

# **Requiem for a Dream: A Novel Study Guide**

**Requiem for a Dream: A Novel by Hubert Selby Jr.**

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## Plot Summary

Harry and his mother, Sara Goldfarb, fight over his addiction to heroin. Sara lives alone in the apartment where she raised her son before her husband passed away. Harry lives with his friend Tyrone C. Love and it is common for the two of them to pawn Sara's TV for drug money. Harry and Tyrone spend their days hanging out with other friends who use various types of drugs, hustling just enough money to get by. One summer they come across a particularly potent batch of heroin and Tyrone comes up with the idea that they should buy a large supply, stretch it out and sell it for almost double profit. The two friends start this venture around the same time that Harry starts a relationship with a girl named Marion. Their lives become tied to one another with the drug sale plan and for a while everything runs smoothly. As time passes, the friends start using too much of the product they are selling and things start falling apart. They lose their connection to the high-rate drugs and can only buy the same drug that everyone else on the street is buying and even that becomes hard to find. Eventually selling becomes an afterthought and using becomes the most important thing to them. They all ignore the signs as they sink deeper into their addictions leading them each to a grim fate.

Meanwhile, Sara gets a phone call from a man claiming to work with a television network. He talks to Sara about the possibility of featuring her on a television show and she is ecstatic. She has lived alone for many years and television is her life. For her the chance would be a dream come true and she gets to work almost immediately on improving her appearance. Sara already has a slight obsession with food but she ignores it, insisting that she fit into a red dress she last wore when Harry was a teen. When a diet proves unsuccessful one of Sara's friends suggests visiting doctor she knows of. The doctor prescribes diet pills to take with her three daily meals. Sara's obsession transfers from food to weight loss and she quickly gets addicted to the pills. Sadly, she isn't aware that the pills are the problem and she can only focus on getting contacted by the television company and fitting into her red dress. Sara barely has the opportunity to recognize that she has a problem until things get really out of control. No one knows what is going on with her so she ends up spending her days alone in a mental hospital.



# Chapter One

## Chapter One Summary

Harry Goldfarb locks his mother, Sara Goldfarb, in her closet as he prepares to steal her television set. Sara returns to the closet even after she has been released and Harry doesn't understand why until he grabs the television and it is chained to the radiator. Harry threatens her and her home and eventually she slides the key under the door. Sara refuses to emerge and listens as he rolls the television out of the door.

Harry, his partner, Tyrone C. Love, and Sara's TV are a common sight for Mr. Rabinowitz and he shakes his head as they enter his pawn shop. Harry and Tyrone decide to buy drugs from one of Tyrone's connections named Brody with the TV money. The exchange of drugs and money was going to take place in a predominantly Black area and no one would trust them with Harry, who is White, trailing along so Harry waits for Tyrone in a coffee shop. Back at Tyrone's small apartment, they take a hit of the drugs and Tyrone comes up with the idea to sell the drugs they get from Brody. The portion that he gave them is so potent that they are convinced that they can divide it enough to make a profit as well as have a stash for themselves.

Sara is only able to give two dollars toward the total amount owed on her television. Mr. Rabinowitz can't help but ask Sara why she doesn't call the police on Harry before he pawns the TV again. Sara explains that she can't cause her only son any trouble, believing that he will get his life together, get married and have children to make her happy.

## Chapter One Analysis

Sara and Harry are the first characters introduced and immediately the dynamic that makes up their relationship is clear. Sara is an elderly mother whose husband has passed and her role to her son has become more child-like than motherly. Harry is a user of drugs and he takes advantage of his mother's weak nature. The opening scene between the two is one that has played out many times before; Sara's first phrases include "not again the TV." Her attempt to change the outcome of her son's actions only angers him more and she has to lie to keep him from taking that anger out on her. Harry has convinced himself that Sara is the problem and not the fact that he continues to rob her of her television. It is clear that this is way of leaving the guilt behind. By the time he reaches the outside of her building, his biggest concern is getting to pawn shop without someone else robbing him.

Tyrone C. Love is another character introduced. His dialogue and slang is distinct and culturally sets him apart from Sara and Harry. He shares Harry's addiction and callousness to the means of getting the drugs they abuse. For Tyrone and Harry, obtaining the drugs is the only thing that is clear and central to their thoughts. It is only

after they are high that they both dare to dream about a world beyond getting money, getting drugs.



# Chapter Two

## Chapter Two Summary

Harry and Tyrone start their day after sunset. They think about how unlucky people are who have to work full time jobs and suffer through the same routine every day. They head to the morgue where their friend Angel works. On the bus, Tyrone reminds him of the cultural divide in the south Bronx and they head to the back of the bus. At the morgue Tyrone and Harry meet up with a group; Angel, Marion, Gogit and Betty. Gogit brings heroin and everyone puts up money for their share and move to private corners to get high.

A man named Lyle Russel calls Sara on behalf of the McDick Corporation to invite her to be featured on a television program. Lyle never reveals which show Sara will participate in but Sara is so giddy with anticipation that the details don't matter. Sara hangs up with Lyle, who promises to send more information in the mail. Her mind starts reeling with the details of her appearance; hair, clothes, shoes and losing a few pounds. She decides that she will diet, have her friend Ada dye her hair red and wear the red dress and gold shoes she last wore at Harry's Bar Mitzvah. Ada lives next door and Sara waits for a commercial break on TV and goes to share her news.

## Chapter Two Analysis

To this point in the novel, each of the main characters have shown signs of addiction in some forms. Tyrone and Harry's addiction is clearly heroin; established in the first chapter and now the reader is given direct insight into how the two men indulge. First, their day starts by pitying the rest of the functional world, truly believing that they have the better end of the deal. They wake up at night but even then, the intensity of the night lights is too much. "The sun was down which made it night time, but Harry and Tyrone were bugged with all the lights that stabbed and slashed and skewered their eyeballs...Daytime is a drag...you look forward to the night when you can get some relief from the assaults of the day and start to come alive." Ironically, the place where they choose to 'come alive' is at the city morgue, where they don't have to live "joy and youth." They use the drugs and each other to make their dreams come true.

Comparably Sara hides from reality through her television. This is the first hint that Sara has an addiction to the TV. It is interesting that in the first chapter, her addiction is used to facilitate her son's. Sara's life has become so dependent on the television that she has begun to blend the real world and that of television. Sara has become so accustomed to living through the TV that when the phone call comes from Lyle Russel she thinks she is still watching. "The voice was so bright and cheery and so enthusiastic and real that she turned toward the TV set to see if the voice was coming from there." Sara does not know how to deal with this new and exciting reality. "For the first time in memory she was unaware of the television."



# Chapter Three, Part 1

## Chapter Three, Part 1 Summary

Tyrone and Harry walk through their area, solidifying their plan to sell drugs. They have seen many users with the same plan end up strung out or dead. Tyrone mentions that guys get work at the newspaper building, loading the 5 a.m. trucks. They are sidetracked when they get a tip on a potent stash of drugs at someone named Windy's. They get enough heroin to last to the next day so they put off work again and visit a friend named Tony instead. Tony's apartment is littered with "people getting high, getting higher, or wondering why they weren't high yet." Tony sits in the only chair in the apartment watching television, smoking marijuana and quietly cursing at the characters on the television. Harry talks to Marion who sits among a group on the floor drinking wine and sharing marijuana from a pipe and the two are obviously connecting. While someone starts passing around stimulant drugs called 'poppers' Tony's anger with the TV escalates. He gets so irate that he pulls out a pistol and starts shooting the television.

## Chapter Three, Part 1 Analysis

Harry and Tyrone's lifestyle is framed out in this chapter segment. Working for a living is at the bottom of their list of priorities. They pity the people around them who have to go to work everyday and face the reality of living in the daytime. The only motivation they could find for working, even for a short period of time is heroin. As they map out their plan and insist on separating themselves from the other junkies and drug addicts around them, the comparison makes it clear that they are truly no different. They make up their minds to start work immediately; getting up at four in the morning. All it takes is seeing a friend on his way to score drugs and the plan is halted that easily—they succumb to the potential of a quick fix just as much those around them. "They could always go to work some other time, but you don't always get a chance to score for some dynamite shit like this."

Tony's house represents an even deeper level of fantasy for the characters and for the story itself. The apartment is lacking furniture supporting the idea that the attraction to Tony's place isn't the comfort of the atmosphere. Tony is the only one in a chair and he sits in the room completely removed from reality. He doesn't even indicate that he is aware of any of the people gathered in his home. Tony spends the entire chapter getting high and heated discussions and arguments with the television. Again, the television is used to emphasize the separation between reality and dream. Tony is another character indulging an addiction and getting lost in it. All of these addicts gather in one room but are each in completely different mind states. "Harry and Marion had another popper...they continued to drift through the smoke and laughter and through ears and brains somehow came out on the other side undisturbed and everyone felt



good...soaring and floating on the currents like a bird...suddenly cut loose...suddenly free...free...free."



## Chapter Three, Part 2

### Chapter Three, Part 2 Summary

Sara sits at home in her viewing chair in her red dress but the shoulders of the dress fall off because she can't close the zipper because she is too large. Sara makes up her mind to go to the library for diet books. Meanwhile, she eats chocolates and stands in front of the mirror imagining herself fitting into the dress and walking on the television stage all in red, including her hair. When they ask her name she will tell them she is Little Red Riding Hood.

### Chapter Three, Part 2 Analysis

The reader is given the first real glimpse into Sara's loneliness. "Maybe it wasn't perfect, maybe a little polish got on the fingers and it looked a little lumpy, but who would notice? Who did she have to polish her nails for? Who did she have to worry would see it's not so good? Or the sewing or the ironing or the cleaning? No matter what she is doing one and a half eyes on the television makes the job, the day and life pass bearably on."

Her state of loneliness is the breeding ground for her addictions. She uses the television as a companion and has had no concept of time since. For Sara, there are marked events in her life, like when her husband was alive, but the rest of time has been nothing more than days passing by. The mindset has also led to a fixation on food. The description of her night without the last chocolate can easily be paralleled to that of a drug addict without a fix. The whole event occurs even outside Sara's reality because she longed for the chocolate even subconsciously. The reference to the fictional character, Little Riding Hood, supports the ideal that Sara enjoys life in another realm so that she doesn't have to face her true circumstances.



