

A RAISIN IN THE SUN

ACT 1

Scene 1:

Legend:

PURPLE → characterisation

YELLOW → general

BLUE → insights

GREEN → themes

THE APARTMENT:

- The Youngers family have limited resources → Walter has a blue collar job. (white collar → people working comfortable jobs, another word for the pay white collar jobs is remuneration. It's called blue collar jobs because they wear blue overalls.) Walter is the only one working in the family → solo breadwinner → Because of Walter's limited education (**because of his race**), he **had to settle with a low wage job** [THEMES: **MONEY, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**]
- The Youngers family have a very **positive, optimistic attitude** even though the apartment is very run down
- "*Indestructible contradictions*" → refer to things they can't change about the layout because of their limited resources

PERSONIFICATION:

- "*Now the once loved pattern of the couch upholstery has to fight to show itself from under acres of crocheted doilies*" (pg 23)
- "*the carpet has fought back by showing its weariness*" (pg 23)
- "*Once loved*" (pg 23) → shows how they **used to have a lot of hope** when they were first living in the house, furniture represents their hope. over time, as **blemishes begin to form on the furniture**, the same is done to the hopes of the family members → hopes wearing down/fading/diminishing (**THEMES: HOPES & DREAMS**)

SYMBOLISM:

- "The single window that has been provided for these 'two' rooms is located in the kitchen area"(page 24) **this shows a lack of light in not only the apartment, but also in the lives of the Youngers.**

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- Light symbolises hope, and the limited light that supports the entire apartment might mean their current situation isn't that ideal. the **light could also represent the awaiting cheque** (the family's only hope), which could better their lives and fulfil their dreams
- The family is divided, with everyone wanting to pursue different ambitions using the cheque money.
 - Walter wants to use it to open a liquor store,
 - Beneatha needs it for her medical school tuition, which is very costly
 - while Lena wants to buy them a new house in Clybourne Park (a neighbourhood predominantly white) with the money, as she wants to secure a better standard of living for the family as the house is very cramped & run down. Getting a house in Clybourne Park is also breaking away from the stereotype that the Blacks can't live with the whites, and it offers more opportunities as it is a neighbourhood of richer people → **better facilities & resources** because it's a neighbourhood meant for the whites **[THEMES: RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, ASSIMILATION, DREAMS]**
- "Weariness has in fact, won in this room" (pg 23)
 - This symbolises the feelings of the Youngers in the story. With many of the character's feelings being so tremendous that it seeps into the room, the room is stripped down of all its atmosphere, leaving only the bare minimum for living in the house → Youngers live in such a small house whilst full of so much aspirations and hopes, they feel stuck

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OF ACT 1

1. What is the significance of Walter's anger at eggs? What's really going on?
 - Eggs:
 - can represent unhatched potential in Walter and his ideals because he's obstructed by his lack of resources (education, money, job opportunities), and he gets shut down by his wife & family **[THEMES: MONEY, DEFERMENT OF DREAMS]**
 - represent nutrients → Ruth is telling him to eat his eggs and that he has to be grateful with what he has and face his reality and stop dreaming.
2. What point is Joseph making about Beneatha's hair?
 - Joseph tells Beneatha not to straighten her hair → Beneatha trying to fit in with the white society, Joseph tells her not to because she's destroying her identity and heritage. **[THEME: ASSIMILATION]**
 - Beneatha has a lack of opportunities → might not do well as a doctor and reserved for the whites → wants to straighten her hair to fit in with the whites. Beneatha hindered both by race & gender **(THEMES: gender inequality)**

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- If Beneatha had embraced her origins, she might've become a champion for women's rights
3. Which character takes the most appropriate attitude regarding the insurance money?
 - Lena Younger wants to buy a house for the family & set aside money for Beneatha's tuition → thoughtful grandmother
 - "Some of it gotta be put away for Beneatha and her schoolin" (pg 44)
 - Forward-thinking: planning ahead with what to do with the money. Pragmatic, practical grandmother as she's realistic with what to do with the money
 - **(CONTRASTING LENA'S CHARACTER)** On the other hand, Walter wants to open a liquor store (after seeing his friend open a successful business, got influenced) with an uncalculated risk → shows that he is impulsive and unrealistic
 4. What does Beneatha argue regarding her mother's faith?
 - **(CHARACTERISATION)** Beneatha doesn't believe in God (atheist), she finds it strange that God gets all the credit for all the things the human race achieves through their own effort, humans are in control of their own destiny. Just because she doesn't believe in God, it doesn't make her a bad person → stereotyping people with no religion to be people who aren't morally upright, and view religious people to have more moral high ground
 - Beneatha is very self-reliant as she does everything out of her own hard work and effort.
 - also shows that society is progressing as Beneatha is an atheist and doesn't hide herself, unlike how it was in the past when people left their fate in the hands of God. Her character and mindset stands out, and she's a representation of progress
 5. What does Beneatha mean when she says she is looking for her identity?
 - She grew up in a society white dominated, couldn't embrace or understand her culture → approached Joseph to find out more about the ways in which a "pure" African American girl would've grown up with people of her heritage and culture
 - Beneatha wants to find out about Africa to find out about her roots and origin.
 - "You see, Mr Asagai, I am looking for my identity."
 - Joseph brings a coat back from Nigeria, and his character is a reminder of the lost African heritage. (pg 57) The Blacks view the Africans to be very uncivilised, Lena imagines that they don't even wear clothes → harmful stereotypes by the whites, a result of white supremacy. The Blacks may have also been very oppressed as most Americans in that time didn't talk much about African heritage. **[THEMES: RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, ASSIMILATION]**
 - Beneatha is ashamed of her own heritage as she tries to straighten her hair to fit into the white society
 - Blacks were being oppressed → didn't learn much about her culture as the focus was on surviving (poverty-stricken) **[THEME: MONEY]**

CHARACTERISATION

character	description/ trait	evidence	Explanation
Beneatha	strong-willed/ headstrong/ determined/ resolute/ persistent	(pg 50) <i>"but first I'm going to be a doctor... I couldn't be bothered with that. I am going to be a doctor and everybody around here better understands that!"</i>	<p>Pursuing a career as a doctor wasn't normalised. Beneatha as a character symbolises progress, how women's culture is changing by being determined and working hard to achieve something instead of following the stereotype where women should only plan to get married (THEMES: feminism, gender inequality)</p> <hr/> <p>Beneatha as a symbol of progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to move ahead in society • Not a conventional women of the 50s • Back in those days, the women weren't career-oriented <p>Her obstacles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of resources to fund education - Discrimination of race & gender - Lack of familial support <p>→ because of all these obstacles, she has to have a lot of self-belief to accomplish her dreams → doesn't believe god is the driving force that got her this far</p>

character	description/ trait	evidence	Explanation
Beneatha	self-absorbed / selfish	<p>(pg 37) "i've never asked anyone around here to do anything for me!"</p> <p>(pg 51) "Why? Why can't I say what I want to around here, like everybody else?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneatha often focuses on her own needs instead of acknowledging the sacrifices her family makes. Since she's more educated than the family, she expresses her thoughts and feelings in ways her fam might not understand. She has a contrasting view from her family about religion and expresses her opinions harshly towards them
beneatha	nonconforming/ ambitious	<p>(pg 36) "i'm interested in you. Something wrong with that? Ain't many girls who decide- to be a doctor." (in bold cuz walter has said it many times and beneatha has heard it time & time again)</p> <p>(pg 47) "Madeleine is going to start my guitar lessons today."</p> <p>(pg 47) "the horseback riding club for which she bought that fifty-five dollar riding habit that's been hanging in the closet ever since!"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women were supposed to just stay at home and serve husbands. She's making use of every opportunity to cultivate her skills and learn new things → ambitious Horseback riding was a male dominated activity but she's pursuing it → breaking the stereotype
Walter	over-optimistic, reckless, unrealistic	"You see, this liquor store we got in mind cost seventy-five thousand and we figured the initial investment on the place be 'bout thirty thousand,	Through act 1, he's constantly brought up the topic of investing in the liquor store, and he's tried to pester both Ruth and Mama to have confidence in his plans

character	description/ trait	evidence	Explanation
		<i>see.</i> " (pg 33)	
Walter	Hot-headed, blunt, misogynistic	<p>"DAMN MY EGGS - DAMN ALL THE EGGS THAT EVER WAS! (pg 34)</p> <p><i>Who the hell told you you had to be a doctor? If you so crazy 'bout messing 'round with sick people - then go be a nurse like other women - or just got married and be quiet (pg 38)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He gets angered easily and how he vents his anger on little things and the bluntness of his speech. • feels that nurses plays a subordinate role compared to doctors • seen through his impatience and intolerance of many things
walter	Ambitious, persistent, selfish	<p><i>"You ain't looked at it and you don't aim to have to speak on that again?" (pg 71)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He quarrels with Mama to bring his liquor store idea to her, his tone is adamant on bringing his idea to life. • Doesn't consider if any of the family members want to do more with the money as well

BENEATHA'S RELIGIOUS VIEWS + COMMONALITIES W WALTER

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<p><u>DOES BENEATHA'S EDUCATION CONTRIBUTE TO HER CONTRASTING VIEWS?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education made her more broad-minded → challenges the status quo, progressive mindset • No: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beneatha has been brought up in an era where women have more opportunities → more educational opportunities → different way of thinking from her fam 	<p><u>SIMILARITIES BETWEEN WALTER & BENEATHA:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both persistent in achieving their goals • Walter is more unrealistic, Beneatha is more proactive in achieving what she wants & takes logical steps • Irony: men back then were supposed to be more focused on his ambition and educated (but Beneatha is more educated than Walter) Because Walter's Black, he's not as well-educated + he's older than Beneatha, meaning education wasn't offered to everyone when he was young
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LANGUAGE FEATURES

1. "Slubborn" is not a real word. Ruth has formed a portmanteau—the combining of two words into a new word. Explain her portmanteau and think of some additional examples. (pg 29)

Portmanteau (lit device):

- Effect of the device: Emphasises **specific traits of the character** (in this context, it's Travis' character traits + get the reader imagining in this manner → make them wonder why he's acting like this, engages them)
- Slubborn (ruth calls travis this cuz he eats sloppily and keeps asking for 50 cents)
- Other examples: motel (motor + hotel), brunch (breakfast + lunch), email (electronic + mail), Amerasian

2. How is the language of the stage directions different from the language of the dialogue? Why is this important?

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- Stage directions are written in brackets + italicised & are instructions on how the characters behave & move. Also expresses the character's emotions. Italicised but not bracketed → descriptions of setting + information about context

RUTH & WALTER: parenting styles

- Walter is more lenient, indulging his son a lot.
 - could stem from favouritism
 - (pg 30 accident) Didn't want Travis to think they were poor → he's very prideful and doesn't want to lose face
- Ruth is the stricter parent

CONFLICTS

Character VS character:

- Walter VS Beneatha:
 - (pg 37) walter is saying that Beneatha should be a nurse and that Beneatha doesn't have to ask Mama to have some of the money used for her education but Mama will do it anyway, and he expects her to quit school so he can use the money for his own dreams
- Walter VS Ruth:
 - (pg 33) walter shouting at ruth for shutting his dreams down
 - Can hardly agree on anything
- Walter VS Lena:
 - (pg 70) Arguing about investing in the liquor store
- Travis VS Ruth:
 - Travis isn't entirely happy with her since he can't get what he wants and his way of things. He feels resentment towards her because of how frugal she is
- Beneatha VS Ruth and Lena
 - Conflict about taking guitar → Beneatha argues that she experiments with different forms of self expression and the other two put her down, laughing at her for not being money-minded, Beneatha has a mindset of a modern woman → emphasises that the black community may be progressing, but the older conservative women are pushing against self-expression of the young liberals

Character VS Society:

- Walter VS society:
 - (pg 74) walter talks to mama about money, and he says that money is life

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Societal conflicts:

