

# A Raisin in the Sun themes

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



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Lorraine Hansberry is an African American Playwright and writer who was born in Chicago, Illinois 1930. She was born to an African American family who at this time were perceived as better off than others in the African American community. Hansberry's father was an educated Real Estate broker.

He used his education and his achievements as a platform to uplift and speak out for the Black community who at this time, especially in the South, were being mistreated. Despite Hansberry's father's educational and academic accomplishments, he was still mistreated by society. In *A Raisin in the Sun*, Hansberry reflects on events that actually took place in her life, things she witnessed her father and family experience. In the play, a family gains financial stability and decides to move into a more suburban community. They receive opposition from the community when a community representative personally offers the family more money than they intend to pay for the house in exchange for not moving there. This compares to Hansberry's personal experience where her father moved her family into a predominantly white community and her family was rejected and threatened because of their race.

One can say that Hansberry's motivation for her plays come from her personal experiences of being a black sheep. Hansberry could compare herself to a black sheep due to the objectivity she faced because of the color of her skin and later on her sexuality. *A Raisin in the Sun* gives a perspective of the Black experience in the 1950's. The Black experience in the 1950's reflects the freedom struggle of the civil rights movement. These

experiences developed the fear of failure despite achievement, yearning for wealth and the pursuing of the American Dream.

The fear of failure despite achievement is shown in the play through the character, Walter. Throughout the play we see Walter battle himself because of his inability to properly support his family. He sees his dad work so hard all his life and not get to see his dreams fulfill, leaving behind his family. I believe although Walter speaks about doing better he never made an initiative because of his fear of failure despite. He feared that even if he worked just as hard as his father he too would not see the fruits of his labor. He would want his hard work to be for something, not to go in vain. I believe Hansberry's used this character to reflect the effects of the law on the perseverance of African American men in the 1950's. Hansberry's father was an educated African American. However, even at the peak of his achievements he was not granted the same freedoms as others in society because of the color of his skin. He put in a lot of work in order to advance himself despite opposition from the system but still did not get what he deserved. I believe this is the fear that Walter had in the play. Walter feared that he would put his blood, sweat and tears to advance himself only to not be given the equal opportunity as others.

Beneatha also experienced this fear of failure despite achievement in the play. Her goals were to beat the odds of going to medical school and become a female doctor. She also desires to be connected to her heritage by discovering her roots. Later on in the play, Beneatha considers marrying her African classmate and moving to Nigeria with him. In the end Beneatha

decides that she no longer wants to become a doctor anymore. She concluded that humans are selfish and humanity cannot be fixed. I believe that Beneatha gave up on her dreams because she was afraid. Afraid that she would not get too far or accomplish everything that she wanted to accomplish. Beneatha was afraid that despite her achievement she would still fail.

Money is the root of all evil. Money is a very important part in the play. The play depicts a poor family living in a small apartment in Chicago. The Mom, her two kids, her daughter in law and her grandchild. Money became a necessity to get them out of their current situation. Once the family received the insurance check from the father's death it formed a wedge in the family. They began to debate on who deserved the rights to use the money, who needed the money. Money was the answer to all of the conflict in the play likewise it caused more conflict. Mama worried about the families' future and wellbeing. She becomes willing to sacrifice anything for her children's future. She took on this responsibility when Mr. Younger passed away. Mama cared more about her family's future than the money. However, one can argue that the catalyst for her family's success is money, wealth.

Walter was unhappy having to squash his family into his mother's small apartment having his son sleep on the couch. He was not satisfied with his life. He wanted to do better for his wife and his son. Walter struggled with his manhood due to his inability of being the breadwinner in the household. When his wife announces her pregnancy and her consideration of abortion he does nothing. He goes to the bar. Walter was not in a position financial to

have a baby neither to finance aborting it. Money played a vital role in Beneatha's dreams. She needed money to pursue her dreams of becoming a doctor. Although her family could not afford to, they pushed Beneatha and supported her financially in order for her to reach her dreams. Collectively, they all needed money for their future happiness, some more than others, in pursuit of achieving their American Dream.