

# **A Raisin in the Sun Book Notes**

## **A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry**

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# Author/Context

## Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965)

Born and raised during the Great Depression in Chicago, Lorraine Vivian Hansberry was born into a wealthy black family. Her mother, Nannie Perry Hansberry was educated early in life and her father, Carl Augustus Hansberry, was an attorney for the NAACP and eventually became a U.S. Deputy Marshall. Since education was valued in her family and her father was a Harvard professor, she rubbed shoulders with such men as Langston Hughes, W.E.B. Dubois, Duke Ellington, and Paul Robeson. Hansberry was exposed to these intellectuals and talents at an early age, and used their influence to help her excel in her own interests. At age 14 and without any knowledge of the game, Hansberry won an English award for a short story about football. From that point on, she did not stop writing.

Her family moved to an all white neighborhood when Hansberry was only eight years old, after her father won a large civil rights case. Aspects of her life, such as this experience, are seen in her plays and writings. She not only studied writing at the University of Wisconsin, but she also excelled in and studied art. An avid painter, she expressed herself through two mediums, words and paints. In 1953, she married a Jewish songwriter and moved to New York City. Soon after her arrival in Greenwich Village, she wrote *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play inspired by a line from a Langston Hugh's poem - a man she met while writing for the magazine, *Freedom*. This play brought her fame as a playwright and established Sidney Poitier as the premier black actor of his time.

*A Raisin in the Sun* garnered much acclaim and commotion when it opened at the Barrymore Theater in New York in 1959. Not only was it the first black play ever to be produced on Broadway, but it won the New York Drama Critics Circle award for Best Play of the Year, beating out such heavyweights as Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams. Compared to Arthur Miller's *Death of A Salesman*, *Raisin* elicits the similar emotions of fury and true Americanism, and is hailed as a visionary work of art.

According to New York Times drama critic Frank Rich, *A Raisin in the Sun* "*changed American theater forever [by forcing] both blacks and white to re-examine the deferred dreams of black America [and by posing] all her concerns in a work that portrayed a black family with greater realism and complexity than had ever been previously seen on an American stage*" (Carter 19).

Hansberry also wrote *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, a play about a Jewish intellectual. She never produced a large body of work because cancer cut short her career at the age of 35. After her death, her letters and writings were collected, published, and produced as *To Be Young, Gifted, and Black*, and later *Les Blancs*.



## **Bibliography**

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Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun*. Random House: New York, 1959.

# Plot Summary

The play opens as the Younger family anxiously awaits the arrival of a check. It is the life insurance check of \$10,000, made payable to Lena (Mama) Younger, the matriarch of the family, because of the death of her husband. The entire family lives within the walls of a tiny apartment and the play takes place entirely in its worn out, lived-in living room. Travis, the young son of Ruth and Walter Lee, sleeps on the couch in the living room and is constantly awoken by noise from the adults. Walter Lee and Beneatha are Lena's children. Walter Lee is married to Ruth, and works as a chauffeur, while Beneatha, much younger and energetic, plans to study to become a doctor. Each member of the family wants to do something different with the money, and therefore, waits anxiously for his/her new life to start.

Walter Lee is working with low-life street men, Willy Harris and Bobo, to start a liquor store. He is obsessed with money and constantly feels as if the world is against him, especially his wife and mother. He storms out of the house, seeking the two men with whom he plans to do business and also to complain about his job. Mama meanwhile suspects Ruth to be pregnant.

Beneatha discusses her new, independent style in college. She is courted by two men: the first boy, George Murchison, is a wealthy Negro concerned with appearances and material, while the second, Joseph Asagai, is a native African that inspires her intellectually and spiritually. Asagai brings Bennie authentic Nigerian robes as a gift, and she puts them on, pretending to be an African princess. George arrives to take Bennie out to the theater and is appalled by her attire, forcing her to change. The Younger family is in favor of George because they believe his money will help her and themselves.

When the check finally does arrive, Lena has trouble dealing, for she realizes that the ten thousand dollars is a replacement for her husband. The family tells her to do what she desires with the money. Walter irrationally urges Mama to give him the money, gradually become irate and furious. Mama reprimands him, not understanding how he became so obsessed with money and so disinterested in his own family. She reveals information that Ruth is pregnant and may abort the fetus. When Ruth confirms these suspicions, Walter is silent, sending Mama into shock.

Mama tells the family that she put a down payment on a house in Clybourne Park with the insurance money, so that Travis will one day be able to grow up to become a man with property. Walter is upset and wonders why he can never be the one in charge of all actions. The entire family is concerned about the location because it is an all white neighborhood.

While Mama is gone, Karl Lindner, a white business man and representative of the Clybourne Park Welcoming Committee comes to the Younger household under the false auspices of brotherhood, and offers to pay them off so that they will not move into the house. They throw him out and later tell Mama.

Mama listens to Walter's pleas and decides to give him the rest of the money to manage. A portion of it will go to Beneatha's medical school fund, but he may keep the rest. Bobo comes to the house weeks later on moving day to inform Walter Lee that Willy Harris has absconded with their money. Walter Lee never deposited the money in the bank and has lost his father's check forever. The entire family is outraged and deeply hurt.

Later that same day, Asagai comes over to help the family pack, only to find a disheartened Beneatha. He asks her to marry him and return home to Africa to practice medicine. Walter decides to call Mr. Lindner over to accept money and 'play into the scam' that is supposedly already in place. Mama and Ruth cannot believe that Walter would sell his soul and his pride for money. The moving men arrive around the same time as Lindner. Walter Lee transforms into a mature man of pride and miraculously tells Lindner that his family cannot be bought. They plan to move into Clybourne Park and live as a happy family.

Ruth and Lena are proud of Walter and happily walk away from their old living room to a new life.

# Major Characters

**Ruth Younger:** Ruth is Walter Lee's wife, a deeply emotional and old fashioned woman. Despite her true love for family and her husband, she has difficulty dealing with Walter's mistreatment of her. Ruth is pregnant and goes to a female gynecologist to put a down payment on having her unborn child aborted. Ruth is the family member most excited to move into a new home because she wants her son Travis to have a better life.

**Travis Younger:** Travis is Ruth and Walter Lee's only child and sleeps on the couch in the living room. He loves his grandmama deeply and buys her a large gardening hat as a moving gift. Although he often plays one parent against the other unknowingly, he has a close relationship with both Ruth and Walter.

