

Start

NICK. *(To audience.)* 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 anyone," 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 communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. *(The dancers drift off as "Gatsby's Love Theme" is heard. Nick turns and looks at him.)* Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this story, represented everything for which I had an unaffected scorn. But if personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something ... gorgeous about him ... some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life. He had 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. *(Daisy rushes onstage followed by Jordan. Or perhaps they float in on a divan. Daisy is mercurial, utterly compelling, and always the center of attention. In truth, she is a classic manic/depressive, much like Zelda Fitzgerald. By contrast, Jordan is almost mannish, athletic, emancipated, and self-assured. The Buchanan house forms around them ... as Gatsby slowly disappears.)*

DAISY. Nick! Nick, darling, I'm p-paralyzed with happiness! *(She throws herself on him and gives him a huge kiss.)*

NICK. Hello, Daisy.

DAISY. Nick Carraway, Miss Baker. Nick is my cousin —

NICK. Second cousin, once removed.

DAISY. He and Tom graduated Yale together.

JORDAN. Did you play football as well?

NICK. No, Tom was the football hero. I was — *(Tom Buchanan enters. His size and money have made him brutal.)*

TOM. Nick! There you are. *(He wears riding clothes and pushes on a drink cart.)*

NICK. Hello, Tom.

TOM. Care for a drink?

NICK. Uh, not yet. Little early for me. Thanks.

TOM. Who needs a refresher? *(Tom pours a drink. He consumes alcohol the way he used to play football. Daisy flops on a divan, pulling Jordan down with her, cuddling like lovers.)*

DAISY. Nick, I've been telling Jordan all about you.

TOM. You found the place alright?

NICK. Hard to miss.

TOM. Where you staying?

NICK. Across the Sound.

JORDAN. West Egg?

NICK. A little cottage I found.

JORDAN. Really?

NICK. What a strange community! On either side of me are these huge estates that must go for twelve, fifteen thousand for the summer.

TOM. What are you paying?

NICK. Eighty a month.

TOM. Huh. Well, welcome to *East Egg*.

DAISY. How long you staying?

NICK. Until I make my fortune.

DAISY. Tom will help you, won't you, darling?

NICK. I stopped off in Chicago on the way out and at least half a dozen people send their love.

DAISY. Do they miss me?

NICK. The whole town's desolate. All the cars have their left rear wheel painted black as a mourning wreath and there's a persistent wail all night along the North Shore.

DAISY. How gorgeous! (*She jumps up.*) Let's go back, Tom. Tomorrow! (*To Nick.*) You ought to see the baby.

NICK. I'd like to.

DAISY. She's asleep. She's two years old. Haven't you ever seen her?

NICK. Never.

DAISY. Well, you ought to. She's —

TOM. What you doing these days, Nick?

NICK. Learning to be a bond man.

TOM. Who with?

NICK. Probity Trust.

TOM. Never heard of them.

NICK. Oh. Well, you will.

TOM. Any money in bonds?

NICK. Everyone I know is doing it. Making lots of money. After being in the war, well, the Midwest feels kind of dull to me. That's why I've come east. Father's financed me for a year.

JORDAN. Where you from?

NICK. St. Paul. (*She looks at him blankly.*) Minnesota?

JORDAN. (*No clue.*) A-ha.

DAISY. You'll be rich as Midas one day.

NICK. I've bought about a dozen books on banking and credit and investment securities, studying all the time and —

DAISY. You'll help him, won't you, Tom?

JORDAN. (*Yawning and standing.*) I'm stiff. I feel like I've been lying on that sofa for as long as I can remember.

DAISY. Well, don't look at me. I've been trying to get you to New York all afternoon.

TOM. This'll help. (*Tom offers Jordan a drink.*)

JORDAN. It is Prohibition.

TOM. So what!

JORDAN. Besides, I'm absolutely in training. (*She grabs the drink and downs it in one gulp.*)

TOM. How you ever get anything done is beyond me.

NICK. I recognize you from somewhere.

JORDAN. You said you live across the Sound in West Egg. I know somebody there.

NICK. I don't know a single —

JORDAN. You must know Gatsby.

DAISY. (*Demanding.*) Gatsby? What Gatsby?

JORDAN. He's got that huge mansion that looks like an imitation of a French hotel.

NICK. The one with the tower?

JORDAN. Throws huge parties.

NICK. I live right next door. Our lawns practically —

DAISY. (*Suddenly rushes downstage, looking off.*) In two weeks it'll be the longest day in the year. Do you always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it? I always watch for the longest day in the year and then miss it.

JORDAN. We ought to plan something.

DAISY. (*Excited, manic.*) All right. What'll we plan? What do people plan? (*Looks at her hand.*) Look! (*Holds out finger.*) I hurt it. (*Pouting.*) You did it, Tom. I know you didn't mean to but you did do it. That's what I get for marrying a brute of a man, a great big hulking physical specimen of a —

TOM. I hate that word, "hulking," even in kidding.

DAISY. Hulking. Hulking, hulking, HULKING! (*A beat.*)

TOM. Have a drink, Nick.

NICK. Alright.

TOM. (*Pouring drinks.*) I've got a nice place here.

NICK. Enormous. The sunken gardens —

TOM. It belonged to Demaine, the oil man. I'll show you around.
(*He starts to take Nick off.*)