## Chapter Three, Part 3

### Chapter Three, Part 3 Summary

Harry walks Marion to her apartment still high and light from the marijuana and the uppers. Along the way they pass a couple who are both intoxicated and the woman squats and urinates on the sidewalk. When the couple loses their balance and falls into the urine Harry's response to the drunken scene is "juice heads are too much, aren't they? They really have no class, no class at all."

At Marion's apartment they talk for a while about Marion's relationship with her parents. She despises their pretentious nature, disgusted with their financial support for causes they don't believe in. Despite Marion's incessant talking, the attraction is evident for both of them and they have sex before falling into a deep sleep.

### Chapter Three, Part 3 Analysis

The author depicts a strange reality as Harry and Marion walk home. The reader is led to view their surroundings through their point of view. The lines between reality and fantasy are blurred in order to experience the high that Harry and Marion have not come down from. "They knew it was warm and humid but it remained a fact outside themselves and not something they were experiencing...It was a delightful evening, or morning or whatever it was..."

Next, when Harry and Marion pass the drunken couple it is unclear whether the events occur as described or if parts of it Harry and Marion's imagination has indulged. The comparison of the woman's urine to a river becomes almost literal when the man falls in and starts to scream and splash that he can't swim. Marion's reason for escaping reality is revealed in her tirade about her parents. She is almost hypocritical because she criticizes for their falsehoods. She thinks that they know nothing of the plight of a true human being but in fact, Marion is also hiding from the same reality. She uses her parents' money to keep up her own lifestyle. She has no steadfast relationships, her roommate is gone and she dates a married man and she uses drugs regularly to ensure that she remains sealed in this bubble.



## Chapter Three, Part 4-6

### Chapter Three, Part 4-6 Summary

It is early in the morning and Sara enjoys a bagel with cream cheese. She has to convince herself not to rush the meal but before she realizes it she has finished the bagel and starts on her cheese danish. She decides that she will walk to the library and pick up the books on dieting. On the way there Sara doesn't realize her detour until she is standing in the bakery paying for another cheese danish. At the library, she talks with the librarian who is politely amused by Sara's desire to lose weight after catching a glimpse of the bakery bag Sara is still holding. Back at home, Sara's friend Ada prepares to dye Sara's hair.

Harry and Marion awake in the afternoon only because the heat forced them out of their slumber. After taking a hit of heroine they spend the day sipping on bottles of Perrier water, eating yogurt and smoking cigarettes.

Ada has finished Sara's hair coloring and Sara is not happy. She imagined hair like Lucille Ball, but Ada has come up with a color that looks orange. Ada soothes her by offering her "smoked fish and bialy" and convinces her that they will try again the next day and everything will be perfect.

### Chapter Three, Part 4-6 Analysis

Sara's compulsions are becoming clearer; she needs one to let go of the other. She cannot take her attention away from the television unless she is drawn away by food. The phone call offer to put her on television has brought another unrealistic obsession into her life. Sara now insists she must lose weight even though it is obvious she doesn't have the will power for the task. Every mention of her diet is directly paralleled with her attachment to food.

This segment is used to demonstrate the levels of closeness that has developed between Harry and Marion. Harry and Marion are comfortable around one another. Although they seem to have only been friends in the past their move into intimacy is almost seamless. It is made clear that these two characters and their relationship will be one of the central pieces of this novel. This is also a quick look into Marion's lifestyle and some of the indulgences that she may take for granted. Marion has criticized her parents' upper class ways, but none of the other characters introduced drink Perrier or take scented oil baths.

Sara's dream to be Little Red Riding Hood on a television game show is starting to unravel already. She is completely flustered about her appearance now that she believes that someone will see it. Sara's wit is also touched upon; she has a sharp tongue that makes even the reader like her.



## Chapter Three, Part 7-9

### Chapter Three, Part 7-9 Summary

Tyrone joins Harry at Marion's apartment and after smoking marijuana for a while Marion goes to the store and brings back French bread with salami, cheese, olives and Chianti wine. Tyrone fakes refinement, jokingly sniffing and sipping the wine until hunger takes over and he devours everything in front of him. The three friends sit around full and feeling good while enjoying music on the radio. This feeling leads to deferring their plan to work for another night. They fill Marion in on their plan to work and sell drugs and offers her supply of drug stimulants; dexies to help them get through the work nights.

Sara's diet doesn't go well from the start; a hard boiled egg, grapefruit and coffee for all three daily meals. Sara is shocked by the lack of food and hopes to find more food in later weeks. Thoughts of her with the announcer on a television game show, looking young and curvy help Sara's optimism and she makes up her mind to start the diet the next day.

Harry and Marion get high, make love and listen to music passing the day sheltered from its bright light. Harry and Marion talk more while cuddled on the couch and Harry shares his dream of owning a coffee shop using the money from selling heroin to get him started. Marion lights up when she hears his idea, adding that they could have poetry readings and local art on the walls and they enjoy a moment of shared bliss.

### Chapter Three, Part 7-9 Analysis

Marion's world intertwines with that of Harry and Tyrone and they all feel that the connection is explosive. The group of friends is physically filled and their plans to get rich selling heroin seems more possible every time they speak about it. "They refilled their coffee cups and lit another joint and luxuriated in the feeling of deep and all pervading satisfaction, a feeling of knowing absolutely that all was well with the world and them and that the world was not only their oyster it was also their linguine with clam sauce. Not only were all things possible, but all things were theirs."

Again, Sara's diet is directly contrasted with the presence of food. As she reads through the diet book, she eats a box of chocolates. The more intense the description of the diet becomes for her, she eats more of the candy and is less conscious of her consumption. Meanwhile, she continues to dream; she can see herself with red hair and curves when neither is true. The reality of the diet almost spirals her into immediate depression and her dreams of television bliss save her from the fall. Like Harry and Tyrone's plans to start work, the reality of Sara's diet is put off for another day. Her dreams allow her a peaceful rest wrapping her night with a conversation with her husband; just as if her life had never changed.



Harry and Marion get high, make love and listen to music as the day passes. The windows are covered with shades so they are sheltered from the bright light of the day. Harry confides that he has always noticed Marion's beauty and she is excited that they are making a connection beyond physical. She tells him that everyone around her, including her family, has always expected her to be a beautiful façade and nothing more. Harry and Marion talk more while cuddled on the couch and Harry shares his dream of owning a coffee shop. He has never shared the idea with anyone but he hopes that the money from selling heroin will get him started. He wants to have a unique shop with exotic teas and coffees and performances by theatre groups. He dreams that one day it could even expand internationally. Marion lights up when she hears his idea, adding that they could have poetry readings and local art on the walls. They enjoy their moments of shared bliss, happy that they each have someone who believes in them.



## Chapter Three, Part 10-11

### Chapter Three, Part 10-11 Summary

Sara wakes up smiling, checks the mail for the papers promised from the television company and after meeting an empty box prepares breakfast. To her disappointment the meal is over quickly and when she looks at the clock she starts to panic. She is still early for breakfast time and lunch seems unbearably far away. She watches television then checks the mail again and goes to Ada's for another dye treatment.

Harry and Marion sleep the day away on the couch as everyone and everything continues to move around them.

### Chapter Three, Part 10-11 Analysis

Sara's wonderful dream enables her to have a really happy morning. Nothing seems to be able to sour her mood until her food addiction takes hold of her. Her mind convinces her that she can't handle the diet and pushes her to panic when breakfast is over and she has to wait until lunch to eat again. In the end it is only the television that soothes her and takes her mind off of food. She is using one attachment to rid herself of another, but they each take her further from enjoying the life she has in front of her.

This segment is constructed with imagery in order for the reader to enter Harry and Marion's world. There is so much going on in the world around them as they rest comfortably in one another's arms. The scene follows closely behind Sara's, only once she wakes up she still has to face her reality even partially. This scene may foreshadow the same wake-up to reality for Marion and Harry eventually. The author chooses the word "oblivious" for their separation from reality; giving the impression that they are not purposely blocking out the real world, they are completely unaware that it is there.



## Chapter Three, Part 12

### Chapter Three, Part 12 Summary

After eating her lunch, Sara checks the mailbox again and debates the success of the diet in her mind. She is already starving and despite the techniques that the book suggests she can't ignore the feeling. She takes her folding chair and goes to sit outside of her building and show her hair off to her friends. Sara tells the other ladies about her diet and one of them recommends a doctor she knows who may be able to give her diet pills. Sara finally gets an envelope from the television company with a questionnaire enclosed. Sara goes to her apartment to fill out the paperwork, giving them her social security number, date of birth and all of the intrusive questions they ask. Some of the ladies are still outside catching the last of the day's sun when Sara heads to the mailbox with the completed form.

### Chapter Three, Part 12 Analysis

Now that Sara is trying to deprive herself of food, it has become more significant in her life. She now has to literally have arguments and debates with the refrigerator so that 'it' doesn't win the battle and make her cheat on her diet. Her imagination won't let her forget that she is hungry because the hunger has found its way into her dreams. Sara chooses to spend time with some of the women in her building and pass the time that is now devoid of food. The women are excited to have something new happening with Sara and they all secretly hope that some of the excitement will rub off. The importance of receiving the letter from the television company and in front of her friends, gives Sara the strength to carry on her diet for another day.





## Chapter Three, Part 13-15

### Chapter Three, Part 13-15 Summary

Marion and Harry wake up on the couch, sometime late in the evening. Marion makes two cups of coffee and offers Harry a drug called dextroamphetamine or "dexie" for short, reminding him that he will have to be awake for work later that night. Tyrone calls a few hours later and Harry is wide awake and talking non-stop from the dexie. Tyrone arrives and almost starts to resent their giggling and joking until Marion gives him a dexie to help lighten him up.

Sara has made it to the end of day one of her diet. She fills up on water, pledging to double the suggested amount even if she forfeits her night's sleep to do it. Sara hears the refrigerator remind her that there is matzoh to eat in the cupboard and she convinces herself and the fridge that she doesn't need it.

Marion gets Harry and Tyrone out of the house early so they wouldn't miss out on getting picked to work that night. At work, their pace is so quick that the other workers tell them to slow down before the bosses expect them to work as quickly in the future. Tyrone and Harry slow their pace, buy the next round of beers for the workers and everyone is happy for the remainder of the night.

