

Chapter 9 Summary:

- Nick makes the arrangements for Gatsby's funeral.
- The Buchanans have left New York, leaving no contact address.
- Nick visits Meyer Wolfshiem, who says he is unable to attend the funeral.
- One of the few mourners present is Henry C. Gatz, who has travelled from the Midwest, after reading of Gatsby's death in a Chicago newspaper. He speaks with pride of his son's attainments.
- Later in the year, Nick bumps into Tom Buchanan, who admits telling George Wilson that it was Gatsby's car which killed Myrtle.
- The novel ends with Nick contemplating the empty mansion, and pondering the significance of Gatsby's story.

[illegible]

Analysis

The scene of the crime:

Note the vocabulary Nick uses when describing the aftermath of Gatsby's murder. The words 'adventitious' (meaning incidental) and 'pasquinade' (meaning a lampoon or parody) leap out as unfamiliar words. Such vocabulary seems to have been chosen to keep us at a distance from the crime scene.

You might expect that this description of a crime scene, complete with police investigators and news reporters, would include a degree of sensationalism. But there is a kind of protective formality in Nick's use of such words, as though he wants to shield his neighbour from the effects of gossip and lurid reporting. We are not led to feel like onlookers, gawping at the scene; rather, we are made aware of the presence of Nick, our careful narrator.

Friends and Neighbours:

In this final chapter, Nick emphasises Gatsby's isolation. After hosting all these lavish parties, it turns out that he was essentially alone all the time. Nick has only known Gatsby for three months at the time of his death, yet it is left to him to arrange the funeral. Owl Eyes attend the ceremony, yet he never really knew Gatsby at all. His presence seems random, and that makes Gatsby's aloneness seem still more complete.

We might conclude that Gatsby deserved to be so isolated; it is the price he paid for 'living too long with a single dream'. Up to this point we have been led to understand that Gatsby totally erased his past, left his parents behind and had no further contact with them. But Nick now reveals that Gatsby has in fact sent his father, Henry C. Gatz, a photographer of his mansion. He has, moreover, visited his father and bought him a house too. Henry C. Gatz is proud of his son and says, 'ever since he made a success he was very generous with me'.

Is this true, or is the old man deluded himself? Henry C Gatz seems an honest man, whose word we ought to trust. The well-worn photograph he carries also suggests that he is telling the truth. Remember that ever since this funeral Nick has been aware of Gatz's claim that his son kept in touch and was good to him. Yet all through the narration so far he has led us to believe that Gatsby simply turned his back on his parents. Introducing this sense that the break with his past wasn't total, Nick now makes Gatsby seem more human, less aloof and more deserving of his and our own sympathy.