Conflicts in ideologies

- Liberal VS conservative: **[THEMES: DREAMS, MONEY]**
 - Walter got upset at Ruth for shooting down his plans, mumbling "We are one group of men tied to a race of women with small minds" (pg 35). → internalised a lot of the bigoted ideologies from the whites, grown to be disdainful towards women. Walter criticises all women just because she won't listen to his plans, feels that women are not open-minded
 - Coloured people have issues putting food on the table → **more focused on their survival and keeping food on the table to be investing anywhere and everywhere and their losses might be too much to bounce back from**. Ruth is scared to take risks. Walter is shallow/simple cuz he doesn't consider the risks and considered their underlying concerns: one wrong move could plunge the family into bankruptcy
 - Lena wants to use the money for her family while Walter and Beneatha want to use the money to improve themselves (business and education) Lena is more family-oriented than Walter and Beneatha (**contrast** on how they want to use the money). Walter & Beneatha are coming from a more self-centred perspective.
 - Lena wants to improve their quality of life and housing
- Back in the 1950s, many women got an abortion even tho it was unsafe because of a lack of technology and medical advancements → more black abortions than white → blacks aren't as educated on sexuality and protection
 - Ruth wants to abort because they don't have capacity to raise another child

Commented [1]: Ruth and Beneatha in a supportive r/s. Beneatha can take up hobbies because ruth took up extra jobs → relatable to each other cuz they're both women and know what the other is going through

Mama plays the role of mediator between Walter and Ruth

THEMES

FOOD IN ACT I

EGGS:

- Eggs represent some form of nourishment and a basic source of protein → Ruth tells him to look at what's in front of him instead of constantly dreaming about his dreams and dreaming forward. She's trying to tell him to focus on what's in front of you, get your

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basics in order before dreaming about big things (**THEME: IDEALS/DREAMS VS REALITY**) → **reference to the poem harlem: dreams got deferred**

- “Eat your eggs” = be grateful with what you have
- “Alaiyo”
- Bread represents the money they need for survival, Joseph calling her this means that Beneatha isn’t satisfied with having basic necessities (wants to be a doctor and not a nurse). Also isn’t satisfied with **just staying at home taking care of things like women did in the past (1950s)**, she wants to go out to pursue hobbies and learn new skills
- Beneatha wants more: independence, ability to make her own decisions → wants to **find fulfilment in life**
- Women back then faced familial opposition and objection, gender stereotypes, lack of opportunity for education

SUMMARY OF ACT 1, SCENE 1

- Begins with the revelation of the Younger’s living room in Chicago. Ruth enters, starts making breakfast for the family, calls Travis to get up.
- Walter enters, immediately mentions “check” that’s coming the next day → Ruth replies saying it’s too early to be discussing money → Travis asks for 50 cents, Ruth says no. Walter gives Travis a dollar → Walter’s defiance of Ruth gives way to greater conflict between husband and wife. Ruth criticises Walter’s friend, Willy Harrison, and his business scheme, and his asking Walter to invest in a liquor store.
- (pg 35) Beneatha enters the scene → Walter badgers her about the check money. Beneatha counters by saying “forgive me for ever wanting to be anything at all!” shows how women are expected to give up their own dreams and instead just support men.
- Lena walks in, and tells Ruth about her intentions with the money, about the deferred dream that she shared with Big Walter of buying a house in Morgan Park.
- (pg 46) “*Seems like God didn’t see fit to give the black man nothing but dreams- but He did give us children to make them dreams seem worthwhile.*” Big Walter used to say this, Lena says.
- (pg 47-49) We learn that Beneatha is taking up guitar and horseback riding lessons → wants to make use of every opportunity to better herself. Beneatha calls the guy she’s

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going out with, George Murchison, shallow, and she tells Lena and Ruth that he's rich. In response, Ruth says, "*What other qualities a man got to have to satisfy you, little girl?*" → shows how in those times women didn't marry out of love but to enhance their family's wealth

- Beneatha talks about how she doesn't believe in God, Lena slaps her. Ruth faints

SUMMARY OF ACT I, SCENE 2

- **SETTING:** Saturday morning: the check is expected to come.
- Lena tells Beneatha about Ruth's possible pregnancy. Beneatha gets a call from Joseph Asagai and invites him over to the house. Lena is extremely taken in by the stereotypes of Nigerians and Beneatha asks for her not to ask ignorant questions → **the whites have created the stereotype that Africans are uncivilised and rowdy, a result of white supremacy** as the whites want to be seen as the supreme race.
- Ruth enters, confirms she's pregnant. Lena asks about the child and Ruth tells her that the doctor she saw was a female, meaning that Ruth be considering an abortion as at the time, seeing a male doctor was the tradition and he wouldn't deem it fit to have an abortion take place.
- Joseph arrives → gifts robes to Beneatha and says she looks good with "mutilated" hair → Joseph calls her an assimilationist which Beneatha denies (she straightens her hair to make it easier to fit in with the whites)
- Joseph confesses his romantic feelings for her → Beneatha says that "by itself it won't do." implies that romantic feelings aren't enough but she also needs a partner who's dedicated to her freedom and equality
- Beneatha realises that to truly embrace her origins, she has to embrace her not straight hair and let her African heritage be recognised by the world
- The check arrives. Lena suspects Ruth is getting an abortion. Walter enters in great excitement → Ruth and Lena shut him down → Walter and Ruth have an argument and Ruth leaves.
- Walter tells Lena about his troubles, of how his job as a white man's chauffeur is emasculating, and his hopes for his future are very limited → shows how **racial discrimination regarding job opportunities curbed many Black people's dreams for social advancement and locked them into the role of servants.**
- Lena criticises Walter's over-emphasis on money, and she says that back in the day the **Blacks were focused on not getting lynched**
- Lena tells Walter that Ruth is pregnant → Lena tries to convince Walter to convince Ruth not to get an abortion

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ACT 2

SUMMARY OF ACT 2, SCENE 1 (pg 76-95)

- Setting: later that same day
- Beneatha enters, wearing robes and a headdress that Asagai gave her. She also carries an "ornate oriental fan," which is "mistakenly" more reminiscent of Asia than Africa → **still lacks an understanding/sense of African identity**. Beneatha also goes to turn off the good loud blues that's playing and goes to play Nigerian music, calling good loud blues "assimilationist junk!", disregarding that it is a genre that came about from African American culture → emphasises even **further on the lack of understanding**
- Walter enters, and gradually warms up to Beneatha's dancing. Beneatha encourages Walter's behaviour, he leaps onto the table and completely loses himself in a fantasy → he embraces his heritage in only fleeting moments of fantasy, communion with his African identity centers on regaining the lost status and majesty of African leaders, which was stolen from African-Americans through the transatlantic slave trade. He desires to be a **great chief to fulfil a traditional male role as a powerful protector & provider**
- George Murchison enters because he's going to the theatre with Beneatha. She pulls the headdress off to reveal "close-cropped and unstraightened" hair. Beneatha calls her hair natural while George says that it's eccentric. They argue, and George says that the heritage Beneatha is so proud of is "nothing but... some grass huts!" Beneatha starts reciting African achievements and Ruth ushers her into her room
- Ruth tries making small talk with George but he's uninterested. Walter reenters asking George about his father's business ventures → George dismisses him. Walter both **hates and covets George's wealth**. Walter's dreams centre around money while George justifies his superiority with his wealth
- George calls Walter Prometheus, a Greek demigod who stole fire from Zeus, intended to mock Walter's grand dreams and also to draw attention to George's own knowledge (George puts himself in the position of being the God).
- Walter is in fury at George's remark, and he says he's spent the afternoon talking to people who understand him, Ruth guesses it's Willy Harris and she's right. Walter bitterly snaps that he is *"tied up in a race of people that don't know how to do nothing but moan, pray and have babies!"* → he blames his own failings on women around him, packs even more punch because Ruth is pregnant. Ruth says she'll go through with the abortion and she offers Walter milk → he asks why she's always offering food → she says that's all she can give him. Walter's leaving also indicates that he **leaves the burden of this monumental decision on his wife's shoulders** + Ruth makes it clear that her offers of food are not ways to avoid his dreams but the **only way she can support him**

Commented [2]: Beneatha uses her natural hair as a visible marker of her protest against assimilation, while George uses his social status in order to reap the benefits of membership in the mainstream of society.

- Mama enters and calls Travis to her and tells him that she “bought you a house” with the insurance money. Walter erupts “in fury”. Mama tries to convince Walter to accept her dream and to recognize its value, but Walter has to be the one providing and the dream has to be his own. → mama has immense pride in the manifestation of her and big walter’s deferred dream + also happy that the family will have their own humble home, ownership of the dream symbolises personal freedom
- Ruth asks about the house's location and Mama says it's in Clybourne Park, a neighbourhood white dominated. Because they had financial problems and racial discrimination, this shows how **limited the options are for safe and suitable housing in segregated cities for African Americans.** **[THEME: MONEY, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION]**
- It is at this moment that Ruth's mood brightens as she realises that there is a possibility she need not get an abortion, as the new house would have space for another child → shows how family-oriented she is as her decision to get an abortion previously was based on the family's poverty instead of her own choice
- Mama tells Walter that the house will be a new beginning, a unifying force that can repair the family's bonds. However, Walter cannot see hope in the new home but **only the death of his own dream (shows his self-centeredness).** Walter wants to be the one to earn a comfortable home and uses his deferred dream as a barb towards Mama. **[THEMES: DREAMS, GENDER]**

SUMMARY OF ACT 2, SCENE 2 (pg 96-109)

Setting: a few weeks later, Friday night

- Goerge tries kissing Beneatha but she dodges. He says she's a nice girl but he doesn't date her to hear about her thoughts. He tells her to “*cut it out*” (pg 96), and Beneatha asks George what the purpose of an education is, and George says that education has nothing to do with thoughts. → Beneatha refuses just to be viewed as a “nice-looking girl” and demands recognition as an independent-minded young woman.
- George doesn't think very deeply about things because he's already very wealthy and privileged. He's living a decent enough life not to care much about societal issues, and

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Beneatha has to worry about these things because she's not as privileged [THEMES: MONEY]

- Mama asks Beneatha how her date went, and Beneatha calls George a fool. In response, Lena says, *"Well- I guess you better not waste your time with no fools."* (pg 98), and Beneatha thanks Lena for understanding her this time.
 - Although Beneatha and Mama do disagree at times (about being an atheist and God), and the instance in which Beneatha talks about picking up many skills and Mama doesn't understand why she's doing this |
 - In light of their differences, Beneatha is touched by Mama's support, which may have stemmed from her seeing the harm she had done to Walter by not supporting his dream. Now, she's taking the first step by trying to understand.

