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## "A Raisin in the Sun" by Langston Hughes

Walt Disney once said "If you can dream it you can achieve it." Dreams have a great importance in *A Raisin in the Sun*, with the play's name coming from a 1951 Langston Hughes poem titled *Harlem*. In the poem, part of which serves as the play's legend the poet asks, "What happens to a dream deferred?" pondering whether it shrivels up "like a raisin in the sun" or explodes. Hughes' open question forms the basis of Hansberry's work, with the intertwined and conflicting ambitions of the Youngers driving the play's plot. Each character holds on to distinct dreams, which have long been postponed due to the limitations placed on the family by racism.

The resolution of these dreams lends the play a general sense of hope, despite the conclusion's foreshadowing of coming struggles for the family. To dream big can be dangerous if one's dreams are not given a chance, but you'll find something to hold on to. Mama and her late husband Big Walter's dream of owning a home forms the essence of the play. Clinging to a dream negotiated for nearly 35 years, Mama recalls Big Walter's statement that it seems "like God didn't see fit to give the black man nothing but dreams," linking the postponement of her dream to racial inequality. Ironically, it is Big Walter's death, with its resulting \$10,000 insurance payment, that makes Mama's dream possible by the end of the play.

Unlike mama's dreams Beneatha's dreams of becoming a doctor. She said "That was what one person could do for another, fix him up – sew up the problem, make him all right again. That was the most marvelous thing in the world...I wanted to do that. I always thought it was the one concrete thing in the world that a human being could do. Fix up the sick, you know – and make them whole again. This was truly being God...I wanted to cure. It used to be so important to me. I wanted to cure. It used to matter. I used to care. I mean about people and how their bodies hurt..." She just wants to help people. To Beneatha, giving people medical attention is definitely one of the most concrete good things a person can do.

Unlike Beneatha, Ruth clings to the dream of a home, which causes conflict with her husband, Walter Lee, who dreams of becoming a self-sufficient business owner. Walter is incredibly unhappy with his life, and he's taking it out on everybody around him. Poor Ruth feels the guilty of her husband's unhappiness. She seems to be afraid of what will happen between them if Walter doesn't get the chance to grasp his dream. "Mama, something is happening between Walter and me. I don't know what it is – but he needs something – something I can't give him anymore. He needs this chance, Lena." Walter's desires are complicated to the point of becoming a hazard to him. Walter's dream of owning a liquor store stands in firm contrast to his sister Beneatha's dream of becoming a doctor.

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However, by the play's end Walter lost all of his investment, and he placed both his and Beneatha's dreams in jeopardy, casting a shadow over the play's semi-hopeful conclusion, which centers on Mama's accomplished dream. With the insurance money gone, Walter and Beneatha's dreams for the future appear in danger of further postponement, recalling vast struggles with social forces beyond the characters' control. Walter decides that he's going to tell Karl Lindner that he will take the offer on the house. He thinks selling out on the house and sacrificing his dignity is the only way to earn the money back. Walter informs Lindner that the his family is going to move into the house. Their move is not to provoke there neighbors, but it's to stand up for a family's right to create a home. By not to give into the stereotype, Walter regains his dignity.

By the end of the play, only Mama and Ruth's dream is fulfilled as the family prepares to move into a new home. Even though not all of their dreams came into reality. They will still have there family. And for most people that is the best thing you can have. The biggest dreams may cause the most damage but, it will lead you back to what's more important.

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