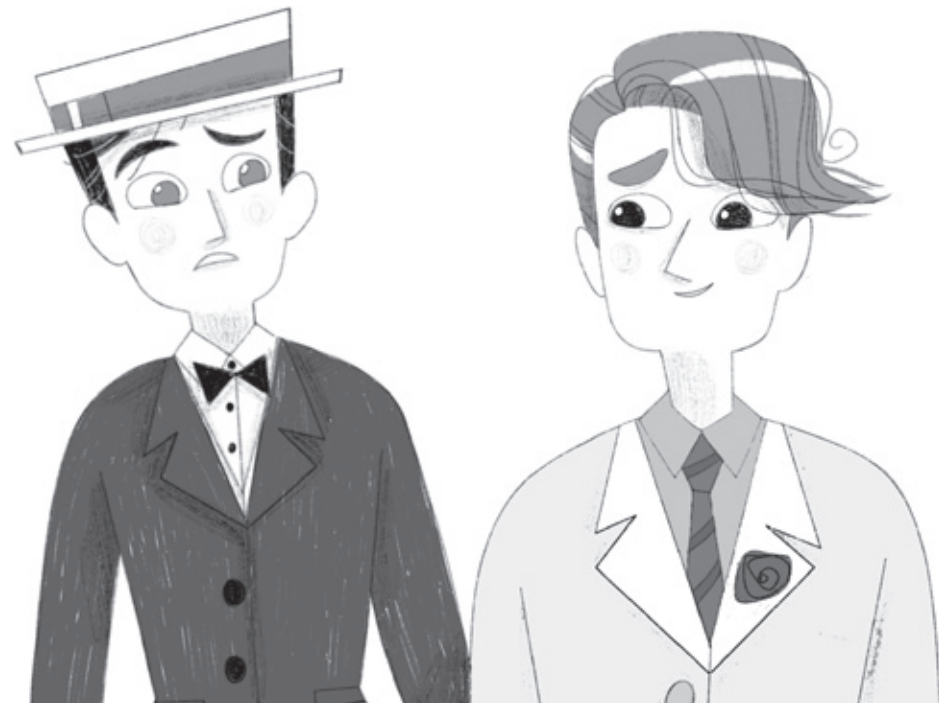
‘I thought you inherited your money,’ I said, confused.

‘Oh, I did, old sport,’ Gatsby replied instantly. ‘But I lost most of it when the war started.’

I wondered how anyone could earn enough wealth in three years to afford to build such a life.

‘What business do you work in?’ I asked.

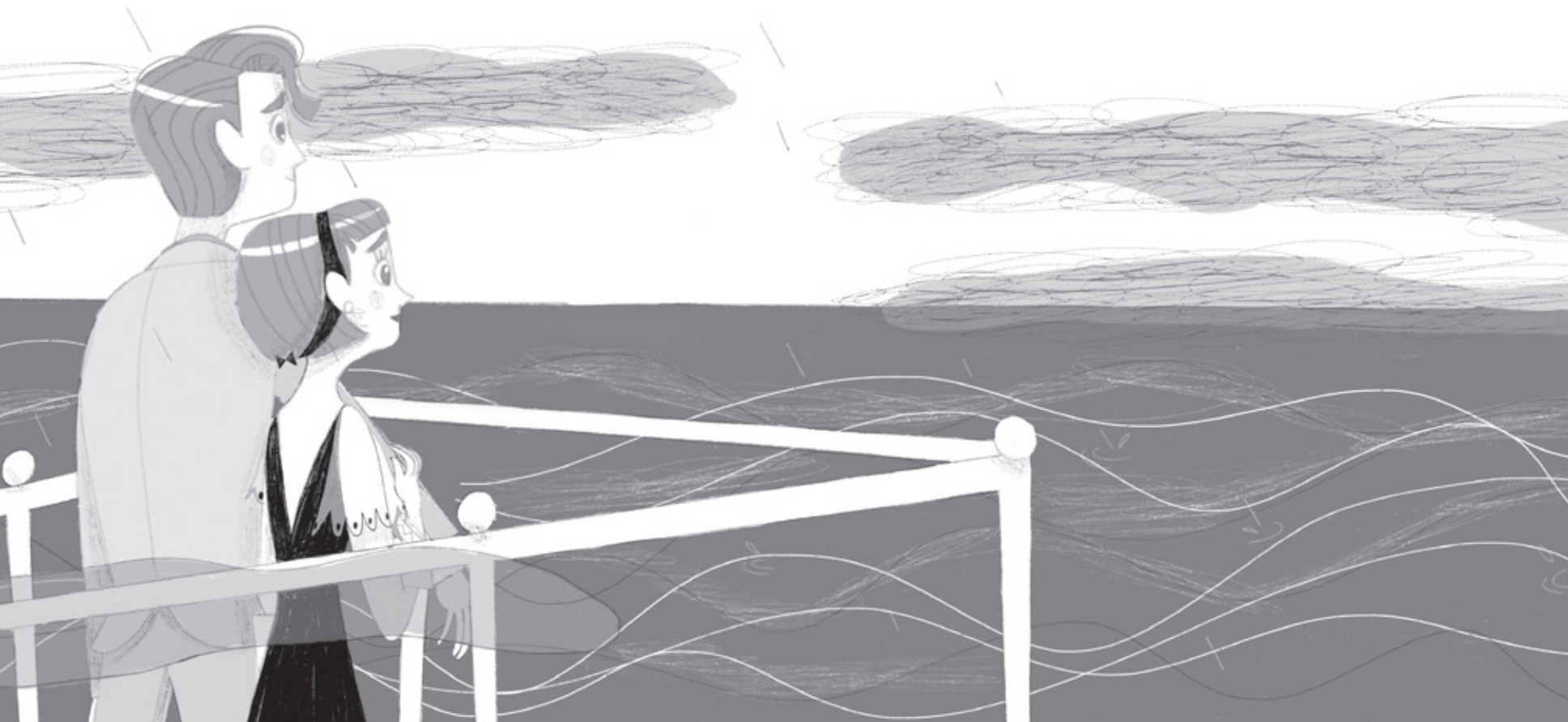
‘Those are my affairs,’ he answered abruptly. He must have realised how suspicious his reply sounded because he quickly added, ‘Oh, I’ve worked in several things over the years. Medicine, the oil business ... I’m no longer involved in them now.’