**Walter Lee Younger:** Walter Lee is Lena's oldest child and only son. He is married to Ruth and works as a chauffeur for wealthy white people. He constantly feels as though the entire world is against him, especially the women in his life: his mother and his wife. He seems to care only for money and wants the insurance money to start a liquor store with Bobo and Willy Harris. Although Walter is obsessed with money and seems to ignore his family, he matures at the conclusion of the play, as he tells Lindner that his family cannot be bought.

**Beneatha Younger:** Beneatha (also known as Bennie) is Lena's youngest child and only daughter, who plans to become a doctor. She has two gentleman callers in her life: George Murchison, the wealthy Negro whom she dislikes intensely, and Joseph Asagai, the Nigerian intellectual who sweeps her off her feet. She constantly presents herself as a modern, black woman, with new freedoms and rights, and plans to find her roots both in America and in Africa.

**Lena Younger (Mama):** Lena (Mama) is the matriarch of the Younger family, controlling everyone's emotions and actions, and calling the shots on the future. The check belongs to her, since it is her husband who passed away. She cares nothing for money and only about her beloved family and life. She adores plants and carries her window plant with her to the new house. Although she scolds her children, she wants nothing more than for them to get along and raise happy, healthy families. She migrated north to Chicago from the South during the harsh lynching period for Negroes and cannot understand the modern ways in which people are heading. Everyone in the family looks to her for advice and love, which she openly gives with all her heart.

## Minor Characters

**Joseph Asagai:** Asagai is Beneatha's African boyfriend. He is from Nigeria and wants to take Bennie back with him to practice medicine in Africa. He is very intelligent and stays close to his roots, causing Bennie to fall for him.

**George Murchison:** George Murchison is Beneatha's wealthy gentleman caller. He is true Negro wealth and has an ego to back it up. Although the Younger family appears to

want Bennie to marry George for his money, Bennie despises his character and wants to be with Asagai.

**Karl Lindner:** Mr. Lindner is the white representative from the Clybourne Welcoming Committee. He comes to the Younger household feigning respect, and attempts to appear accepting, while secretly wanting the Negro family out of his community. He offers the Younger family money in exchange for their absence from his neighborhood.

**Bobo :** Bobo is one of Walter Lee's acquaintances. He is one of the men in on the deal for the liquor store and informs Walter Lee that Willy Harris has disappeared with both his and Walter's money.

**Willy Harris:** Willy Harris makes no physical appearance in the play, yet is mentioned several times as a no-good scoundrel. He is one of the men with whom Walter plans to open a liquor store, but disappears with both Walter and Bobo's money leaving no trace.

**Moving men :** The moving men come into the Younger household at the conclusion of the play and move their possessions out of the living room.



## Objects/Places

**Younger living room:** The play takes place entirely in the living room of the Younger household in Chicago's Southside. Hansberry describes it as having a personality of its own. It is small, but houses so many people and so much love. 'Weariness has, in fact, won in this room. Everything has been polished, washed, sat on, used, scrubbed too often. All pretenses but living itself have long since vanished from the very atmosphere of this room' (Hansberry 3).

**The Check:** The check from the insurance company is the object of everyone's desire, in one way, shape or form. It is for ten thousand dollars and is from their father's life insurance. Walter Lee is obsessed with the money from it so that he can start a new business, Beneatha wants it for medical school tuition, and Ruth wants to help the entire family start fresh in a new house. To Mama, it represents her dead husband and she would rather not deal with the financial burdens which accompany it.

**Chicago's Southside:** The Younger family lives in Chicago's Southside, a poor, black neighborhood. They feel at home here, but are trying to leave it to move upwards in society.

**Clybourne Park:** Clybourne Park is the new white community to which the Younger family plans to move. The Clybourne Welcoming Committee, represented solely by Mr. Lindner, tries to pay the Youngers off so that they will not move into his private, elitist community.

**Nigerian robes:** Asagai, Beneatha's African boyfriend, brings her authentic Nigerian robes from home as a gift. When she puts the cloth on her body, she assumes the role of a Nigerian princess. They represent the true Negro roots of the Younger family in Africa.

**Mama's plant:** Mama perpetually tends to her small window plant and returns to it at the conclusion of the play. Because of her love for foliage, the family buys her gardening tools and a gardening hat as a moving gift. It is something genuine that Mama loves and that she can grow and tend to on her own.

# Quotes

Quote 1: "Weariness has, in fact, won in this room. Everything has been polished, washed, sat on, used, scrubbed too often. All pretenses but living itself have long since vanished from the very atmosphere of this room" Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 3

Quote 2: "Check coming today?" Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 6

Quote 3: "Now - whose little old angry man are you?" Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 11

Quote 4: "Yeah. You see, this little liquor store we got in mind cost seventy-five thousand and we figured the initial investment on the place be 'bout thirty thousand, see. That be ten thousand each... Baby, don't nothing happen for you in this world 'less you pay somebody off!" Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 14-15

Quote 5: "We one group of men tied to a race of women with small minds." Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 17

Quote 6: "a woman who has adjusted to many things in life and overcome many more, her face is full of strength. She has, we can see, wit and faith of a kind that keep her eyes lit and full of interest and expectancy. She is, in a word, a beautiful woman. Her bearing is perhaps most like the noble bearing of the women of the Hereros of Southwest Africa - rather as if she imagines that as she walks she still bears a basket or a vessel upon her head." Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 22

Quote 7: "Mama, something is happening between Walter and me. I don't know what it is - but he needs something - something I can't give him any more. He needs this chance, Lena." Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 25

Quote 8: "Big Walter used to say, he'd get right wet in the eyes sometimes, lean his head back with the water standing in his eyes and say, 'Seem like God didn't see fit to give the black man nothing but dreams - but He did give us children to make them dreams seem worth while.'" Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 29

Quote 9: "The Murchisons are honest-to-God-real-live-rich-colored people, and the only people in the world who are more snobbish than rich white people are rich colored people. I thought everybody knew that." Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 34

Quote 10: "In my mother's house there is still God." Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 37

Quote 11: "Now I ain't saying what I think. But I ain't never been wrong 'bout a woman neither." Act 1, Scene 2, pg. 41

Quote 12: "Assimilationism is so popular in your country." Act 1, Scene 2, pg. 48

Quote 13: "When a man goes outside his home to look for peace." Act 1, Scene 2, pg. 60



