

# Dissapointments in mama and walter lee (a raisin in the sun) essay sample

[Literature](#), [Play](#)



“ Life often builds people up only to let them down. By referring to two characters, show how Hansberry brings out the truth of this statement in the Raisin in the Sun. Which character do you feel deals with disappointment more effectively.”

In the play “ A Raisin in the Sun”, there are two specific characters that are often built up only to be let down, Lena Eggleston Younger and Walter Lee Younger. Deferral seems to be an evolving constant in this family. Before even being introduced to a play, a tone of disappointment is set by the poem “ Harlem”. Something shared in common amongst these two characters are that they both watched the dying of the collective aspirations.

For these two characters, life seems syrupy sweet only to let them down. Together, they both battle disappointments which have been handed down by the previous five generations. Like before generations, everyone in the house is a laborer. This is something that brings self-torture to Walter being a laborer, and Mama, watching both her husband and her son work themselves until the death of them.

Walter base of his disappointments of his dream starts at his son Travis. Whenever speaking about his dream, he mentions his son. On page 120, when Mama claims that Walter stepped into his manhood, he explained to Lindner that he has a son and pulled him closer and that he and his father were laborers all their lives and he wants better for his son.

Walter Lee’s dream is to get out of his social deadlock and be successful. He is a person of such big dreams and aspirations but so limited resources. His

dreams are stated from as early as page 14 in act one, he wants to invest his late father's insurance money on a liquor store with two business partners, Willy Harris and Bobo. Deeply, Walter's dream isn't to be a liquor owner, but he aspires to be the owner of something. Be the first in his family to be the employer rather than the employee. The deepest part of Walter's desire is to provide for Travis. On page 16, he speaks about the fact that he is thirty-five years old; been married for eleven years and still has a boy sleeping in the living room and all he has is stories to tell him about how rich white people are. In his era, many black men dealt with systematic racism and fell into a status quo on their role in society.

The problem with the Younger family is that they don't fall into the status quo of their era. Such as Mama wanting to move to Clybourne Park or Beneatha is studying to be a doctor. Like Beneatha and Mama, Walter doesn't see himself like the average black man working as a laborer all his life, he aspires and dreams big. He is unhappy with his job and desperately seeking to help his current family standing in society. On page 79, act two, scene two, Mama entrusted the insurance money into Walter's hand to carry out his dream. Mama says " I paid thirty-five hundred dollars down on the house. That leaves sixty-five hundred dollars.

Monday morning I want you to take this money and take three thousand dollars and put it in a savings account for Beneatha's medical schooling. The rest you put in a checking account with your name on it. ... I'm telling you to be the head of this family from now on like you supposed to be." For Walter, this is when life seemed to be " syrupy sweet", but only before it lets him

down. On pages 81-82, he explains to Travis in detail his dream as he thinks that it is almost carried out. He tells him that in seven years, when he's seventeen, he'll come to his downtown office. Travis ironically points out the reality that he doesn't work in an office. He tells him that he's about to make a business transaction that will change their lives. That a car will pull up in their driveway, a black Chrysler, and he will buy Ruth a Cadillac convertible to go shopping in.

They will have a gardener by the name of Jefferson who will address him as Mr. Younger. Travis will attend the finest schools across America. And he finishes off by saying that whatever Travis wants to be, he can be it. To just name it, and he'll be handed the world. The scene is ended by the stage direction "(Walter's voice has risen in pitch and hysterical promise, and on the last line he lifts Travis high.)" He tends to embrace the greater possibilities for his child as he ends the scene with great optimism and confidence. The plan was for Walter to give the money to Willy Harris and he and Bobo would go to Springfield to spread some money around so that they can get the liquor license quicker. Bobo explains to him that Willy took off with the money. When he went to the train station, Willy wasn't there, and he tried calling around and going to his house but there was no sign of him.

At this point, Walter's dream went from syrupy sweet to being a letdown. Though Walter Lee experiences a lot of let downs in the play, the character that deals with disappointment most is Mama. She also deals with it more effectively. Mama has watched the men of two generations slave of laborers all their life with such big dreams. Mama definitely deals with the most

disappointments and let downs in the play but she copes with it well and never lets it get her down as Walter. Lena Eggleston Younger, also known as Mama is the matriatical figure in the Younger household. I feel as if Mama deals with the most disappointment in the family because she doesn't only carry a burden of her own, but the weight of the whole family.

Mama's dream is introduced to us on page 26. She firstly states that she wants Beneatha to go to medical school, nothing is going to touch that part, she also dreams of a two story house, with a yard where Travis can play in in the summer time. On that same page, she goes on to say " Hadn't been married but two weeks and wasn't planning on living here no more than a year. We was going to set away, little by little don't you know, and buy a little place out in Morgan Park. We had even picked out the house." The stage direction indicates that in the midst of this, she shook her head at the dissolved dream. With Mama being the head figure of the Younger family, the burdens and disappointments always fell back on her.

She feels the burden of her late husband as a disappointment as shown on page 27 " Honey, Big Walter would come in here some nights back then and slump down on that couch there and just look at the rug, and look at me and look at the rug and then back at me, and I'd know he's down... really down." She goes on to say " I guess that's how come that man finally worked hisself to death like he done." In connection with this, she also lost her baby, Claude, A baby of hers that died because of their poverty.

Along with the disappointment handed to her by Walter Sr., she also carries the burden of her son Walter Jr. Throughout the play, Mama sees her son being torn by labor just like his father, the same veins in his head and the red in his eyes. Mama can be seen as naïve, but she is optimistic. She slowly watches her dreams collapse on top of each other. On page 79, this was a beginning of a dream for both Mama and Walter. Their dream isn't necessarily to open a liquor store but they hope that it would get them to a point to wear their dreams can come into reality.

With the loss of the money, it killed three dreams for Mama: The first being her dream for Beneatha to go to medical school as she earlier stated on page 26. The second dream being deferred is Mama's dream of maintaining upward social mobility. With Walter giving away the money, he ruined all chances she finally had to getting anywhere in society. Lastly, Mama lost the dream of her son becoming a man. Though Mama was the most educated, she was a woman of pride and she knew who she was. On page 119, Walter told Mama that he was calling Lindner and he was going to allow him to buy the house back as they don't want any blacks in their community. On page 121, two of these dreams materialized after all. He told Mr. Lindner that they are a people of pride and honour, also that his father worked hard enough to own this house brick by brick. The other dream that became reality was their upward social mobility.

The Youngers were going to be the only blacks to be living in Clybourne Park and they are finally moving out what Ruth calls the "rat trap". Though Mama deals with the most disappointments in the play, she copes with it the best.

On page 100 when Walter finds out that his investment was stolen, he didn't take on his Prometheus allusion but he went into a great depression. He lost himself and almost sold the house. Rather than this, through all the grand letdowns that Mama have been through, she never got down. She stayed committed to God and just kept on going. In conclusion, deferral seems to be an ongoing constant in the Younger family as it has been passed down throughout five generations.

Characters Walter Lee Younger and Lena Eggleston Younger (Mama) are two characters that have faced the most dissatisfaction throughout the novel. Though they have both been through a lot, Mama undergoes the most. She takes on the disappointment of several generations of Youngers as she is the head matriatical figure in the play "A Raisin in the Sun".