Commented [3]: REFER TO 3RD SIGNIFICANT MOMENT OF ACT 2

- Ruth enters, and Mama asks if Walter's home. Ruth replies that he is, and they get a knock at the door, only to find that it's their meddling neighbour, Mrs Johnson.
- Mrs Johnson enters, and she pats Ruth's stomach and says, *"I'm just soooooo happy for y'all."* (pg 99) in reference to the Younger's move. Mama doubts the sincerity of Mrs Johnson's words, but remains polite nonetheless.
- Mrs Johnson goes on to ask if they've read the coloured paper recently, eagerly telling them that an African American family had been bombed out of his home to Chicago, and she insincerely says, *"I thinks it's wonderful how our folks keep on pushing out."* Mrs Johnson even uses a slur which Lena doesn't allow in the household.
 - Mrs Johnson is bitter and jealous that she doesn't have the mean to move out like the Youngers, and she cunningly gives backhanded statements → case of sour grapes
- Mrs Johnson goes on to talk about Walter, talking about his good looks and guessing it was his idea to move to Clybourne Park. She then suggests the title of the coloured paper the next month, saying, *"NEGROES INVADE CLYBOURNE PARK— BOMBED!"*
 - Mrs Johnson derives pleasure from filling the household with fear, as she feels bitter and jealous that the Youngers are advancing in society
- Beneatha enters, and Mrs Johnson is offended by Beneatha's curt manner, and she criticises the pride Beneatha takes in her college education, which she believes to be excessive.
- Johnson mentions Walter's dissatisfaction with his work as a chauffeur and she says, *"Ain't nothing wrong with being a chauffeur."* (pg 103) Mama objects this belief, repeating Big Walter's belief that *"being any kind of a servant wasn't a fit thing for a man to have to be."*
 - Mama acknowledges the racial prejudices that curb Walter's job prospects

- Mrs Johnson calls the Youngers one proud-acting bunch of coloured folks, she views the Younger's pride as a negative quality that makes them view themselves as exceptional.
 - She quotes assimilationist Booker T. Washington that, *'Education has spoiled many a good plow hand.'* (pg 103) Mama responds by calling him a fool and stands up for her children's dreams.
- Beneatha enters again, and compares Johnson to the KKK (Ku Klux Klan) shows the **extent to which she believes assimilation is a scourge on the African American community**. → Johnson exits

Commented [4]: a white supremacist group in america

- Mrs Arnold, the wife of Walter's employer, calls and Ruth picks up. Mrs Arnold says that if Walter doesn't go to work tomorrow, they'll get a new chauffeur.
- Walter enters, and he tells Mama and Ruth that he's spent the last 3 days driving around Chicago in Willy Harris' car → Ruth exits and Mama continues listening to Walter's drunk ramblings.
 - Walter's reckless behaviour shows the extremely detrimental effect the deferral of his dream has on him. Walter has lost all motivation and hope, completely abandoning his duties as a husband and father.
 - Ruth is unable/unwilling to combat her husband's irresponsibility with the family's financial security, leaving after she's heard enough.
- Overcome with guilt, Mama realises she has unknowingly contributed to Walter's descent by not supporting his dream. She says, *"I been doing to you what the rest of the world been doing to you."* (pg 106) and says that she, *"ain't never really wanted nothing that wasn't for you."* (pg 106)
- Mama takes an envelope from her handbag, and tells Walter she has already paid \$3500 for the house, and gives him the rest of the money (\$6500) for himself, telling him to put \$3000 in a savings account for Beneatha's medical school. Mama tells him, *"I'm telling you to be the head of the family from now on like you supposed to be."* (pg 107)
 - She realises the **denial of Walter's dream has been added to the many limitations that curb Walter's opportunities** → in hopes of restoring his identity & self-esteem, Mama gives Walter control of the money, giving him control over his future.
 - Mama allows Walter to finally assume the role of an adult in the household, which he needs to see himself as a man.
- Walter is filled with mingled joy and desperation. Travis enters, and Walter begins to talk to him sweetly. Walter tells Travis that after tonight, he'll be able to provide financially for the family, and about the car and home he'll be able to purchase for the Youngers.
- Walter says that when Travis turns seventeen, he'll send him to any college in the world, and that he'll hand him the world.

- The possibility of achieving his dream reinvigorates Walter, and he regains his identity as a worthy husband and father.
- While Walter dreams of providing for his family, his dreams nonetheless revolve around markers of material wealth, such as luxurious cars and homes. Walter dreams of giving Travis the world, an aspiration that centres on the ability of money to overcome racial prejudice & limitations.
- Walter says he'll send Travis to any college he wants, but doesn't believe Beneatha should go to college → he doesn't believe in education for women.

SUMMARY OF ACT 2, SCENE 3 (pg 110-130)

- Setting: a week later, Saturday, moving day!
- Ruth is finishing the packing for the family's move, and Beneatha enters. Exuberantly, Ruth starts telling Beneatha about how Walter has *"done changed so 'round here."* She tells Beneatha that they had gone to the movies and held hands
 - With the opportunity to fulfil his dream again, Walter has become a new man, dedicating himself to the duties of a husband & father.
 - Walter has the confidence boost which came with him stepping up into the head of the house, Walter feels more self-assured and makes progress towards improving his relationship with Ruth.
- Walter enters, and dances with Ruth while Beneatha calls them old fashioned Negroes. Continuing to dance, Walter says, *"Damn, even the N double A C P takes a holiday sometimes!"* (pg 113) → their teasing contrasts their usual arguments and the display of light-heartedness **shows the redemptive power of dreams**
- A white man appears at the door. He tells Beneatha he's looking for Lena. He enters the home and introduces himself as Karl Lindner, a representative of Clybourne Park Improvement Association. Walter urges Lindner to take a seat. → he takes obvious pride in his new position as the head of the household
 - It's clear that having a white man visit them is an unusual circumstance → highlights how deeply segregated Chicago is.
- Lindner starts talking about "special community problems", and Beneatha interprets the double meaning of the phrase, as she understands that their move might be seen as a problem for the white community. With racial issues at the forefront of her mind,

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Beneatha is extremely sceptical and suspicious of Lindner and his intentions the way Walter & Ruth aren't.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS OF ACT 2

(A Raisin In The Sun - ACT 2.pptx)

FIRST MOMENT:

summary:

Act 2, Scene 1 (pg 76-83)

- Summary: American music is blasting from the radio (jazz music). Beneatha dons traditional Nigerian clothes and shows off to Ruth, Walter walks into the house drunk and begins to ramble about the African past, while Ruth is ironing. George comes in, and expresses his distaste → George and Beneatha have a heated argument about oppressive culture and African heritage. Walter tries making George feel welcomed but George doesn't care much for it

PLOT DISCUSSION

- Beneatha says, "Enough of this assimilationist junk!" (pg 76) (she says this because of the American music that's playing. Many Africans are americanised and are not in touch with their African culture and identity) Beneatha rejects the music because by identity, they're African but they're trying to listen to all this American music and be Americanised. By calling American blues "junk", she's rejecting the American heritage by calling it junk and she's also rediscovering her African identity → rejects American music for African music. **(THEMES: ASSIMILATION)**
- Walter comes in, and with all the African sayings he's saying, he's also trying to find roots with his African identity. He's embracing African identity (seen from his drunken state) and he's expressing a lot of solidarity with his Black brothers. He also says "*the lion is waking*" (pg 78) → the lion could signify the African roots being awakened, and it could also be inferred that people like Walter (African Americans) are waking up and standing up for themselves as they've realised the oppression and conditions (compared to the whites) they're living in. **The waking suggests realisation!**

Commented [5]: Assimilation: the process of taking in and fully understanding information or ideas

Commented [6]: in the context of the book, Africans trying to assimilate into American culture means that they reject their African culture for the American

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- Beneatha joins in, and for once brother and sister are united in their beliefs. Walter says "Do you hear the beating of the wings of the birds..." The birds signify freedom, and the beating of wings **signify freedom and the Blacks campaigning for their rights and freedom**
- (pg 79) Walter also says, "*telling us to prepare for the GREATNESS OF THE TIME!*" → the greatness of the time refers to **the day the African American would truly receive their equal rights**. Ruth responds in embarrassment to her husband's outburst, as she often does, which shows that their **relationship is very estranged as they don't fully support each other**.
- George tells Beneatha they're going to watch a play, not be in it. **George's tone is very disapproving and condescending** → **shows that he's chauvinistic and he expects Beneatha to be submissive**. Beneatha is taunting him by looking at him ceremoniously and slowly, in a form of protest and defiance, trying to rebel against George's chauvinistic behaviour.
- When Beneatha takes the headdress off and sees her hair, George is horrified by her hair (being an assimilationist) → their shock **comes from the fact that they've fully assimilated into American culture and can't accept that now Beneatha resembles an African woman** **(THEMES: ASSIMILATION)**
- Ruth says, "*You expect this boy to go out with you with your head all nappy like that?*" → shows that Ruth is a **very conservative and traditional woman, who expects women to have long, straight hair** **(contrasts with Beneatha)**
- "*How can something that's natural be eccentric?*" (pg 80) → shows how fully assimilated Ruth and George are in the American culture, as they feel that Beneatha's close-cropped and curly hair is "eccentric"
- Ruth asking what assimilation means shows that **she might be a stereotype of women**, as she believes in very stereotypical descriptions of women, stereotypes that had come from the whites? (maybe due to a lack of education?)
- **"Your heritage is nothing but a bunch of raggedy-assed spirituals and some grass huts!"**. Beneatha defends her African heritage, and says that Africans were the first ones who smelt iron on earth while the English were still tattooing themselves with blue dragons. One interpretation could be that the blue dragon was an Asian symbol and back in the 1900s, the British and American had invaded the Chinese and Japanese and stole some of their Asian culture and heritage.
 - Beneatha implies that the whites are still "copying" and **imitating the Asian culture** by tattooing the dragon on themselves without understanding the significance, while the Ashantis were coming up with their own ideas and being original → Beneatha's throwing the insult back at him

- Ruth wants George to think the family is civilised and is embarrassed by her family members, and just like George, they're both trying to act refined because they look up to the white culture where people are supposedly more refined and superior → trying to assimilate in the white society **(THEMES: ASSIMILATION & RACE)**

MAIN THEMES

1. Loss of African culture:
 - Ruth and George are both so heavily assimilated into African culture that they've lost their heritage.
 - Beneatha wants to embrace and be more in touch with her African heritage, to which Ruth and George both respond with disapproval
 - Even though George is more educated (college), they both have a very conservative mindset and are used to complying with societal norms, which could be due to their upbringing and hesitance, with African heritage being an unfamiliar topic to them, since they've got no opportunity to learn about it in white dominated societies.
2. Traditional/ progressive mindset:
 - Beneatha has a very progressive mindset, and she wants to find out about her origin and rediscover her identity because she's more educated and knows that heritage is equally important, and that she can find her own place in society instead of fitting in with everyone else → she's non-conforming
 - Also shows that the mindset of women back then was starting to progress, and some were starting to realise that they had ambitions and dreams of their own that they could pursue instead of simply being wed and having to take care of their homes **(THEMES: FEMINISM)**
 - George has already fit in and embraced societal norms, and has no qualms with losing his self-identity in order to fit in with the whites + uses his (high) social status to reap the benefits of society

CONFLICT

- Walter VS himself:

- Starts spearing enemies in his drunken state, may show his true desires. The people he's spearing are those who are stopping him from achieving his dreams and aspirations, people oppressing him and his dreams
 - Walter also has the desire to be the head of the household, since Lena is a woman (the gender roles have swapped, **defying gender stereotypes**. Mama has so much say in the family, but ultimately she's a woman! → emasculated to some extent?
 - ***"Here I am a giant- surrounded by ants. Ants who can't even understand what it is the giant is talking about."*** (pg 85) Walter rambles to George about how he has so many dreams and aspirations, and he **has a lot of pent-up anger** because **he feels that the world is conspiring against him from achieving his dream and getting what he wants**. Walter has a lot of dreams, but can't get the opportunities. Ants suggests tiny, feeble weaklings, and he means that these ants (people) can't do anything for him or help him (connects with his line on page 87 *"Cause we all tied up in a race of people that don't know how to do nothing but moan, pray and have babies!"*)
- Beneatha VS George
 - George has a lot of disapproval with the African identity and heritage, and he keeps telling her to go change her outfit → shows his **chauvinistic nature** as he thinks women are just there to look pretty and nice, and that they're just for show. His persistent urging for her to change out of it also shows that he might've felt embarrassment, and even shame, if he was seen outside with her
 - ***"That's what being eccentric means- being natural. Get dressed."*** → George is **uncomfortable with straying from societal norms** and **believes that it's better for African Americans to conform to societal norms if they don't want to be discriminated against for being different** → thinks they should play a more passive role and fit in instead of embracing their own identity **(THEME: ASSIMILATION & DISCRIMINATION)**

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

WALTER

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TRAIT	EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION
insecure/ prideful	<i>"Plenty of times." (pg 82)</i>	<p>He tells George that he's been to NYC plenty of times as a show of pride as a form of jealousy because he wants to seem just as good or better than George → Walter wants to feel more superior than George</p> <p>It's Walter's human nature to pick out on every little thing George is wearing because he's much more well-dressed and refined, and Walter is jealous (sour grapes). It could be because he grew up poor and without proper education, which is the reason why he's acting without proper etiquette towards George</p>
vulgar/inconsiderate	<p><i>Walter retorts at Ruth in a condescending manner such as "Shut up!"</i></p> <p><i>"Black brother!"</i> (as a show of solidarity, could come across as rude tho)</p>	<p>Walter phrases his words in such a crass (unrefined) manner by using borderline offensive terms, such as "faggoty-looking", and also how he tells Ruth to "shut up" in a drunken state. Additionally, he calls George "Black brother" upon seeing him, and this is a result of how Walter speaks without a filter, without any mindfulness that what he says could potentially offend the other party.</p> <p>Walter is very condescending and rude towards Ruth <i>"Excuse me for what? What you always excusing me for!" (pg 83)</i> → Ruth constantly apologises on Walter's behalf to George because she's embarrassed by him → Walter feels sick and tired of always being shut down, tired of being made to feel insignificant by his wife → Walter constantly says things that are not proper and civilised, and since Ruth is pretty conservative, so she has certain expectations of how a civilised household and person should act, and many a times Walter is uncivilised</p>