Quote 14: "Something has changed. You something new, boy. In my time we was worried about not being lynched and getting to the North if we could and how to stay alive and still have a pinch of dignity too...Now here come you and Beneatha - talking 'bout things we ain't never even thought about hardly, me and your daddy. You ain't satisfied or proud of nothing we done. I mean that you had a home; that we kept you out of trouble till you was grown; that you don't have to ride to work on the back of nobody's streetcar - You my children - but how different we done become." Act 1, Scene 2, pg. 62

Quote 15: "Oh, it's just a college girl's way of calling people Uncle Toms - but that isn't what it means at all." Act 2, Scene 1, pg. 72

Quote 16: "I see you all the time - with the books tucked under your arms - going to your (British A - a mimic) 'clahsses.' And for what! What the hell you learning over there? Filling up your heads - (Counting off on his fingers) - with the sociology and the psychology - but they teaching you how to be a man? How to take over and run the world? They teaching you how to run a rubber plantation or a steel mill? Naw - just to talk proper and read books and wear white shoes..." Act 2, Scene 1, pg. 76

Quote 17: "What you need me to say you done right for? You the head of this family. You run our lives like you want to. It was your money and you did what you wanted with it. So what you need for me to say it was all right for? So you butchered up a dream of mine - you - who always talking 'bout your children's dreams..." Act 2, Scene 1, pg. 87

Quote 18: "And from now on any penny that come out of it or that go in it is for you to look after. For you to decide. It ain't much, but it's all I got in the world and I'm putting in your hands. I'm telling you to be head of this family from now on like you supposed to be." Act 2, Scene 2, pg. 94

Quote 19: "Girl, I do believe you are the first person in the history of the entire human race to successfully brainwash yourself." Act 2, Scene 3, pg. 98

Quote 20: "Well - I don't understand why you people are reacting this way. What do you think you are going to gain by moving into a neighborhood where you just aren't wanted and where some elements - well - people can get awful worked up when they feel that their whole way of life and everything they've ever worked for is threatened...You just can't force people to change their hearts, son." Act 2, Scene 3, pg. 105-6

Quote 21: "He talked Brotherhood. He said everybody ought to learn how to sit down and hate each other with good Christian fellowship." Act 2, Scene 3, pg. 107

Quote 22: "I seen...him...night after night...come in...and look at that rug...and then look at me...the red showing in his eyes...the veins moving in his head...I seen him grow thin and old before he was forty...working and working and working like somebody's old horse...killing himself...and you - you give it all away in a day..." Act 2, Scene 3, pg. 117

Quote 23: "I live the answer! (pause) In my village at home it is the exceptional man who can even read a newspaper...or who ever sees a book at all. I will go home and much of what I will have to say will seem strange to the people of my village...But I will

teach and work and things will happen, slowly and swiftly. At times it will seem that nothing changes at all...and then again...the sudden dramatic events which make history leap into the future. And then quiet again. Retrogression even. Guns, murder, revolution. And I even will have moments when I wonder if the quiet was not better than all that death and hatred. But I will look about my village at the illiteracy and disease and ignorance and I will not wonder long. And perhaps...perhaps I will be a great man...I mean perhaps I will hold on to the substance of truth and find my way always with the right course..." Act 3, pg. 124

Quote 24: "Sometimes you just got to know when to give up some things...and hold on to what you got." Act 3, pg. 130

Quote 25: "There is always something left to love. And if you ain't learned that, you ain't learned nothing." Act 3, pg. 135

Quote 26: "He finally come into his manhood today, didn't he? Kind of like a rainbow after the rain..." Act 3, pg. 141

## Topic Tracking: Family

Family 1: Although Ruth and Travis seem to have an intimate mother-son relationship, Walter Lee has his own private relationship with his son. Travis unintentionally plays one parent against the other in order to get what he wants, as do most young children his age. Walter Lee plays into this world and acts like the 'good parent' by giving Travis the money he needs for school, even though the family does not have it to give.

Family 2: Walter Lee likes to blame his so-called failure in life on both the color of his skin and his unsupportive family. He believes that his wife and mother do not give him any credit or support, and that they are holding him back. Ruth knows that the only thing holding him back is himself - not his family.

Family 3: Beneatha and Walter Lee fight over the check with pure sibling rivalry. Bennie knows that the money belongs to Mama and thinks she should decide where the money goes, while Walter Lee obsesses over his selfish idea of a liquor store. The reality of the situation is that the money represents family - their father - and belongs only to Mama.

Family 4: Mama recalls her late husband's words and integrity. He would talk about dreams and living them for and through children. Family was the most important thing to him, and she hoped it would be for her children, as well.

Family 5: Bennie and Mama discuss Ruth's physical condition and allude to a possible pregnancy. Mama knows that she has never been wrong before about such behavior and realizes that her family may be expanding.

Family 6: The family mentioned in this section has a double meaning. Asagai represents the African family as a whole. As a Nigerian, he is different; yet, as a Negro, he is the same. Asagai and The Youngers all come from the same African family roots.

Family 7: Ruth reveals her pregnancy and possible option for abortion. Mama is appalled that her son would allow his wife to terminate a life. She lectures him that her family is about love and giving children life - not taking life away. While the Younger family appears to possibly be increasing, it also seems to be falling apart.

Family 8: Walter Lee tells Mama that he acts like a child because she seizes all the responsibility. She never allows him to be a man and to be the head of the household. He wants to be in charge of the family, but needs the opportunity to illustrate his responsibility and strength.

Family 9: Mama remembers her late husband's hard work and love. He did everything for his family, for his children, so that they could have a better life. She remembers him fondly as she realizes that the insurance check - the money given to her because of his death - is gone.

Family 10: Asagai proposes to Beneatha in an African tradition mixed with modernity. Because of the chaos and events of the day, Beneatha does not know how to respond. She already feels the familial African bond with Asagai, but whether she wants to become his true family - his wife - is another question.

Family 11: After Walter Lee sinks low enough to beg Lindner for money in exchange for his dignity, Bennie, Ruth, and Mama are shocked. They do not know how to react to his words and actions. However, Mama tells them, again, that family is the most important thing in the world, and no matter what the events, they must always love one another. Family is needed the most when people are down.

Family 12: As the play concludes, Walter Lee grows into a mature man by telling Lindner that the Youngers will still move to Clybourne Park. Ruth and Mama feel the family bond stronger than ever as they move out of the old living room and into the new home. They are together - a family.

