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, just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had.'

In consequence, I'm inclined to reserve all judgements, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me.

Reserving judgements 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.

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 glimpses 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, there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life.

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.
No - 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 shortwinded elations of men.
The history of that summer really begins on the evening I drove over to fashionable East Egg to have dinner with the Tom Buchanans...

Daisy was my second cousin once removed.

To darling Nick, love Daisy. XXX

And I'd known Tom in college.
Among various physical accomplishments, Tom had been one of the most powerful ends that ever played football at New Haven.

Now he was a sturdy man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner, a cruel body and shining arrogant eyes.

His family were enormously wealthy.

and there were men at New Haven who had hated his guts.
Come on—we’ll go inside.
Oh, Nick!
I'm p-paralysed with happiness!

Daisy had 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.

There's no-one in the world I so much wanted to see!
Nick, this is Miss Baker.

Tell me, Nick—do they miss me in Chicago?

Daisy's face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright, passionate mouth.

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 along the north shore.

How gorgeous!

but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared about her found difficult to forget.
Let's go back, Tom. Tomorrow!

So, what you doing, Nick?

I'm a bond man.

Who with?

Fricks.

Never heard of them.

You will. You will if you stay in the East.

Oh, I'll stay in the East - don't you worry -
I'd be a God damned fool to live anywhere else!

Absolutely!

I don't know a single -

Oh - you must know Gatsby.

You live in West Egg. I know somebody there.

Gatsby?

What Gatsby?
...but before I could reply that this Gatsby was my neighbour,

Tom Buchanan compelled me from the room as if he were moving a checker to another square.

Dinner's ready.

Candles? Why candles?

In two weeks it'll be the longest day in the year.

I always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it.
Daisy and Miss Baker talked at once with a bantering inconsequence that was never quite chatter;

...that was as cool as their white dresses

kof!

and their impersonal eyes in the absence of all desire.

They knew that presently dinner would be over

and casually put away.

and a little later the evening too would be over...
You make me feel uncivilised, Daisy. Can't you talk about crops or something?

I meant nothing in particular by this remark, but it was taken up in an unexpected way...

Civilisation's going to pieces!

I've gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things. Have you read The Rise of the Coloured Empires by this man Goddard?

Well, it's a fine book and everyone ought to read it.

It's all scientific stuff - it's all been proved -

The idea is that if we don't look out, the white race will be utterly submerged.
It's up to us, the dominant race.

Or these other races will have control of things!

Suh! Telephone call.

to watch out...
Then the glow faded, each night deserting her with lingering regret, like children leaving a pleasant street at dusk.

For a moment the last sunshine fell with romantic affection on Daisy's face.

Nick - Jordan - excuse me, won't you?

This Mr Gatsby you spoke of is my neighbour -

Shhh!

Is something happening?

You mean to say you didn't know? I thought everybody knew -

I don't -

I want to hear what happens.
Tom's got some woman in New York.

Got some woman?

She might have the decency not to telephone him at dinner time, don't you think?

It couldn't be helped!
Just listen to that nightingale! It's very romantic!

Isn't it, Tom?

Very romantic.

To a certain temperament the situation might have seemed intriguing.

But my own instinct was to telephone immediately for the police.
Why don't we sit on the porch for a moment, Nick-

We don't know each other very well, even if we are cousins.

— but I've had a very bad time and I'm pretty cynical about everything.

Evidently she had reason to be.
Ah... what about your little girl? I suppose she talks and... eats... and everything...

Oh, yes...

Listen, Nick. Let me tell you what I said when she was born. Would you like to hear?

Very much...

It'll show you how I've gotten to feel about things.
She was less than an hour old, and Tom was God knows where.

I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling.

Is it a boy or a girl?

A girl?

Why, she's a darlin' little girl!

All right.

I'm glad it's a girl.
And I hope she’ll be a fool.

That’s the best thing a girl can be in this world.

...a beautiful little fool.
You see, I think everything's terrible anyhow. Everybody thinks so— the most advanced people...

And I know— I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything.

Sophisticated— God, I'm sophisticated!

The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention and my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said.
...as though the whole evening had been a trick.

It made me uneasy.

to extract a contributory emotion from me.

And sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face.
I was confused and a little disgusted as I drove away.
The wind had blown off, leaving a loud, bright light with wings beating in the trees and a persistent organ sound as the bellows of the earth blew the frogs full of life...

I was not alone...
Fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadows of my neighbour’s mansion, and was standing there regarding the silver pepper of the stars.

Something in his leisurely movements and his secure position on the lawn suggested that it was Mr Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of 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 intimation that he was content to be alone...
...I could have sworn he was trembling.