

Twentieth Century American Drama
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Lecture - 44
Hansberry's Day in the Sun Part 5

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supposed to know 'bout housekeeping. My baby, that's what he is. What you fix for his breakfast this morning?

RUTH (*Angrily*) I feed my son, Lena!

MAMA I ain't meddling—(*Underbreath; busy-bodyish*) I just noticed all last week he had cold cereal, and when it starts getting this chilly in the fall a child ought to have some hot grits or something when he goes out in the cold

—

RUTH (*Furious*) I gave him hot oats—is that all right!

MAMA I ain't meddling. (*Pause*) Put a lot of nice butter on it?
(RUTH *shoots her an angry look and does not reply*) He likes lots of butter.

RUTH (*Exasperated*) Lena—

MAMA (*To BENEATHA. MAMA is inclined to wander conversationally sometimes*) What was you and your brother fussing 'bout this morning?



Hello and welcome to today's session. So, we continue to discuss this play by Lorraine Hansberry a Days in the Sun. And we are trying to look at some of the significant instances, which will also help us to have a better understanding of the characters as well as the themes which I enunciated in this play.

So, if one takes a look at the characters and begin to wonder, who is the protagonist over here, maybe one of the easiest characters whom we could foreground over here is Walter. And if we look at the kind of dilemmas and the difficulties that Walter goes through as an individual, we find that he is perhaps the one character in this who is trying to assimilate the best, who is trying to make the most of the American context and the American dream in the 1950s.

And he is also the one who is perhaps you know trying to live in denial of his identity to the point of you know denial in a and in a good way, as you know to the point of him even assuming that these things will not make a difference at all.

So, we find that you know if we find him, if we situate Walter as the protagonist and if there is a need for us to point out an antagonist over here; it you know this sometimes in a very superficial level we might think that you know it is the white community, it is you know the Lindner who is trying to convince him not to go ahead with the property purchase, not you know not to live in that white neighborhood.

But if you think about it in a very deep philosophical sense, we find that the antagonist over here is racism. Walters fight is against racism, not in a very plain sense by defending the ethnic purity whichever way you choose to see it; not just in that sense, but his fight is against racism in terms of trying to appropriate, trying to claim what is available for the other citizens too.

So, of course, you know these there are these identity markers that he cannot completely do away with; but he is trying his best not to become those deterrent, his African American identity, the way that you know how his skin tone is different from the others, how his how you know he is being perceived not as an individual, but just part of a community which could be potentially dangerous.

So, these other things and also you know eh halfway through the play we also get to know that you know it is also a community who is also you know subject to a lot of attacks, yeah legal attacks, physical attacks. So, we find him trying to rise above all these differences and to claim what is out there for all American citizens.

So, here his fight in that sense, it is a fight against racism and the politics over here is very subdued, but strong yeah; it is a very subtle you know a protest against racism, not in an intellectual sense, not in an emotional sense, but in a very practical way, you know which is also you know say one of the beauties of a plays like this, In fact, most of these plays that we have looked at so far; they have these characters who have, who are heavily invested in the American dream.

But they are also you know the characters who are trying to be practical to the core, who are trying to make you know carve for themselves an alternate path a less trodden path yeah in order to make their way, find their way towards the American dream.

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there was time.
ASAGAI How much time must there be before one knows what one feels?
BENEATHA (*Stalling this particular conversation. Her hands pressed together, in a deliberately childish gesture*) What did you bring me?
ASAGAI (*Handing her the package*) Open it and see.
BENEATHA (*Eagerly opening the package and drawing out some records and the colorful robes of a Nigerian woman*) Oh, Asagai! ... You got them for me! ... How beautiful ... and the records too! (*She lifts out the robes and runs to the mirror with them and holds the drapery up in front of herself*)
ASAGAI (*Coming to her at the mirror*) I shall have to teach you how to drape it properly. (*He flings the material*



So, in almost complete contrast to this, we find the character of Joseph Asagai; we find that the contrast here is you know, it does lead to a lot of emotional conflict. But we find that, though they belong to the same race in a very technical sense; there is a different way in which they are looking at their own identity.