# Topic Tracking: Money

Money 1: One of the first ideas uttered in the play is about the check. The insurance check for ten thousand dollars from the death of the Younger family's father is supposed to arrive any moment and it is on the top of everyone's minds.

Money 2: Due to the Younger family's poor status and lack of money, they must all live in a small apartment in Chicago's Southside. Travis, the only child of Ruth and Walter Lee, is therefore forced to sleep on the couch in the living room, where all of the action of the play takes place.

Money 3: Walter Lee wants to take the money from the insurance check to start a liquor business with two comrades, Willy Harris and Bobo. He is obsessed with this idea and tries to explain to Ruth that everything in life costs money. He wants to start a new life of privilege for himself and his family with this money, despite the large gamble.

Money 4: Mama does not care about the money from the insurance check, or any money as a whole. She thinks that money destroys happiness because people tend to fight over it. According to her, it is not Christian to let money destroy familial bliss and only plans to keep the money to help her family.

Money 5: The family is in shock that there are so many zeroes next to Mama's name on a check. Again, Mama says that were it not for her family, she would not keep the money. Each Younger family member allows the money to mesmerize him and her with its power when it arrives tangibly in the living room.

Money 6: George, the wealthy Negro, discusses high culture with Walter. Walter feigns his knowledge of New York, a place he cannot visit because he is too poor. The wealth - money - divides the two men of a uniform race.

Money 7: Mama finally gives Walter Lee financial independence by allowing him to take control of the remainder of the insurance money. Although she has put a down payment of \$3500 on the new house, she tells him to put \$3000 in an account for Beneatha's medical school. After that is complete, he is free to do with it what he pleases. The money symbolizes her trust in him.

Money 8: Karl Lindner, the white representative from the Clybourne Welcoming Committee visits the Youngers and offers to pay them off in order for them to stay away from Clybourne Park. He thinks that money can buy their pride and attempts to do so.

Money 9: Walter Lee learns that Willy Harris has disappeared with the entire \$6500. He lost all the insurance money because he never went to the bank and became greedy. This monetary loss causes him to initially become irate, depressed, and meek and the family to become severely angry with him, for the money represented their dead father.

Money 10: Walter Lee tells the family that he has called Mr. Lindner back to accept his proposal and take money from him, to restore the money he lost. Outraged, Mama explains to Walter Lee that her family and her race cannot be bought with any amount of money. Pride and honor is more important than the almighty dollar.



# Topic Tracking: Racism

Racism 1: One of the first major allusions to any sort of racism appears with the character of George Murchison. Prior to his entrance, the play simply discusses a poor family. However, when the wealthy Negro enters the picture, the Younger family sees the differences in race and group him with snobbish white people.

Racism 2: Bennie's African friend, Asagai, brings a new slant of the color line to the play. Because he is not the typical Negro of America at the time, but rather an African native studying in the States, another type of Negro is introduced. The color lines seem to blur yet again, for although Asagai is Negro, he is not the type of Negro that elicits much of the contemporary racism that the Youngers encounter. He is proud of his African roots and is proud of the color differences. His national distinctions perhaps bring into light a new type of racism within the Black community.

Racism 3: Mama tells Walter Lee of the differences in racism from her generation to the present day. She was worried about her personal survival from lynching and hate crime. It seems as though her children have lost sight of the benefits of the new society. They simply see the problems they face as monumental, illustrating the relativity of the plight of society.

Racism 4: The family worries about Mama's decision to move the location of their new home. They will move to Clybourne Park, a white neighborhood. The family has hesitations about moving to an all white neighborhood, allowing the separation between the two races to persist.

Racism 5: Bennie teases Ruth and Walter about their old-fashioned dancing. However, she adds in the idea of "old-fashioned Negro" dancing. This word choice perpetuates the racial distinctions and separations. Within both races, people seem to label themselves by their color.

Racism 6: Karl Lindner overtly states the racism present in Clybourne Park. While he initially sugar coats his words, he eventually blurts out to the Youngers that they are not wanted in the white neighborhood because of the color of their skin.

Racism 7: Asagai voices a wise opinion of his African people. He wants to teach them and help them become educated men and women. He does not want the color line or racial distinctions to change their opportunities. However, Asagai never refers to his people as "Negroes" or "blacks." Instead, he always refers to them as Africans and villagers, erasing the color line and placing a national one in its place: a line of less hatred.

Racism 8: Walter Lee tells his family that he called Lindner back to beg for the money. He will play into the role of the inferior black man to a superior white man. He would have accepted the money offered to him and also accepted that low position. Mama scolds him and is shocked to learn that she has raised such a man with no pride.

Racism 9: When Lindner does in fact arrive at the Younger's home, Walter Lee has digested Mama's words. He tells Lindner that his family has pride and cannot be bought by money or color. It is through these words that Walter emerges a mature man.

## Act 1, Scene 1: Friday morning

Set in Chicago's Southside at some point between World War II and the present, the Younger living room is described in great detail before any action of the play begins. It has been lived in well by many people and is shaped by an atmosphere of love.

*"Weariness has, in fact, won in this room. Everything has been polished, washed, sat on, used, scrubbed too often. All pretenses but living itself have long since vanished from the very atmosphere of this room"* Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 3.

Ruth, a 35-year-old woman, calls to her young boy sleeping on the sofa in the living room. She must have been beautiful in her youth, but is now settled with her husband Walter Lee and his family in the small Chicago house. She calls to her son and husband to get ready, but before any normal, daily conversation can begin, Walter asks about the mail. "Check coming today?" Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 6. This phrase is perpetually repeated as a chorus throughout the rest of the play. Walter and Ruth continue bickering over the morning paper and breakfast.

Topic Tracking: Money 1

Their son Travis is taking time in the bathroom getting ready in the morning, causing Ruth to be late for work and causing another argument between Walter Lee and Ruth over his late night chattering in the living room. Because they are poor, Travis must sleep on the couch, and consequently, is kept awake by Walter Lee's acquaintances discussing current events and poker all night in the same room, much to Ruth's dismay.

Topic Tracking: Money 2

Walter Lee puts down his wife, as Travis is ready to go to school. He remembers that the day is Friday and that the check should be coming in the mail the next day. He also reminds his parents that he must bring fifty cents to school. Ruth tells him that they have no money and that he should not ask his grandmamma for it.