After Gatsby had showed off his entire clothes collection, we journeyed down to the swimming pool. It began to rain again.

‘If it wasn’t for the mist, we could see your home and the green light

at the end of your dock, Daisy,’ said Gatsby, staring out across the water. Daisy linked her arm through his. I watched as Gatsby realised that everything he had dreamed of was within his reach.



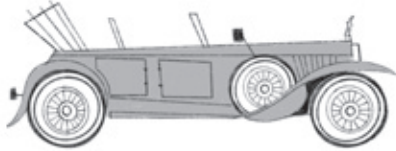
‘I know!’ cried Gatsby, ‘let me get Klipspringer, my tenant. He can play the piano for us. To the music room!’

Gatsby appeared with an embarrassed and dozy-looking young man. He complained he’d been asleep and was out of practice on the piano. I felt sorry for the poor fellow. However, it was clear that whatever Gatsby wanted Gatsby got.

I watched Gatsby and Daisy forget their surroundings. Gatsby was caught up in the dream he had been creating for himself over

the five years since he had last seen Daisy. He was still in love with her.

It was clear now I had been used by Gatsby to create this opportunity for him. I was no longer important in this meeting; my part had been played. They had forgotten I was there, so I slipped out of the house and into the rain.



CHAPTER SEVEN

I didn't see or hear from Gatsby for weeks, so I decided to pop by one Sunday afternoon. To my surprise, Daisy's husband, Tom, was there. He was on horseback with two other people, outside



of Gatsby's house. Tom had been invited out with friends and they had wandered across Gatsby's place. Gatsby now stood on the porch and was clearly affected by Tom's presence. I felt rather uncomfortable – Tom was not someone I'd expected to ever see at Gatsby's house, especially after I had arranged a secret meeting between Daisy and Gatsby. I hoped Tom didn't know.

'We've met before,' Gatsby told Tom.

'Have we? Sorry, I don't remember,' replied Tom.

‘I know your wife, Daisy,’ Gatsby added. Tom shuffled on his horse and stared at Gatsby.

‘Is that so?’ Tom said. Then he turned to me. I felt extremely uncomfortable at where this conversation might go – I could be in trouble for arranging the meeting between Daisy and Gatsby.

‘You live here, Nick?’ Tom asked me.

‘Next door,’ I replied.

‘Is that so?’ he repeated.

The lady rider that was with him said to Gatsby they would come to his next party.

‘I’d be delighted to have you all. Why don’t you come in and have supper with me?’ I felt my pulse quicken at Gatsby’s suggestion. I wasn’t sure what game Gatsby was playing, or why he wanted to stay in Tom’s company.

‘We must go. We have a dinner to get to,’ announced Tom.

‘But you must join us! Both of you,’ the lady said to Gatsby and me. Tom glared at her, but only I seemed to notice.

‘Thank you. I’ll get my coat,’ Gatsby replied and disappeared into his house.

‘How on earth does he know Daisy?’ Tom frowned. ‘Women run around on their own too much.’

He looked at me and said, ‘Tell him we couldn’t wait.’ Then he kicked the side of the horse and quickly trotted off with his companions before Gatsby could reappear.



To my great surprise, Tom and Daisy arrived at Gatsby’s party the following Saturday. At first, Daisy was excited to be at the party.

‘I’ve never seen so many celebrities,’ she exclaimed, when

Gatsby showed us around and pointed out the many famous people who attended his parties. I could tell he wanted to impress his secret love and her husband.

Gatsby asked Daisy for a dance and the two foxtrotted around his grounds, among his guests and disappeared. Tom was oblivious to his wife’s disappearance as he joined in conversations with people he knew.

But soon, Daisy’s excitement faded. She wasn’t used to parties

FOXTROT - A dance for two people, usually a man and woman. It is danced to big band music and consists of a mix of long, slow and quick steps.

such as these – usually attending more elegant affairs, rather than the wildness of Gatsby’s evenings. She and Tom left not long after she had danced with Gatsby.

I waited until all the guests had left, lingering in the garden for Gatsby to join me.

‘She didn’t like it. She didn’t have a good time,’ sulked Gatsby.



‘Of course she did,’ I insisted. But Gatsby knew it wasn’t her scene. He was miserable. He was desperate for Daisy to tell her husband she didn’t love him, but loved Gatsby instead.

‘I’m going to fix everything, just the way it was when we first met.’

‘Go easy, Gatsby. You can’t repeat the past,’ I told him.

‘Of course I can. You’ll see,’ said Gatsby.

I didn’t know what to tell him. I couldn’t see Daisy leaving Tom and moving into Gatsby’s wild life, but I didn’t want to crush his hopes.



The following Saturday evening was eerily quiet. I suddenly realised Gatsby's house was still. There was no music, no bustle of caterers, no laughter. A few cars pulled into the drive and sat for a moment before leaving, disappointed at the absence of entertainment.

I was concerned. I went and knocked on Gatsby's door and a man answered who I'd never seen before. He was wearing a butler's uniform, so I could only assume he was a part of Gatsby's staff. The unfamiliar man eyed me

suspiciously and I squirmed under his glare.

'Is Mr Gatsby sick?' I asked.

'Nope,' grunted the butler, clearly irritated at my interruption. 'Sir,' he added begrudgingly.