RUTH:

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uneducated	From the scene in act 2, she doesn't quite know what the meaning of assimilation is	<p>When George and Beneatha talk about assimilation, Ruth is very confused because she doesn't know what it means → George had to explain assimilationist in a very simplified and layman way to her because he knows she might be too simple-minded</p> <p>She thinks very simply about things (doesn't know what assimilationist is), and she's shallow in that sense</p>
conforming	<i>"Head all nappy like that?"</i> (pg 80)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruth's reaction to Beneatha's hair is a reflection of her adherence to traditional beauty standards and societal norms Ruth represents the traditional African American women, and the whole of society wants African American women to act this way, it's not just her. Expected, not WANTS Beneatha to conform, otherwise it'd represent a personal view from Ruth alone Seeking social acceptance → by adhering to these standards, she may believe she can fit in and navigate society more easily Society expects American women to have long, luscious hair as it connotes feminism!! Society expects women to behave in a feminine way → Beneatha isn't behaving in the conventionally expected manner, so Ruth responds disapprovingly towards Beneatha's behaviour, so that the society will see her as civilised and refined (THEMES: FEMINISM & ASSIMILATION)
Diplomatic	<i>"Why must you and your brother make an argument out of everything people say?"</i> (pg 81)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruth acts as the mediator between brother and sister, Walter and Beneatha, as they're constantly arguing (could be useful in questions like "how does Hansberry make Ruth a significant character in the play?") → Ruth removes tension between siblings → she's the glue that unites the family, even if she's a simple-minded and conservative person, she plays a vital role in keeping the family together. When things get difficult, Ruth is the one that keeps the family together (Lena too)

DEVICES AND EFFECTS

1. Personification (pg 77):

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Ethiopia, a state in Africa is personified to stretch her hands → an action signifying the welcome of glory → highlights how Walter is embracing his African heritage when he was drunk, which reflects his true thoughts. However, due to assimilation, he lacks freedom to express himself and his identity. **Ironically, he wants to embrace his African heritage, but it's also his race that's curbing his opportunities**

→ these are things he cannot obtain due to him being a victim of his circumstances

2. Symbolism (pg 80):

When Beneatha cuts her naturally curly hair off, it's a symbol of her accepting her African identity instead of straying away from it

→ long hair connotes more traditional, feminine roots → she's trying to move away from assimilating into American society → traditionally women are presented as damsels in distress, but Beneatha doesn't need a man to come to her rescue, and **she's opinionated**: doesn't need a man to tell her how and what to think **(REAL WORLD CONTEXT) (THEMES: ASSIMILATION & FEMINISM)**

"The lion is waking." (pg 78)

→ the lion represents the **untapped potential in Walter** and people like him, and they're realising the oppression they are under and trying to break out of it

→ lions are associated with bravery. Walter is brave when he aspires to open a liquor store because he's willing to take that risk, and when he rejects Lindner's bribe for the house

IMPORTANT QUOTES TO REMEMBER

- *"The lion is waking."* (pg 78) (said by Walter)

SECOND MOMENT

PLOT DISCUSSION:

- Walter disapproves of George and affluent people → Ruth tries to calm Walter down → Beneatha and George leave, George mentions Prometheus → angered Walter and sparked fight between Walter and Ruth → Walter is quite sick and tired of being treated as insignificant and **he's tired of being brushed aside**, tired of being looked upon as an embarrassment → Mama returns and informs them that she has purchased the money
- Ruth asks why Walter doesn't agree with everyone, and Walter says it's because nobody ever supports him/his ambitions
- Ruth is always unaffected by Walter and whatever he does. Whenever he gets angry, **Ruth is really stoic and unaffected by his anger** → causes him to be even angrier at her
- *"I been out talking with people who understand me."* → he insinuates that Ruth doesn't understand him or his thought process
- (pg 87) *"I'm sorry about this new baby, Walter."* → this could be a possible indication that Ruth has realised she has lost the spark and love and bond she had with Walter → hence she apologises, as Walter might worry about the **financial burden of a new baby** + he's not ready for another child, given the way he's acting (a very absent father)
- (pg 87) *"I guess I didn't raise how bad things was with us."* → Ruth might've been too busy taking care of the house and the family and her other responsibilities (motherly duty as housewife) that she has neglected the feelings of her husband → tries to soothe him with hot milk, symbolising warmth, comfort and nourishment, she shows her love and care through food that she offers to him. Treats Walter like a child through her offering of hot milk. However, Walter is rejecting Ruth's love for him (the food) → **Walter is too blinded by resentment to see the subtle care and concern Ruth is trying to provide**
- As an alternative, Ruth tries to offer Walter coffee, which could **symbolise a new start to their relationship**, as coffee is usually taken in the morning, as it's the start of a day, or it could mean that **Ruth wants Walter to face his bitter reality** (coffee is bitter). But Walter rejects the coffee too, and it's like he's rejecting her olive branch, and Ruth asks him what more she can give him, possibly realising they're not that compatible → Walter becomes vulnerable & softens

PROMETHEUS AS AN ALLUSION:

- (pg 86) *"Good night, Prometheus!"*

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- Prometheus is a Greek God that brought (stole) fire to the humans, but Prometheus ended up chained to a mountain. George is mocking Walter to say that Walter thinks he can achieve all his big, lofty ideals, just like how Prometheus thought he could do it too.
- Also shows how similar Walter and Prometheus are in the aspect that their dreams are similar: Walter has the noble dream of opening a liquor store (a bit immoral, because liquor, and like how Prometheus stole fire to progress civilisation) → they **both want to help people** (Walter wants to help his family financially and Prometheus wanted to help the people) → also shows how Walter has ambition too, and it challenges the stereotype of African Americans not having ambition and just sitting at home all day moaning and complaining

MAIN THEMES:

1. discrimination:

- Walter's criticism of George's appearance:
 - George dresses stylishly, reflecting his social class and wealth. Walter's remarks about George's clothes stem from **his deeply rooted insecurities about his own lack of wealth as he covets and resents George's wealth**, as it shows George is a lot more privileged and successful than him
 - Walter's sore that George has the privilege of this upbringing and education
- Walter's criticism of well-educated individuals (eg George)
 - (pg 85) *"What the hell you learning over there? Filling up your heads – with the sociology and the psychology – but they teaching you how to be a man?"* Walter feels resentful about George's academic prowess over him. The line *"but they teaching you how to be a man?"* is also a form of discrimination as Walter believes men shouldn't be driven by education and it doesn't shape a man.
 - It also shows that Walter feels that educated people wouldn't be able to relate to people like him (blue collared workers?) and that they aren't an asset to society, implying that they don't partake in laborious work and are just rich and well-educated individuals for show only.
 - **Walter's definition of a man is very traditional and conservative**: can do manual labour, man of the house, **not educated and as refined as George is**

2. Dreams & aspirations:

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- Walter's quarrel with Ruth expresses his great desire to achieve his dreams. His line, "*'Cause we all tied up in a race of people that don't know how to do nothing but moan, pray, and have babies!*" (pg 87) → this line expresses Walter's feelings that the Black community is not advancing, possibly due to a lack of opportunities. At the time, Blacks weren't given as many opportunities and Walter critiques his own race because he feels that they don't seize every opportunity given to them, but there's also a big risk they're taking in pursuing these dreams, because they could make more losses than they can recover from. However, it's also evident through his ideology that he is a forward thinker, as he's thinking of progress and advancement but just doesn't have the means to achieve his dreams and aspirations, and he's left to only dream of the liquor store idea instead of having a concrete plan to manifest it into reality.

3. Jealousy:

- Despite both being African American, Walter is extremely jealous of George as he's of a much higher social status and wealth.
- Differences between George & Walter:
 - George was able to secure a good education whilst the same can't be said for Walter, and hence they both work different jobs that determine their economic status → Walter is jealous because George was able to fulfil Walter's dream of success and escape poverty.
 - Instead of commending George, Walter insults and pokes at him by insulting him for studying sociology and psychology, and asks George if they're teaching him to be a man. He picks on every little detail about George to protect his pride
 - To Walter, good education doesn't make a man. He is prideful because he's been through so much hardship to only achieve such a small income, and he's jealous that George has been offered everything on a silver platter as he's from a rich family that could afford a good education.

4. Pride:

- George mentions Prometheus in order to spite Walter. Prometheus, a god of fire, implies that Walter is hot-headed → George attempts to insult Walter to hurt his pride.
- Walter's reaction to the insult shows how much pride he holds for himself and how offended he was, despite not having a clue of who Prometheus is.
- Another instance of his pride being hurt is when Ruth and Lena don't listen to his business venture idea, and he lashes out, "*WILL SOMEBODY PLEASE JUST LISTEN TO ME TODAY!*" → this shows his ego was hurt because he was being shut down and not heard as they didn't believe in his idea.

CONFLICTS

1. Character VS character:

- Ruth VS Walter: (pg 87-88)
 - Ruth tries offering Walter hot milk to diffuse the argument → Walter refuses it and uses it as an excuse to be angry, saying *"Why you always trying to give me something to eat?" (pg 88)* → people would refuse with hesitation but Walter puts it very bluntly, showing how short-tempered he is and how he constantly picks arguments with Ruth.
- Travis VS Ruth (pg 89-90):
 - Both characters engage in a heated dispute over Travis' late arrival home, and Travis responds with defiance rather than accepting responsibility → shows that he desires independence
 - Ruth: constantly cuts Travis off, doesn't give Travis the chance to explain, thinking that she knows better. Lena: favours Travis and is a very doting grandmother [*"(Putting her finger on his nose for emphasis)"*] As the youngest in the house, Travis has big dreams, and is a sign of hope and progression → the ambitions of the young

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

GEORGE MURCHISON

TRAIT	EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION
George is sly	(pg 86) <i>"Good night, Prometheus!"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George backhandedly mocks Walter's personality as Prometheus was a god who helped others and sacrificed himself, unlike Walter, who looks down on people who've seen more success than him, and he's always looking for the easy way out of things (using the insurance money to invest in a liquor store rather than working hard to make a living. • George sees Walter as lower in status than him and mocks him as Walter thinks he can accomplish many big things when in reality, Walter can't

WALTER YOUNGER

TRAIT	EVIDENCE	EXP
Walter is jealous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (pg 83) <i>"She looks like she got burnt legs or something!"</i> (Walter about Beneatha) (pg 84) <i>"I know ain't nothing in this world as busy as you coloured college boys with your fraternity pins and white shoes"</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walter's insult towards Beneatha hides his own jealousy that Beneatha, his own family member with the same financial circumstances, is able to attain a good education and is able to get a better future than him
Walter is conflicting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (pg 73) <i>"I want so many things that they are driving me kind of crazy...Mama—look at me...I'm thirty-five years old; I been married eleven years and I got a boy who sleeps in the living room—and all I got to give him is stories about how rich white people live."</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walter is a forward looking person but because of his lack of resources to accomplish his dream and his lack of a concrete plan. He's unable to execute his dream of having a liquor store

RUTH YOUNGER

TRAIT	EVI	EXP
Ruth is conforming	<i>"I'm sorry 'bout this mornin', baby. I—I just didn't feel like getting up. But I did. I got up. You wouldn't get up, would you? So I just got up and did it myself"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruth is portrayed as being tired or sad; she accepts whatever happens and is worn out by the family situation. Despite being pregnant, she continues caring for the family, leading to her extreme exhaustion and the way in which she copes with other issues in life.

