

Forget it. Just come back before Pammy goes to bed. *(He waits for a response. There is none. He exits. Daisy looks across at the lights.)*

DAISY. It was so much nicer a long time ago when we had each other and the space about the world was warm. *(She cries ... as lights shift. Sound of a hydroplane. Gatsby and Nick, wearing aviator goggles and caps, enter. [Note: If possible, it would be great to see them "flying."])*

GATSBY. WHAT A MACHINE!

NICK. FANTASTIC!

GATSBY. THRILLING, OLD SPORT?

NICK. THRILLING!

GATSBY. I THOUGHT WE'D GO INTO NEW YORK LATER AND HAVE LUNCH.

NICK. ANYTHING! I'M ALL YOURS TODAY.

GATSBY. LOOK HERE, OLD SPORT. WHAT'S YOUR OPINION OF ME?

NICK. WHAT?!

GATSBY. I SAID, WHAT'S YOUR OPINION OF ME? *(Sound of the hydroplane fades.)*

NICK. We've only just met.

GATSBY. Be frank, old sport.

NICK. Well ... honestly? ... I've heard all sorts of rumors.

GATSBY. I'm going to tell you something about my life. I don't want you to get a wrong idea of me from all these stories you hear. This is the God's honest truth — I'm the son of some wealthy people in the Middle West — all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It's a family tradition.

NICK. What part of the Middle West?

GATSBY. San Francisco. *(A manservant appears to help them change clothes.)*

NICK. I see.

GATSBY. My family all died and I came into a good deal of money. After that I lived like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe — Paris, Venice, Rome — collecting jewels, chiefly rubies, hunting big game, painting a little, things for myself only, and trying to forget something very sad that had happened to me long ago. Then came the war, old sport. It was a great relief and I tried very hard to die but I seemed to bear an enchanted life. I accepted a commission as first lieutenant when it began. In the Argonne Forest — you were there?

NICK. At St. Mihiel Salient.

GATSBY. This was near Souilly. I took two machine-gun detachments so far forward that there was a half-mile gap on either side of us where the infantry couldn't advance. We stayed there two days and two nights, a hundred and thirty men with sixteen Lewis guns, and when the infantry came up at last they found the insignia of three German divisions among the piles of dead. I was promoted to be a major and every Allied government gave me a decoration — even Montenegro, little Montenegro down on the Adriatic Sea! *(Nick has to stifle a laugh. Gatsby pulls a medal out of his pocket.)* That's the one from Montenegro. See what it says?

NICK. "Orderi di Danilo. Montenegro. Nicolas Rex."

GATSBY. Turn it over.

NICK. "Major Jay Gatsby. For Valour Extraordinary."

GATSBY. Here's another thing I always carry. A souvenir of Oxford days. It was taken in Trinity Quad. *(He hands Nick a photograph.)* The man on the left is now the Earl of Doncaster.

NICK. *(Surprised.)* Then it's all true?

GATSBY. Of course.

NICK. I didn't mean it like that. It's just that —

GATSBY. It's all right, old sport.

NICK. Why are you telling me all this?

GATSBY. I'm going to make a big request of you today, so I thought you ought to know something about me. I didn't want you to think I was just some ... nobody.

NICK. You planned all this?

GATSBY. I knew I could trust you. You see I usually find myself among strangers because I drift here and there trying to forget the sad thing that happened to me. *(Beat.)* You'll hear about it this afternoon.

NICK. At lunch?

GATSBY. Yes, but not with me. You'll be having lunch with Miss Baker.

NICK. Do you mean you're in love with Miss Baker?

GATSBY. No, old sport, I'm not. But Miss Baker has kindly consented to speak to you about this matter.

NICK. I don't understand. Why don't you just tell me yourself?

*(Jazz music. A New York restaurant forms around them.)*

GATSBY. It's a delicate matter ... and I'd rather — *(Tom enters.)*

~~TOM. Hello, Nick.~~

END