



PLAYWRIGHT AND  
WRITER

# Lorraine Hansberry

Hansberry was the first black female author to have a play performed on Broadway. Her best known work, the play *A Raisin in the Sun*, highlights the lives of Black Americans living under racial segregation in Chicago.







## Lorraine Hansberry

"January 19, 1959

Dear Mother,

Well here we are. I am sitting alone in a nice hotel room in New Haven, Conn. Downstairs, next door in the Shubert Theatre, technicians are putting the finishing touches on a living room that is supposed to be a Chicago living room. Wednesday the curtain goes up at 8 p.m. The next day New Haven papers will say what they think about our efforts. A great deal of money has been spent and a lot of people have done some hard, hard work, and it may be the beginning of many different careers. The actors are very good and the director is a very talented man—so if it is a poor show I won't be able to blame a soul but your youngest daughter..."

# Walter Lee Younger



The protagonist of the play. Walter is a dreamer. He wants to be rich and devises plans to acquire wealth with his friends, particularly Willy Harris. When the play opens, he wants to invest his father's insurance money in a new liquor store venture.



# Lena Younger (Mama)



Walter and Beneatha's mother. The matriarch of the family, Mama is religious, moral, and maternal. She wants to use her husband's insurance money as a down payment on a house with a backyard to fulfill her dream for her family to move up in the world.

# Ruth Younger

Walter's wife and Travis's mother. Ruth takes care of the Youngers' small apartment. Her marriage to Walter has problems, but she hopes to rekindle their love. She is about thirty, but her weariness makes her seem older.





# Travis Younger



Walter and Ruth's sheltered young son. Travis earns some money by carrying grocery bags and likes to play outside with other neighborhood children, but he has no bedroom and sleeps on the living-room sofa.

# Joseph Asagai

A Nigerian student in love with Beneatha. Asagai, as he is often called, is very proud of his African heritage, and Beneatha hopes to learn about her African heritage from him. He eventually proposes marriage to Beneatha and hopes she will return to Nigeria with him.





# George Murchison



A wealthy, African-American man who courts Beneatha. The Youngers approve of George, but Beneatha dislikes his willingness to submit to white culture and forget his African heritage. He challenges the thoughts and feelings of other black people through his arrogance and flair for intellectual competition.

# Mr. Karl Lindner

The only white character in the play. Mr. Lindner arrives at the Youngers' apartment from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association. He offers the Youngers a deal to reconsider moving into his (all-white) neighborhood.





# Bobo

One of Walter's partners in the liquor store plan. Bobo appears to be as mentally slow as his name indicates.