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ASAGAI (*Looking back at her in turn*) Are you really?
BENEATHA Yes—very.
ASAGAI Why?—you were quite glad when I went away. What happened?
BENEATHA You went away.
ASAGAI Ahhhhhhhh.
BENEATHA Before—you wanted to be so serious before there was time.
ASAGAI How much time must there be before one knows what one feels?
BENEATHA (*Stalling this particular conversation. Her hands pressed together, in a deliberately childish gesture*) What did you bring me?
ASAGAI (*Handing her the package*) Open it and see.
BENEATHA (*Eagerly opening the package and drawing out*



So, there is something very non-American about the way in which Asagai is responding to certainly reacting to certain things that Beneatha does. For instance you know if you, if we

could take a look at this instance, where you know Asagai is back from Canada and Beneatha is happy to have him back. So, they are having this conversation.

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ASAGAI Ahhhhhhhh.

BENEATHA Before—you wanted to be so serious before there was time.

ASAGAI How much time must there be before one knows what one feels?

BENEATHA *(Stalling this particular conversation. Her hands pressed together, in a deliberately childish gesture)* What did you bring me?

ASAGAI *(Handing her the package)* Open it and see.

BENEATHA *(Eagerly opening the package and drawing out some records and the colorful robes of a Nigerian woman)* Oh, Asagai! ... You got them for me! ... How beautiful ... and the records too! *(She lifts out the robes and runs to the mirror with them and holds the drapery up in front of herself)*



And so, Asagai is gifting her a package. So, this is a telling instance of how Asagai chooses to look at his own identity and how you know that identity which he wants to you know imbibe, the identity which he wants to display and you know the identity which he wants to also sell in some sense, the scene is very exotic by Beneatha. So, here you know he brings this package, which has some records and the colorful ropes of a Nigerian woman.

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ASAGAI How much time must there be before one knows what one feels?

BENEATHA *(Stalling this particular conversation. Her hands pressed together, in a deliberately childish gesture)* What did you bring me?

ASAGAI *(Handing her the package)* Open it and see.

BENEATHA *(Eagerly opening the package and drawing out some records and the colorful robes of a Nigerian woman)* Oh, Asagai! ... You got them for me! ... How beautiful ... and the records too! *(She lifts out the robes and runs to the mirror with them and holds the drapery up in front of herself)*

ASAGAI *(Coming to her at the mirror)* I shall have to teach you how to drape it properly. *(He flings the material about her for the moment and stands back to look at her)* Ah—Oh-pay-gay-day, oh-qbah-mu-shay. (A



And Beneatha is mightily impressed over here, it is also something very exotic for her; her response is quite similar to that of perhaps you know any other American, any other white American. Asagai, you got them for me, how beautiful and the records to; she lifts out the robes and runs to the mirror with them and holds the drapery up in front of in front of herself. And Asagai is also you know saying, I shall have to teach you how to drape it properly.

So, there are certain you know proper ways in which things are done within particular ethnic groups. And here we find the cosmopolitanism that you know our character like Beneatha is trying to embrace, yeah that scene as assimilation and even in a mutilation very soon by Asagai. So, he flings the material about her for the moment.

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Yoruba exclamation for admiration) You wear it well ... very well ... mutilated hair and all.

BENEATHA (*Turning suddenly*) My hair—what's wrong with my hair?

ASAGAI (*Shrugging*) Were you born with it like that?

BENEATHA (*Reaching up to touch it*) No ... of course not.

(She looks back to the mirror, disturbed)

ASAGAI (*Smiling*) How then?

BENEATHA YOU know perfectly well how ... as crinkly as yours ... that's how.

ASAGAI And it is ugly to you that way?

