

Up in the city I tried for a while to list the quotations on an interminable amount of stock, then I fell asleep in my swivel-chair. Just before noon the phone woke me and I started up with sweat breaking out on my forehead. It was Jordan Baker; she often called me up at this hour because the uncertainty of her own movements between hotels and clubs and private houses made her hard to find in any other way. Usually her voice came over the wire as something fresh and cool as if a divot from a green golf links had come sailing in at the office window but this morning it seemed harsh and dry.

‘I’ve left Daisy’s house,’ she said. ‘I’m at Hempstead and I’m going down to Southampton this afternoon.’

Probably it had been tactful to leave Daisy’s house, but the act annoyed me and her next remark made me rigid.

‘You weren’t so nice to me last night.’

‘How could it have mattered then?’

Silence for a moment. Then—

‘However—I want to see you.’

‘I want to see you too.’

‘Suppose I don’t go to Southampton, and come into town this afternoon?’

‘No—I don’t think this afternoon.’

‘Very well.’

‘It’s impossible this afternoon. Various——’

We talked like that for a while and then abruptly we weren’t talking any longer. I don’t know which of us hung up with a sharp click but I know I didn’t care. I couldn’t have talked to her across a tea-table that day if I never talked to her again in this world.

I called Gatsby’s house a few minutes later, but the line was busy. I tried four times; finally an exasperated central told me the wire was being kept open for long distance from Detroit. Taking out my time-table I drew a small circle around the three-fifty train. Then I leaned back in my chair and tried to think. It was just noon.