'I haven't seen him around recently. Can you tell him Nick came over?' I asked.

'Who?' he demanded rudely.

'Nick Carraway,' I repeated.

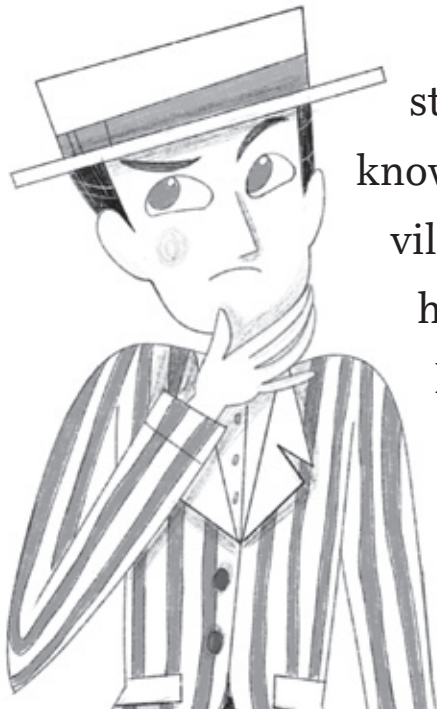
'I'll tell him,' he said, then slammed the door in my face. Who was this rude man?



I went home and my housekeeper informed me that my elaborate neighbour had fired most of his servants earlier that day.

Gatsby called me on the phone the next day.

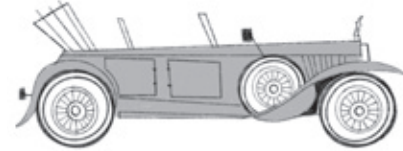
‘Why was the house so quiet last night?’ I asked him. ‘And why have you fired your old servants?’



‘I want new staff who don’t know the other villagers. I can’t have gossip about Daisy coming over to visit.’

I hadn’t realised that Daisy had been going over to visit Gatsby. I wondered how far their relationship had developed, but I didn’t dare to ask.

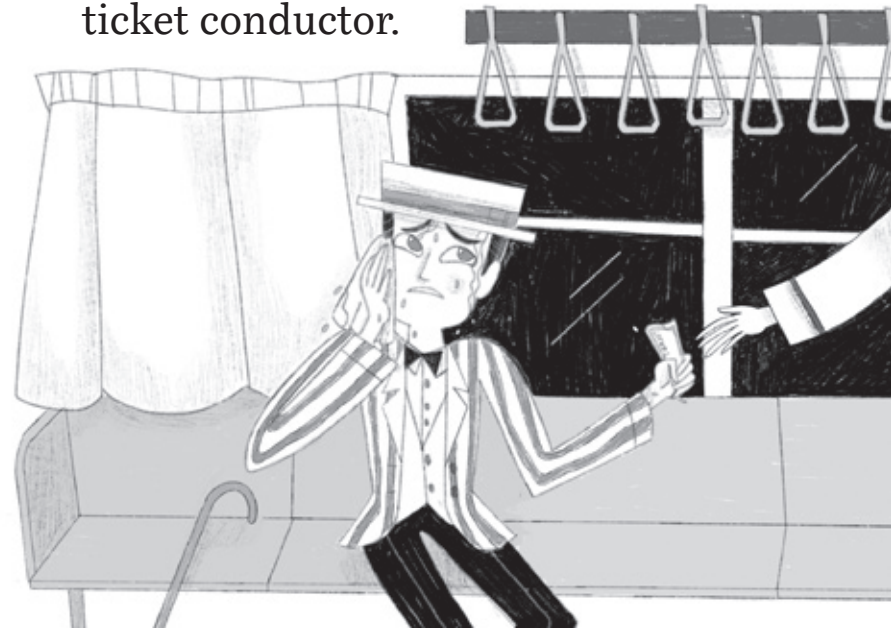
‘But I’m not calling you to discuss my staff. I want to invite you to lunch at Daisy’s house tomorrow.’ I suddenly felt concerned. How would Tom react to his wife befriending Gatsby? Would Tom find out that I had them both round at my house? Did he already know? ‘Miss Jordan Baker will be there too,’ Gatsby added, as though that would make me agree.



CHAPTER EIGHT

It seemed odd that Gatsby would call me and ask me to lunch at the house Daisy shared with her husband, but I agreed anyway. Daisy was family after all, and I had become friends with Gatsby. I felt he may need my support.

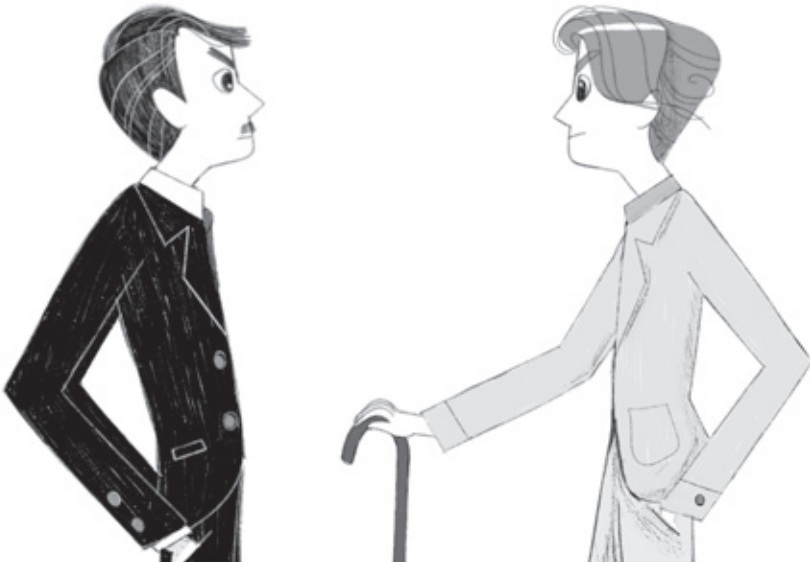
The next day was the hottest day of the year. Sweat poured from me as I sat on the train on the way to Daisy's house. My ticket wilted under my damp fingers as I passed it to the equally wet hands of the ticket conductor.



