



## Trumpet: A Novel

By Jackie Kay

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In her starkly beautiful and wholly unexpected tale, Jackie Kay delves into the most intimate workings of the human heart and mind and offers a triumphant tale of loving deception and lasting devotion.

The death of legendary jazz trumpeter Joss Moody exposes an extraordinary secret, one that enrages his adopted son, Colman, leading him to collude with a tabloid journalist. Besieged by the press, his widow Millie flees to a remote Scottish village, where she seeks solace in memories of their marriage. The reminiscences of those who knew Joss Moody render a moving portrait of a shared life founded on an intricate lie, one that preserved a rare, unconditional love.

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## Trumpet: A Novel By Jackie Kay Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

*"It was our secret. That's all it was. Lots of people have secrets, don't they? The world runs on secrets. What kind of place would the world be without them? Our secret was harmless. It did not hurt anybody."*

The secret that Millicent Moody, widow of jazz great Joss Moody, refers to may have been harmless in life, but when Joss dies and the truth is exposed, it ends up affecting more people than she ever imagined. It gives nothing away to reveal right off that Millicent's late husband was, in fact, a woman--something Millie has known all along but that the Moodys' adopted son, Colman, only discovers after his father's death. Titillating as the subject matter initially seems, in Jackie Kay's capable hands Joss's gender-bending becomes almost a side issue in a novel that is, at its heart, concerned with the essential nature of love.

Kay tells her story from many different perspectives--the doctor who signs the death certificate, the mortician who prepares the body, the opportunistic biographer looking to make a buck and a name for herself, the musicians who knew Joss--but it is Millicent and Colman who bear the brunt of both the pain and the responsibility for telling the tale. Millie Moody is a tremendously sympathetic character; her love for Joss is so powerful, so *right* that the reader never questions the decisions this odd couple made in life. "I didn't feel like I was living a lie," Millie tells us. "I felt like I was living a life." Colman, on the other hand, is more difficult to like. Though it's easy to understand his anger and confusion upon suddenly learning that the man he regarded as his father for 30 years was actually a woman, one also has the sneaking suspicion that he wasn't a particularly lovable guy *before* the revelation, either. Still, by the end of *Trumpet*, there's hope for Colman, peace of mind for Millie, and a satisfying rendering of love in all its permutations for the reader. --  
*Alix Wilber*

### From Publishers Weekly

A Scottish poet with a fresh and resonant voice makes her fiction debut with a novel about the life of a famous jazz musician, born female, who masquerades as a man. Like the real-life Billy Tipton, Scottish trumpet player Joss Moody has a wife, Millie, and a domestic life. No one except Millie knows the truth about his sex, which is revealed by the medical examiner only after his death. The issue of sexual identity is only one aspect of Kaye's intense and poetic narrative. Joss is black, and both he and his adopted son, Colman, suffer from pervasive racism in London. Kaye prismatically reflects Joss's life in vignettes from almost a dozen characters, some of them endearingly quirky, but the principal voices are those of Millie and Colman. Angry and bitter about having been deceived by his adoptive parents, Colman is a sour young man, without talent, drive or purpose, and his cooperation with a sleazy reporter who wants to write a tell-all book about Joss grants the narrative its main tension. Rather than sensational revelations, Kaye is interested in motivation and emotion, and her portrait of a distraught Millie is an incandescent study of grief. In conveying the nuances of an unconventional but passionate marriage, Kaye creates her own kind of prose music akin to the bittersweet melodies from Joss's trumpet. Once into the rhythm, however, Kaye cannot abandon its cadences: all the characters speak in the same short, lilting sentences and emphatic fragments, beautiful to the ear but not sufficiently differentiated. In the end, the mysteries of Joss's life remain ambiguous, but his courage in maintaining the sexual charade that allows him entree into the jazz world, and his legacy of love, provide the haunting motif of this richly evocative narrative. 40,000 first printing; author tour.

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### From Library Journal

Inspired by the story of American jazz pianist Billy Tipton, who was discovered to be a woman upon his death, this first novel by Scottish poet Kay is a jazzlike improvisation on the Tipton tale. Joss Moody is a renowned British trumpeter. Black and Scottish, he is something of an anomaly in life and more so in death when he is found to be female. The novel focuses on the way his death affects those closest to him?his wife, Millie, who has long known his secret, and their adopted son, Colman, whose hurt and anger at discovering his father's true gender lead him to collaborate with a tabloid journalist on a sordid book about his family. Written with a poetic precision of language, this is a "mystery" in the broadest sense, exploring the puzzles of identity, gender, and our inability to truly know one another.

-?Lawrence Rungren, Merrimack Valley Lib. Consortium, Andover, MA

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Cornell Warren:**

Nowadays reading books be than want or need but also turn into a life style. This reading addiction give you lot of advantages. The benefits you got of course the knowledge the particular information inside the book that will improve your knowledge and information. The data you get based on what kind of publication you read, if you want have more knowledge just go with schooling books but if you want experience happy read one along with theme for entertaining like comic or novel. The actual Trumpet: A Novel is kind of reserve which is giving the reader capricious experience.

#### **Mikel Davis:**

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#### **Lynda Alford:**

Spent a free time to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their leisure time with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they performing activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book may be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing you will ask may be what kinds of guide that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the publication untitled Trumpet: A Novel can be excellent book to read. May be it could be best activity to you.

**Mario Curtin:**

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