LENA YOUNGER

TRAIT	EVI	EXP
Lena is preserving	<i>"... When it gets like that in life – you just got to do something different, push on out and do something bigger." (pg 94)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lena is hardworking as she goes through many challenges that make her preserve. For example,

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TRAIT	EVI	EXP
		she uses the money to buy a house in a neighbourhood white dominated → shows that she wants to prove that the Youngers are able to have better circumstances for the family and escape poverty

DEVICES & EFFECTS

1. Allusion:

- (pg 86) “*Good night, Prometheus!*”
- Prometheus is a Greek God that brought (stole) fire to the humans, but Prometheus ended up chained to a mountain. George is mocking Walter to say that Walter thinks he can achieve all his big, lofty ideals, just like how Prometheus thought he could do it too.
- Also shows how similar Walter and Prometheus are in the aspect that their dreams are similar: Walter has the noble dream of opening a liquor store (a bit immoral, because liquor, and like how Prometheus stole fire to progress civilisation) → they both want to help people (walter wants to help his family financially and Prometheus wanted to help the people) → also shows how Walter has ambition too, and it challenges the stereotype of African Americans not having ambition and just sitting at home all day moaning and complaining
- Prometheus stole fire and gave it to humans, suggesting that he wanted them to be able to survive → on the surface, it implies that Walter is rebellious and defiant for the sake of challenging norms for a good cause
- it seemed like he was being rash and reckless but there was a much more noble cause behind it → to both support his family financially and push/break boundaries for the African Americans and show that Blacks are capable, have ambition, and can make it in life! → they aren't just unambitious people who just “moan, pray and have babies” [THEMES: RACIAL DISCRIMINATION]

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN PROMETHEUS & WALTER	
PROMETHEUS IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY	WALTER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tied to a rock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walter felt that he was <i>"tied up in a race of people who don't do nothing but moan, pray and have babies!"</i> His circumstances are that he's a victim of his circumstances, being an AA with social and economic limitations with no foreseeable changes in the future His dream of financial freedom and opening the store won't be met because he's tied to a rock
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zeus' bird eating his liver over & over again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because of his limitations in money and opportunities, not being able to open a store is constantly frustrating him (like the bird to Prometheus) → inability to achieve his dreams is bugging him

2. Repetition:

- (pg 82-84) Ruth repeatedly yells, "Walter!" → indirectly **implying her lack of power in trying to stop Walter from doing what he wants**, and she lacks the ability to quarrel with him, and is too tired to argue → shows her helplessness and neglect in the relationship with Walter
- Could also mean that she was trying to reason with him, but to no avail + her voice gets weaker every time she says his name → **loss of hope** and she's trying to stop fighting

3. Symbolism:

- Mama's plants: could **symbolise Mama's dreams** and her caring and nurturing nature. Despite its struggling growth (like the dreams she has), Mama still cares for the plant → shows how she puts in effort to keep the dream alive despite adversities. The **plants also represent hope and resilience** in the face of adversity.

- Ruth's pregnancy:
 - symbolises **a new lease of life & renewal** for the Youngers. Despite the challenges they face, the prospect of a new baby brings a sense of optimism and hope for the family.
 - Hope and renewal this pregnancy symbolises also highlights desires of the Youngers financially.
 - However, Ruth's pregnancy also brings **more conflict in Ruth's and Walter's marriage**. Ruth's **wanting to abort the baby is a further symbolism of her rejection of change, progress and hope**. Her change of mindset to not abort the baby shows that she had changed from someone who was very pessimistic to **someone who's willing to embrace change and evolution**, and become more hopeful.

IMPORTANT QUOTES TO REMEMBER

1. (pg 85) *"wear them faggoty-looking white shoes."*
 - This line shows how Walter was repulsed at well-educated individuals like George, due to his belief that school was a waste of money that didn't nurture important values (Walter believes manual labour is more important)
2. (pg 86) *"Good night, Prometheus!"*
 - Shows the educational gap and the rivalry between George and Walter → showed difference between uneducated and well-educated people: Walter flares up as he doesn't even know what it means whilst George can utilise the word as an insult to Walter

THIRD MOMENT

PLOT DISCUSSION

- Setting: the Younger family is preparing to move into Clybourne Park (act 2, scene 2 pg 96-103).
- Characters involved: Mrs Johnson, Beneatha, Ruth, Mama, George
- George comes back with Beneatha after their date and they had an argument

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- George leaves → Beneatha says George is a fool and Lena backs her up, and Beneatha thanks her for understanding her this time.
 - Other instances Mama and Beneatha disagreed: the instance when Beneatha picks up a lot of hobbies, and Mama doesn't understand why she's doing all this + the instance where Beneatha expresses her view about religion and Mama doesn't understand
- The family's ideas change from traditional to similar to Beneatha's ideas: Walter goes with the decision to move out, which is unlike his character. Mama in act 1 scene 1 opposing Beneatha on matters VS how Mama supports her now and her decisions → shows that their mindsets have changed → the characters are dynamic because they've changed. Characters that are static are like George, Asagai unlike the Youngers who have a progressive mindset
- Mama also used to think that Walter's ideals were very lofty and risky → but now mama begins to trust Walter by giving him the check and entrusting him to do what's right for the family by apportioning the check and the money. The power dynamic of the family is also changing from Mama to Walter as she's trying to trust him to make good decisions so he can be the head of the family as the male
- Mama also feels that people show your true love when someone is struggling Mama is saying you don't forsake and trample on your family when they're feeling down (pg 145)

MAIN THEMES

1. Racial discrimination:
 - Mrs Johnson explains that a black family in a white neighbourhood was bombed → shows that the whites were unhappy with Blacks "invading" into their living spaces → they **wanted the racial segregation to continue so they wouldn't have to live together** → emphasises the pervasive racial discrimination against the Blacks
 - Mrs Johnson condemns the family, saying their names "*y'all's names will have been in the papers plenty*" (pg 102). → tries to disguise her ill intentions with good faith + appears to be congratulatory but in reality, she's really jealous of them. Also hypocritical and ironic that she subtly wishes the worst on them but at the same time, she's jealous because she can't attain what they have

CONFLICTS

1. Character VS character:

- George VS Beneatha (pg 96):
 - George wants Beneatha to stop sharing her opinions
 - George says *"let's not spoil it"* (pg 96) Beneatha wants to say what's on her mind but George considers it spoiling the night
 - George asked Beneatha to cut it out, expressing how he wants a simple sophisticated girl and not someone with big dreams like Beneatha. **George is condescending**, as he doesn't want to listen to her and is uninterested in her mind. His idea of a simple and sophisticated girl is a lady who doesn't think and only looks good on the outside, George is looking for a submissive girl as **he wants to assert his dominance and possession over her** → conformed to ideas about the way women should act
 - There's a **power struggle between the genders**. Other instances of power struggles: Mama and Walter fighting over the control of money, of who gets to decide what the check is used for, fighting to be the person who gets to decide what to do with the money. Also George and Walter struggling for power (**wealthy VS poor**): George is the one with power in this case because he's more wealthy than Walter and he's more educated than him too
 - (pg 97) Beneatha asks George if he's angry, and he responds with *"... this is stupid! I don't go out with you to discuss the nature of 'quiet desperation' or to hear all about your thoughts- because the world will go on thinking what it thinks regardless"* → George is resigned because **he's of an upper class because he's so superior economically that he doesn't share the same struggles as Beneatha**. He lives an entitled life and has many riches and he's comfortable → **he doesn't have to think of the worries of others**

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

GEORGE MURCHISON

TRAIT	EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION
Conforming and assimilationist	<i>"I don't go out with you to discuss the nature of 'quiet desperation' or to hear all about your thoughts- because the</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• George is dismissive of Beneatha's intellectual interests and priorities social norms and entertainment over meaningful conversations and

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	<i>world will go on thinking what it thinks regardless" (pg 97)</i>	<p>challenging social norms → he seeks success within well established societal structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> George values his traditional role and social status, contrasting with Beneatha's intellectually curious and progressive nature
Arrogant and condescending	<i>(pg 97) "you read books- to learn facts- to get grades- to pass the course- to get a degree. That's all- it has nothing to do with thoughts."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George replied Beneatha with artificial patience, revealing his disdain for her independence and that Beneatha doesn't conform to societal expectations → creates tension and emphasises his narrow-mindedness in understanding her desires and ambitions

LENA YOUNGER

TRAIT	EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION
Mama is understanding	<i>(pg 98) "well- i guess you better not waste your time with no fools."</i>	By saying this, Mama validates Beneatha's views about George and lends her familial support, allowing Beneatha to feel more at ease. Beneatha then says, <i>"thank you... for understanding me this time."</i> (pg 98)

MRS JOHNSON

TRAIT	EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION
Mrs Johnson is over-the-top, flamboyant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>(pg 102) "NEGROES INVADE CLYBOURNE PARK- BOMBED!"</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johnson has an extremely laid back and over-the-top attitude when speaking to the Youngers + attitude runs in stark contrast compared to the Younger's attitudes (on edge & sceptical). → instead of choosing her words carefully, she's outspoken and says what's on her mind She outlines a potential headline when the Youngers move into their new home <i>(pg 102) "NEGROES INVADE CLYBOURNE PARK- BOMBED!"</i>, painting the end of the play in a different light completely. Whereas the end of

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TRAIT	EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION
		<p>moving out of their dilapidated house and into a new home full of potential and new opportunities would originally be seen as a fresh start for the Youngers, it's now seen as a potentially horrific end to the story; knowing that the African-Americans who moved into Clybourne Park were seen as "foreign invaders", this darkens the tone later in Lindner's last line in Act 3 Scene 2, <i>"I sure hope you people know what you're getting into."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mrs Johnson is uncaring if her words prompt a new fear in the Youngers: a fear not to move into their new home for fear of what the whites might do
Mrs Johnson is conservative, potentially malicious	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (pg 103) <i>"ain't nothing wrong being a chauffeur"</i>• (pg 103) <i>"Education has spoiled many a good plow hand"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Johnson carefully and deliberately chooses her words to prod and poke at the psyche of the Youngers → trying to scare them into not moving into the apartment due to her conservative-minded nature → constantly detracts the progress of the Blacks• Her unwillingness to move on and progress to a new age of African-American freedom and prosperity is also subtly evidenced by the fact that she stays for so long, not moving on to her house even after saying she would, openly accepting food from the Youngers despite saying she has to leave → her mindset is fixed in the past, unwilling to accept the fact that the Blacks were progressing and that the Jim Crow laws were slowly being done away with, with the Blacks slowing being integrated into society rather than being second-class citizens.• The "stuck in the past" mindset makes her more maliciously towards the Youngers → she subtly and deliberately chooses her words to deter the Youngers from moving up in life to a bigger and better home and hope → plays it off as being flamboyant and showy but in reality, she wants to push them away from the possibility of progression as an African-American family due to her jealousy and spite. The Youngers being able to move to a new house angers Johnson as it is a luxury that not many African Americans can afford → hence, she acts maliciously towards the Youngers•

DEVICES & EFFECTS

1. Irony:

- Mrs Johnson reveals the reality of the Youngers' "upgrade" to Clybourne Park, which begs the question of whether it's truly beneficial for them to move. On the surface, moving to Clybourne Park (white neighbourhood) shows that the family is moving up to a higher class, but Mrs Johnson brings up the darker side of moving into the neighbourhood through the news of a black family being bombed → could be hidden dangers that make the prospect of moving less beneficial

IMPORTANT QUOTES TO REMEMBER

1. (pg 100) *"Ain't it something how bad these here white folks is getting here in Chicago! Lord, getting so you think you right down in Mississippi!"*
 - This line shows how the whites are trying to keep the AA at status quo and their oppression towards them
2. (pg 103) "Education has spoiled many a good plow hand."
 - Higher education has led to less people becoming farmers