### Chapter Three, Part 13-15 Analysis

Again, Harry and Marion's concept of time differs from everyone else. It is unclear what time they fall in and out of sleep, but they are again contrasted with the "nine to fivers, the brown baggers, the working stiffs, the squares." When Harry and Marion wake up, these members of society are at home or on their way home after a day's work." Harry doesn't know what time it is and has already completely forgotten the plan for him and Tyrone to work that night. Ironically, it takes drugs to wake Harry's senses but his spirits pick up their own momentum as he and Marion indulge in each other's dreams. Tyrone can't relate to their vibe, unfamiliar with any version of a natural high. Harry's reenactment of Cyrano also shows the educational and perhaps cultural gap between Harry, Marion and Tyrone.

Sara continues to blur the lines of reality as she has full debates about food with her refrigerator. She really believes that it is the fridge that tempts her with the foods she loves. Sara doesn't realize her lack of self-control and she has an unhealthy addiction to food. Sara has convinced herself that she will lose weight on her diet and cannot use the difficulty of the first day to see that her goal may be unrealistic.

With Marion's help, Harry and Tyrone finally get out for their first night of work. They take uppers to help get them through the night and it makes them overly motivated. Their quick pace shows the effect of the dexies and the difference between them and the working guys who are there to work on a regular basis. As the night passes and the

drugs wear off a little, Harry and Tyrone blend with the other workers. They still fight the merge and race home before they end up commuting with the same people they mock time and again.



## Chapter Three, Part 16

### Chapter Three, Part 16 Summary

Marion is bored after Harry and Tyrone leave for work and she lets her mind wander, envisioning the colors of famous paintings she once viewed all over Europe. She remembers the feelings that she had when she experienced culture and life in Italy, Rome and other places. Marion tries to recapture the time when she created art and painted endlessly and freely among other free minds. However, she can't ignore the coldness that took over her life when she returned home. Marion hugs herself on the couch, feeling the cold but remaining hopeful that with Harry she can recreate the joy she once felt.

### Chapter Three, Part 16 Analysis

This is the first segment dedicated solely to Marion and her experience. Marion's past has included travel and culture, a direct contrast to the other characters whose experience doesn't seem to go beyond life in New York. Marion has been to Italy, Rome and Africa, indulging in the depth of culture and art and finding her voice through painting. For the first time, Marion's character is given depth and the reader understands a little of why she is so anxious to make dreams come true with Harry. She describes her life in New York as a "dulled brilliance" comparing it to beauty that is boring. She longs to recapture the real brilliance she once found in herself.



## Chapter Three, Part 17-20

### Chapter Three, Part 17-20 Summary

It is the middle of the night and Sara tries to ignore the strong urge to use the bathroom. She eventually gives in and stumbles to the bathroom, still reminding herself to think 'thin' or her coined phrase, "zophtic." She smiles to herself when she flushes, imagining all of the extra pounds she wants get rid of flushing away.

Harry gets back to Marion's apartment still high from the dexie and cannot sleep. Marion gives him some sleeping pills and they hang out smoking marijuana until the pills kick in. Harry and Tyrone fall into this routine every night that now includes work. They take uppers to get motivated enough to work. They head home, take sleeping pills and sleep through the entire day.

Sara's hair color has finally gotten to the shade of red she wants and she tries the red dress on with her gold shoes, convinced that she has lost a little weight. She is confident enough that she mocks the refrigerator and her spirits are high as she takes her place at the center of attention sitting in the sun with her friends.

Marion buys sketch pads, charcoal and pencils feeling the urge to capture every object around her with the simplicity that a sketch would offer.

### Chapter Three, Part 17-20 Analysis

Both Harry and Sara need their fixes in order to get into a comfortable sleep. Sara is filled with thoughts of being thin. She doesn't mind getting up to relieve her bladder once she imagines that she is flushing out unwanted pounds. She sleeps happily with "thin" thoughts motivating her sweet dreams. Harry used pills to get him awake and through the night of work and now needs more pills to bring him back down. He also now needs Marion as another type of fix, it is clear that her apartment is becoming home for him as well.

Sara's life has come full circle from the lonely and depressing scene presented in the beginning of the book. Things seem to have finally started changing for her and the reader is meant to be happy and laugh with her as she enjoys her new 'happy' lifestyle. The placement in the book indicates that things may transition again before long so there is clearly more to find out about Sara's story.

Like Sara, Marion has pinpointed her place of happiness and for the first time it doesn't seem beyond her grasp. There is a sense of reality that didn't exist in other segments. Marion has concrete goals and plans and even symbolically, the things she wants to paint are real tangible objects, people. Her subjects are ideas and concepts that before now, she forced herself to ignore and distance herself from. "She felt almost and

uncontrollable urge to draw everything she saw as she walked the street, everything had such vibrance and life."

From Harry and Tyrone's perspective everything is running smoothly with their plan. They believed the hardest part would be getting accustomed to getting up every night/morning to work. So now that they are over that obstacle, they are completely ignoring the danger of taking uppers and sleeping pills in order to get through every night. This may be foreshadowing of danger in the future of their plans.



## Chapter Three, Part 21-23

### Chapter Three, Part 21-23 Summary

Every night Marion brings her sketch pad and charcoal to the couch with hopes of sketching. She tries to look around the apartment for inspiration and finds none so she fantasizes. Marion becomes so engrossed in the details of her dream that she is happy to leave her sketching for another day. She keeps her scheduled dinner with Arnold, the psychologist her parents send her money to see. Harry is clearly jealous and Marion tries to reassure him that they will only meet for dinner. Marion manages to get Harry to lighten up and as they joke she makes him feel secure in their relationship.

Sara still waits without luck, for a response from the television company, the McDick Corporation. Sara is also anxious about the diet and can't keep her mind off of her favorite foods. She hangs out with Ada and the other ladies to pass the time, but the thoughts of food distract her. Sara decides to put an end to the pressure and asks her friend about the doctor who gives diet pills.

### Chapter Three, Part 21-23 Analysis

Marion's dream has started to shift; she is already choosing the fantasy over making real life dreams come true. "She would pick up her sketch pad and...nothing seemed to excite or inspire her so she went back to her fantasies and enjoyed the comfort and reassurance they gave her and they were more real than sitting on the couch looking at the pencils, the charcoal and the virgin sketch pad."

The lines of reality and imagination are blurring for Sara due to her stress over the new diet. Like her interaction with the television, when Sara is alone is when she has the hardest time deciding what is real over what is imagined. Sara's addiction to food wins over the diet and she gives in to the hallucinations that she has created. Her red hair is the most distinct imagery here, because as perfect as it is and what it represents, her perfect hair isn't enough to battle her food addiction.

Harry's jealousy is the first dose of reality that the relationship has faced. Harry and Marion have been so lost in one another and in their drug use that they overlook some of the real issues that relationships face. It clearly never dawned on Harry that Marion needed the money her parents sent and therefore would have to continue seeing a man she had a sexual relationship with. Harry and Marion have fought hard to keep reality outside of their world, but it is pushing its way in.



## Chapter Three, Part 24

### Chapter Three, Part 24 Summary

Marion meets Arnold at a cozy restaurant and they exchange standard conversation while waiting to be seated. When Marion asks Arnold about his wife, Anita, he pauses, trying to grasp why Marion has chosen to ask about his wife and reluctantly answers her questions. He chooses not to explain much and analyzes Marion instead. Marion tells him that she is painting again and that things are going wonderfully in her life. Excited to hear that she is making progress Arnold moves into the role of psychiatrist but Marion mocks his analysis, subtly driving the point that she doesn't need him anymore.

Later, back in Marion's apartment, she looks for inspiration to sketch. Eventually she comes up a sketch of a baby going through various stages of life until womanhood, carrying the same identifiably sad expression through every phase. Marion sits back and looks at her work, excited to have finally started.

### Chapter Three, Part 24 Analysis

It turns out that reality is the muse that Marion has been searching for. Her time with Arnold is the first real-life interaction that she has had since introduced. Although Marion is a little unnerved by her company, she is completely comfortable in the atmosphere of good food and cultured music. Although the direct correlation isn't made, it is insinuated that Marion needed to get away from the fog that her and Harry have created in order to find her artistic voice.

Marion and Arnold are now in a clear struggle for power. Although they have an understanding that Marion doesn't have to see Arnold professionally or pay him, it is clear that in the past he has maintained the role at the head of their relationship. Marion has been the dependent and this chapter offers a clear shift in their association. The encounter is left without a clear owner of power established so the reader knows that Arnold will resurface in the plot.



## Chapter Three, Part 25-26

### Chapter Three, Part 25-26 Summary

Harry and Tyrone receive their paychecks, cash them at a local bar and have one drink before getting started on their plan. Tyrone stops at a pay phone and calls Brody who informs them that they will need another hundred dollars to purchase the amount of heroin they want. They borrow the money from Marion who cashes one of her investment checks to get it. Tyrone meets with Brody while Harry buys the supplies they will need; glassine bags and milk sugar.

Sara enjoys a bagel smothered in cream cheese while mocking the refrigerator about it. She tells her old enemy that she will eat another one of her favorites, herring, for lunch. The bagel is followed by a cheese danish as Sara makes more jokes feeling triumphant over the fridge now that she can eat freely. After her meal, Sara leaves the fridge behind and joins the ladies outside in the sun.

### Chapter Three, Part 25-26 Analysis

This is the closest that Harry and Tyrone have come to having their dreams form within their reality. They have paychecks that they worked for and in the midst of the planning they don't even realize that working for money wasn't as bad as they make it out to be. When they are still short a hundred dollars it is representative of them falling short of their get-rich fantasy once again.

Sara's refrigerator has now become a character with personality. Before the argument that Sara had with the fridge seemed more like she was arguing with herself, trying to maintain her willpower. Now it seems that she really believes that it is the refrigerator that keeps tempting her and mocking her when she cannot stick to her diet plans. She has found her power over the fridge through the enjoyment of food once again and the attention she now gets from her friends.





## Chapter Three, Part 27

### Chapter Three, Part 27 Summary

Harry waits for at Tyrone's apartment and gets comfortable with the radio, cigarettes and marijuana and his mind drifts off as he listens to music. He imagines how his life will be once they have sold the entire stash of heroin and are wealthy. He daydreams about their last large heroin purchase before they retire from the business. As "Harry Goldfarb, one of the big drug distributors in the city..." he carries \$75,000 in a briefcase and to make the first exchange at Kennedy Airport followed by another at Macy's department store. Harry enjoys his daydream until Tyrone comes in with their purchase from Brody. They try some of the drugs in order to determine how to cut it, again making a pact not to get strung out in their efforts to get rich.