The butler answered Daisy's door and looked as though he might melt under his uniform. Gatsby and I made our way to the salon, as instructed, and found Daisy and Jordan laying on a sofa each.

'We can't move,' they said in unison. 'It's too hot to move.'

Tom appeared in the room. Gatsby and the husband glared at each other, weighing each other up.



Jordan whispered in my ear that Tom had just been on the phone to his secret girlfriend. It seemed oddly fitting that Tom and Daisy should both have a secret from each other: Tom had his girlfriend, Myrtle, and Daisy had been seeing Gatsby.

'Make us a cold drink, would you?' Daisy asked Tom. When Tom disappeared from the room, Daisy got up from the sofa, walked over to Gatsby, pulled his face down and kissed him on the lips.

'You know I love you,' she declared to him. It suddenly became clear to me that Daisy and Gatsby's reunion

had escalated much further than I'd thought.

'You forget there is a lady present!' exclaimed Jordan, surprised at Daisy's public display of love to a man that was not her husband.

'I don't care,' cried Daisy and sat back down on the sofa.

Tom came back in with the drinks. We all drank greedily, hoping they would cool us down.

After a tense lunch, Daisy suggested we all go into town for the afternoon. Tom ignored Daisy's suggestion and started talking to

Gatsby about making a garage out of a stable.

'Who wants to go to town?' demanded Daisy insistently. Gatsby looked over to Daisy and she smiled. 'Ah, you look so cool. You always look so cool,' she told him.

Tom watched Gatsby and Daisy stare into each other's eyes. It was clear Daisy had trouble looking away. I believe this was the moment that Tom suspected something was going on between them. He glared at his wife and Gatsby with his mouth open in surprise.

Daisy looked at her drink, then back to Gatsby. ‘You resemble that man from the advertisement. You know the one, the one who—’

‘All right,’ said Tom quickly, breaking Daisy off before she could pour any further compliments onto Gatsby. ‘Let’s go into town.’

Tom wrapped a drink bottle in a towel while the two ladies got ready.

We ventured outside. Gatsby felt the hot green leather of his car, dismayed he hadn’t thought to leave it in the shade.

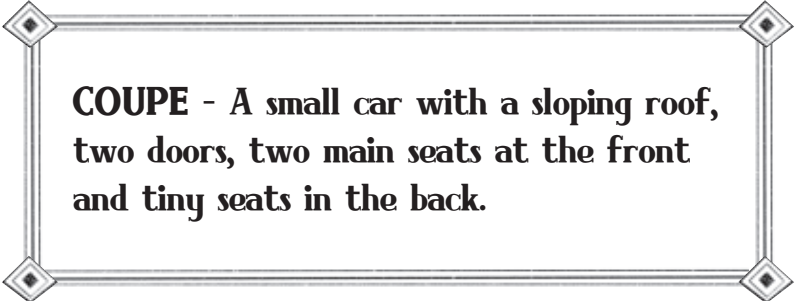
‘You take my coupe and I’ll drive your car to town,’ said Tom,

taking charge of the situation. ‘It’ll be fun.’

‘I don’t think there is much petrol,’ stuttered Gatsby, trying to avoid letting Tom take his car.

‘There’s plenty,’ insisted Tom. ‘Come on, Daisy,’ he called to his wife as she appeared from the house. ‘I’ll take you to town in this joke of a car.’

‘You take Nick and Jordan. We’ll follow you in the coupe,’ replied Daisy as she touched Gatsby’s coat. Furious, Tom jumped into the driver’s seat. We sped out of the



COUPE - A small car with a sloping roof, two doors, two main seats at the front and tiny seats in the back.

drive leaving Daisy and Gatsby behind.

The heat was making everyone irritable, but Tom even more so. The drive to town was an uncomfortable one. Tom told us he had been looking into Gatsby's history and did not believe anything the man said. He didn't believe that Gatsby had gone to Oxford University nor that Gatsby's money was inherited.

Much to Tom's annoyance, Jordan insisted we stop at the garage for petrol. Wilson, the man

OXFORD - A historic city in England, famous for the prestigious University of Oxford.

who owned the garage, came over to refuel the car. He apologised to Tom for telephoning earlier and interrupting his lunchtime. It appeared that it wasn't Tom's girlfriend that had called the house after all.

'I need money,' said Wilson. He wanted Tom's old car so he could sell it on and move his wife away. He had just found out his wife, Myrtle, was seeing another man. Jordan and I glanced at each other. From the



surprise in her eyes, she too must have realised that Wilson's wife was Tom's secret girlfriend.

To my horror, Tom asked, 'Do you want to buy this one?' It was Gatsby's car he was talking about.

'Fat chance,' Wilson smiled. It would be difficult to find a quick buyer for a car as luxurious as a Rolls-Royce. 'But I could make some money on the other.'

Tom's coupe suddenly drove past us in a flurry, with Gatsby at the wheel and Daisy beside him. Tom rushed Wilson to finish fuelling the car.

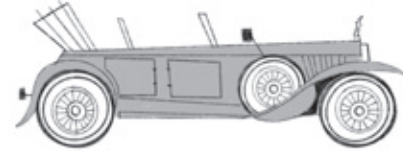
'I'll let you have that car you want. I'll send it over tomorrow afternoon,' he said.

I glanced up at the window of the garage and saw the man's wife, Myrtle, watching us. In fact, she wasn't watching *us* – she was glaring at Jordan with hatred on her face. I wondered if Myrtle thought Jordan was Tom's wife.



Tom hit the accelerator hard, wanting to catch up with Gatsby.

