



The Jazz Palace: A Novel

Mary Morris

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Acclaimed author Mary Morris returns to her Chicago roots in this sweeping novel that brilliantly captures the dynamic atmosphere and the dazzling music of the Jazz Age.

In the midst of boomtown Chicago, two Jewish families have suffered terrible blows. The Lehrmans, who run a small hat factory, lost their beloved son Harold in a blizzard. The Chimbrovas, who run a saloon, lost three of their boys on the SS *Eastland* when it sank in 1915. Each family holds out hope that one of their remaining children will rise to carry on the family business. But Benny Lehrman has no interest in making hats. His true passion is piano—especially jazz.

At night he sneaks down to the South Side, slipping into predominantly black clubs to hear jazz groups play. Along the way he meets a black trumpeter, a man named Napoleon who becomes Benny's close friend and musical collaborator. Their adventures together take Benny far from the life he knew as a delivery boy. Pearl Chimbrova recognizes their talent and invites them to start playing at her family's saloon, which Napoleon dubs "The Jazz Palace."

Even as the novel charts the story of its characters, it also tells the tale of the city where they live. It is a world of gangsters, musicians, and clubs, in which black musicians are no freer than they were before the Civil War, white youths head down to the South Side to "slum," and Al Capone and Louis Armstrong become legends. As *The Jazz Palace* steams through the 1920s, Benny, Pearl, and Napoleon forge a bond that is as memorable as it is lasting.

From the Hardcover edition.

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