Everything goes well; Marion offers to let them use her phone until they set one up in Tyrone's apartment. Harry and Tyrone each sell in separate neighborhoods and make it through with no problems and enough money to double their next purchase from Brody.

### Chapter Three, Part 27 Analysis

Harry's imagination is so full in this segment that it takes on a scene of its own. His story has so much detail that the reader is almost led to forget that it isn't real. Here Harry's lines of reality and fantasy blend as it has been for other characters previously. His mind glides almost seamlessly into the dream and back out again. There are repeated concepts in the section that give the impression that Harry and Tyrone will not be as successful as they think and the very things they think they are avoiding may be their downfall. In his dreams Harry brags about how smart he is, thinking of all angles and covering all bases where other drug dealers fall short. He says it about as many times as Tyrone says that they won't get strung out on the stuff they are trying to sell, yet they use some of it anyway. Nonetheless, they are on their way to actually doing what they planned and that is different from the dreaming they have been doing before now.



## Chapter Three, Part 28

### Chapter Three, Part 28 Summary

Sara waits in the doctor's office to discuss the weight she hopes to lose. After a brief checkup the doctor tells her that the nurse will give her a pill regimen. Armed with her new pills, Sara enjoys her usual delicacies but she starts getting carried away with her coffee consumption. She ignores it, only thinking about how her loss of appetite is a miracle and continues her pill and coffee routine. Sara starts cleaning nonstop and feels like she has boundless energy. She enjoys her triumph over her refrigerator and takes her dinner pill with coffee. She feels a strong sensation in her stomach but dismisses it. She blames the coffee and decides to cut down the following day.

### Chapter Three, Part 28 Analysis

Sara's downward spiral is the most clear of all the characters. Sara is the one who is blind to the potential downfalls as she stands before them. Sara is so obsessed with losing weight for the television show that she doesn't think about taking these unknown pills with food or the possible dangers of taking so many pills in one day. The opening of the chapter tells that something bad may take place in her future if she follows through with her pill plan. "The waiting room was crowded. Sara didn't know anyone there but they had a familiar look, even the young thin ones." The look she recognizes is most likely that of Harry when he is strung out.



## Chapter Three, Part 29

### Chapter Three, Part 29 Summary

Things start moving quickly for Harry and Tyrone and the drugs they are selling are in high demand. They get an organized system once Marion suggests that they use her apartment to keep and cut the drugs as well as use the phone. They start making thousands of dollars weekly and they bring a few other guys in with them, like their friend Gogit, to sell in order to free up their own time.

Harry and Marion relax in her apartment one night after taking some of their heroin stash and Harry announces that he plans to buy his mother a new television. He explains his reasoning to Marion and tells her that he really loves his mother and they talk a little about his father. Marion reflects on how unpretentious Sara is and voices her disgust for ostentatious, shallow people like her own family.

### Chapter Three, Part 29 Analysis

Harry and Tyrone seem very organized and they are sticking to the plan they set forth. It is interesting to note how many people around them are afflicted by addiction as well. The previous section showed that Sara isn't the only one who is addicted to both food and the idea of being thin. Now, Harry and Tyrone sell out their inventory of drugs before they even get it in their hands because they are surrounded by people trying to escape the same way they are.

Through Harry and Marion's conversation, language is touched on when Harry speaks about his father using "garment center vocabulary." The reader now gets a better understanding of where Sara's colloquialisms come from.



## Chapter Three, Part 30-31

### Chapter Three, Part 30-31 Summary

Harry knows that he planned to pick out a new television for his mother today but can't bring himself to go through with the shopping without getting high first. At the television department of Macy's, Harry speaks confidently and firmly with the salesperson, picks a television and pays for it cash, in full.

Back at home, Harry thinks about his trip to Macy's and instead of seeing himself as the cool collected customer, he is sweating and stammering as the salesman quick talks him into buying more than he needs. He brushes that image out of his mind with a hit of heroin.

The next day Harry takes a hit of heroin in order to get the motivation to visit his mother. Marion gives him approval on his appearance as he dresses in new slacks and sports shirt.

### Chapter Three, Part 30-31 Analysis

Reality is distinctly blurred here; when Harry's daydream meets reality and reality meets denial. It isn't made clear which scenario actually took place—was Harry strong and confident like his imagined self or was he uncomfortable and out of place making the purchase in Macy's. "[Harry] smiled o himself as he watched himself sitting there so calmly, taking care of business just like real people. He smirked and chuckled inside himself as the salesman came back with his change, acting almost like a servant. Harry pocketed the money carelessly and gave the guy a nod and a wave as they left."

Harry took heroin before and after his trip to Macy's so there is a distinct possibility that he imagined the entire exchange because the description of his actions in the quote is closely comparable to the demeanor described in Harry's fantasy.

There is a clear shift in Harry's pattern as yet another chapter opens with Harry using drugs to kick start even the smallest of tasks. "Visiting his mother didn't seem like such a good idea when the time came to leave, but a little taste makes all things possible."



## Chapter Three, Part 32

### Chapter Three, Part 32 Summary

Sara has been on her diet pills for two weeks and has started to ignore their side effects. She grinds her teeth, her eyes bulge, and she can't sit still, even after cutting down to one pot of coffee. Sara ignores all of this with the help of her doctor who says that she has lost ten pounds in the first week. Sara still goes out every day to wait for mail from the television company; sitting with the ladies in the special spot they now reserve for her. Sara is outside when Harry pulls up in a cab and she notices immediately that something is different about him. Sara and the other women, who have known Harry his entire life, greet him with hugs and kisses, happy to see him looking cleaned up.

Sara doesn't have any food to offer Harry but she can't stop bustling around and sets places for them to have coffee. Harry finally gets Sara to calm down and tells her about his new job as a "distributor." He gets Sara calm long enough to tell her about her present. He is flushed and embarrassed by Sara's praise but gets caught in the moment and gives her a kiss and hug for the first time in years. They are interrupted when Harry pinpoints a strange noise he had been trying to identify—the sound of Sara grinding her teeth. Harry knows the sound well and when Sara tells him about her diet he is floored with the realization that she is hooked on diet pills. Harry tries to make her understand the danger of the pills with no success so he reluctantly gives up the argument and wraps up his visit, promising to come again soon and to bring Marion.

### Chapter Three, Part 32 Analysis

Sara and Harry's roles have switched in one sense. Sara is now the one showing notable signs of addiction and drug abuse. Once her doctor gives her the green light to continue the intense regimen of pills Sara doesn't give her reactions a second thought. The reader now sees that Sara created her refrigerator as a character because she needed someone to talk to and contend with on a regular basis. Now that she no longer has any food in the house or any desire to eat, she no longer has the company of her fridge and she would be returned to her lonely state if she stayed still long enough to notice.

Harry's moments with Sara are pivotal because it is the first time, including within his relationship with Marion, that a drug free state-of-being offers true emotion and happiness for Harry. "He kissed her again and put his arms around her and found a strange feeling go through him, a feeling something like a high, but different...it was a good feeling. He looked at his mothers smiling beaming face and the feeling increased...an unexplained power and energy making him feel...whole."

There is a definite insinuation that the feeling Harry finds is what each of the characters has been searching for in their every addiction. Harry and Sara's happiness has the potential to start with this moment but her addiction swoops in and redirects their attention.



## Chapter Three, Part 33-36

### Chapter Three, Part 33-36 Summary

Harry is confused by the emotion he felt from his visit with his mother. He isn't sure what to think of her taking the diet pills or seeing her happy. The entire visit is too much for him to process and takes his next hit to make it all go away. Marion and Harry indulge in their heroin habit at least twice a day, while using marijuana and pills in between. They dream more and pay attention to their coffee house plans less.

Tyrone continues to purchase the heroin potent enough to cut several times for sale. Their safety deposit box is almost full and they have their street guys doing most of the work. They are no longer worried about dipping into their heroin stash for themselves and have begun to do so more regularly.

It has been weeks, the red dress almost fits and Sara hasn't received any more information regarding the offer to put her on television. Harry hasn't been back to visit but he called to check on her and tried again to convince her to stop taking the diet pills.

### Chapter Three, Part 33-36 Analysis

The downward spiral has begun for Harry, every emotion; both good and bad now makes him turn to getting high. In the beginning, he seemed to be seeking happiness in the drugs, but spending time with his mother has proven that any reality is now too much.

Tyrone is no longer the voice of reason as the logic has turned from not dipping into the heroin to getting high when they want because of the fact that they can get as much as they want. Words like "always" in reference to the supply and demand of their new business imply the exact opposite. Tyrone and Harry are setting themselves up to fall and no one is thinking clear enough to correct the situation. "They didn't have to sweat it so they dipped a little more into the merchandise. They didn't have to get worried about being strung out when they were the connection, not that that was a real problem. They knew they could stop any time they wanted to. If they should ever want to."

Things aren't going as Sara imagined when she first heard about the television opportunity. At first it seemed that losing weight would be the largest obstacle. Now the key factor-actually getting on the television show is missing from the equation she is starting to panic. The panic throws her and Harry's interaction back to where it was at the beginning of the novel.

The segment ends highlighting the big shortcoming in Marion and Harry's relationship. Harry says to Marion, "You're my dream." So far all of the dream elements are the source of the characters' problems. It is the dream that keeps them from the reality.

## **Chapter Three, Part 37**

### **Chapter Three, Part 37 Summary**

Sara's lack of food, increase in coffee, and pills has left her with an aching jaw, a dry, sickening taste in her mouth and she starts to hear voices. Anxiety makes Sara call the McDick Corporation and ask to speak to Lyle Russel who they inform her doesn't work there. She is transferred around and finally explains her situation and the phone representative concludes that he must have been one of their phone solicitors, takes her information and promising to be in touch, ends the call.

### **Chapter Three, Part 37 Analysis**

Sara has held onto the dream of being on television so long that she can't grasp any other conclusion. Lack of communication with real people has been one of the key attributes of the dreamers in the novel and this is the first time Sara has been struck by it. In the previous chapter Sara was able to carry on a conversation with everyone she met and each of those people loved her personality. Presently she can't clear her thoughts long enough to communicate with the employees at the television company and she is left more confused than ever.





