Reader #1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

“I’ve got something to tell *you*, old sport ——” began Gatsby. But Daisy guessed at his intention.

“Please don’t!” she interrupted helplessly. “Please let’s all go home. Why don’t we all go home?”

“That’s a good idea.” I got up. “Come on, Tom. Nobody wants a drink.”

“I want to know what Mr. Gatsby has to tell me.”

“Your wife doesn’t love you,” said Gatsby. “She’s never loved you. She loves me.”

“You must be crazy!” exclaimed Tom automatically.

Gatsby sprang to his feet, vivid with excitement.

“She never loved you, do you hear?” he cried. “She only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me. It was a terrible mistake, but in her heart she never loved anyone except me!”

At this point Jordan and I tried to go, but Tom and Gatsby insisted with competitive firmness that we remain — as though neither of them had anything to conceal and it would be a privilege to partake vicariously of their emotions.

“Sit down, Daisy,” Tom’s voice groped unsuccessfully for the paternal note. “What’s been going on? I want to hear all about it.”

“I told you what’s been going on,” said Gatsby. “Going on for five years — and you didn’t know.”

Tom turned to Daisy sharply.

“You’ve been seeing this fellow for five years?” …

 “Daisy loved me when she married me and she loves me now,” Tom said.

“No,” said Gatsby, shaking his head.

“She does, though. The trouble is that sometimes she gets foolish ideas in her head and doesn’t know what she’s doing.” He nodded sagely. “And what’s more, I love Daisy too. Once in a while I go off on a spree and make a fool of myself, but I always come back, and in my heart I love her all the time.”

Reader #2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

“You’re revolting,” said Daisy. She turned to me, and her voice, dropping an octave lower, filled the room with thrilling scorn: “Do you know why we left Chicago? I’m surprised that they didn’t treat you to the story of that little spree.”

Gatsby walked over and stood beside her.

“Daisy, that’s all over now,” he said earnestly. “It doesn’t matter anymore. Just tell him the truth — that you never loved him — and it’s all wiped out forever.”

She looked at him blindly. “Why — how could I love him — possibly?”

“You never loved him.”

She hesitated. Her eyes fell on Jordan and me with a sort of appeal, as though she realized at last what she was doing — and as though she had never, all along, intended doing anything at all. But it was done now. It was too late.

“I never loved him,” she said, with perceptible reluctance.

“Not at Kapiolani?” demanded Tom suddenly.

“No.”

From the ballroom beneath, muffled and suffocating chords were drifting up on hot waves of air.

“Not that day I carried you down from the Punch Bowl to keep your shoes dry?” There was a husky tenderness in his tone.. .. “Daisy?”

“Please don’t.” Her voice was cold, but the rancor was gone from it. She looked at Gatsby. “There, Jay,” she said — but her hand as she tried to light a cigarette was trembling. Suddenly she threw the cigarette and the burning match on the carpet.

“Oh, you want too much!” she cried to Gatsby. “I love you now — isn’t that enough? I can’t help what’s past.” She began to sob helplessly. “I did love him once — but I loved you too.”

Gatsby’s eyes opened and closed…

Reader #3: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 “Daisy’s leaving you.”

“Nonsense.”

“I am, though,” she said with a visible effort.

“She’s not leaving me!” Tom’s words suddenly leaned down over Gatsby. “Certainly not for a common swindler who’d have to steal the ring he put on her finger.”

“I won’t stand this!” cried Daisy. “Oh, please let’s get out.”

“I found out what your ‘drug-stores’ were,” Tom turned to us and spoke rapidly. “He and this Wolfshiem bought up a lot of side-street drug-stores here and in Chicago and sold grain alcohol over the counter. That’s one of his little stunts. I picked him for a bootlegger the first time I saw him, and I wasn’t far wrong.”

“What about it?” said Gatsby politely. “I guess your friend Walter Chase wasn’t too proud to come in on it.”

“And you left him in the lurch, didn’t you? You let him go to jail for a month over in New Jersey. God! You ought to hear Walter on the subject of *you*.”

“He came to us dead broke. He was very glad to pick up some money, old sport.”

“Don’t you call me ‘old sport’!” cried Tom. Gatsby said nothing. “Walter could have you up on the betting laws too, but Wolfshiem scared him into shutting his mouth.”

That unfamiliar yet recognizable look was back again in Gatsby’s face.

“That drug-store business was just small change,” continued Tom slowly, “but you’ve got something on now that Walter’s afraid to tell me about.”

I glanced at Daisy, who was staring terrified between Gatsby and her husband, and at Jordan, who had begun to balance an invisible but absorbing object on the tip of her chin. Then I turned back to Gatsby — and was startled at his expression. He looked — and this is said in all contempt for the babbled slander of his garden — as if he had “killed a man.” For a moment the set of his face could be described in just that fantastic way.

Reader #4: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

It passed, and he began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made. But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up, and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, toward that lost voice across the room.

The voice begged again to go.

“*please*, Tom! I can’t stand this any more.”

Her frightened eyes told that whatever intentions, whatever courage, she had had, were definitely gone.

“You two start on home, Daisy,” said Tom. “In Mr. Gatsby’s car.”

She looked at Tom, alarmed now, but he insisted with magnanimous scorn.

“Go on. He won’t annoy you. I think he realizes that his presumptuous little flirtation is over.”

They were gone, without a word, snapped out, made accidental, isolated, like ghosts, even from our pity.

After a moment Tom got up and began wrapping the unopened bottle of whiskey in the towel.

“Want any of this stuff? Jordan?... Nick?”

I didn’t answer.

My Reaction: **What stands out to me in this reading…**

“Nick?” He asked again.

“What?”

“Want any?”

“No... I just remembered that to-day’s my birthday.” I was thirty.