As Travis leaves on errands for Ruth and for school, the two share a special mother-son moment. They enact the same routine each morning, it seems, and as Ruth kisses him goodbye, she says, "Now - whose little old angry man are you?" Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 11. They mimic one another and Walter Lee enters. Travis wants to work at the grocery store after school bagging food so that he can make money. Walter Lee playfully gives him the fifty cents he needs plus fifty more for fun, obviously taking the upper hand on Ruth's downright denial.

Topic Tracking: Family 1

Walter attempts to explain to Ruth about the necessity for a woman to back up her man. He also complains that Ruth listens only to his mama, instead of himself or his sister

Beneatha. Walter tells Ruth about his proposition to make a lot of money with his friends, Willy and Bobo.

*"Yeah. You see, this little liquor store we got in mind cost seventy-five thousand and we figured the initial investment on the place be 'bout thirty thousand, see. That be ten thousand each... Baby, don't nothing happen for you in this world 'less you pay somebody off!"* Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 14-15.

Topic Tracking: Money 3

Ruth is reluctant to buy into Walter Lee's ideas and tells him to eat his eggs. Walter argues, saying he doesn't want to eat any more. Walter Lee looks at his life and thinks of nothing but failure. He attributes his poor lifestyle to his color and his nonsupportive wife. Ruth tells him that his current status has less to do with his color than with his ambition, or lack thereof. "We one group of men tied to a race of women with small minds" Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 17.

Topic Tracking: Family 2

Walter Lee's 20-year-old sister, Beneatha (called Bennie) walks into the living room, exhausted from lack of sleep, and waiting to use the bathroom. Ruth and Walter question her with pride as to which medical school she plans to attend. However, as soon as the check is mentioned, arguments reenter the Younger household. Bennie reminds Walter Lee that the check belongs to Mama, despite Walter Lee's frustration that it may be used to help Bennie through school. He thinks that she should give something back to the family. Bennie and Walter Lee bicker as the sibling rivalry crescendos. Bennie continues to tell him that she doesn't care about the money and that it belongs to Mama, while Walter Lee insists that Bennie is selfish and shouldn't try to become something so great. Walter Lee storms out of the house to go to work.

Topic Tracking: Family 3

Mama enters the living room with regal steps. She is *"a woman who has adjusted to many things in life and overcome many more, her face is full of strength. She has, we can see, wit and faith of a kind that keep her eyes lit and full of interest and expectancy. She is, in a word, a beautiful woman. Her bearing is perhaps most like the noble bearing of the women of the Hereros of Southwest Africa - rather as if she imagines that as she walks she still bears a basket or a vessel upon her head"* Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 22.

Lena (who is called Mama throughout the play) discusses Travis's upbringing with Ruth and Bennie, whom she believes to be too thin. Every word out of her mouth sounds like it's coming from the protective, loving matriarch, who cares about her argumentative struggling family. Mama can tell that her children have been doing nothing but fighting about money and is angry, because she doesn't like money destroying a family's happiness. She thinks it is not Christian to do so.

Topic Tracking: Money 4

Ruth tries to convince Mama that Walter Lee needs the money from the check to invest in a liquor store. "Mama, something is happening between Walter and me. I don't know what it is - but he needs something - something I can't give him any more. He needs this chance, Lena" Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 25. Mama is still upset that money is causing such strife around the house, but refuses to give any money or blessings to anything supporting alcohol.

Ruth tells Mama that she must rush to work. Mama tells her to stay in because she looks ill, however, Ruth reminds her that she needs to make money, despite her weaknesses. Ruth also attempts to convince Mama that the check coming is her money and that she should do something unique with it, like travel to Europe like white women. She tells Ruth that she may put some of the money away for Beneatha's schooling, or rather a down payment on a new home for everyone, where Travis can grow up more comfortably and they can all share together. Mama gets lost in thought while thinking of her late husband, Big Walter, and the dreams they used to have years ago when they moved into the house in which everyone still lives. She remembers how hard he worked and how much he loved his children. He was never the same after Lena lost their first child, Claude. Mama compares Walter Lee to Big Walter and remembers:

*"Big Walter used to say, he'd get right wet in the eyes sometimes, lean his head back with the water standing in his eyes and say, 'Seem like God didn't see fit to give the black man nothing but dreams - but He did give us children to make them dreams seem worth while'"* Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 29.

#### Topic Tracking: Family 4

Beneatha enters the room, enraged that the woman above has been vacuuming all morning, making a raucous. Bennie bickers with both Ruth and Mama about her life, her choices to change her interests and forms of personal self-expression, and the men in her life. She divulges information that she plans to learn guitar and that she doesn't truly like the boy she is dating, George Murchison, because he is rich and pompous. Ruth doesn't understand why Bennie puts down someone with money, because money is obviously the center of their problems and world. Bennie responds to these claims with anger. She insults her brother Walter Lee and Ruth in front of the family and claims that she would not marry George Murchison to save her own family. "The Murchisons are honest-to-God-real-live-rich-colored people, and the only people in the world who are more snobbish than rich white people are rich colored people. I thought everybody knew that" Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 34. Bennie insists upon her becoming a doctor on her own and living as an independent woman, shocking both Ruth and Mama. Mama is appalled that Bennie continues to take God's name in vain. Bennie yells at Mama for her views on religion, and states that she doesn't believe there is a God. She believes that people make the changes in the world. As soon as she utters these words, Mama walks over to her and slaps her across the face. She tells her to repeat the words, "In my mother's house there is still God" Act 1, Scene 1, pg. 37. Bennie thinks that Mama is tyrannical and leaves.

#### Topic Tracking: Racism 1

Ruth and Lena discuss the changes in time and the changes in her relationship with her children, Walter and Beneatha. She worries that Walter is obsessed with money and Bennie with things she cannot understand in any fashion. Ruth tries to comfort her, by telling her that she raised two strong willed children because she is strong willed. As Mama is looking at an old plant and picturing in her head the garden she always desired, Ruth faints into a chair.

## Act 1, Scene 2: The following morning.

The entire Younger family, save Ruth and Walter, is busy cleaning the house, moving furniture out of place and listening to blues on the radio. Travis asks where his mother is and is allowed to wait outside for the mailman after he finishes his chores. Mama tells him that Ruth went on a little personal errand.