## Chapter Three, Part 38

### Chapter Three, Part 38 Summary

Tyrone listens to Harry talk about Sara and reminisces about his own mother who died when he was eight years old. He was one of seven kids and he remembers her singing all of the time and compares the feeling to being high. His father left them so Tyrone ended up with an aunt who he says was nice but nothing compares to the memory of his mother. The thoughts combined with heroin warm him up before he heads out to work the streets.

Tyrone has a new apartment and a new girlfriend, Alice and is enjoying both one night. Tyrone was sold on the apartment once he saw the large mirrored closet doors and his love for silk shirts make him enjoy the space even more. It is a great feeling for him: "Yes, sir, mah names Tyrone C. Love and thas what ah am." Tyrone and Alice joke and play and make love.

### Chapter Three, Part 38 Analysis

This is the first indication that Tyrone seeks love and fulfillment outside of the life the reader has witnessed so far. He has always seemed so in love with himself and his life that all he wanted was more money to indulge in his lifestyle more. This segment is significant because it is the close of this chapter and Tyrone has finally realized what makes him feel as good as the high he gets from heroin. He describes his mother's songs as "songs so it make you believe heaven jus around the corner. You know, she sing make you feel good all ovuh, jus like dope." When he spends time with "Alice, his lady, on her side, her face nuzzled so warmly in his shoulder, feeling a peace and contentment and excitement neither had ever known before, with or without heroin."



## Chapter Four, Part 1-2

### Chapter Four, Part 1-2 Summary

Tyrone meets with Brody and finds out that the supply of heroin they have been getting, "the dynamite," has been cut off and Brody is left to sell heroin that is miles less potent. Harry and Tyrone think they have nothing to worry about but by the end of the summer things literally and figuratively go cold for them. Winter sets in and Brody can no longer get uncut heroin at all. The obvious solution is to stop using but even with their best efforts, their plan doesn't last through one evening.

Sara's calls have become an expected joke at the McDick Corporation now that she calls twice every week. Depression starts to set in and Sara now takes all of the pills in the morning hoping that her bad feelings will subside. Aiming to force happiness and good feelings back into her life she takes all of her pills in the morning with a pot of coffee then tries on her red dress and gold shoes. Fully dressed, she sits through her favorite shows and sees herself on the stage glittering. Sara starts hallucinating and sees herself stepping out of the television to judge the grim surroundings of her apartment. Eventually, other people in the television also come out also to judge Sara's bleak apartment with the old furniture. The numbers grow until millions are surveying and judging and Sara is crushed with grief and shame.

### Chapter Four, Part 1-2 Analysis

The downward spiral has begun for all of the characters as they let their addictions lead their lives. Harry and Tyrone were not smart about their choices and are quickly becoming the addicts that they joked about months prior. To top it all, they don't even realize the lacking elements of the plans they come up with. They are still waiting for someone to show up with a pound of pure heroin for them to buy when they can't even buy uncut heroin from their main source anymore. Sadly their panic isn't from running out of the money they worked all summer to get. It isn't even from fear of losing all of the things they have dreamed about. Their fear stems from the potential of not getting high. "They awoke earlier than usual with the panic roiling their stomachs, their eyes burning and their noses running, and the magic of the dope healed all their ills immediately. It wasn't that they couldn't stop using, it was just that this wasn't the time."

Sara is in a comparable but sadder state than the others. For Sara, the goal was to lose weight, fit into her dress and get on television. She ignored her addiction to food and in turn ignored her addiction to losing weight. The addiction has now consumed her and her fantasy has literally become a living nightmare. Her imagination once filled the void of loneliness in her life and now it taunts her. Sara no longer has the resolve or strength to be charming, interesting or even to live. Her dreams and her reality have turned their back on her.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

Harry and Tyrone's connection, Brody, is found killed, most likely for his drugs. Harry and Tyrone split up to see what they can find on the streets. It is while out on the streets and right after buying a few bundles of heroin that Tyrone gets arrested. The cops rob him for his money and drugs and throw him in a cell with a bunch of drug addicts and drunks. Tyrone along with everyone else in the cell listen intently as an old addict tells his stories of drugs, women and money. "I'll tell ya kid, if ya wanna make it out there an feed ya habit, ya stay away from the broads an ya don't go for nothin' too big." Tyrone convinces himself that he isn't like the old junkie and the others in the cell. Finally Harry shows up to bail him out and they share a cab. Back at Marion's apartment, Harry also tries to shake the clear parallel between himself and the old junkie.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

Marion's words to Harry summarize the problem outlined for this group of friends. "It just amazes me how blind some people can be to the truth. It's right there in front of them and they don't see it. It just amazes me."

The character of the old junkie in the jail is brought about to offer each of them a look into their future. With their responses to the old man, each character's shortcomings and potential downfalls are revealed. Tyrone is a little self absorbed and thinks that he is too special to ever be like the junkie. He is also counting on the fact that he has a true friend in Harry to keep him from end up old and alone, covered in needle track marks in a dirty jail cell. Unfortunately, Harry is depending on Marion to keep him on the right side of things. Due to the love they feel for one another and the fact that Marion seems to be the educated, grounded one Harry decides that he could never be the old man. Meanwhile, Marion is caught up in her own internal battles to even realize that she is living in the same fog she accuses everyone else of being lost in. Ignoring the existence of the old man brings her closer to becoming him.

## Chapter Six, Part 1-3

### Chapter Six, Part 1-3 Summary

The year is ending and Sara passes her time by calling the McDick Corporation a few times a week. The operators try to be patient with her, but every time Sara gets the same response and hangs up, returning to her viewing chair.

Harry and Marion no longer talk about their coffee house plans or do anything beside shooting up drugs, watching television and listening to music. Now they can barely afford to purchase enough heroin for their habit so no money is coming in and hopes of getting the pound of uncut heroin have faded. One night things get really bad and they can't find drugs anywhere. Marion and Harry feel panic and cold welling up in them until Tyrone digs up a fix for everyone.

### Chapter Six, Part 1-3 Analysis

Sara addiction has made her life more monotonous than it was when her character was introduced. She used to at least get fulfillment from watching her shows on television, now she sits in the viewing chair between the time she takes her pills, her coffee and makes her calls to the television company. The reader no longer knows what shows she is watching because none of that is important to the character anymore.

The foundation of Harry, Tyrone, Marion and Alice's friendship is now exclusively heroin. Without it, the lack of communication resurfaces, even between Marion and Harry who in the beginning appeared to soul mates. The idea that they are special and different from other addicts is starting to fade. All of the elements that separated them from the pack are dissolving. Friendship was the last thread they had and now they can't have a proper conversation that isn't drug induced.



# Chapter Seven, Part 1-3

## Chapter Seven, Part 1-3 Summary

Harry and Tyrone fight the cold and streets with hundreds of other junkies in order to feed their habit. For safety they no longer split up and they scrape the streets like the rest, trying to get their hands on drugs; At times they lying to Marion and Alice in order to keep what they find to themselves.

One night Tyrone and Harry freeze on the streets and word starts that a dealer names Harlan Jefferson planned to put heroin out on the street for the Christmas season. The catch is that he has doubled the costs and the minimum purchase is five hundred dollars for half of a 'piece' of heroin. Harry and Tyrone are short and ask Marion to turn to her shrink. She makes sure Harry understands that she may have sex with Arnold in order to get the money, but the need for drugs supersedes the uncomfortable situation.

Arnold is happy to once again have the upper hand after having Marion refuse his invitations and advances for months. Marion fights her way through every moment of dinner and tries to convince herself that the night with Arnold is the same as any other in the past. After they have sex, Arnold asks her about the needle marks on her arms before giving her the money. He is genuinely surprised at the road Marion has taken, but she brushes off his concern and leaves with her payment. Outside Marion vomits uncontrollably before returning home to Harry. They both fake nonchalance about what has happened but neither can deny that the night has changed everything between them.

## Chapter Seven, Part 1-3 Analysis

Harry and Tyrone have now moved from their level of addiction to that of the street junkies they once pitied. The author uses the segment where they use toilet water to fill their drug works to illustrate the change. In the beginning, each of them had their own works, then they started borrowing one another's, now they are in the street using toilet water from a public bathroom just to get a quick fix before going home. The final sign of danger is that they plan to use all of the money they have left to but a bulk of drugs. It is already clear that although they plan to sell and keep money in their pockets, they may end up lower than they are now.

Harry and Marion's episode with Arnold shows how the addiction has broken down their relationship and their personal standards. Heroin is now the leading figure as opposed to their relationship. Marion is an educated, in Arnold's words, "...you're so young and bright and talented...you're not like those people who roam the streets mugging...for enough money to get dope. You're cultured and delicate and have been under therapy..." Arnold's confusion is that of anyone who is on the outside looking at what has

unfolded for Marion, Harry and Tyrone. Any potential that have existed among them has now been completely snuffed.



## Chapter Eight, Part 1-4

### Chapter Eight, Part 1-4 Summary

Sara now takes Valium with her purple, red and orange diet pills. Her friends have finally realized that something is very wrong and they try without success to get her to eat. Per Sara's request, Ada still touches up Sara's red hair every few weeks in denial that the show may have been canceled. One cold afternoon paranoia leads her to the headquarters of the McDick Corporation dressed in her red dress and gold shoes over layers of winter clothes.

The receptionist at McDick and other representatives who have spoken to Sara over the past months are shocked to see her there and are saddened by her miserable state. They offer her soup and try to console her crying and begging to be let on a show, any show. Someone calls an ambulance and Sara ends up in the mental ward at Bellevue Hospital. A young medical resident; Dr. Spencer, tends to her soothingly while he looks over her chart. Her problem is clear; too many diet pills and consumed too little food. He orders for her transfer to the medical wing, upset that she has been scheduled for shock therapy.

Dr. Spencer stands rigidly in the office of the department head, Dr. Harwood. "This morning I found that my orders had been countermanded by Dr. Reynolds and that the patient is still in psycho and not only that, but he has left a standing order...that all such orders of mine are to be completely and immediately ignored...I have taken six of Dr. Reynolds patients and treated them medically, for the same symptoms and the same reasons...they have all fully recovered...without shock treatment or any psychotropic drugs." Dr. Harwood is more concerned with the hospital running smoothly than the well being of one old woman and assures Dr. Spencer that if causing tension among the staff will be at the expense of his job.

