

# HEAT WAVE

Before we dig deep into any specific issue (like, um, Daisy killing Myrtle?), let's break down the action of the first part of the chapter and take it moment-by-moment. Answer the following questions in about 50 words each.

The next day was broiling, almost the last, certainly the warmest, of the summer. As my train emerged from the tunnel into sunlight, only the hot whistles of the National Biscuit Company broke the simmering hush at noon. The straw seats of the car hovered on the edge of combustion; the woman next to me perspired delicately for a while into her white shirtwaist, and then, as her newspaper dampened under her fingers, lapsed despairingly into deep heat with a desolate cry. Her pocket-book slapped to the floor.

"Oh, my!" she gasped.

I picked it up with a weary bend and handed it back to her, holding it at arm's length and by the extreme tip of the corners to indicate that I had no designs upon it – but every one near by, including the woman, suspected me just the same.

"Hot!" said the conductor to familiar faces. "Some weather! hot! hot! hot! Is it hot enough for you? Is it hot? Is it...?"

1. Gee, apparently it's hot. Why does Fitzgerald give us this brief interaction on the train? What tone do you think he's trying to establish here?

The room, shadowed well with awnings, was dark and cool. Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols weighing down their own white dresses against the singing breeze of the fans.

"We can't move," they said together.

2. Hmm, seems familiar. Where have we seen Daisy and Jordan posed like this before? Why do you think Fitzgerald is echoing this earlier moment?

The child, relinquished by the nurse, rushed across the room and rooted shyly into her mother's dress.

"The bles-sed pre-cious! Did mother get powder on your old yellowy hair? Stand up now, and say–How-de-do."

Gatsby and I in turn leaned down and took the small, reluctant hand. Afterward he kept looking at the child with surprise. I don't think he had ever really believed in its existence before.

3. Why tell us that Gatsby hadn't really thought about the reality of Daisy being a mother before? What do you think Fitzgerald is trying to tell the readers about his character?

"She's got an indiscreet voice," I remarked. "It's full of—" I hesitated.

"Her voice is full of money," he said suddenly.

That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it....high in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl...

4. What does Nick mean when he says that Daisy's voice is "full of money?"

"You can buy anything at a drug-store nowadays."

A pause followed this apparently pointless remark. Daisy looked at Tom frowning, and an indefinable expression, at once definitely unfamiliar and vaguely recognizable, as if I had only heard it described in words, passed over Gatsby's face.

5. Is the remark about the drug store "pointless?" What is Tom referring to? Why do you think he makes that remark?