FOURTH MOMENT

PLOT DISCUSSION

- Setting: pages 110-119
- Characters: Beneatha, Walter, Ruth, Karl Lindner

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- The Youngers meet Karl Lindner, who's a white man who visited the Younger family. He says "our Negro families are happier when they live in their own communities." → racial discrimination in terms of housing
- The whites feel threatened by the Youngers moving in (pg 119), "*everything they've ever worked for is threatened.*"
- Ruth feels that the whites might be scared of their pure white blood being "polluted" by the Blacks blood (pg 121), "*No, honey, marry 'em.*" → racial discrimination
- Karl Lindner's perspective on races mixing in housing: he rationalises the Younger's move by saying people with a common background work better together. Karl is **passive-aggressive** in the way that he doesn't say outright that he wants the Youngers to go back to where they came from, but he does **put across a lot of resistance** from the white neighbourhood as something logical (trying to justify that their racial discrimination is logical and he's rationalising it → shows that **Lindner is cunning**, because he wants to chase them away but does it in a seemingly diplomatic way) **[THEME: RACIAL DISCRIMINATION]**
- **Lindner's passive aggressiveness comes** from his biases against the Blacks, while Mrs Johnson's passive aggressiveness stems from envy/jealousy. The fact that Lindner wants to spend money to bribe them shows that he expects resistance, and the youngers deny because they have the right to the house they bought with their money

Commented [7]: indirect resistance

Commented [8]: using sneaky and cunning ways to say that he wants them gone

Commented [9]: Mrs Johnson is a passive aggressive character too, with what she says about the Younger family getting bombed but she cheers for them ... ?? this stems from her jealousy

THEMES

1. Racism and discrimination against the Younger family
2. Prejudice towards AA and favouring the whites
3. Hopes & dreams being deferred (by Karl Lindner)

CONFLICTS

- Character VS society (Youngers VS society):
 - Karl visits the Youngers as a representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association (**ironic** that it's a welcoming committee but **Lindner is doing nothing to welcome them but instead, to convince them not to move in**)
 - Lindner makes a jump from talking about being the welcoming committee to "special committee problems" (pg 115) → this refers to the white's unhappiness

with the fact that the Youngers are moving into the neighbourhood because of the stereotypes and racism they have against AA

- Karl shares with the Youngers how he deplores of the incidents that happen when the Blacks move into white neighbourhoods → suggests the bombing incidents + shares with them that he believes incidents happens because people don't sit down and talk to one another (pg 116)
- Lindner says that, *"well you see our community is made up of people who've worked hard as the dickens for years to build up that little community. They're not rich and fancy people; just hard-working, honest people who don't really have much but those little homes and a dream of the kind of community they want to raise their children in."* [pg 117] → this implies that AA don't work as hard as the whites
- *"and at the moment the overwhelming majority of our people out there feel that people get along better, take more of a common interest in the life of the community, when they share a common background"* [pg 117] → Lindner is being **passive-aggressive**; he **isn't** directly stating the downsides of them **moving in**, but he **isn't saying that they can't move in either** → cunning nature + shows how they don't support cultural diversity, feel that people of different backgrounds (race/religion) shouldn't mix together **[THEME: RACIAL PREJUDICE]**
- Lindner also states that AA are better off in their own communities → believes that **they don't belong in such rich neighbourhoods and should live in rundown conditions**

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

1. Karl Lindner is passive aggressive. He expresses that people with a common interest work better together, saying this in a passive aggressive way. He tries to rationalise the racial discrimination of the whites and to put it across in an objective manner
2. Karl is **cunning** as he tries to rationalise his logic in a seemingly diplomatic manner

FIFTH MOMENT

PLOT DISCUSSION:

- Act 2, scene 3 (pg 125-130)
- Summary: Bobo breaks the news that they've been scammed by Willy Harris, and Mama starts to hit Walter in a fit of rage.

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MAIN THEMES:

1. Deferred hopes & dreams

- Even with money available to Walter, he's unable to pursue his dream because his dream was stolen from him by Willy → shows how limited opportunities are for AA. This also affects Beneatha as she no longer has the means to attend medical school.
- For a long time, Walter had went after the dream of opening a liquor store to give the family a better life, but now he's done the opposite by ruining the chances of a stable financial state for the family and a decent standard of living too

2. Betrayal of trust

- Willy's betrayal of Walter & Bobo: he ran off with their money, Bobo says that, "*I had my life staked on this deal, too...*" (pg 129) and Walter had invested almost all the insurance money into the store
- Walter's betrayal of Lena's trust: Lena hands him the money set aside for Beneatha but he selfishly uses it for his own dreams.

3. Money:

- Money could sever or build tension in relationships: the money lost by Walter led to a strained relationship with Mama, as he broke her trust when she might have been starting to see potential in Walter as the head of the house

ACT 3

SUMMARY OF ACT 3:

- Pages 131-151
- Walter's loss of the insurance money fills the apartment with "a sullen light of gloom."

ASAGAI'S & BENEATHA'S CONVO

(pages 131-137)

- Asagai visits Beneatha, and when he asks how she's doing, Beneatha responds with, "Me? ...Me, I'm nothing." (pg 132)
- She recounts how her dream of wanting to become a doctor came up: a friend who got injured in a sledding incident. Beneatha expresses how amazed she was that one person could fix another up, but she states that she has lost the youthful idealism of her dream
 - After losing the money to support her dream, Beneatha has lost her pride in her identity, because she had put so much of herself to devote to her dream, and her pride was intimately tied to her dream of becoming a doctor
 - Without her dream to anchor her, Beneatha is unmoored
- Beneatha goes on to mock Asagai's dream of African independence, asking him what comes after freedom: "What about all the crooks and thieves and plain idiots who will come into power and steal and plunder the same as before- only now they will be black and do it in the name of new Independence-" (pg 134) → Beneatha **rejects his idealistic belief in human progress**
 - Having lost her own dream, Beneatha attacks Asagai's idealistic dream for African independence
 - Beneatha anticipates the problems that many newly formed African nations did face

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- Asagai asks Beneatha if the insurance money was hers & when Beneatha says no, Asagai says, *"Then isn't there something wrong in a house- in a world- where all dreams, good or bad, must depend on the death of a man?"* (pg 135) → criticising Beneatha's overemphasis on money she didn't earn and is a catalyst for Beneatha to take her dreams into her own hands, and he says that when he goes back to his village he'll be able to change the circumstances there and educate the people to make it a better place
- Asagai explains that progress occurs in starts and stops, encouraging her to hold on to her dream
- Asagai proposes to Beneatha → Beneatha's confusion of what Asagai meant when he told her to "come home" with him meant that she doesn't view Africa as her home yet. Beneatha prioritises her ambition and dreams over marriage
 - Beneatha says, *"at this moment you decide to be romantic!"* → she's trying to dodge the topic and it's out of character for her to say that

WALTER'S SPEECH TO FAMILY

- Walter enters, and Beneatha starts hurling insults at him → she uses **his irresponsibility with money as a weapon to further insult him** & lampoons his aspirations of material wealth & power
- Ruth enters, followed by Mama, who returns her plant to the usual spot by the window, suggesting that she has given in to the dissolution of her dream & resigned to the fact that the family will stay in the apartment.
 - With the loss of the money, Mama loses both her dream & her pride. She talks about how people used to say that she aimed too high
- Walter reenters & tells the family he made a call to Karl. Walter states that the family is going to do business with him, and Walter makes a speech about the divisions in life between "the takers and taken".
 - His speech recalls his assertion that money is life → shows the overriding importance of money, which he believes carries more weight than moral distinctions between right & wrong.
 - Walter resents his status as one of those being taken from and is willing to sacrifice his pride to become a "taker" → covets the power that takers exert over the world
- Ruth asks Walter what his intentions are again, and he says he plans to put on a show for the white man → Mama implores Walter to reconsider and uphold the family's pride.
 - (pg 143) *"I come from five generations of people who was slaves and sharecroppers- but ain't nobody in my family never let nobody pay 'em no money*

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that was a way of telling us we wasn't fit to walk the earth." → nobody had ever gave up the family pride and bowed down to those who were superior, except Walter. Despite their dire financial straits, they maintained their pride in the face of crippling racial discrimination

- Mama mourns Walter's decision to sacrifice the pride for the family's financial gain. She laments his decision to accept Lindner's prejudiced & humiliating offer → signalling Walter's acceptance of racial stereotypes (segregation)
- Walter protests that he, too, wants the ability to financially support his family. His imitation of a stereotypical African American marks his complete loss of dignity → declares his manhood but behaves cowardly and childish. → he hates that he's unable to fulfil the mainstream male role as a financial provider
- Beneatha criticises that Walter is nothing but a toothless rat → Mama critiques Beneatha for her lack of empathy and for being concerned with her own dreams instead of Walter's debilitating loss of pride.
 - Mama hopes the family's love can repair the damage society & racial prejudice has inflicted onto Walter.

WALTER'S SPEECH TO LINDNER

- Lindner appears at the door, Walter enters the living room.
 - Walter's boyish demeanour when meeting Lindner shows the loss of manhood that has been brought about by his decision
 - Mama's demand that Travis witness Walter's decision to accept Lindner's bribe is a last attempt to appeal to Walter's dignity (could be a contrast to the scene where Walter wants Travis to think highly of him, *shows how he's truly given up his pride*)
- Walter begins his conversation with Lindner, telling him that the Youngers are very plain people, and he suddenly looks at Lindner with a certain intensity. Walter tells Lindner that the Youngers come from a family of people who had a lot of pride, adds that Beneatha wants to become a doctor
 - Remembering the pride Big Walter took in his racial identity, Walter starts to reconsider his decision
- Walter reaches climax of speech and tells Lindner, *"We have decided to move into our house because my father- my father- he earned it for us brick by brick."* (pg 148)
 - Walter reaffirms his family's pride, and asserts that he is as American (or even more) than Lindner (6 generations in America).
 - Walter identifies the house as a fulfilment of his father's dream, and moving to the house is something earned and not something inherited

- Walter says the Youngers will be good neighbours to the people of Clybourne, while also asserting their rights to be neighbours of white people. → **BREAKING RACIAL STEREOTYPES**

RESOLUTION

(pages 149-151)

- Lindner exits.
- The Youngers deliberately ignore the nobility of Walter's decision. Beneatha tells Mama Asagai proposed to her, and Walter starts arguing with her about it, saying she should marry someone "with some loot"
 - The Youngers wordlessly & internally celebrate his moral victory without shamelessly celebrating it
- Mama says to Ruth, "*he finally come into his manhood today, didn't he? Kind of like a rainbow after the rain...*" (pg 151) → Ruth and Mama take great pride in Walter's moral victory over racial prejudice, as this marks his transformation into a man. **Mama's decision to take the plant along symbolises a new beginning for their dreams**, but also continued struggles for the family in their new home.

LITERATURE DIAGNOSTIC 2024 (drama)

[\(DA 2024 Paper 2 - Drama\)](#)

(a) SIGNIFICANCE OF MINOR CHARACTERS?