At the Harlan Jefferson drug sale the police have been paid off and guards with machine guns are posted at the entry point and on the roofs of the surrounding buildings to ensure that things go smoothly for the dealers. The line is hundreds long and drags by as Harry and Tyrone stand freezing with the rest. They make their purchase and head home without looking back. They get high and cut the heroin into bags, making smaller portions, doubling the price-each taking their half for their local customers.

Back at her apartment Marion starts to question Harry and Tyrone's decision to sell most of the drugs. She is worried that this is the last they will get for a while. She pleads with Harry not to sell until they can replenish their supply. Harry remains firm, confident that they will be able to find what they need from now on.



## Chapter Eight, Part 1-4 Analysis

This segment shows the enabling elements that surround the characters and everyone who may be like them. First, Sara's problem is brought out for the world to see. In her own environment, it took a while for anyone to notice that anything is wrong. Now, her friends have taken notice and then she heads out into the city. Unfortunately for Sara, the city is so full of people in a condition comparable to her deteriorated physical and mental state. Everyone looks the other way as Sara talks to herself because she looks like another dirty lunatic on the subway. The ambulance takes her straight to the mental ward without a second thought to what may be wrong with her. The final step to the end of the charming, funny old lady introduced in the beginning of the novel is the argument between Dr. Spencer and Dr. Harwood. Sara is so close to getting what she needs; someone to take the time to care for her but it is quickly snatched away when Harwood pulls rank.

The scene from Harry and Tyrone's experience trying to buy drugs shows another level of society being plunged into a drugged state. Like the people Sara comes across, in the drug world, no one wants to heal the needy masses; instead, even the police are a part of the indulgence. Drugs have corrupted the sellers, the users and anyone who sees something to gain from the speedily growing list of addicts in the city.





# Chapter Nine, Part 1

## Chapter Nine, Part 1 Summary

Marion and Harry argue one morning over drugs. They used too much of their stash the night before and Marion has already blown her first vein from overusing. She becomes hysterical regularly over the need for heroin, now immune to the high of the pills she still gets from her doctors. She blames Harry for everything and arguing is now a norm for them.

Harry and Tyrone are back to hustling one high to the next. Without even noticing they have started lying and withholding money from one another 'just in case.' They wait in the freezing cold for Tyrone's connection and one guy tells them about a dealer who is willing to give heroin in exchange for sex.

When Harry gets back home Marion is in the bathroom, her frustration from trying to find a vein turns into rage and she takes it out on Harry. "Where have you been? I've been waiting all day...I'm not going to bed until there's a morning shot, I can't stand it, I can't stand this being sick and waiting." They quietly take a hit and Marion is calm enough to admit that she is losing her grip. She's only slightly comforted by the fact that they have enough drugs for the next few days and hints that she would be willing to exchange sex for drugs.

## Chapter Nine, Part 1 Analysis

Again, the lack of the ability to communicate is the indicator that another character has been taken over the edge by addiction. Marion, once well poised and well spoken, can't bring her hysteria at bay long enough to explain why she's frantic in the first place. She speaks to Harry in broken phrases and incomplete thoughts and by his reaction it is clear that he can't understand what she is going through. Marion's scene in front of the television when she laughs about thoughts of her life seems like a scene taken from Sara's life. One piece after another flashes before her randomly as she sits, "waiting to live."



## Chapter Nine, Part 2

### Chapter Nine, Part 2 Summary

In the hospital, Sara is drugged into numbness then chastised for her lack of motivation. The treatment becomes so bad that Sara fears mealtime because the food is shoved painfully down her throat. When Dr. Reynolds checks in on her he treats her as if she is being a stubborn case, meanwhile she is desperately trying to express the pain and discomfort she endures. Without knowing what is ahead and physically incapable of protest, Sara goes to her first shock therapy session quietly. She is strapped in and the pain surges through her body. She can smell her own flesh burning but her mouth is too numb to even scream so she cries out in her head.

### Chapter Nine, Part 2 Analysis

Sara's bout with consciousness is the last glimmer of hope for this character. Somehow she is fighting through the drugs to come to terms with her reality. It is something she hasn't done in previous chapters. Unfortunately it seems that her fate is sealed and she resigns herself to her own mental torture, unable to make anyone understand what she is going through.

## Chapter Nine, Part 3

### Chapter Nine, Part 3 Summary

Harry, Tyrone and Marion travel to meet with Big Tim to exchange sexual favor with Marion for dope. The three are lost in the midst of their own thoughts and awkward silence. Neither Tyrone nor Marion feels the weight of the act that Marion is about to take part in, their only concern is the heroin they are about to have in their hands. On the other hand, Harry is having an internal battle over the ordeal.

Big Tim's apartment is large and well furnished, overlooking Central Park. He is large in stature, six foot-six inches, large frame and is listening to John Coltrane when Marion arrives. He offers Marion marijuana and good liquor to relax but when Tim starts to fondle her, she freezes; the reality of what she is doing comes flooding into her mind and she throws up. Marion regroups and when Tim has been satisfied sexually, he gives Marion ten bags of heroin knowing he will see her again. Harry and Tyrone have been waiting in the coffee house for an hour after catching a movie when Marion shows up with eight bags of heroin.

### Chapter Nine, Part 3 Analysis

The friendship between Marion, Harry and Tyrone is breaking down and drugs are completely taking over. It is interesting how they now function as two people each. There is one identity that pops in with doses of reality but then there is the identity that follows the lead of the heroin. This is now the stronger identity and it has led Marion to prostitution. The side of Harry that still functions in the realm of reality is clearly stronger than Tyrone and Marion. He still feels his morals and ethics when Marion can barely remember what her emotions for Harry are supposed to be.



# Chapter Nine, Part 4

## Chapter Nine, Part 4 Summary

Sara waits with terror when she hears the food cart approaching because she is now fed through a painful hose and the straps to restrain her cut into her wrists. It has become an effort just to lift her head and when she has to use the bathroom no one comes and she is forced to relieve herself in her chair. The nurse thinks that Sara wants special treatment and leaves her there for two days.

Marion goes to see Big Tim again without telling Harry. When Harry sees her come in he knows where she has been and says nothing. Again she keeps two bags for herself and gives Harry eight. Harry made a good sale outside and is keeping money and drugs from her as well. Marion convinces Harry that they should keep some of their better stash without telling Tyrone.

## Chapter Nine, Part 4 Analysis

Sara is dying a slow, torturing death but her body will not die. She needs the friendship and camaraderie that Harry, Tyrone and Marion let slip by more every day. None of the characters grabbed their chances at redemption and they are starting to live their own nightmares. Interestingly, as the spiral heads downward, each find themselves watching television aimlessly while their world crumbles. Sara no longer has a television to watch but she has been muted so she is a viewer of her own life, muted and watching her surroundings as if they are a world apart from her. The television is Tyrone's companion in this segment because he tells himself that he needs no more than what he has. Tyrone choice of wording and language make a direct parallel between him and the old man in jail that he feared becoming.



## Chapter Nine, Part 5-7

### Chapter Nine, Part 5-7 Summary

Finding drugs on the street is still hard and the hustling makes Tyrone and Harry hide more money and drugs from each other. Marion sees Big Tim regularly now and tells Harry she gets six bags, stashes four bags from him and he stashes three bags from Tyrone. One day while waiting to meet up with a drug connection, Harry and Tyrone listen to a group of guys going on about the large weight of drugs being sold in Florida. They paint a picture of warmth and easy money and Harry gets the idea that they should go straight to the sources in Florida to get the heavy sale they need.

Tyrone is reluctant but Harry sells him on the idea eventually and their friend Gogit finds them a car to use. Harry has an infected arm from hitting the same vein too often but he figures he can deal with it when they return to New York. When they make a stop along the way to get high, Harry can't help but to shoot up in the same arm, making it even worse. Slowly they realize that the trip is a foolish idea, the weight of their drug problem becomes clear and they start panicking. The further they get into the South, Everyone refuses them service and assistance because Tyrone is Black and the infection spreads on Harry's arm. They find a small medical facility but rather than help Harry the doctor furtively calls the police.

It is Friday and Harry's pain is ignored and they are left in a cell to suffer, unable to see a judge until Monday. It's Friday and they won't be able to see a judge and have to endure They are treated roughly as they are brought to a courthouse; Tyrone getting clubbed every move he makes. Tyrone's court appointed lawyer encourages him to plead guilty to vagrancy to serve a few weeks on a work gang before given bus fare back to New York.

Sara is brought to court and the judge commits her to the State Mental Hospital. Once she is placed, her friends Ada and Rae visit. They bring her all of her favorite foods but the food runs out of her mouth as she tries to chew. "They look at their friend of so many years, trying hard to understand. They stayed for an endless hour then reluctantly, but with a sigh of relief, left...They sat waiting for a bus, tears flowing from their eyes. They hugged each other."

Marion calls Big Tim as soon as Harry and Tyrone leave, happy to have a means to feed her habit without Harry's help. Tim wants her to work for a large score of heroine, telling her to show up at a party the following night where she will work with five other girls, performing sexual favors and whatever else the men at the party want. Marion almost freezes up, never having performed with women but the thought of heroin makes it easy. When she gets home with her payment and takes a hit, she feels like it is all worth it. Marion smiles happily knowing that she has finally found the security she has been searching for.



Tyrone and Harry are sentenced to three months in the work gang rather than the weeks that the lawyer promised. Harry is barely functioning through his delirious state but the guards beat Tyrone whenever he tries to help. Tyrone is boiling with anger but his heroin withdrawal made it hard to concentrate on anything. When the doctor sees Harry's arm they ridicule him about being a junkie and send him to the hospital so that he won't die in the jail. It is the last the friends see of one another. Harry's arm is amputated from the shoulder and the hospital staff goes through an intense process trying to save his life. Harry fights through dreams and nightmares, he slowly returns to consciousness. He has been cared for by a nurse who is there when he wakes and warmly explains where he is. Harry, so enamored by the white light of his dreams can think of nothing else as he drifts back out of consciousness.

Sara shuffles through the hospital in paper slippers with the rest of the patients. She heads to the medication line and waits for the nurse to put her tranquilizer in her mouth. When she notices she is standing alone she makes her way to the television room, her stare constantly blank. While others showed various emotions from the medication or their own feelings, Sara only stares.

