Chapter 7 Summary:

- Daisy has been visiting Gatsby regularly. He has dismissed his servants to prevent the spread of gossip.
- On the hottest day of the summer, Nick and Gatsby have lunch with the Buckanans.
 They meet Daisy's daughter, Pammy. Tom recognises that Daisy and Gatsby are in love.
- They drive into New York: Tom takes Nick and Jordan; Gatsby travels with Daisy.
- Tom stops for petrol at George Wilson's garage, and is startled to learn that the Wilsons plan to go West.
- Tom, Daisy, Jordan, Nick and Gatsby take a room in the Plaza Hotel. Gatsby asserts that he is the only man Daisy has ever really loved. Tom scornfully alludes to Gatsby's links with the criminal underworld.
- The narrative cuts to an inquest where Michaelis, the Wilsons' neighbour, is a witness.
- Myrtle Wilson has been killed by a hit-and-run driver. A bystander testifies that 'death car' was a big yellow vehicle.
- In the garden of the Buckanans' home, Gatsby tells Nick that Daisy was driving the vehicle, and discloses that he intends to take the blame for Myrtle's death.

Analysis:

Moving West:

George Wilson tells Tom that he has lived at the garage too long and needs to move away. He plans to go West, taking Myrtle with him. The Wilsons have been in the 'valley of ashes' for eleven years. They have become fixed in that place, just as Gatsby's unsuccessful parents were stuck on their farm. Gatsby managed to move away while still young, but George Wilson is older, poor and tired. His dream of a fresh start will not be realised.

Note that George Wilson's face looks 'green' in the sunlight. Elsewhere in the novel the colour green is associated with natural freshness and growth, but in Wilson's case it suggests that he is unwell or that he is green with envy of Tom's wealth and power. Nick tells us that Wilson has been made ill by the shock of discovering that Myrtle has 'some sort of life apart from him in another word'. He adds that Tom, for all his wealth and power, 'had made a parallel discovery less than an hour before'—that is, he had found out that Daisy had been seeing Gatsby.

Desire and the sense of purpose:

Gatsby's greatness, for Nick Carraway, resides in his capacity for hope and the strength of his desire. Fitzgerald contrasts the energy of Gatsby's desire with the apathy and cynicism of those around him. Daisy, still in her early twenties, complains that she has 'been everywhere and seen everywhere and done everything'. She cannot imagine that the future holds any promise for her, and the prospect of having to devise ways to while away the years ahead appals her. Her social set shares this purposelessness. They drift, restless but without direction. The only desire they know is that which is generated by advertisements, a desire for objects which can readily afford. It is a trivial emotion and is soon extinguished or exhausted.

But it is a life that ends in tragedy. His energy is cancelled out by a murderer in a case of mistaken identity. We might conclude that such a life driven by hope is untenable in modern America, and decide that Gatsby was mistaken to pursue transcendence, especially as Daisy Buckanan was so obviously unworthy as an object of his devotion. But Nick's account shows a world of bored individuals, lacking any sense of purpose, and it emphasises the need for the kind of vision that might redeem this world from terminal apathy. Gatsby's desire sustains such

a vision. Nick, despite his dismay at being thirty years old with thinning hair and diminishing prospects, finds purpose in his own life and devotes himself to the creative task of writing the story of Jay Gatsby.