

## **Contemporary Play Analysis**

### **A Red Eagle Falling**

**Playwright: Lorraine hansberry**

**By: syrus kee**

**THEATRE APPRECIATION M W F at 10.00 am**

**Date: 00/00/0001**

**Note: This is just a guideline; you must use your own knowledge for each explanation for the play.**

## I. Plot

**Introduction:** *A Raisin in the Sun*, written by Lorraine Hansberry and produced on stage in 1959, marks a watershed moment in American theater. On the face of it, *A Raisin in the Sun* was not destined for success. The play takes place in a pivotal time period for race relations in America—after WWII and before 1959.

**Point of Attack:** Ruth telling Travis to wake up.

**Rising action and climax:** The rising action Ruth discovers that she is pregnant. Mama makes a down payment on a house; Mama gives Walter the remaining insurance money. Walter invests the money in the liquor store venture. The climax Bobo tells the younger that Willy has run off with all of Walter's invested insurance money. Asagai makes Beneatha realize that she is not as independent as she thinks.

**Falling action:** The falling action occurs as Walter is contemplating selling his pride for Lindner's money and then deciding not to do so.

**Resolution:**

## II. Characters

There are six characters in this play, five men and a woman. These characters are:

Ruth Younger— the thirsty wife of Walter Lee Younger and the mother of Travis, their ten-year-old son. Ruth acts as peacemaker in most of the explosive family situations. Very lowkey, Ruth

reveals her strongest emotions only when she learns of the possibility of their moving to a better neighborhood.

Travis younger- ten -year-old son of walter and ruth younger. Living in a household with three generations in conflict, travis skillfully plays each adult against the other and is, as result, somewhat “spoiled.” In spite of this, he is a likeable child.

Walter lee- younger in his middle thirties, he is the husband of ruth,father of travis,brother of beneatha, and son of lena(mama) younger. Walter works as a chauffeur and drinks a bit too much at times. When he discovers that his mother will receive a \$10,000 check from his fathers insurance, he becomes obsessed with his dreams of a business venture which will give him financial independence and, in his mind, will make him a more valuable human being.

**Beneatha Younger**-The twentyish sister of Walter Lee and the daughter of Lena Younger. She is a college student planning to go to medical school. The only family member privileged to have

the opportunity for a higher education, she is sometimes a little overbearing in the pride she takes

in being an “intellectual.”

**Lena Younger (Mama)** The mother of Walter Lee and Beneatha, mother-in-law of Ruth, and

grandmother of Travis. Lena's (Mama's) every action is borne out of her abiding love for her

family, her deep religious convictions, and her strong will that is surpassed only by her

compassion. Mama's selfless spirit is shown in her plans to use her \$10,000 insurance check for

the good of her family, part of which includes plans to purchase a house in a middle-class white

neighborhood.

**Joseph Asagai** An African college student from Nigeria, Asagai is one of Beneatha's suitors.

Mannerly, good looking, and personable, he is well liked by all members of the Younger

household.

**George Murchison** Beneatha's other boyfriend, he too is a college student. His wealthy

background alienates him from the poverty of the Youngers. Easily impressed, Ruth is the only

member of the Younger household who naively overlooks George's offensive snobbishness.

**Mrs. Johnson** Brash and abrasive neighbor of the Youngers, she insensitively points out to the

Youngers all the negative repercussions that await them should they decide to move into the

white neighborhood.

**Karl Lindner** A weak and ineffectual middle-aged white man, Lindner is the spokesman for the

white community into which the Youngers plan to move. He has been sent to persuade the

Youngers not to move into the white neighborhood. In fact, he has been authorized by the white

community to offer the Youngers a monetary incentive *not* to move in.

**Bobo** The somewhat dimwitted friend of Walter Lee who, along with another friend, Willy,

plans to invest in Walter Lee's business scheme.

**Two Moving Men** Having no speaking parts, they enter at the end of the play to help the

Youngers move to their new neighborhood.

**Walter Younger** The husband of Lena Younger, father of Walter Lee and Beneatha, and

grandfather of Travis. His death before the action of Act I provides the insurance money that will

change the lives of the Younger family.

**Willy** The unscrupulous "friend" of Walter Lee and Bobo who absconds with all the money for

the prospective business venture. Although the audience never meets him, Willy's character is

assessed through the dialogue of others.

### **III. Setting**

*A Raisin in the Sun* portrays a few weeks in the life of the Youngers, an African-American family

living on the South Side of Chicago in the 1950s.

#### **IV. Given Circumstances**

Mrs. Johnson's news that a black family's house has been bombed foreshadows the objections that the Clybourne Park Improvement Association will raise to the idea of the Youngers moving in; Walter's hints to Travis that he is investing the insurance money foreshadow the disappearance of the money.

#### **V. Conclusion**

In conclusion to the play "A Raisin In The Sun" by Lorraine Hansberry the theme is that a

person's dream is not controlled by money and finances but it is controlled based on what they do

to either better it or worsen it. I also believe this play can relate to a lot of people.