Perhaps the thought of losing both his mistress and his wife made him drive faster. He overtook his own car with Gatsby's, calling to his wife and Gatsby to meet them at the south side of Central Park, in front of the Plaza Hotel. He took off in front, but not so far ahead that he lost sight of them in his rear-view mirror. The last thing Tom wanted was Gatsby to disappear down a side street with his wife.



CHAPTER NINE

We entered the Plaza Hotel. It was just as hot in there as it was outside. My clothes had started to chafe my sweaty skin, and I was extremely uncomfortable.

We rented a suite to sit in and gulp down some ice-cold drinks. I thought it was rather extravagant to hire a hotel suite just for that, especially as the room was just as hot as everywhere else.



‘Open a window,’ Daisy commanded. Then, ‘Open another!’ There weren’t any more to open.

‘We need an axe to break through the walls. It’s too hot in here!’ Daisy complained.

‘Would you just forget about the heat!’ Tom snapped at her. I suspected his frustration was more at the situation with Gatsby than her complaints about the heat.

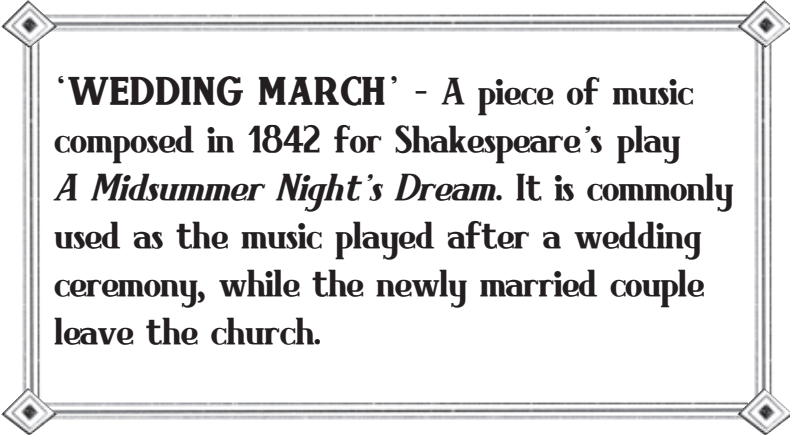
‘Why not leave her alone, old sport?’ said Gatsby. ‘You’re the one who wanted to come to town.’

Tom glared at Gatsby with cruel eyes. ‘That’s a great expression of

yours, isn’t it? “Old sport”. Where did you pick that nonsense up from?’

‘Stop it, Tom,’ said Daisy. ‘If you’re going to be mean I won’t stay a minute longer.’

Suddenly the room filled with the ‘Wedding March’ from a wedding taking place below. Jordan broke the tension with a story from the past. The conversation



‘WEDDING MARCH’ - A piece of music composed in 1842 for Shakespeare’s play *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. It is commonly used as the music played after a wedding ceremony, while the newly married couple leave the church.

drifted away from the stand-off between Tom and Gatsby, but Tom remained irritated. He turned the conversation to questioning Gatsby about his past.

‘So, Gatsby. I was told you’re an Oxford man.’

‘Not exactly,’ Gatsby answered, stiffening. He seemed uncomfortable with Tom’s probing.

‘But you have told people you went to Oxford! That makes you an Oxford man.’

‘I said I went there, but I only stayed five months. I can’t really call myself an Oxford man,’ said Gatsby.

Tom looked around the room to see if we mirrored his suspicion.

‘Some of us were given an opportunity because of our efforts in the war. We could go to any university. I chose Oxford,’ Gatsby explained. I wanted to applaud him for standing up to Tom. Tom was so aggressively trying to convince us all that Gatsby was a fraud.

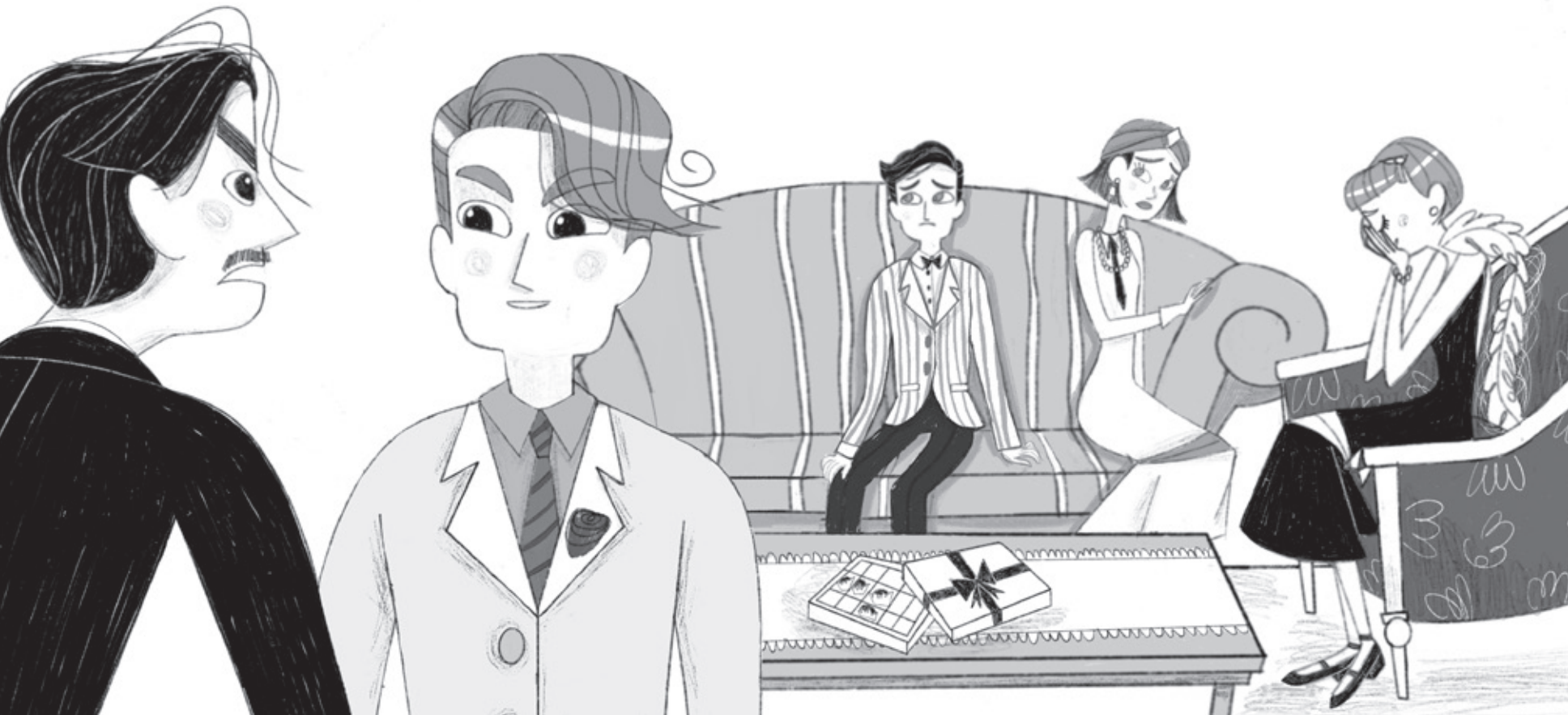
Daisy tried to change the subject and distract Tom with a drink. She made the mistake of telling Tom he wouldn’t look so stupid after a nice cold drink. I could tell that