Walter Lee enters and calls Willy Harris on the phone, who is waiting for the check. Beneatha asks Mama about Ruth's whereabouts, to which she responds that she is at the doctor. Walter Lee is oblivious to this discussion, as he is only concerned with money. Bennie and Mama exchange glances about what they believe to be wrong with Ruth. "Now I ain't saying what I think. But I ain't never been wrong 'bout a woman neither" Act 1, Scene 2, pg. 41.

Topic Tracking: Family 5

Bennie answers the phone and, after much dissuasion, invites her male friend, Joseph Asagai over to the house, much to Mama's dismay. Asagai is a student that Bennie met on campus who is also a native African. This unusual patriotism confuses the Younger family and Mama admits that she has never before met an African. Their ignorance, given the fact that they are all African-Americans (before the politically correct terminology became standard), infuriates Bennie, and she asks her mother why she always gives money to the church to save people from 'heathenism.' The Younger family is a family of good Christian beliefs and Bennie's radicalism is difficult to accept.

Topic Tracking: Racism 2

Ruth enters the room and tells everyone that she is in fact pregnant - two months along. Beneatha is concerned that there is no place for the new baby to live and asks if she planned the child. Mama is appalled by such a question and asks if everyone's health is satisfactory. Ruth tells her that her doctor said everything was fine. Mama is shocked even further to learn that Ruth's doctor is a woman. Ruth almost collapses and Mama comforts her and helps her to lie down. The doorbell rings and it is Asagai.

Beneatha welcomes Asagai into the house in traditional African language and custom. He is concerned about her and her family looking so morose. They dispel their feelings about becoming serious with each other and then Asagai gives Bennie presents: an authentic African robe and records. He drapes it over her, telling her that she is more beautiful in her natural state, than with her mutilated Americanized Negro hair. He tells her in jest that, "Assimilationism is so popular in your country" Act 1, Scene 2, pg. 48. He reminds Bennie that she introduced herself to him so that she could find her identity, her African roots. Asagai reminds her of his affections toward her, once again, and she worries about becoming just his experience in America and nothing special. Mama enters and asks Asagai about his culture, using Beneatha's words. He talks about Nigeria and leaves the house, after calling Bennie by the pet African name of Alayoi.



## Topic Tracking: Family 6

Mama leaves the living room after complimenting Asagai on his good looks. Beneatha looks at the Nigerian robes and feigns the role of a Nigerian woman in front of the mirror as Travis walks in and makes fun of her. Mama asks Travis to go next door and ask their neighbor, Miss Johnson, for some kitchen cleaner. Beneatha puts on her robes and plans to leave, telling everyone she plans to be Queen of the Nile. Ruth enters, claiming that she does not need to lie down. Ruth reminds Lena that the mailman will come at the same time that he does each morning and not to worry.

Travis returns with a small amount of cleanser. As Mama complains that her neighbor is stingy, the doorbell rings. Initially everyone remains still until Travis runs outside to get the envelope. He returns and holds it in the air for everyone to see. Once opened, Lena asks Travis to count the zeros to make sure there are enough. Mama has difficulty dealing with ten thousand dollars as a replacement for her husband. As Travis tells his grandma that she is rich, Mama claims that she would just give the money away, were it not for her family.

## Topic Tracking: Money 5

In an effort to change the subject, Mama asks Ruth where she went that day, to which she responds - the doctor. Walter enters, obsessed with the money, and is immediately turned down by Ruth. She doesn't want her money going to liquor stores. An enormous fight erupts among the three as he storms out. Walter Lee claims that nobody ever listens to him, while Mama can't understand why he always leaves and should be happy with what he has. She says that it's dangerous "When a man goes outside his home to look for peace" Act 1, Scene 2, pg. 60. The mother and son continue to fight over the money and misunderstanding between the them. Walter tries to explain to her about wanting a better life and that opening doors for white people and driving them around is not a good life. Mama rebuts with her own feelings on the times when things were not always about money.

*"Something has changed. You something new, boy. In my time we was worried about not being lynched and getting to the North if we could and how to stay alive and still have a pinch of dignity too...Now here come you and Beneatha - talking 'bout things we ain't never even thought about hardly, me and your daddy. You ain't satisfied or proud of nothing we done. I mean that you had a home; that we kept you out of trouble till you was grown; that you don't have to ride to work on the back of nobody's streetcar - You my children - but how different we done become."* Act 1, Scene 2, pg. 62

## Topic Tracking: Racism 3

As they continue to fight, Mama reveals that Ruth is pregnant and thinking of aborting the fetus because of lack of money and lack of love from her husband. Walter cannot fathom that his wife would do such a crazy deed, but as soon as he says so, Ruth appears, confirming Lena's words. She urges him to tell Ruth that he is an honorable man who gives children life, not a man who destroys life. She is shocked when Walter



Lee is silent; she cannot believe Walter Lee to be her own flesh and blood after such actions and exits mortified.

Topic Tracking: Family 7

## Act 2, Scene 1: Later, the same day

Ruth is ironing as Beneatha walks into the living room fully clothed in the Nigerian robes from Asagai. She performs a showy African dance so-called welcoming the men back to the village, to Ruth's comic dismay. Walter Lee enters drunk during her performance, making snide remarks on her attempts to find her roots. Bennie encourages Walter's African dance as he jumps on the kitchen table and tears off his shirt, as they believe native Africans to do, pretending to be a chief. Bennie and Walter play-act in a repetitive chant, as Ruth embarrassingly answers the door to let in George Murchison. George plans to take Bennie to the theater and pejoratively puts down her attire. She insults him by saying that he is not proud of his natural heritage, while he claims she looks like an eccentric. She cries that she hates assimilationist Negroes. George's response to Bennie's accusation is derogatory: "Oh, it's just a college girl's way of calling people Uncle Toms - but that isn't what it means at all" Act 2, Scene 1, pg. 72. Bennie rebuts his comment with a massive monologue about her proud heritage and the African heritage being submerged by an oppressive culture, namely America. The two bicker intellectually for a few moments, until Bennie storms out to get ready for the theater.

Ruth invites George to sit down, and attempts to appear cultured and civilized for this wealthy Negro. George boasts of his travels to New York and his experiences with high culture as Walter walks in putting down the "east," saying that New York is no better than Chicago. Walter lies to George about having been to New York and then puts down George and Bennie's college style of clothing. Becoming sober, he then tries to talk business with George, hoping to get some help with his ideas of investing. Ruth is embarrassed during this entire conversation, for Walter is making a fool of himself lying and putting down colored college boys.

