

Chapter 7: Confrontation and Collision

Chapter 7 marks the culmination of the romantic and social tension that has been building throughout the summer, resulting in a disastrous confrontation and a fatal accident.

The Luncheon and the Reveal: Gatsby stops throwing his lavish parties, which were primarily a means to attract Daisy. On a scorching hot day, Nick, Gatsby, Jordan, Tom, and Daisy gather for lunch at the Buchanan's house. Tom realizes the affair between Gatsby and Daisy when he observes the way they look at each other. Daisy, bored and restless, suggests they all go to the city.

The Showdown at the Plaza Hotel: The group goes to a suite at the Plaza Hotel. Tom, determined to reclaim his wife, forces a confrontation. He accuses Gatsby of being a fraud and his wealth of coming from bootlegging and other illegal schemes. Gatsby insists that Daisy tell Tom she never loved him. Daisy is unable to do so, admitting that while she loves Gatsby now, she did love Tom once.

This moment destroys Gatsby's dream of completely recreating the past and reveals Daisy's ultimate attachment to the security and status of her marriage. Tom, knowing he has won, scornfully tells Gatsby to drive Daisy home in his own car, proving Gatsby's inability to hurt him.

Myrtle's Death (The Hit-and-Run): Driving back through the Valley of Ashes in Gatsby's large yellow car, Daisy—hysterical and driving carelessly—hits and instantly kills Myrtle Wilson, Tom's mistress, who had run out into the road.

Gatsby's Sacrifice: Gatsby reveals to Nick that Daisy was driving, but he intends to take the blame for the accident to protect her. Nick, disgusted by Tom and Daisy's carelessness, waits outside the Buchanan house with Gatsby until 4 AM to ensure Tom doesn't harm Daisy, but nothing happens. Tom and Daisy sit at their kitchen table, reconciling and seemingly conspiring together.

Chapter 8: The End of the Dream

Chapter 8 begins with Gatsby maintaining his vigil outside Daisy's house and concludes with his murder.

Gatsby's Past Revealed: Nick goes to Gatsby's house the next morning and urges him to leave town to avoid the police, but Gatsby refuses, still holding onto the hope that Daisy will call. Gatsby finally tells Nick the full truth about his past, including his impoverished background, his initial courtship with Daisy in Louisville in 1917, and his desperate determination to earn enough money to win her back.

Gatsby admits he deceived Daisy about his wealth and background, and when he went to war and then Oxford, she grew tired of waiting and married the wealthy Tom.

Nick's Farewell: As Nick leaves for work, he shouts to Gatsby that he is "worth the whole damn bunch put together," the only compliment Nick ever paid him.

George Wilson's Revenge: George Wilson, devastated and driven to madness by his wife's death, believes the driver of the "death car" was also Myrtle's lover, as Tom had earlier told him that the car belonged to Gatsby. Wilson sees the billboard of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg, viewing it as the eyes of God judging him, and resolves to avenge Myrtle's death.

Gatsby's Murder: Wilson tracks Gatsby down to his mansion. Gatsby decides to take a rare swim in his pool before it is drained for the season, still waiting for a call from Daisy. George Wilson finds Gatsby floating on an air mattress and shoots him dead, then kills himself. Nick finds Gatsby's body in the pool when he returns later that afternoon.