Tom was furious just by the look on his face.

‘What kind of row are you trying to cause in my marriage, Gatsby?’ snapped Tom.

I looked at Gatsby. He looked smug, almost pleased.

‘Let’s just all go home,’ cried Daisy, upset by the hostile atmosphere.



‘Good idea,’ I agreed.

‘Your wife doesn’t love you,’

Gatsby suddenly shouted at Tom.

‘She never loved you, do you hear me? She only married you because I went off to war!’

Jordan and I got up to leave the extremely uncomfortable scene that was taking place before us. It was not for our eyes to witness such a spectacle. But both men insisted that we stayed. They faced each other in a display worthy of the comparison of peacocks flouting their feathery tails. Then came the emotional tug of war –

Daisy was the rope being tugged from one man to the other.

‘Our affair has been going on for five years,’ cried Gatsby.

Tom glared at Daisy. She looked shell-shocked, standing as though rooted to the spot.

‘We haven’t seen each other for that long,’ admitted Gatsby, ‘but we’ve loved each other the whole time.’

We learnt a few things during the emotional scene that erupted in that hotel room. Firstly, Gatsby believed he and Daisy had been in love ever since they met. Gatsby also

believed Daisy had married Tom for a life of riches, and because she got bored of waiting for Gatsby to return from war. Tom admitted that he had relationships with other women – but he said that he always went back to Daisy because he loved her.

I felt awkward witnessing these revelations. I wasn't a part of this story, and I had no right being there. I regretted ever being thrown into this mess.

The tug of war between Gatsby and Tom continued. Both men demanded that Daisy admit she

didn't love the other. Eventually, Daisy succumbed to Gatsby's pressure. She said she had never loved Tom. But the lie was obvious and, of course, Tom wouldn't accept it. Poor Daisy became incredibly flustered.

'I did love him once – but I loved you too,' she cried to Gatsby.

Tom was obviously feeling threatened by Gatsby. He promised to treat Daisy better. I couldn't help but wonder if it was too little too late.

Suddenly, Gatsby shouted at Tom: 'She's leaving you!'

‘Pah! Leaving me? For a crook? Nonsense,’ spat Tom. Gatsby and Daisy both stared at Tom. ‘That’s right. I knew there was something off about you from the moment we met. I’ve been doing some investigating into you and your affairs, Gatsby. You are a crook!’

Gatsby shifted uncomfortably. ‘What do you mean?’ he said.

‘I know about your crooked dealings and your crooked friends. I know about how a man went to prison because of your illegal dealings! I know you made your money smuggling illegal things

from one place to another.’ Daisy looked terrified as she glanced from Tom to Gatsby and back to Tom again.

Gatsby turned to Daisy in desperation. ‘I can explain,’ he begged. ‘It’s not like that. Tom’s twisting the events. I’m not a crook.’

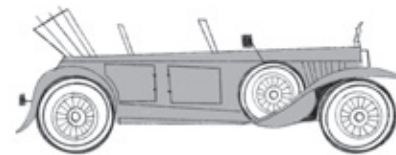
I watched Daisy struggling to cope with this new information. I knew she was not the kind of woman that would leave her rich life for an illegal one with a crook.



‘I can’t take this anymore!’ cried Daisy.

Tom had control again. He told Daisy to go back home with Gatsby. I couldn’t help but think what a strange command to give – sending your wife home with the man she was in love with. But Tom was certain this nonsense with Gatsby was over, now he had exposed him as a crook.

And so Daisy and Gatsby were gone, leaving Tom, Jordan and me in the hotel room.



CHAPTER TEN

As Tom, Jordan and I drove home, we noticed a commotion taking place outside the garage where we had stopped for fuel earlier that day. We slowed down and brought the car to a stop.

People gathered around the garage door and I could hear a wailing sound coming from the inside. Something terrible must have happened.

Tom got out of the car and headed towards the crowd. As he pushed his way to the front, he saw that Myrtle had been in an accident. An accident which she hadn't survived. She lay lifeless on a table.

'What happened?' shouted Tom.

A yellow car had hit Myrtle and drove off. The driver hadn't even stopped. A policeman was now at the scene taking details from the witnesses.

'It was the car you were driving!' shouted Wilson.