Tyrone fulfills his sentence fighting through abuse and physical hardship. His body starts going through constant convulsions without heroin. Tyrone can't decide if he is afraid to die or afraid not to. The guards taunt him but the other prisoners show Tyrone support. One night he dreams of his mother holding him in her arms when he is sick but he wakes up in the darkness of the jail and cries. Tyrone gets strong enough to handle the work and blends into the work gang, getting through his nights imagining being held in his mother's arms.

## Chapter Nine, Part 5-7 Analysis

The spiral of chaos for each of the characters ends in the last segments of this chapter. The author uses a few elements that cross over to each of the characters in order to compare their fates. The means to Sara's end is the beginning of her shock treatment. For Harry and Tyrone their final bad move is their trip to Florida. Marion final stage of change is indicated by her second trip to Big Tim's. Each of them are still chasing even the smallest of dreams, their once big dreams are only distant memories. Sara is content just to dream that someone will come and save her from her misery. Harry and Tyrone are now chasing drugs rather than dreaming of rich life and good company. Marion no longer searches for security in her independent thinking, instead she only feels secure when her next fix is guaranteed.

All of the characters in this chapter have a section when they are watching television but not paying attention to it. The television is used as a comparison to how aloof they all are from the reality of their own lives. They are like viewers watching a show unfold, unable to change the outcome, unable to communicate with the people and events moving around them.



In the end Sara and Tyrone blend into their surroundings, succumbing to a broken spirit. Marion is lost believing that having a continuous supply of heroin is all she needs. She peeks into reality for small moments and hates what she sees so she quickly returns to her numb state. Harry is the only one who may have hope for his life but he loses an arm for the chance. He is the only one who ends with someone kind and caring at his side. The plot closes with each of them in a dream state, Harry searching for the white light of heaven he found between life and death, Tyrone dreaming of the comfort of his mother's arms and Sara, lost in a fog and back in front of the television perhaps still seeing her there.



# Characters

## Harry Goldfarb

Harry Goldfarb is the main character. He is the son of Sara Goldfarb and Seymour Goldfarb (deceased). The novel opens with Harry as a user, stealing from his mother for drugs and ends with him completely strung out. Harry lived with his mother in Bronx for most of his life. At some point he gets caught up using heroine and his mother can't get through to him to let it go. He loved Sara but gets frustrated with the fact that her life has never changed-even though he is the one hiding from life.

Harry is convinced for most of the novel that he isn't addicted to the drug but the addiction takes him into very compromising situations. His best friend and partner in everything he does is Tyrone. He later falls in love with a girl named Marion and the three of them embark on a venture that they hope will make them rich enough to live luxuriously. They come across the chance to get high quality heroine and start selling it, quadrupling the money they would put out. Their addiction gets the best of them when they start using the product more than selling. Things get so bad that Harry allows Marion to prostitute herself for drugs although he is torn about the idea. Harry's distinctive trait is that he always laid back. He enjoys when things around him go smoothly and people avoid conflict. The novel ends with Harry in a hospital because he continuously shot drugs into an infected vein. His arm was amputated and he comes close to dying.

## Tyrone C. Love

Tyrone C. Love is Harry's best friend and like Harry he is a heroine addict. Tyrone is street smart and is always the one who finds connections to anything the friends need throughout the story. It is Tyrone's idea to cut up the potent heroine and start selling it until they have enough to buy a pound of pure cocaine. Tyrone's key trait is his confidence and cockiness. He's always playing it cool; making jokes and appears to be enjoying his life. When he starts to get strung out on the drugs he comes to the realization that he needs something more than drugs and himself to be happy. He starts to remember his mother's love and the fulfillment it brought to him for the short time she was alive. He meets a beautiful young woman named Alice and when he is with her she fills the gap. When things turn for the worse for the group of friends, Alice's family sends for her to return down South and Tyrone is again left with the nagging feeling that he needs something more. He hides from that feeling behind his drug use and convinces himself that a good high is all he needs.

## Sara Goldfarb

Sara Goldfarb is Harry's mother, an older Jewish woman living in the Bronx. She has lived in the same apartment for at least the span of her son's life. Her husband has





passed away and her son has left home, perhaps to escape her or following his drug habit. Sara loves to hang outside with her friends; they all pull out their lawn chairs in the summer and enjoy the sun. Her closest friend is Ada who also lives in the building. Even with her friends Sara is alone and lonely and has become a little addicted to food. According to the doctor she is moderately overweight but when she gets a call that she may be considered for an appearance on a television show, she decides to lose weight. The decision becomes an obsession and Sara becomes addicted to diet pills. She is a little naive and not at all street smart so she thinks that because the doctor has prescribed the pills they must be OK. Her health and mind state deteriorates and she is committed to the State Mental Hospital.

## **Marion Kleinmeitz**

Marion Kleinmeitz is Harry's girlfriend. She comes from a wealthy family that she resents for their wealth. Their upper class status has offered Marion a great education and opportunities to travel and see the world and indulge in Art and culture. Marion overlooks that because of the expectations the family has put on her and she feels pressure to meet. She hides from herself and judges the rest of the world constantly. Marion ends up so strung out that she starts prostituting for drugs.

## **Arnold**

Arnold is Marion's psychiatrist. Marion has an arrangement with him where he tells her parents that they are having continued sessions so that they continue to send Marion the money for them. In exchange, Marion has a continued affair with him. Arnold is married with children and according to him; his wife is more concerned with career and social gain than their marriage. He thinks he has been making headway with Marion over the time he has known her and is angered when he finds out that she has become addicted to drugs.

## **Ada**

Ada is Sara's closest friend. She lives next door in Sara's apartment building and shares Sara's love for television. Ada helps Sara get her hair and appearance ready for her television debut. When Sara gets committed Ada and another friend, Rae are the only ones to visit Sara at the hospital.

## **Big Tim**

Tim is the big-time drug hustler who Harry, Tyrone and Marion turn to when it gets hard for them to find drugs on the street. He will only exchange his drugs for sex and gets Marion caught up in working for him continually. He is wealthy and Marion describes him as large in stature with a laugh like Santa Claus.

## **Alice**

She is Tyrone's girlfriend and he describes her as a 'fox' or very attractive woman. She is with him for the last half of the novel. Her family moves her back to Georgia when she gets strung out on drugs with Tyrone.



## Objects/Places

### Marion's Apartment

Marion's apartment is small and quaint and where Harry and Marion spend most of their time. When Harry and Tyrone start selling drugs they have to use Marion's apartment as headquarters because Tyrone doesn't have a phone set up at home.

### Tyrone's Apartment

Tyrone's apartment is barely furnished without a phone or television. Tyrone keeps a small radio with bad reception there as entertainment. This may have been where Harry was living before he moves in with Marion. Tyrone gets a new apartment when they start making money. The only description of the new place is that it has large closets with sliding mirrored doors. This apartment marks the 'new' Tyrone, the one with a beautiful girlfriend and a closet full of silk shirts.

### Sara's Apartment

Sara's apartment hasn't been changed in all of the years she has been living there. When Sara starts hallucinating, she thinks that the people from the television come out and look down on her for the shabby furnishings in her apartment.

### Sara's Pills

Sara begins taking the pills as the doctor orders: three before every meal. The pills are purple, red and orange and when Sara no longer feels the buzz that they gave her in the beginning she starts taking them all at once to start her day.

### Sara's Television

Sara's television is her life. The novel opens and closes with Sara watching television. In the beginning Harry would steal her television and Sara would have to buy it back from the local pawn shop. Harry buys her a new television as a gift when he starts making money. It is the only company Sara knows since her husband died and Harry left.



## **New York**

New York is the city where most of the novel takes place. All of the main characters live in the Bronx but small portions of the plot highlight Manhattan and other areas of New York.

## **The South**

The South is where Harry and Tyrone end up after Harry's idea that the source of the heroine is in Florida. The two start driving and never make it to Florida because they end up getting arrested somewhere in the South. No one identifies exactly where in the South they are.

## **The City Morgue**

The City Morgue is a hang spot where Harry, Marion, Tyrone and a few other heroine users used to meet to get high and enjoy each other's company. One of their friends work there and allowed them to come there from time to time.

## **Arnold's Apartment**

Arnold's apartment isn't described by its physical attributes or contents. This is where Marion and Arnold meet to have sex so that Arnold's wife doesn't catch them.

## **Big Tim's Apartment**

Big Tim's apartment is large and luxurious and fitting of the large character, Big Tim. The apartment overlooks Central Park and Tim has furnished it with upscale taste. This is the apartment where Marion meets time when she exchanges sexual favors for heroine.

## **Macy's**

Macy's appears in Harry's daydream first. He imagines himself completing a large drug transaction there but first he makes a stop in the toy department. He checks out the toy department to look at model trains before making his way to the designated area for the drop. In reality Macy's is where he buys his mother's television. He chooses there so he can see what it feels like to compare his dream to his reality.

## **Sara[s Refrigerator**

Sara's refrigerator becomes a character when Sara gets so lonely she imagines that the fridge speaks back to her. She is on a diet that isn't working and she thinks that the

fridge mocks her for her lack of self-control. The fridge's life ends when she starts taking the diet pills and stops eating; they no longer have anything to discuss at that time.



# Themes

## Denial

Addiction in this novel feeds off of denial leading each of the characters further away from empowerment over the habit. For Tyrone and Harry, denial makes them believe that they don't have a problem with drugs. "They realized they didn't have to sweat it so they dipped a little more into the merchandise. They didn't have to get worried about being strung out when they were the connection, not that that was a real problem. They knew they could stop at any time they wanted to. If they should ever want to." (146) The point of denial serves as a crossroad every time the characters move into a new level of addiction.

