

# [The homecoming](https://assignbuster.com/the-homecoming/)

The HomecomingQ1) Would you agree that ruth is the most important character in the play. OutlineIn the play, the various male characters try to establish their importance and postion in the household through violence and aggression. However, when Ruth, the only woman in the play, enters, she appears to defeat the mens power, not with violence but by her sexuality and apparent intelligence through which she takes control of the house and establishes herself as one of the most important and powerful characters in the play.

Ruth gradually takes power from every man in the house, first she takes control from teddy by constantly ignoring his requests to ??? go to bed???, thereby breaking the conventional image of a submissive housewife and refusing his will by holding her ground. Ruths suggested intelligence becomes a vehicle for her sexual power that distracts attention from Teddy. Ruths actions have defeated her husband as he makes no attempt to stop what she is doing. Initially Max, who considers himself as ??? the head of the household??? demands that Teddy and Ruth leave his house, yet by the end of the play, he is sobbing and yearning for attention from Ruth. The insults and derogatory terms used within the family are not so much an element of power as a way of life. As there is no real mother figure within the household, the men have lapsed into a way of life in which they can show no affection to each other. Instead they insult each other in ways usually reserved for women: “ bitch” and “ slag”. A show of affection or even respect can result in argument, “ Stop calling me Dad”, Max complains.

The men appear to hold power through unity. Although they fight, they work together to devise plans for establishing Ruth as a prostitute. By clubbing together in this way, the men think that they have found a way to control Ruth how they like. At this point however, they do not expect to be overpowered once again by Ruth. Her sexual dominance and quick wits are the power that ensures her demands of a three roomed flat and a personal maid. Even Lenny who hopes to challenge ruth and exert his importance through recounting stories of his brutality is defeated. Ruth has been made aware of Lennys capacity to be brutal, but she then openly challenges him after another story of violence.

Lennys report of how he assaulted an old lady becomes all the more horrific as it is surrounded by ordinary events. He gives the old lady “ A short arm jab to the belly”, then he “ jumped on a bus outside”. The subject is then abruptly changed as Lenny offers to move the ashtray. His violent nature has again been the most important element of power is defeating his primary victim. Yet after these two stories, Ruth still has the power to challenge Lennys suggestions.

Her power is not violence, but another form of physical power. She overpowers Lenny through her sexuality and her quiet self-assured nature saying, “ If you take the glass …

Ill take you”. Ruth takes control of Max and Lenny through her sexuality but she conquers joey by providing him with a maternal figure who has been missing in his life. This is illustrated when states that ??? you can be happy.

.. without going any hog.??? Her empowerment of joey is evident through his devotion, he is outraged by the thought of sharing her and angrily exclaims ??? Ill kill the next man who gets the gravy??? The position that the late mother, Jessie, once held is now filled by Ruth. As with Jessie, Ruth is considered in both an abusive and an affectionate way. Ruth unites the family and Max remarks that “ Its a long time since the whole family was together”. Ruth provides the centre that has been missing in the family and the men focus around her. As Ruth is able to provide both emotional and sexual care, she is desired by all the men.

Her manipulative power and insight into the required family structure enable her to take control of the family. Since Jessie died, the rest of the family have been headed by Max as the father figure, but Lenny only describes the set up as a “ unit”, not as a family. In addition to that, while the retrospective stories and angle taken on the men reveal much about them and their background, little is revealed for certain about Ruth.

She unveils certain aspects of her life through euphemisms such as being “ a photographic model for the body”. Ruth holds the power of mystery and intrigue over the men. Ruths air of mystery is an element of what allows her to control the men. As she is both a mother and a whore, she satisfies the fantasy that is apparently desired by Lenny as he questions his father about the night he was conceived.

It is Lennys view that many people his age think about “ the night they were made in the image of those two people at it “. Ruths position as a mother is shown through her cooking abilities and the need for attention from her “ children”, the men. Her position at the head of the family makes her powerful, but Ruth does not gain her position through violence. In contrast, her movements are more subtle and unpredictable. Ruth undermines the strength of the group through her sexuality and alert mind which both serve to overpower the rough plans and ideas of the men. Her manner of questioning their actions and what they tell her undermine their long held confidence in what they do as being right.

While the men of the family believe violence to be the way in which to hold power and gain respect, this changes when Ruth enters their lives. Her exertion of sexual power overpowers them as they have been deprived of a central mother and sexual figure since Jessie died. It is Ruths cunning, rather than her conventional intelligence that enables her to work her own requirements into the deal she makes with the family. Ultimately, violence is a useful source for bragging, but is easily overpowered by Ruths frank sexual nature and her position as a central mother and whore figure.

Ruth is important as she bring about matriachy in a patriachal household. This is suggested in the last scene when Max the ??? head of the household??? is begging for a ??? kiss??? and Joey the strongest has his head on her lap. It is Ruths position as a “ desired sexual object” that allows Ruth to triumph and therefore makes her one of the most important characters in the play.