Tom grabbed Myrtle's husband by the shoulders. 'The yellow car



I was in earlier, it wasn't mine!

I borrowed it, do you understand?'

Tom kept repeating that the yellow car wasn't his – especially as he had pretended it was earlier, when he offered to sell it to Wilson.

'What's all this?' the policeman said, and questioned Tom about his car.

I told the officer that we had just come from New York. Someone who had been driving behind us confirmed this to be true.

‘Let’s get out of here,’ Tom said to me.

We all got into the car and slowly drove until we were out of sight. Then Tom put his foot down and sped home.

It slowly dawned on me that it must have been Gatsby who had hit Myrtle. Gatsby who hadn’t even stopped after he had hit her! I was mortified at the thought.

Tom drove straight to his and Daisy’s home in East Egg. When we pulled up, Jordan wanted me to go

inside with them. But I’d had enough of all of them – I wanted to be well away from their drama. I felt sick when I thought about the outcome of this disastrous day, and the poor woman who had lost her life.

I could hear the butler telephone for a taxi for me from where I stood outside, and I walked down the drive to wait for it. I hadn’t reached the end when I heard my name – and Gatsby appeared from out of the bushes.

‘Was she killed?’ he asked me.

‘Yes!’ I exclaimed, shocked at his question.

‘I thought so,’ he said, shaken by the news. ‘I told Daisy she had been. I tried to grab the wheel. Daisy was driving – but of course, I’ll say I was.’

I listened in shock as Gatsby told me what had happened. Daisy had been in a state when they left New York, and had wanted to drive to calm herself down.



When Myrtle saw the yellow car she had, perhaps, run out into the road thinking it was Tom coming back for her. But another car was also coming the other way. It had happened very fast.

Daisy had sped off after she hit Myrtle. Gatsby said she wouldn’t stop so he pulled the emergency brake, stopped the car and moved her over so he could drive. He hid the car in his garage. Now he was waiting for Daisy to come out to meet him, and leave Tom behind.

I began to think that if Tom found out it had been Daisy driving, he

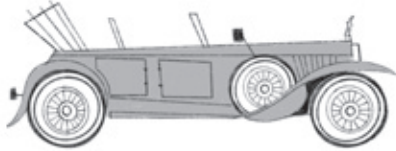
might think that Daisy knew Myrtle was his girlfriend and had hit her on purpose. I crept back around the outside of the house to see if I could see her and make sure she was okay. As I peered through a window, I spotted Daisy and Tom sitting in the kitchen, talking. Tom's hand

was placed gently over Daisy's. It appeared that they were trying to make up with each other.

I crept back to tell Gatsby that the house was quiet and Daisy was fine. I asked him to come back to West Egg with me, but he refused. He insisted on waiting for Daisy. I knew that if he had just seen what I had, then perhaps he would have realised there was no point.

When my taxi pulled up I went home, leaving Gatsby alone on Tom and Daisy's drive.





CHAPTER ELEVEN

I didn't sleep well that night. I tossed and turned. When I heard a car pull into Gatsby's drive in the early morning, I shot out of bed.



I got dressed and went out to see if he was okay.

I found him leaning against a table in the hall, the doors wide open. He looked miserable. I tried to advise him to leave town for a while.

'Leave *now*, old sport?' Gatsby said. He was going nowhere until he knew what Daisy planned to do.

We sat talking in his home until the sun had fully risen.

'She doesn't love Tom. She was confused back at the hotel,' Gatsby insisted.

I wasn't convinced. It was clear to me that Daisy was sad when I

met her – she wanted fun in her life. Gatsby had certainly provided the fun, but I questioned if she still was in love with him the way she had been years ago.

‘I often wonder what would have happened had I not been sent to war, old sport,’ said Gatsby. ‘I dreamt about Daisy every night. Since my return I still do, and I will continue to do so until the day she leaves Tom for me.’

I couldn’t help but think the poor man was deluded. I couldn’t see Daisy leaving Tom and the life they had built together.

It was time for me to leave to go to work. Gatsby was going to spend the day swimming in the pool.



I found out later that, while I was at work, Myrtle’s husband began searching for someone in the area with a yellow car. He was convinced that the owner of the yellow car, and the man who ran her down, was Myrtle’s secret boyfriend. Wilson was a man possessed with rage and grief, and was not going to stop until he found the owner.

His search took him to West Egg, and by the time he got to the village he knew Gatsby's name. Gatsby was later discovered in his pool, no longer alive. Wilson had finally found him.

I still remember that day clearly, even two years later. I searched for Gatsby's true friends and family, to tell them the sad news. It rained on the day of his funeral, a funeral of myself, Gatsby's father and only one guest of the hundreds of people that went to Gatsby's parties. Not even Daisy turned up – nor did she send a note or a flower.

With everything that he had, and everything that he became, Gatsby never did get the one thing he truly wanted.

Daisy.



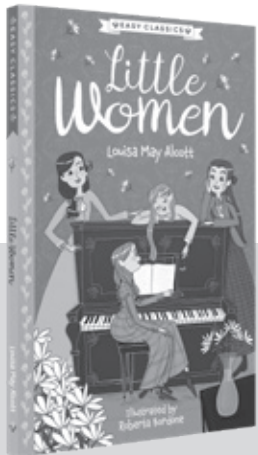
'Happiness doesn't come from money,' said Mrs March. 'I'd rather see my girls happy and married to poor men, than unhappy and married to rich men.'

The March sisters are living through tough times. Their father is off at war, money is scarce and the eldest sisters must work to support their mother. Their poverty creates hardship to be overcome. But will the girls grow to find richness of spirit as well as material wealth?

Read on for an exclusive sample from the next book in The American Classics Children's Collection ...

