***Jazz*, by Toni Morrison**

**Chapter Abstracts**

**Chapter 1**

• The book opens by describing the place where Violet and Joe live on Lenox Avenue.

• Violet goes to the funeral parlor to disfigure Dorcas's face, but the men at the funeral parlor throw her out.

• Violet goes home and releases her birds into the snow.

• She tries to have an extramarital affair out of revenge, but she is not satisfied.

• Violet wants to learn more about Dorcas, so she goes to visit Dorcas's aunt.

• Violet develops an uncomfortable friendship with Dorcas's aunt, who gives Violet a picture of Dorcas.

• Violet puts the picture of Dorcas on the mantle, where it bothers both her and Joe.

• Violet wonders if she is crazy or not and thinks back to when she steals a baby out of a pram.

• Joe does not know that she has crazy episodes, but knows she sometimes says crazy things.

• Violet finds a knife in the bottom of the parrot's cage and does not know how it gets there.

**Chapter 2**

• The chapter begins with a description of Joe's feelings toward Dorcas and how he kills her to keep the sweet feeling from slipping away.

• Joe thinks back to when he and Violet leave Virginia, and notes that he has trouble remembering emotions from that time.

• During the train ride to Maryland, Joe and Violet don't leave each others' sides, as they cannot stand the thought of being separated by a table.

• Joe thinks of how he tells Dorcas important, emotional things about himself such as his yearning to connect with his mother.

• Dorcas understands how Joe feels because she is abused by her mother, who dies in a house fire when Dorcas is a girl.

• When the fire happens, Dorcas saves her clothespin dolls from the fire.

• The relationship between Joe and Dorcas revolves around his desire to please her and Dorcas's power over Joe.

• Joe convinces Malvonne to rent her second bedroom for several hours a week for Joe and Dorcas.

• Malvonne's nephew, Sweetness, recently moves out and leaves a sackful of stolen mail behind Malvonne's refrigerator.

• Malvonne sorts through the mail and tries to make amends to those people whose mail doesn't reach the destination, such as a young black girl who applies to law school.

**Chapter 3**

• The chapter opens in 1917, nine years earlier, with Dorcas and her aunt Alice attending a parade protesting the St. Louis race riots.

• The men are silent and carry banners while drums beat loudly, which scare Alice.

• Alice tries to protect Dorcas from white men and "lowdown sticky music," though Dorcas loves that type of music and the way it makes her feel.

• During her mother's funeral, Dorcas finds it impossible to cry for her dead parents and focuses on her clothespin dolls instead.

• During the day, Dorcas is left with the Miller sisters, who constantly call the police to report places that sell alcohol, despite the Prohibition.

• Dorcas is struck by Neola Miller's left arm, which is paralyzed since her fiancé left her.

• Dorcas and Joe formally meet when Joe comes to deliver cosmetics to Alice.

• Alice does not know about the affair until after Dorcas is dead, and she does not want anything to do with the Traces.

• Violet earns the nickname "Violent" since she tries to attack Dorcas's body at the funeral.

• Alice eventually allows Violet to visit, and she becomes a sort of caretaker and friend for Violet.

**Chapter 4**

• After she attacks Dorcas, Violet feels as if she splits into two different people: her normal self and a violent person.

• Violet means to slash Dorcas's face but only nicks her neck

• The funeral ushers stop Violet, and Violet fights back and then runs home to release her birds from their cages.

• Violet wonders why Joe loves Dorcas, and imagines him doting on her and giving her lots of presents.

• Violet acknowledges that when she meets Joe, she is instead looking for a boy her grandmother, True Belle, cares for.

• Violet's father goes to the North to look for work, and her mother becomes incapacitated.

• True Belle moves from Baltimore to care for her five grandchildren and Violet's mother, Rose Dear, eventually kills herself.

• True Belle sends Violet to another town to pick cotton, and Violet meets Joe there.

• Joe and Violet eventually marry and move to the city thirteen years later.

• Violet and Joe never want children, but Violet begins to desire a daughter.

**Chapter 5**

• The chapter describes Harlem in the springtime and mentions the blues musicians playing on the sidewalks.

• Joe is crying as he remembers seeing Dorcas for the first time, buying candy at the drugstore.

• He feels new, as he does when he names himself Trace after people tell him his parents disappear "without a trace".

• As a boy, Joe is chosen by a well-known hunter in town to be an apprentice.