Tyrone gets a glimpse of his future on drugs in character of the old man in the jail cell. He denies the connection even when he finds himself talking like the old man, almost verbatim. Marion stands in Big Tim's apartment after having sex and performing favors for hours in order to get drugs and denies that she is a junkie. Sara ignores that she has a slight eating addiction and this leads to her obsession with losing weight followed by her addiction to diet pills. Surrounded by friends worse off than him, it is easy for Harry to deny all of his wrong turns. His mother reminds him of good feelings without heroine and so he turns her away, convincing himself that she is what he needs to remove from his life. Harry's moral conscience is stronger than his friends so his denial is stronger in order to counter any guilt. "His head was persistent and kept shoving the image of the old man in front of him and Harry kept turning his back on him and wrinkling his face in disgust, How could anybody let themselves get to be that low..." (179)

## Freedom

"Harry and Marion had another popper...they continued to drift through the smoke and laughter and through ears and brains somehow came out on the other side undisturbed and everyone felt good...soaring and floating on the currents like a bird...suddenly cut loose...suddenly free...free...free." (41) This quote describes a scene where Harry and Marion are completely high from heroine, marijuana and prescription drugs believing themselves to be free. Therefore, the concept of freedom does not exist without irony in this novel. The characters define freedom by their independence from the constraints of society. Tyrone and Harry are quick to pity the working class for having to get up and struggle through a hard day at work, doing the same thing every day. Marion pities and despises the upper class for false ideals and blind ambition. The irony that runs through all of their ideals is that they have allowed themselves to be enslaved by the very thing they believe makes them different and sets them free. Their disease [heroine] made it possible for them to believe whatever lies it was necessary for them to believe to continue to pursue and indulge their disease, even to the point of them believing they were not enslaved by it but were actually free." (191)

## Escape

Escape is a recurring theme at every turn of the novel. The characters are running from everything in their lives; ducking and slipping away continuously. The subject of escaping never comes up in direct conversation but the wave passes through each character's life. Collectively they are all using their addictions and escaping to their dreams but from separate obstacles. With the diet pills Sara can escape her refrigerator taunting her to taste her favorite foods. Or she imagines herself on television at the center of everyone's attention in order to escape the loneliness that weighs on her life. Harry and Tyrone allow themselves to believe that a 'taste' of heroine makes all troubles go away. Their heroine addiction helped them escape from the reality of their loneliness as well. On a smaller scale they ran to their addiction to leave behind the stresses of work, finances, and every day life to the point that their days and nights blurred into one endless fog of indifference.

# Style

## Point of View

The novel is told almost equally from a third and first person point of view. The third person voice is a storyteller, offering only the details as they happened. The reader can then logically anticipate certain turns. For example, when the characters are in denial about their addictions, the narrative voice offers the facts of the situation so the reader knows otherwise. The first person point of view gives the reader the opportunity to see the flaws and the worth in the personalities of each character. The reader gets to know each character through their dialogue, dialect, tones and mannerisms.

## Setting

Most of the novel is set in the Bronx area of New York. The area has two personalities represented by the various characters' experience. Sara, Ada and the rest of their friends live in a quiet area of the Bronx. It is a closely-knit predominantly Jewish area where everyone seems to know one another. The part of the Bronx where Tyrone, Harry and Marion live seems more gritty and urban. By the end of the novel the area is clearly overrun with drugs and crime. New York City-Manhattan has small features in the novel all of which carry the same feel. Arnold's apartment, Big Tim's apartment and Macy's are all in Manhattan. Each of these locations are described with a sense of lavishness or upscale quality. Money and power surrounds each place and the characters affiliated with them.

New York is contrasted briefly by the South. A search for heroine leads two of the main characters out of New York and into an unnamed area of the South. There is a distinct flip when they are no longer in their comfort zone. Neither of the characters has ever left New York so having the South so different from their home highlights how much they are out of their element. Harry and Tyrone joke about race for the entire novel and as soon as they hit the South they are faced with true racial animosities.

## Language and Meaning

The language of the narrator is very straight forward and clear. The remaining language changes with the characters. Marion's dialogue is very wordy. She references history, art, literature and more every time she speaks. Her text is always long and seem like she is giving a speech when having the simplest conversations. Tyrone's language is indicative of his street smarts. He knows and is comfortable speaking slang, jokes about everything with a slick tongue and sometimes speaks of himself in third person. Harry's speech is very comfortable and laid back. It is clear that he has been educated, but he isn't worldly like Marion. He is a median between Tyrone and Marion and can understand and speak on both of their levels. Sara and her friends are full of Jewish



slang. Harry references some of the words to the garment district where his father worked but the Bronx ladies have a dialect of their own.

## Structure

There are two hundred and seventy-nine (279) pages that make up the novel. There aren't any labeled chapters or traditional breaks. Nine chapters are broken into many small segments or parts. Each part is marked only by the change in the focal character and line breaks; no headings. The author uses the constant breaks within a chapter to keep the reader connected to every character. It is also easier to make parallels between each character and situation when there is a continuous flow from one character plot to another.



## Quotes

"The voice so filled with nostalgia that you could almost see the memories floating through the blue smoke, memories not only of music and joy and youth but perhaps of dreams." (24)

"The sun was down which made it night time, but Harry and Tyrone were bugged with all the lights that stabbed and slashed and skewered their eyeballs...Daytime is a drag...you look forward to the night when you can get some relief from the assaults of the day and start to come alive." (15)

"The voice was so bright and cheery and so enthusiastic and real that she turned toward the TV set to see if the voice was coming from there."

"For the first time in memory she was unaware of the television." (25-26)

"People getting high, getting higher, or wondering why they weren't high yet."

"They could always go to work some other time, but you don't always get a chance to score for some dynamite shit like this." (33)

"Harry and Marion had another popper...they continued to drift through the smoke and laughter and through ears and brains somehow came out on the other side undisturbed and everyone felt good...soaring and floating on the currents like a bird...suddenly cut loose...suddenly free...free...free." (42)

"Maybe it wasn't perfect, maybe a little polish got on the fingers and it looked a little lumpy, but who would notice? Who did she have to polish her nails for? Who did she have to worry would see it's not so good? Or the sewing or the ironing or the cleaning? No matter what she is doing one and a half eyes on the television makes the job, the day and life pass bearably on." (42)

"Juice heads are too much, aren't they? They really have no class, no class at all." (48)

"They knew it was warm and humid but it remained a fact outside themselves and not something they were experiencing...It was a delightful evening, or morning or whatever it was..." (46)

"They refilled their coffee cups and lit another joint and luxuriated in the feeling of deep and all pervading satisfaction, a feeling of knowing absolutely that all was well with the world and them and that the world was not only their oyster it was also their linguine with clam sauce. Not only were all things possible, but all things were theirs." (61)

"Harry and Marion got off on the last of his stuff and made it on the couch grooving behind the high and the music." (66)



"They left the newspaper plant, hurrying to get home before they got caught in the early morning rush hour, and the sunlight." (88)

"She felt almost and uncontrollable urge to draw everything she saw as she walked the street, everything had such vibrance and life." (93)

"She would pick up her sketch pad and...nothing seemed to excite or inspire her so she went back to her fantasies and enjoyed the comfort and reassurance they gave her and they were more real than sitting on the couch looking at the pencils, the charcoal and the virgin sketch pad." (95)

"[Harry] smiled o himself as he watched himself sitting there so calmly, taking care of business just like real people. He smirked and chuckled inside himself as the salesman came back with his change, acting almost like a servant. Harry pocketed the money carelessly and gave the guy a nod and a wave as they left." (132)

"Visiting his mother didn't seem like such a good idea when the time came to leave, but a little taste makes all things possible." (133)

"He kissed her again and put his arms around her and found a strange feeling go through him, a feeling something like a high, but different...it was a good feeling. He looked at his mothers smiling beaming face and the feeling increased...an unexplained power and energy making him feel...whole." (138)

"They didn't have to sweat it so they dipped a little more into the merchandise. They didn't have to get worried about being strung out when they were the connection, not that that was a real problem. They knew they could stop any time they wanted to. If they should ever want to." (146)

"You're my dream." (149)

"Yes, sir, mah names Tyrone C. Love and thas what ah am." (155)

"songs so it make you believe heaven jus around the corner. You know, she sing make you feel good all ovuh, jus like dope." (154)

"Alice, his lady, on her side, her face nuzzled so warmly in his shoulder, feeling a peace and contentment and excitement neither had ever known before, with or without heroin." (156)

"It wasn't that they couldn't stop using, it was just that this wasn't the time. They had too much to do and they weren't feeling well." (161)



"They awoke earlier than usual with the panic roiling their stomachs, their eyes burning and their noses running, and the magic of the dope healed all their ills immediately. It wasn't that they couldn't stop using, it was just that this wasn't the time." (161)

"I'll tell ya kid, if ya wanna make it out there an feed ya habit, ya stay away from the broads an ya don't go for nothin too big." (175)

"It just amazes me how blind some people can be to the truth. It's right there in front of them and they don't see it. It just amazes me." (180)

"All the neighborhood streets were filled with dope fiends, even in the snow and sleet, looking for something, anything. Every hallway was cluttered with sick faces with runny noses and bodies shivering with the cold and junk sickness...their bodies not only craving, but needing the very poison that ground them into that pitiable state...For every bit of dope that was put on the streets there were thousands of eager and sick hands reaching, grabbing, stabbing, choking, clubbing, or pulling the trigger of a gun." (190-191)

"...you're so young and bright and talented....you're not like those people who roam the streets mugging...for enough money to get dope. You're cultured and delicate and have been under therapy..." (202)

"This morning I found that my orders had been countermanded by Dr. Reynolds and that the patient is still in psycho and not only that, but he has left a standing order...that all such orders of mine are to be completely and immediately ignored...in the past eight months I have taken six of Dr. Reynolds patients and treated them medically, for the same symptoms and the same reasons...they have all fully recovered...without shock treatment or any psychotropic drugs." (223)

"Where have you been? I've been waiting all day...I'm not going to bed until there's a morning shot, I can't stand it, I can't stand this being sick and waiting." (232)

"They look at their friend of so many years, trying hard to understand. They stayed for an endless hour then reluctantly, but with a sigh of relief, left...They sat waiting for a bus, tears flowing from their eyes. They hugged each other." (264)

## Topics for Discussion

Television is a key element in the novel, especially at the closing. Explore why the author chooses to use this object. What does it represent for each character?

Explore the relationship between Harry and Tyrone. Is their friendship their downfall or did it have the power to save them from their fates?

Why are issues of race explored in the novel? Is race simply used as a tool to reiterate the setting and tone of these times?

Compare and contrast Harry and Sara. What are the common threads in their addictions?

Is love a concrete theme in the storyline? How do each of the characters define love and do any of them experience it?

Marion is a contradictory and complex character. Determine when she displays her truest nature.

Friendship and love could have saved all of the main characters - true or false?