Topic Tracking: Money 6

*"I see you all the time - with the books tucked under your arms - going to your (British A - a mimic) 'clahsses.' And for what! What the hell you learning over there? Filling up your heads - (Counting off on his fingers) - with the sociology and the psychology - but they teaching you how to be a man? How to take over and run the world? They teaching you how to run a rubber plantation or a steel mill? Naw - just to talk proper and read books and wear white shoes..."* Act 2, Scene 1, pg. 76.

Ruth reprimands him and questions why he feels so alone. Walter insists perpetually on stating that he is alone and not even his wife or mother is on his side, working for him to improve his situation and position in life. Bennie enters in cocktail attire and leaves with George, who subtly insultingly calls Walter 'Prometheus.' Walter and Ruth are left to bicker and insult one another. Walter defends his association with Willy Harris and claims that nobody supports him, while Ruth is in shock that her marriage has plummeted so far. She thinks she'll continue with the abortion that she had started.

Walter and Ruth start to speak softly and lovingly to one another when Mama comes home and enters the living room. Walter immediately forgets his wife to his side and

jumps up to ask Mama about her afternoon. He hopes she did nothing stupid with the insurance money, because again, he is solely concerned about getting it for himself. Travis comes home late after Mama. Mama tells them that she bought a house for them, namely Travis for when he grows up, with the money. Ruth is thrilled, yet Walter is quiet and hurt. Mama tells them that they move on the first of the month to the neighborhood of Clybourne Park. Ruth and Walter are shocked to learn of the location, for it houses no colored people. Ruth eventually accepts the news and flails her arms around saying good riddance to the old house. After she rejoiced for the new home with lots of sunlight, she leaves with Travis.

Topic Tracking: Racism 4

Mama speaks slowly to Walter Lee about her fears about the family falling apart and moving backwards instead of forwards. This is the reason she bought the house and she wants him to understand her actions and emotions. Walter cannot fathom her thoughts and instead voices his bitterness:

*"What you need me to say you done right for? You the head of this family. You run our lives like you want to. It was your money and you did what you wanted with it. So what you need for me to say it was all right for? So you butchered up a dream of mine - you - who always talking 'bout your children's dreams..."* Act 2, Scene 1, pg. 87.

Topic Tracking: Family 8

He leaves Mama alone in the room.

## Act 2, Scene 2: Friday night. A few weeks later.

Boxes are strewn all over the living room, as the Younger family prepares to move. George and Beneatha walk inside after what seems like a lovely date. They are sitting on the sofa and George attempts to kiss Beneatha. She pulls away and they proceed to argue over the usefulness of education. Bennie wants to talk with George, but he wants nothing more than physical contact and believes that college is only good for making grades and getting a degree. Bennie disagrees because she craves thoughts and education. George leaves as Mama enters.

Mama asks Bennie why she did not have a good time on her date, and Bennie simply states that George is a fool. Mama understands Bennie and agrees with her, telling her not to waste her time. Bennie is appreciative of her mother for listening and understanding her this once.

Ruth walks in and tells Lena not to bother herself with all the packing. The phone rings and Ruth answers it. It is Mrs. Arnold, the wife of Walter Lee's boss. He has not been to work in three days and is ready to be fired. Ruth covers for him by saying that he is sick, however, he is standing healthy in the room. Walter tells the women about all of his explorative experiences in Chicago over the past few days. During his long speech about the glory of the Southside, Ruth quietly slips out of the room. Mama seems to have come to peace about her problems with Walter, believing herself to be a source. She tells Walter that she put \$3500 of the check as a down payment for the house, and therefore has \$6500 left. She gives him the money, telling him to put \$3000 in an account for Beneatha's medical school and that he should take the rest for himself.

Topic Tracking: Money 7

*"And from now on any penny that come out of it or that go in it is for you to look after. For you to decide. It ain't much, but it's all I got in the world and I'm putting in your hands. I'm telling you to be head of this family from now on like you supposed to be" Act 2, Scene 2, pg. 94.*

Walter is surprised that Mama trusts him like that. She tells him that she never stopped trusting him, just like she never stopped loving him. She exits, leaving Walter to loudly throw the entire bed up in the air, leaving everything on the floor. He takes the money and leaves quickly.

## Act 2, Scene 3: Saturday, moving day, one week later.

Ruth is packing and singing before the lights come up on stage. Bennie enters the living room to help and Ruth shows her the new curtains she bought for the new house. She tells Bennie to write a sign on a box that has Mama's fragile china on it. The wording is large and Ruth jokes that both Bennie and her brother, Walter's philosophy on life is the same: things have more emphasis when they are bigger. Ruth plans to take a bath when she first gets into the new house. Ruth is giddy and tells Bennie about how she and Walter were happy and went to the movies last night holding hands.

Walter walks in with a large smile on his face and a box. He takes the record player out of the box, plugs it in, and starts to dance with Ruth to the music. Bennie calls them old-fashioned Negroes, however, today nothing bothers Walter. He teases Bennie about being too proactive and intense and continues to dance with his loving wife. "Girl, I do believe you are the first person in the history of the entire human race to successfully brainwash yourself" Act 2, Scene 3, pg. 98.

Topic Tracking: Racism 5

In the middle of the joyful dancing, the doorbell rings. Bennie answers it and is taken aback by the middle aged white man standing before her looking for Mrs. Lena Younger. Walter takes control as the man of the house and invites the man, Mr. Karl Lindner, to sit down. He is a representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association and has come to the Younger family to discuss their upcoming move into his neighborhood. Beneatha immediately picks up on his true motives to ask them not to move; however, Ruth and Walter remain naïve to his subtle actions, continuing to offer him refreshments and warmth. Lindner claims that problems between colored and white people exist simply because nobody sits down and talks to each other. In a roundabout, verbose method, Lindner offers the Younger family money so that they will not move into Clybourne Park. Ruth, Walter, and Bennie are appalled by Mr. Lindner's words and actions and force him to leave the house immediately without coming to an agreement. Lindner opens and says:

*"Well - I don't understand why you people are reacting this way. What do you think you are going to gain by moving into a neighborhood where you just aren't wanted and where some elements - well - people can get awful worked up when they feel that their whole way of life and everything they've ever worked for is threatened...You just can't force people to change their hearts, son"* Act 2, Scene 3, pg. 105-6.

