

'at one's been waitin' fur hours an' he act like he might go way any minute now. 'At's whut the hall man send word, suh."

Blanche had brought his overcoat along and held it up for him, imparting to the service that small suggestion of a ceremonial rite which the members of her race invariably do display when handling a garment of richness of texture and indubitable cost. Mr. Leary let her help him into the coat and slipped largess into her hand, and as he stepped aboard the waiting elevator for the downward flight Mrs. Carroway's voice came fluting to him, once again repeating the flattering phrase: "You surely were the life of the party!"

## II

It was fine to have been the life of the party. It was not quite so fine to discover that the taxicab to which he must entrust himself for the long ride up to West Eighty-fifth Street was a most shabby-appearing vehicle, the driver of which, moreover, as Mr. Leary could divine even as he crossed the sidewalk, had wiled away the tedium of waiting by indulgence in draughts of something more potent than the chill air of latish November. Mr. Leary peered doubtfully into the illuminated countenance but dulled eyes of the driver and caught a whiff of a breath alcoholically fragrant, and he understood that the warning relayed to him by Blanche had carried a subtle double meaning. Still, there was no other taxicab to be had. The street might have been a byway in old Pompeii for all the life that moved within it. Washington Square, facing him, was as empty as a graveyard generally is at