CHAPTER THREE
There was music from my neighbour's house through the summer months.

In his blue garden men and girls came and went like moths among the champagne and the whispering and the stars...
At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough coloured lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby’s garden.
By seven o’clock the orchestra has arrived—no thin five-piece affair but a whole pitiful of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos...

The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs...

The cars from New York are parked five-deep in the drive...
The bar is in full swing and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden.

and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colours and hair bobbed in strange new ways and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile.

until the air is alive with chatter and laughter and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot.

and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names.
I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited.

June 28th 1922.

Dear Mr. Carraway,

The honour would be entirely mine if you should care to attend a little party at my house this evening. I had intended to call on you long before this, but a peculiar combination of circumstances has prevented me.

I look forward greatly to meeting you.

Jay Gatsby
People were not invited to Gatsby's house - they went there. They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island Sound, and somehow they ended up at Gatsby's door.

Sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission.

and once there they conducted themselves according to the rules of behaviour associated with an amusement park.
As soon as I arrived I made an attempt to find my host.

Ah... I don't suppose you know where Gatsby is.

No idea! How should I know?

The only place where a single man could linger without looking purposes and alone...

Unsuccessful, I slunk off in the direction of the cocktail table...
Once I wrote down on an empty time-table the names of those who came to Gatsby's house that summer. It is an old time-table now, disintegrating at its folds and headed 'This schedule in effect July 5th 1922'. But I can still read the grey names and they will give you a better impression than my generalities of those who accepted Gatsby's hospitality and paid him the subtle tribute of knowing nothing whatever about him.
From East Egg came the Chester Beckers
and the Leeches
and a man named Bunsen who I knew at Yale
and Dr Webster Civet who was drowned last summer in Maine
and the Hornbeams
and the Willie Voltaires
and a whole clan named Blackbuck who always gathered in the corners
and the Ismays
and the Chrysties
and Edgar Beaver whose hair they say turned cotton-white one afternoon for no good reason at all
From farther out on the island came the Cheadles
and the O.R.P. Schraeders
and the Stonewall Jackson Abrahams from Georgia

and the Fishguards

and the Ripley Snells.

From West Egg came the Poles

and the Mulreadys

and Cecil Roebuck

and Newton Orchid who controlled Films Par Excellence

and Eckhaust

and Cecil Schoen

and Arthur McCarty, all connected with the movies one way or another.

and Clyde Cohen

and Don S. Schwartz (the son)
All of these people came to Gatsby's house in the summer...

But that first night at Gatsby's I did not know a single one of them.
...when Jordan Baker came out of the house and stood at the head of the marble steps looking with contemptuous interest down into the garden.

I was on my way to get roaring drunk from sheer embarrassment.

I thought you'd be here. I remembered you lived next door.

Yes! Yes, I do.

Jordan! Hello!

I like large parties - they're so intimate.
I like to come to these parties—
I never care what I do—
so I always have a good time!

When I was here last I tore my gown on a chair, and he asked me my name and address—
—and within a week I got a package from Croiriers with a new evening gown in it!

Did you keep it?

Sure I did! It was gas-blue with lavender beads—
two hundred and sixty-five dollars!
There's something funny about a fellow that'll do a thing like that -

He doesn't want any trouble with anybody -

Somebody told me they thought he'd killed a man once -

No... It's more that he was a German spy during the war -

He's a bootlegger:

He's second cousin to Von Hindenburg.

He couldn't be, because he was in the American army during the war.

It was testimony to the romantic speculation Gatsby inspired that there were whispers about him from those who had found little that it was necessary to whisper about in the world.
The bar where we glanced first was crowded but Gatsby was not there...

Well, Nick hasn't met our host, and it's making him uneasy. We'll go and find him.

She couldn't find him from the top of the steps and he wasn't on the veranda...

...and walked into a high gothic library panelled in English oak and probably transported complete from some ruin overseas...

On a chance we tried an important-looking door
Whaddya think about that?!

As a matter of fact you needn't bother t' ascertain - I ascertained. They're real! Have pages 'n everything!

I thought they'd be a nice durable cardboard. Matter of fact they're absolutely real!

See! It's a bona fide piece of printed matter! What thoroughness! What realism!

Knew when to stop though - He didn't cut the pages -

But what do you want? What do you expect?

...Now put that back before the whole damn thing collapses.
Outside, the world and its mistress twinkled hilariously on Gatsby's lawn...

A celebrated tenor had sung in Italian and a notorious contralto had sung in jazz.

and between the numbers people were doing 'stunts' all over the garden

while happy, vacuous bursts of laughter rose toward the summer sky.
I had taken two finger-bowls of champagne and the scene had changed before my eyes into something significant, elemental and profound.
I say—your face is familiar. Weren't you in the first division during the war?

Why yes—I was in the twenty-eighth infantry.

I was in the sixteenth until June 1918.

We talked for a while about some wet, grey little villages in France.

You know, this is an unusual party for me. I haven't even met the host—

I live over there, and this man Gatsby sent over his chauffeur with an invitation.

I'm Gatsby.

What! Oh! I beg your pardon!
He smiled understandingly—more than understandingly. It was one of those smiles that faced—or seemed to face—the whole eternal world for an instant and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favour.

I thought you knew, old sport. I'm afraid I'm not a very good host.

Oh, yes. Do excuse me, won't you?

Chicago's on the wire, sir.
Who is he?
Do you know?
He's just a man named Gatsby.

Where is he from, I mean? And what does he do?
Now you're started on the subject.

Well, he told me once he was an Oxford man.
A dim background started to take shape behind him...

However I don't believe it.
...and immediately faded away.
My curiosity was stimulated.

I would have accepted without question that Gatsby sprang from the swamps of Louisiana or from the Lower East Side of New York...

but young men didn't - at least in my provincial inexperience I believed they didn't - drift coolly out of nowhere and buy a palace on Long Island Sound.

Still, I could see nothing sinister about him.

I wondered if the fact that he was not drinking helped to set him off from his guests...

for he seemed to grow more correct as the fraternal hilarity increased.
Rather ashamed that on my first appearance I had stayed so late, I took my leave of Gatsby.

- and I do apologise for not knowing you in the garden.

Don't give it another thought, old sport. And don't forget we're going up in the hydroplane tomorrow at nine.

I cut across the lawn toward home. A wafer of a moon was shining over Gatsby's house, making the night as fine as before.

Whassa matter? We run outta gas?
But a sudden emptiness seemed to flow from the windows and the great doors, endowing with complete isolation the figure of the host, who stood on the porch, his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell.
Looking back over what I have written so far, I see that I have given the impression that the events of three nights several weeks apart were all that absorbed me...

On the contrary they were merely casual events in a crowded summer and absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs.
Most of the time I worked.

I knew the other young bond salesmen by their first names and lunched with them on little pig sausages and mashed potatoes and coffee in dark, crowded restaurants.

I even had a short affair with a girl who worked in the accounting department, until her brother began throwing mean looks in my direction...

and I let it blow quietly away.
I began to like New York - the racy, adventurous feel to it at night and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye...

I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter into their lives

...before they faded into warm darkness.
But sometimes at the enchanted metropolitan twilight, I felt a haunting loneliness and felt it in others too...
poor young bondsmen who loitered, waiting until it was time for a solitary restaurant dinner...

...young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life.