• Joe and Violet marry and try to buy land, but are fooled by white men who punish him with debt.

• Joe and Violet decide to move to the city at the end of World War I.

• Joe again imagines Dorcas and thinks of eating a sweet apple.

• Joe becomes jealous of all the young men in the streets and tracks Dorcas down with his gun.

• After Dorcas is shot, Joe wants to stay near her in order to keep her from falling and hurting herself.

**Chapter 6**

• True Belle moves to Vesper County, Virginia, to care for her grandchildren, including Violet, and gives up a good job in Baltimore.

• She finds the children in an abandoned shack and foraging for food in the woods while their mother is incapacitated.

• True Belle tells Violet about the golden boy she cares for in Baltimore.

• The golden boy is actually the bi-racial son of Vera Louise Gray and a black man.

• When Vera Louise's parents find out, they are hurt and angry and give her money to go to Baltimore to have the baby.

• True Belle goes with Vera Louise to the city to wait on her during her pregnancy.

• The baby grows up not knowing who his father is until Vera Louise tells him and True Belle gives him his father's name and address.

• Golden Gray sets out for his father's cabin in Virginia and spots a naked, pregnant, black woman in the forest near the cabin.

• The woman runs into a tree and is knocked unconscious.

• The cabin is deserted when Golden Gray reaches it, and thinks of the woman only after he changes his own clothes and cares for his horse.

**Chapter 7**

• Golden Gray's father, Henry Lestory, gets back to his cabin to find Golden Gray and the naked woman.

• The girl goes into labor and has a very difficult birth.

• She is named Wild after she bites Lestory's hand.

• Golden Gray is angry with his father and leaves the cabin with the intention of shooting Lestory the next day.

•Thirteen years later, the plantation burns and the black residents go to nearby towns for work.

• Joe becomes obsessed with the legend of Wild.

• Joe is convinced that Wild is his mother after Lestory tells him that Wild is "somebody's mother".

• Joe thinks he hears a woman singing in the forest and thinks it is Wild.

• Another day, he finds a burrow with several items on the other side, including Golden Gray's clothing.

• Joe returns to that place after he marries Violet and listens again for his mother.

**Chapter 8**

• This chapter describes Joe's attack of Dorcas from Dorcas's point of view.

• Dorcas is dancing with Acton, a young and handsome man, and is happy.

• She likes Acton because he does not try to impress her with gifts and flattery, unlike Joe.

• When Dorcas is with Joe, he dotes on her and gives her lots of presents.

• Dorcas is turned off by this and breaks up with Joe, telling him that she is tired of sneaking around.

• Dorcas knows Joe comes looking for her and she hopes he sees that she is finally happy.

• Joe does find Dorcas, and he is crying.

• Dorcas is suddenly falling but she does not know why.

• Acton brushes the blood off his jacket before seeking medical care for Dorcas.

• Dorcas does not tell anyone who shoots her because she is afraid Joe gets in trouble.

**Chapter 9**

• It is springtime in Harlem and the narrator recounts the jazz music that is played on the rooftops.

• Violet returns Dorcas's picture to Alice.

• Felice, Dorcas's best friend, comes to visit Violet and Joe to ask for her ring, but they tell her Dorcas was buried wearing the ring.

• Felice is disappointed about the ring because it is given to her by her mother, who steals it from a Tiffany's store.

• Felice tells the Traces about Dorcas and how she is manipulative and always getting others in trouble.

• Felice says Dorcas likes being with Joe because it is a secret.

• Felice tells Joe that Dorcas wants to be with Acton because all the other girls want him.

• Dorcas does not want anyone to call the ambulance after she is shot because she doesn't want Joe to get in trouble.

• Felice calls the ambulance, but they don't come until the next day because black people call them.

• Felice accepts Violet's invitation to dinner and allows Violet to trim her hair.

**Chapter 10**

• The narrator discusses the nature of pain and the complex relationship between Joe, Violet, and Felice.

• Felice grasps a new sense of self-confidence.

• Dorcas's aunt, Alice, moves back to Springfield to work for a white woman.

• Joe starts working at a speakeasy called Paydirt.

• He now comes home in the afternoons to spend time with Violet.

• They often meet for a malt milkshake at the local drugstore.

• Joe and Violet eat dinner together and play poker or listen to Malvonne gossip.

• They also go up to the roof, taking their new bird with them, to listen to the jazz music.

• At nighttime, Joe and Violet curl up together under the covers and whisper to each other.