Topic Tracking: Money 8

Topic Tracking: Racism 6

Mr. Lindner places his card on the table and leaves, just in time for Mama and Travis to return. Walter and Bennie facetiously tell Mama about the welcoming committee. After



Mama inquires if they were threatened, Bennie tells her things have changed since her time. "He talked Brotherhood. He said everybody ought to learn how to sit down and hate each other with good Christian fellowship" Act 2, Scene 3, pg. 107.

Mama continues to talk of moving to the new house with her plant. Walter hugs her and starts to sing gospel songs in her ear. He plans to give her the gift box that is wrapped from the family. Ruth, Walter and Bennie have bought mama gardening tools for her new garden, while Travis has bought her a ridiculously large gardening hat on his own. She protects his feelings by showing her pleasure with the hat, while everyone else laughs. Mama is happy, for she has never before received a present without a holiday.

Everyone continues to pack when the doorbell rings, hoping that it is not the moving men. Walter Lee answers it secretly and rushes to get the money. He invites the small man inside and introduces him as Bobo to his family, wondering where Willy is. Ruth is suspicious and worried. Walter Lee starts asking about the investments in Springfield; however, Bobo has difficulty telling Walter what truly happened. He never got to invest the money because Willy took off with all of their money. Walter loses control, screams and cries, that that money was made of his father's flesh. Everyone enters the room and sees the spectacle, understanding what happened. Walter tells Mama that he lost all \$6500 because he never went to the bank. Mama is furious and in shock thinking of her dead husband:

*"I seen...him...night after night...come in...and look at that rug...and then look at me...the red showing in his eyes...the veins moving in his head...I seen him grow thin and old before he was forty...working and working and working like somebody's old horse...killing himself...and you - you give it all away in a day..."* Act 2, Scene 3, pg. 117.

Topic Tracking: Money 9

Topic Tracking: Family 9

Mama begins to ask for strength as she faints before Beneatha.

## Act 3: An hour later

The ominous mood lingers in the living room as Walter lies on his back staring at the ceiling and Beneatha sits at the table. Asagai rings the doorbell, coming over to help the Youngers pack. He loves moving and tells Bennie it makes him think of Africa. Before he becomes more excited, Bennie solemnly tells Asagai that Walter gave the money away to a man even Travis would not have trusted. She tells him a story about a young boy named Rufus who fell on his face and was fixed up by doctors. Since then, she wanted to become a doctor so that she could cure - become close to the truth. She no longer feels that anymore. Asagai pleads with her to see the truth and the light after she questions him on the name of Independence for the black people.

*"I live the answer! (pause) In my village at home it is the exceptional man who can even read a newspaper...or who ever sees a book at all. I will go home and much of what I will have to say will seem strange to the people of my village...But I will teach and work and things will happen, slowly and swiftly. At times it will seem that nothing changes at all...and then again...the sudden dramatic events which make history leap into the future. And then quiet again. Retrogression even. Guns, murder, revolution. And I even will have moments when I wonder if the quiet was not better than all that death and hatred. But I will look about my village at the illiteracy and disease and ignorance and I will not wonder long. And perhaps...perhaps I will be great man...I mean perhaps I will hold on to the substance of truth and find my way always with the right course..." Act 3, pg. 124.*

Topic Tracking: Racism 7

Beneatha cuts him off, bitterly calling him a martyr, but truly understands everything he says. Asagai then asks her to come home with him - to Africa. He plays the role of the African prince to her, once more, sweeping her up in romantic passion. She is confused and needs time to digest all of the events of the day. Asagai leaves her to think and lets himself out with poetic words flowing from his mouth.

Topic Tracking: Family 10

Bennie immediately jumps on Walter for being a failure and an idiot. Walter storms out of the house, slamming the door. Ruth enters, curious about the noise, hoping Bennie didn't say anything bad to him. Mama enters, forlorn and saddened, walks to her plant and replaces it on the windowsill. She feigns cheerfulness and tells everyone to start unpacking. Ruth tries to convince her to still move, that she will work all day every day so that they can afford the new place. Mama knows that they cannot move. She sees things clearly now and says, "Sometimes you just got to know when to give up some things...and hold on to what you got" Act 3, pg. 130.

Walter enters, exhausted, and tells everyone that he called the man to come over. He plans to put on a show for Mr. Lindner and to take the money that he offered earlier. He claims that life is divided into two groups: the takers and the 'taken,' and he plans to be

a taker. People like Willy Harris are takers and now, he wants to take money, as well, because he deserves all the fine things in life, just as much as white people. Bennie and Ruth and Mama are disgusted by his speech. Mama tells him that they are not so poor that they need to be paid to be told they are not fit to live.

Topic Tracking: Money 10

Mama tells him that his insides are rotting and that he is sinking too low. An enraged Walter continues on his rampage to get back the money he lost, if even by playing the role of the inferior Negro to a white man. While on his knees, he breaks down crying and leaves. Bennie calls Walter a rat and claims that he is not her brother. Mama is appalled at Bennie's comments and tells her that she is no better than Walter. She and Daddy taught her to love. "There is always something left to love. And if you ain't learned that, you ain't learned nothing" Act 3, pg. 135. She tells her that you must love your family especially when they are at their lowest, because that is when they are the most needy.

Topic Tracking: Family 11

Topic Tracking: Racism 8

Travis explodes into the room stating that the moving men are downstairs at the same moment as Mr. Lindner enters the living room. Mama warns Walter not to become like Willy Harris and throw his proud generations away as he talks to Lindner. Walter tells Mr. Lindner about his proud family and his father. He informs him that they are a plain family, but a proud family who will still move into Clybourne Park. Mr. Lindner leaves defeated.

Topic Tracking: Racism 9

Ruth screams to the family to move out of the house quickly because the movers are here. Mama is silently beaming with pride for her son, fixes everyone up quickly, and runs to get her plant. As the moving men take all the furniture out of the house, Bennie tells Mama that Asagai proposed marriage to her that day and asked her to move to Africa and practice medicine there. Mama tells her she's too young and Walter tells her he thinks she should marry George Murchison, whom she despises. The two siblings bicker as they walk out the house. Mama and Ruth share a moment of happiness as they see their family united again. Mama tells Ruth, "He finally came into his manhood today, didn't he? Kind of like a rainbow after the rain..." Act 3, pg. 141. Ruth nods and leaves. Mama looks at her old house one last time before joining the family outside.

Topic Tracking: Family 12