Little Women

Louisa May Alcott



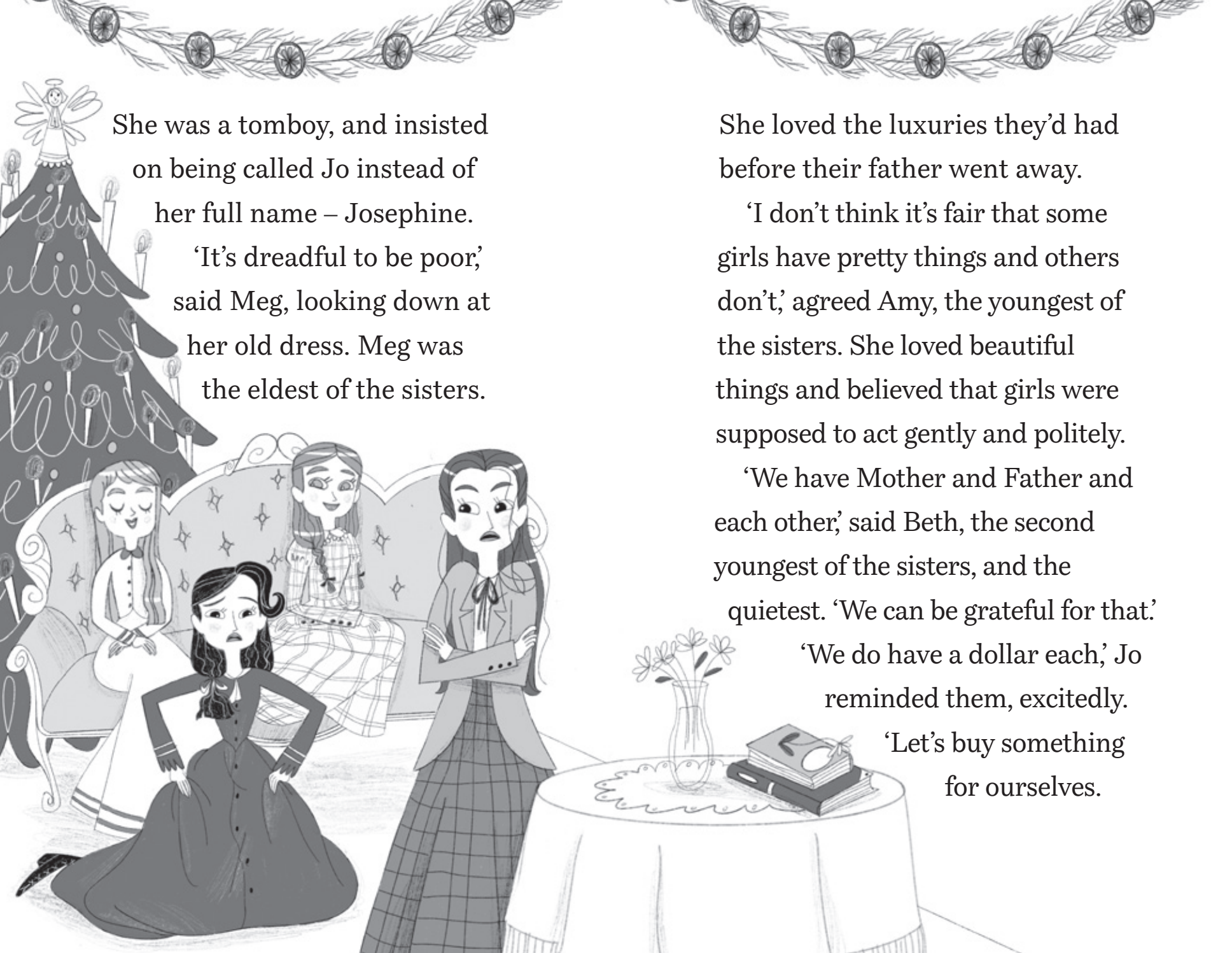


Chapter One

The four March sisters were quite close in age but very different in personality. As Christmas drew near, they sat discussing the fairness of their luck. Their father had left to serve as a chaplain in the civil war and money was tight. Christmas would be bare.

‘Christmas won’t be Christmas without any presents,’ grumbled Jo, the second eldest of the sisters.

CHAPLAIN – A Christian official who is responsible for religious services and activities. They also perform wedding ceremonies, christenings and funerals.



She was a tomboy, and insisted on being called Jo instead of her full name – Josephine.

‘It’s dreadful to be poor,’ said Meg, looking down at her old dress. Meg was the eldest of the sisters.

She loved the luxuries they’d had before their father went away.

‘I don’t think it’s fair that some girls have pretty things and others don’t,’ agreed Amy, the youngest of the sisters. She loved beautiful things and believed that girls were supposed to act gently and politely.

‘We have Mother and Father and each other,’ said Beth, the second youngest of the sisters, and the quietest. ‘We can be grateful for that.’

‘We do have a dollar each,’ Jo reminded them, excitedly.

‘Let’s buy something for ourselves.’

I'm desperate for a new book.' Jo loved reading, and writing stories was her greatest passion.

'I would like some new music,' whispered Beth. She loved to play the piano, but the one they had was old, worn and out of tune.

'I'd really like some new colouring pencils,' said Amy, the artist of the family.

'We've worked hard for that money, so we'll buy ourselves one item each for Christmas,' said Jo.



When their father left, the two eldest girls had found jobs to help out with the family income. Meg took a position as a governess, teaching young children. Jo went to work for their old, grumpy aunt, as a maid. She wasn't happy working for her aunt, but wanted to do her bit to help the family.

'I think I'm going to use my money to get Mother a new pair of slippers, instead of music for myself,' said Beth. She often put other people before herself.

GOVERNESS – Someone who is responsible for the care and education of her employer's children.

After hearing Beth's plans,
Meg, Jo and Amy also decided to
buy gifts for their mother, instead
of spending their money on
themselves.

