

A Raisin in the Sun, Continued

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CHARACTERS:

Beneatha Younger: Now in her final year of medical school, she is engaged to George Asagai, but faces a choice.

George Asagai: Hopes to marry Beneatha, bring her home to Nigeria, and, together, help his hometown.

Walter Younger: Overworked and disillusioned. Beneatha's older brother.

Ruth Younger: Taken on a broader maternal role as Beneatha is busy with school and Mama falls sick. Does domestic work for White families.

Travis Younger: Now in middle school. Developed a stronger relationship with Mama. Has an affinity for candy and still carries groceries.

Lena (Mama) Walker: The matriarch of the family, fallen ill. Still tends to her garden and loves her children unconditionally.

SETTING: The late 1950s. A few years after the Youngers moved into their Clybourne Park house.

SYNOPSIS: Beneatha nears graduation, and faces a decision complicated by Mama's poor condition: Does she leave for Nigeria with Asagai, or practice medicine in Chicago?

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Act 4, Scene 1

Lights up on the stage where we see Mama's garden, now three years in the making, flush with tulips and tomatoes. Her plant from the apartment is nowhere to be seen; it's hidden in the center. Dwarfed by the others, MAMA pays extra care watering and nurturing the plant. Gardening is one of her few remaining activities. The others include, but are not limited to, Beneatha's graduation and spending time with Travis.

TRAVIS

(Bursting into the backyard as he holds up a candy bar like a trophy) Hiya Mama! Look what I got!

MAMA

(Gingerly looking up, the creases on her face are more pronounced than in earlier scenes) Oh, what've you got now? Come a little closer. I can't see it from here.

TRAVIS

A candy bar. I carried groceries after school and got myself one. You wanna bite?

MAMA

No thanks, baby. I don't have much of an appetite.

MAMA looks over her shoulder as a car pulls in the driveway. WALTER steps out and opens the door for RUTH. The two walk in, both looking tired.

RUTH

Hey Travis. Hey Lena. What have y'all been up to?

TRAVIS

(Proudly) I worked after school! Got myself a candy bar, too.

RUTH

Work? Oh, dear. See, Walter, this is what I'm talking about. Exactly what I've been sayin'. (*More quietly and directly to Walter*) Travis has got to get with some friends. He can't just be at the store or school all day.

WALTER

(*Whispering back*) But the kid's got to work. We need the money, plus it's a good experience. Look at us. We are already working like dogs for this damn house. Besides, who would he be friends with here? Ain't none of these folk in Clybourne want their kid around any of us.

RUTH

(*Sarcastically*) Maybe we ought to call up Linder and get his Welcoming Committee to help. Do some sort of social event for the neighborhood. (*More seriously*) Walter, he's got to make *some* friends. There's no way it's good for the boy.

TRAVIS

(*Headed to the screened door*) Oh, Ma, it's fine. The store is on the way home from school and the people there are usually pretty nice.

Another, nicer, car pulls up parallel to the house. GEORGE steps out in his polished wingtips and helps BENEATHA drop her books on the front step. He proceeds to wave to MAMA and leave. WALTER snickers under his breath.

WALTER

(*Looking to Beneatha*) When are you gonna start working? Travis already started, and he's in middle school.

BENEATHA

(*Confidently*) I will soon. Don't worry about me. I've got my degree, now I just need to make my mind up.

WALTER

You know how to do all these things — cutting a man open, stitching him up, tending to infections — but you don't know how to work. As far as I can tell, you haven't done a damn thing with that doctorate of yours.

BENEATHA

Well actually, George has invited me to Nigeria ... to live and work with him.

MAMA shifts uncomfortably. RUTH glances at WALTER whose frustrated laugh breaks the silence.

WALTER

You're going halfway across the world to do what? We spent tens of thousands of dollars — *thousands of dollars* — for you to leave? Do you hear yourself?

BENEATHA

(Her frustration crescendos) Well, I am not sure just yet. And even if I do go, I'll be doing good work, important work. It's work that *I love*, and it'll be with someone who can at least appreciate *that*.

WALTER

Well I'm sure the four of us would appreciate *you* doing something that helped *us* keep this roof over our heads and food in our mouths. Me and Ruth been working ourselves into the grave for this house — *for you* — and you're just gonna up and leave? And on top of that, I'm sure Mama wants to spend more time with you!

MAMA pulls herself up from the garden and wobbles over silently. The bickering immediately stops. She continues across the yard and into the kitchen. Everyone else follows her — BENEATHA defiantly strides toward her room, followed by RUTH, then WALTER dawdling far behind.

MAMA

(*Wiping the sweat from her brow*) It seems to get hotter and hotter every year, my goodness.

RUTH

Here, Mama. (*Gesturing at the sink*) Drink some water and I'll grab you a seat. I'll go and grab the medicine the doctor prescribed to you.

MAMA

Oh, I'm fine, thanks. Just a little bit dizzy. It's nothing.

RUTH

Are you sure? That doctor sure does know what he's talking about.

BENEATHA

Ruth's right. We learned about how this medication works in class, and it can make you dizzy, but it's your last shot at staying out of the hospital.

RUTH sets the pills on the coffee table next to a cup of ice water and leaves to help BENEATHA carry in the rest of her books for the summer. Once they leave, MAMA takes all the pills available to her and washes them down with water. She quickly hides the empty container back in the cabinet, returns to her bedroom, and closes her eyes.

CURTAIN