Question breakdown: minor characters are symbolic of the themes in the 1950s, eg

- George Murchison:

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- Representative of assimilation and those who have assimilated into mainstream society
- Joseph Asagai:
 - Representative of the acceptance of African American identity (his identity)
- Willy Harris and Bobo represent dreams and aspirations: whether they can fulfil the dreams of the characters
- Mrs Johnson represents the hypocrisy of some AA
- Karl Lindner represents racism masked as politeness
- Big Walter represents dreams/pride & dignity
 - Built everything up despite being a black man

1. GEORGE:

- PURPOSE: represents a group of people in those days who assimilated into white culture → highlights **consequences of loss of identity**: George is highly educated, so he's expected to be wealthy, respectful of others no matter their background, conducts oneself appropriately and have humility
- **IRONY**: while a person can be highly educated, they may not behave in a civilised manner. George lacks humility and respect for women and thinks of them as the inferior gender → reflects in his actions.
- George panders to the white culture because blacks are viewed to be more subservient, and the stereotypes back then suggested that blacks are uneducated and act in a very uncivilised manner → feels that the African American heritage is holding him back and he denounces his African American heritage → **LOSES HIS DIGNITY IN ALL HIS PANDERING TO THE WHITES**
 - CONTEXT OF THE 1950S: African Americans who assimilated were unkind to their own people. **HYPOCRISY**: It is **OK** for George to look down on other un-assimilated African Americans, because he believes he's of a higher social status than them because he believes his own kind is uncivilised and it holds him back from progress. **HOWEVER**, he doesn't think **it's okay for whites to disrespect him because he views himself to be on equal status as a white man.** **[THEME: ASSIMILATION]**
- George's impact on Beneatha:
 - Their interactions are tense and unpleasant she often felt belittled by George) because he opened her eyes to the realisation that assimilation would cause you to neglect and forget your own identity and values because you're trying so hard to adopt other people's culture → **strengthens her resolve to embrace her identity** → meeting George STRENGTHENED this resolve, but it wasn't the CATALYST for it (this

Commented [10]: thats why george pokes fun at walter

isn't the incident that started her curiosity for her heritage) [THEME: ASSIMILATION AND IDENTITY]

2. KARL

- Serves as an obstacle to the Youngers, as Karl is unrelenting in wanting the Youngers to not move in, as he wants to maintain racial purity. If their racism is overtly shown, they'll be punished → hence people like **Karl Lindner have to exhibit their racism "discreetly"** to avoid the punishment: eg he uses politically correct terms and phrases it in such a way that how the Youngers would benefit rather than stating how the people of Clybourne Park don't want them there → exposes his racist side
- He's non-confrontational and it hides his true intentions; uses euphemistic language to avoid hostility and frames the bribe as a generous offer for the Youngers
- *"Negro families should live within their own communities."* (pg 118)
- *"I hope you know what you're getting yourselves into."* → he's threatening them, but he does it in a "discreet" and subtle manner

Commented [11]: at the point in time, the country is shifting into an era of not being segregated

Commented [12]: moving towards equality

3. JOSEPH

- Joseph functions as Beneatha's source of knowledge about her cultural identity, and Hansberry employs the device of contrast against George (the assimilationist):
 - Contrasts Joseph against George to show that Joseph is anti-assimilationist
 - Provides Beneatha with gifts and robes from Nigeria (pg 61) *"(eagerly opening the package and drawing out some records and the colourful robes of a Nigerian woman)"*
 - (pg 61) Beneatha wanted to straighten her hair to blend in with the whites, and Asagai calls it mutilated and **was the catalyst that got her thinking about her cultural identity** + Asagai gives her records which prompts her to find out more about her roots
 - Has a discussion with Beneatha in act 3 (pg 135) about his dreams for a better Africa. When he says, ***"Then isn't there something wrong in a house— in a world— where all dreams, good or bad, must depend on the death of a man?"*** → he's trying to tell Beneatha **she has to take her destiny into her own hands and she must continue to pursue her dreams** → serves as catalyst for pursuing her dreams too
 - *"Your brother made a mistake and you are grateful to him so that now you can give up the ailing human race on account of it!"* (pg 135) → he's implying that Beneatha is grateful to Walter because she can stop fighting for her dreams now

- *"AND YOU CANNOT ANSWER IT!"* (pg 135) → feels that he's pointing fingers at her but has no answers to offer him. Asagai shouts back that he lives the answer because **people in his village are victims of their circumstance (no access to education)**
 - Asagai wants to be the change he wants to see in the world → *"and i will not wonder long"* (pg 135) → he doesn't want to dwell on the problem and wants to find the solution to the problem → this is supposed to serve as inspiration to Beneatha, as he's asking her to step up and pursue her dreams on her own.
 - Asagai asks Beneatha to go back to Nigeria with him, *"That when this is all over— that you come home with me."* (pg 136) → Asagai refers to Africa as home, **he's very deeply rooted in his culture.**
 - *"Nigeria. Home. I will show you our mountains and our stars, and give you cool drinks... Say that you'll come."* → from the use of "our", it shows that Asagai already views her to be of the same mindset as him, but Beneatha pulls away.
 - *"Ah— so this is what the New World hath finally wrought..."* (pg 137) → New World refers to the new America (has the comforts of life, technology, very glamorous life) and it has the resources to help her achieve her dream of becoming a doctor → her mindset is why would she throw it all away to go to Africa? → Beneatha is very intelligent and she's aware of the fact that going to Africa would get rid of all these opportunities → Asagai realises that Beneatha has become fearful of losing her comfortable life in America and that it has changed her. His tone here is disappointed because **he feels that it has reduced her to someone who's very fearful.**
 - Asagai is guilt tripping her because he asks her 'Where are you now?' because America has all these technologies but Beneatha has achieved almost nothing
 - Asagai leaves her with that line because he wants her to **reflect and hopes that she'll embrace her identity as an African, and she'll bring all her knowledge back to Africa to help the country progress and make a change** because Asagai's philosophy is that he must be the change he wants to see in the world. (*'I LIVE THE ANSWER!'*)
- In the real world context, we've done so much to achieve gender and racial equality but so many countries have police forces that are brutal and met out racially motivated punishments (USA) → a lot of archaic practices
 - Asagai mentions having retrogression: eg in California people could steal from AA stores they could just rob them of everything → because of the law that you won't be charged for stealing anything worthy below a certain amount because of a lack of space in prisons → gives people the leeway to resort to stealing → shows how backwards the world has become

4. JOHNSON

- Serves as a juxtaposition to the Younger family's dreams and aspirations
- Her character shows the acceptance of the status quo of AA in America; **she spites the Youngers because they're able to move into a white man's neighbourhood** and be on the same social status as them
- Mrs Johnson's limited vision of AA contrasts the bold dreams of the Younger family.
 - She's afraid to go against the grain and has no courage (seeing the bombing of other AA, she's fearful), so she doesn't go get opportunities like the Youngers → hence, she feels stuck → **expresses her vindictive attitude** and wishing harm upon the Youngers
 - The Youngers are determined to achieve their dreams, as evidenced by their move to Clybourne Park, which is a predominantly white neighbourhood which could

Is Mrs Johnson complacent?

- **NO**, Hansberry highlights contrast between Youngers' determined attitude and Mrs Johnson's jealous demeanour; in the first place, she wants to have what the Youngers do and is envious of their new house

Commented [13]: complacent ISNT the inability to do something

Johnson's traditional mindset & her role in 1950s American society

- Mrs Johnson disapproves of Beneatha's ambition to become a doctor, which reflects her reluctance of AA's progression → shows that she thinks AA women don't have the money or social status to become a doctor because she perceives them as uneducated
- Mrs Johnson also says, "*Ain't nothing wrong with being a chauffeur.*" → shows how she's unaccepting of the fact that an AA family is progression
- (pg 103) "*You sure one proud-acting bunch of coloured folks!*" → Mrs Johnson implies that the **African Americans should know their place and they have a lowly status in society** → accept their lowly status
- (pg 103) "*Education has spoiled many a good plow hand.*" → plow hand refers to the labourers and farmers; she's trying to say that the more educated people are, the less people are willing to work as farmers → no resources/ food
- In society at the time, Mrs Johnson is representative of that group of people in society who have very low expectations and ambitions of themselves, BUT she also wants to stop the ambition of other blacks and didn't want to see them achieving big dreams → sabotages others' ambitions

BOBO

people who trust the 'get rich quick' schemes

- His trust is fuelled by the desire to get out of poverty → he's easily swindled
- Back in 1950s America, African Americans were given the promise of the American dream, a dream they were guaranteed to get → Bobo is chasing the American dream

Commented [14]: the country was in the transition phase of racial segregation, but not everyone agreed with having equality. some people had an archaic way of thinking

Catalyst for Walter's decision to trust Willy

- Bobo is the person who influences Walter to recklessly invest the money,
- Constantly the bearer of bad news, serves as a reality check → which shatters Walter's dreams and it's a **push for change in his character** (dynamic character)

Represents the vulnerability of AA and being exploited + symbol of struggle

- His desperation to escape poverty makes him more susceptible to exploitation → AA are easily lured into traps because they want economic stability (**IRONY**)
- 1950s America: Bobo's lack of education and knowledge about money and financial literacy leads to them falling into these traps → recklessly passing money to Willy without a proper contract → become easy victims

WILLY

- Representative of those in society who are taking advantage of those chasing after the American dream → survival of the fittest concept in those days

BIG WALTER

- Part of people who believed that as long as they work hard, they'll achieve their dreams
- Would sacrifice for their families

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(b) DOES ASSIMILATION HELP/HINDER SUCCESS?

what is assimilation?

- Definition: the process of acquiring the same habits, attitudes and mode of life of another culture
- In the context of ARITS, some forms of assimilation are Beneatha wanting to straighten her hair, George wearing very different clothes from what AA would typically wear. Ruth is a conventional example of a woman who's assimilated into society because of her beliefs and attitudes that women should bear kids and take care of the house
- AA identity and their roots are lost when they assimilate. Their identity is tarnished when they try to fit in with the whites. The successful assimilation would be being seen as an equal to the whites: given the same opportunities, levels of respect and rights (education, housing, freedom of cultural practices)

RUTH

- Ruth has a loss of hope and her aspirations and dreams → she has this feeling of helplessness and vents it out on Walter → she shuts him out and says "i would rather be living in Buckingham Palace" → she's saying that Walter's dreams are unreachable, like how she would never be royalty, she channels her pessimism onto him → **VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCE**
- Assimilation has hindered Ruth because it's confined Ruth to societal expectations in those days → she loses her ability for independent thought & personality (like a robot) and hope for the future

GEORGE MURCHISON

BACKGROUND

- George represents the people who've assimilated into American culture, he embraces the attributes and consequences of assimilation into white culture and forgoing his own culture.
- George's success is defined by his level of education, wealth, and ability to travel around US compared to other AA + able to flaunt his success by the way he dresses (cashmere sweater, white shoes)

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- Possible that he had grown up with the same assimilation mindset. Inferred from Walter's comment, *"Buy that big hotel on the drive."* (pg 83) → their family has amassed a decent amount of wealth in the USA → **connect with the American dream**

SUCCESSFUL ASSIMILATION

- Threw his identity away in exchange for acceptance by the whites. While he has managed to gain a lot more than the average AA during the 1950s, he has also handicapped himself due to his assimilation
- As an assimilationist, George is tied to and held down by his beliefs; George can't go against assimilation as it may **cause him to lose his standard of living and his livelihood and is in a way much more confined & narrow-minded than those who haven't assimilated because everything he's achieved is because of the assimilation**. Despite having more wealth and opportunity, he can't truly express his emotions and has to go with the flow of the white's demands and expectations. → George is afraid of losing his luxuries and comfortable life
- HOWEVER, assimilationists have to adopt views and models of life of the dominant culture and **not provided freedom with what they want to do**
- The way George approaches his relationship with Beneatha is very conventional and chauvinistic: eg when he calls Beneatha's curly hair "eccentric", expresses his distaste for Beneatha's ethnic attire + expects her to give in to his demands: condescending manner

HINDERED SUCCESS:

- Despite being well-educated, the privilege of learning more than a typical AA. Generally educated people are thought to be more humble BUT George contrasts this because of his constant pride about the amount of knowledge he has, and **his constant chauvinistic condescension to Beneatha** → George hasn't taken away any form of critical thinking or morality from his education and is very narrow in his mindset (**IRONY**)
- *"As for myself, I want a nice simple sophisticated girl... not a poet— O.K.?"*

(FAILURE AS) BENEATHA'S SUITOR BECAUSE OF ASSIMILATION: | |

- George has handicapped himself as he adopts bigoted views → self sabotage because he presents himself as someone who's very unlikable → diminishes chances of being with her.
- In act 1 scene 1, Beneatha says that George is *'he's— he's so shallow'* (pg 48) → George sabotages chances with Beneatha because his opposing viewpoints are driving her away

Commented [15]: dont bring up so much about this tho because the qns focus is the significance of GEORGE

- Beneatha also says, “*if the Youngers are sitting around...*” → doesn’t respect him as a suitor and critical thinker
- CONTRAST WITH ASAGAI: George acts demanding and superior towards Beneatha, he doesn’t respect Beneatha’s opinions or her will in trying to connect with her heritage → he refuses to let her argue for her heritage with his oppressive nature. On the other hand, Asagais is more civilised and knowledgeable, and he’s able to guide her into embracing her culture by bringing her Nigerian robes etc

QUOTES:

- “*Look honey, we’re going to the theatre— we’re not going to be in it... so go change, huh?*” (act2scene2)
- “*What have you done to your head— I mean your hair!*” (act2scene2)
- “*You read books— to learn facts— to get grades— to pass the course— to get a degree. That’s it— it has nothing to do with thoughts.*” → this further emphasises how George has taken nothing away from his high education and continues to be shallow minded. His character goes against the perception that highly educated people have to be people with high moral values.

PBQ

(i) How does Hansberry present Walter in a surprising way in this passage?

- Initially, she had presented his character to take up Lindner’s offer but eventually, he decided not to. He was nervous but became increasingly self-assured and insistent as he reasoned with Lindner: “*slowly and awkwardly, rather like a small boy*” (lines 9 & 10)
 - Walter exhibits nervousness because he’s conflicted and he’s going through a dilemma, he’s making a life-changing decision on behalf of his family that would determine their standard of living. **CONTRAST** with how Walter usually acts, as he is typically very rash and crude, but now he delivers his speech with a “*profound, simple groping quality*” (line 22)
 - After Mama encourages and pushes Walter to make a big decision, he becomes someone who now has the power to make decisions for the family as the head of the family → **didn’t want to ruin the family’s future like how he had done by losing the money**

- Previously, Walter had invested the money (Beneatha's share as well) without consulting the family → had been cheated of the money and dashed the hopes of the family → he has a record of making bad decision
- Now, he has to make another big decision and **he's conflicted because if he makes the wrong decision, his family would lose every ounce of faith and trust they have in him.**
- Hence, it is surprising that he had changed his mind because Walter had been rambling about the lost money and accepting Lindner's offer

Walter's perception of blue-collared jobs + Big Walter

- As Walter speaks, he mentions the previous patriarch of the family, Big Walter, pouring his blood, sweat and tears into building the foundation of the family to what it was, and indirectly helped them get them the house in Clybourne (*"earned it for us brick by brick"*) → he wants to **honour his father's hard work** and follow in his footsteps, ensuring the best for the Youngers.
 - Walter mentions how the Youngers are plain people, him working as a chauffeur whilst Ruth and mother do domestic work
 - Previously, he was dissatisfied with his job as a chauffeur as *"being any kind of servant wasn't a fit thing for a man to have to be"* (pg 103), clearly took no pride in his job
 - Now, he takes a lot of pride in it despite the fact that it's a blue collared job → he has dignity and realised that his father had sacrifice a lot to provide for the family, and **he's developed a profound appreciation for an honest living even though it is difficult as AA**
 - HENCE, he's adamant on the family's move to uphold the pride of his father's hard work as they're *"very proud people"*

What's surprising about this?

1. He had always been disapproving of blue-collared jobs, but now he takes pride in it because it is a job that brings him the bread that feeds the family
2. Walter has always been idealistic and driven by his desires and recklessness, but in the passage he is **firm and resolute** in his decision. When he declares that he doesn't want Lindner's money, it emphasises his development and role as a **dynamic character**.
3. Previously, money was a resource that Walter had wanted so badly that he had begged his mother for it, and through his rejection of Lindner's offer it shows that he's learnt to consider the needs and wishes of others as well

Walter as a dynamic character:

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- He stands up for his family against a white man and he's become proud of his family, shows how his perception on African Americans have change; Walter accepts that the status of AA is progressing
- The Younger family is portrayed as a dignified family, which symbolises the breaking of stereotypes that AA were unambitious and not hardworking **[BREAKING RACIAL STEREOTYPES]**

Walter's change in his misogynistic views

- Walter declares his sister will become a doctor and has confidence in her abilities to do so; when his sister expressed his ambitions previously in the book, he told her to just get married and settle down → contrast in the way he views her and his ideas. He used to view women to be the ones playing very subservient and submissive roles in society. Walter changed because:
 - Through Big Walter's humble labouring, he was able to afford them a big house in Clybourne Park
 - **WALTER CAME TO A SUDDEN REALISATION:** Whilst Walter was looking back on his job as a chauffeur and his family's jobs, he PROBABLY **realises that no matter if it's a man or woman or how glamorous and prestigious the job is, it still contributes to the family and for the betterment of the family's future.**
 - Walter accepted the fact that women didn't have to align with myopic and subservient stereotypes, and he loses his chauvinistic character as the play progresses.

Commented [16]: must hedge this statement because it's not confirmed in the book, use words like "this is probably because....."

Walter is less selfish and less self-centred:

- everything he used to do was to contribute to his own dream; he didn't take into consideration the dreams of the rest of the family, especially when he made a reckless investment with Big Walter's money → it was a decision made solely on his own without consulting the family members even though his money wasn't his in the first place.

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- In this passage, Walter foregoes his own dreams and makes an unwavering decision on behalf of the family

Lindner's intentions/motive for turning to Mama

- Lindner appealed to Lena because she's the older and wiser one in the house, and she's also the head of the house, and he hopes that she would overturn Walter's decision BUT Lena cuts Lindner off then tells him she would stick with Walter's decision in a **SHOW OF SOLIDARITY**
- Beneatha shows her support for Walter's decision their relationships has changed drastically as by doing this, it shows that Beneatha has newfound respect and she's reaffirming his decision in front of Lindner → **acknowledges his position as the head of the house**
- Lena thrusts Walter into the limelight, now he has a very heavy responsibility on his shoulders and **it pressures him to take accountability** because he's making this decision on behalf of the whole family. She was already hoping for him to reject the offer *"rocking back and forth as though she were in church, with her head nodding the Amen yes"*

(ii) Using one other moment in the play, explore the ways in which Hansberry portrays Walter to be the opposite of his character.

||

Commented [17]: **NOTE: don't write a lot about Walter's demeanour in this passage compared to how he is usually; already discussed in part (i). Make a simple statement

Walter choosing not to sell the house

Walter's planned speech

- (pg 144) *"You got the right to keep it like you want."* (saying this in response to Youngers (mama), not Lindner)
 - Walter's lines emphasise how he's coerced into agreeing and succumbing to Lindner's offer, giving into Lindner's pressure, even though the offer was degrading and undesirable.
 - After losing the money, Walter feels defeated and desperate to fix the issue for himself AND the family → he has to restore the situation. As it's all Walter's fault for causing the problems in the family, Walter **probably feels indignant because of the lack of trust** the family has in him

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- *"Just write the check — and the house is yours."*
 - Portrays Walter as a victim of circumstance + emphasises Walter's desperation to get the money he'd lost to Willy.
 - May also suggests that he didn't appreciate how hard Big Walter and Lena worked for their family to finally achieve this opportunity of moving into Clybourne Park
 - Walter doesn't value how the money had come about, and Walter also doesn't understand and see how desperate his family's hopes and dreams are when he makes this line; he's different because he sees no value in Big Walter's hard work of getting the money and he also ignores the hopes and dreams of the family members (especially Mama)
- *"A-hee-hee-hee! Oh, yassuh boss! Great white father... dirty up yo' white folks neighbourhood."* (pg 144) (AFRICAN SLANG)
 - His lack of composure comes from his low self-esteem and exaggerates Lindner to be someone who has a lot of power over the AA.
 - *"Dirty up yo' white folks neighbourhood"* promotes the common stereotypes of AA being dirty → self-defeatist
 - ****Through this line, Walter is **deriding his own African American** heritage with sarcasm when he speaks in African slurs because it sounds uncivilised and crude; he's scorning and making fun of his own heritage → it's **bringing out his own insecurities about his heritage**. Walter is living up to the derogatory way the whites perceive African Americans to be, and he's self-defeating because he's given up fighting and arguing
 - *"Oh yassuh boss!"* → putting himself down. He feels that Lindner is giving money to him out of pity
- *"And you— you people just put the money in my hand and you won't have to live next to this bunch of stinking..."*
 - This line emphasises further Walter's desperation of being able to get back the money he lost from Willy, since the ticket to a better future, as well as how he lacked pride in his family, from how he derided his own kind with the use of, *"stinking..."*
 - Walter has to live at the charity of the whites → lost his dignity and pride because he knows he can't change the opinion of the whites about AA → he's given up fighting Lindner's racist views
- *"And maybe— maybe I'll just get down on my black knees."*

- Getting down on your knees is an act that gives up all his dignity, but the fact that he's black makes it even more derogatory because of racism
- Here, he's
- *"And I'll feel fine! FINE!"*
 - Use of repetition paired with contrast towards the end of the speech also further emphasises Walter's frustration and sarcasm, since feeling fine is far from what should be expected after getting degraded by a white man → Walter doesn't mean it when he says this line
 - Walter dehumanises himself and acts as how Lindner would want to → emphasises the racial hierarchy present in their society

SIGNIFICANCE OF MINOR CHARACTERS

1. GEORGE MURCHISON:

- Serves as a symbol of regression
 - Regressive mindset can be seen from when he comes to pick Beneatha up for their date; he makes many disdainful remarks to Beneatha about her African American getup. George calls her curly hair eccentric
 - In the 1950s, racism was still prevalent in the US and the norm would be for everyone to assimilate into American culture, regardless of their own background + white supremacy lead to AA heritage being looked down upon (what George is doing to Beneatha)
 - Both George and Beneatha are AA, but the way they react to their culture and heritage is contrasting: **George has conformed to American culture and expresses contempt for AA heritage because of his fear of straying from societal norms whilst Beneatha isn't afraid to embrace her origins**
- He represents African Americans assimilating into American culture and rejecting the African identity because he had an upbringing where **African heritage and culture wasn't frequently talked about in a dominantly white society** → **never had the chance to embrace** his roots

GEORGE VS BENEATHA

2. Karl Lindner

- Serves as a symbol of the majority of the racist, white society in America, but he doesn't see himself as racist because racism is so embedded into their society that they can't differentiate what's racist and what's not → views himself to be reasonable when he makes the bribe to the Youngers
- Lindner tells the Youngers that people would get along better if they listened to each other, but he's contradicting himself because **what he wants is for them to listen to him and what he has to say instead of partaking in a mutual conversation**. He feels that any other outcome other than the Youngers accepting his deal is unfathomable.
- Karl also says that Clybourne park is a community made of *"just hard-working, honest people who don't really have much but a dream of the kind of community they want to raise their children in."* → gives himself away as he follows this by saying that people are generally happier when they share a common background → **doesn't think that African Americans fit into his perception of how white people are generally more refined and proper** → he knows nothing about the Youngers and doesn't want to know any more **because he already has his ideologies and prejudices set in stone about African Americans**
- Karl makes it known to the Youngers that the whites don't feel that African Americans deserve or belong in the same community as them, as they believe themselves to be the superior race.

3. Mrs Johnson

- Serves as a reality check for Youngers as she plays the role of a nosy and jealous neighbour
- She makes tauntful remarks about the family moving into the new neighbourhood and the dangers of moving into a predominantly white neighbourhood hang in the air after she leaves the Youngers
- Her inconsiderate and uncaring nature is expressed when she uses a racial slur that she knows Lena doesn't allow in the household

4. Willy Harris

- Serves as an obstacle to Walter's dream, also shows how limited the opportunities were back then for AA because even though Walter had the means

to achieve his dream, external factors still prevented the manifestation of his dream

- Because Walter is so hopeful that his dream may come true, he lets his guard down, resulting in the money being lost.
 - Willy has no moral code and no qualms about betraying his friends. He knows there would be no quick way to advance his social status as an African American, which has curbed his opportunities for a better life
 - Instead of working his way up the social ladder, Willy takes the easy way out by stealing the money Walter and Bobo trusted him with
 - Walter and Bobo also trusted Willy with the collective dream of opening a liquor store → shows his self-centred and manipulative nature
- Willy also serves as a symbol of Walter's failure in achieving his dream:
 - Walter has a strong desire to be the sole breadwinner and financial supporter of the family, but he's thrown away the family's hopes of having a good financial situation by losing the money.
 - His recklessness with the money not only caused the deferment of his own dreams, but his sister's as well, along with his mother's trust in him.