BENEATHA (*Quickly*) Oh, no—not ugly ... (*More slowly, apologetically*) But it's so hard to manage when it's, well



And stands back to look at her hair and you wear it well, very well mutilated hair and all. So, Beneatha suddenly asking you know my hair, what is wrong with my hair? We are you born with it like that? Of course, not; she looks back to the mirror disturbed. How then? You know perfectly well how as crinkly as yours, that is how. And it is ugly to you that way? No, not ugly apologetically; it is a; it is a very important word over here, this is what she feels.

No one begins to wonder you know whether she is apologetic for you know making her hair look different and more beautiful in her own way perhaps. Or is she apologetic for not perhaps you know, you know adhering to the standards that Asagai is now setting up before her.

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apologetically) But it's so hard to manage when it's well
—raw.

ASAGAI And so to accommodate that—you mutilate it every
week?

BENEATHA It's not mutilation!

ASAGAI (*Laughing aloud at her seriousness*) Oh ... please!
I am only teasing you because you are so very serious
about these things. (*He stands back from her and folds
his arms across his chest as he watches her pulling at
her hair and frowning in the mirror*) Do you remember
the first time you met me at school? ... (*He laughs*) You
came up to me and you said—and I thought you were the
most serious little thing I had ever seen—you said: (*He
imitates her*) "Mr. Asagai—I want very much to talk with
you. About Africa. You see, Mr. Asagai, I am looking for
my identity!"



It is so hard to manage when it is well raw. Asagai, and so to accommodate that, you mutilate it every week. So, look at the term that he is using over here, the assimilation or this embracing of this cosmopolitan culture as perhaps you know Beneatha would want to see it; it is seen as mutilation over here, mutilation of an identity, mutilation and almost an annihilation of a an ethnic community, from which of course you know the African American community also draws much.

So, here you know philosophically they are in, they belong to two different worlds altogether; of course you know towards the end Beneatha accepts his invitation, I mean accepts his proposal and decides to leave for Nigeria to become a doctor. So, we do find that you know there is this chord that they are striking with each other, but philosophically, intellectually, politically they seem to be inhabiting two different worlds over here.

It is not mutilation and this is she you know she is certainly very disturbed, she is apologetic and this is not no longer the confidence, confident arrogant self that she displays in front of her family, you know not and with Walter with her mother. Asagai oh please, I am only teasing you because you are so very serious about these things. He stands back from her and folds his arms across his chest as he watches her pulling at her hair and frowning in the mirror.

Do you remember the first time you met me in school? You came up to me and you said, I thought you were the most serious little thing I had ever seen you said; Mister Asagai, I want

very much to talk with you about Africa. You see Mister Asagai, I am looking for my identity.

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(Her face is quizzical, profoundly disturbed)

ASAGAI *(Still teasing and reaching out and taking her face in his hands and turning her profile to him)* Well ... it is true that this is not so much a profile of a Hollywood queen as perhaps a queen of the Nile—*(A mock dismissal of the importance of the question)* But what does it matter? Assimilationism is so popular in your country.

BENEATHA *(Wheeling, passionately, sharply)* I am not an assimilationist!

ASAGAI *(The protest hangs in the room for a moment and ASAGAI studies her, his laughter fading)* Such a serious one. *(There is a pause)* So—you like the robes? You must take excellent care of them—they are from my sister's personal wardrobe.

BENEATHA *(With incredulity)* You ... you ... you ...



So, her face is quizzical and she is profoundly disturbed and Asagai is still continuing in that same strain. Well it is true that this is not so much of a profile of a Hollywood queen as perhaps of a queen of Nile; a mock dismissal of the importance of the question. But what does it matter? Assimilationism is so popular in your country.

So, here one would not know how one would begin to look at the word assimilation over here. And we also need to keep this in mind that this is a 1950s play, where a lot of critical discussion, a lot of intellectual energy had not yet begun to be invested on to these questions, the questions of race, the questions of identity to assimilation and I know which is like on a really big deal today when one is talking about critical race studies.

So, she is also getting very defensive over here. So, look at these series of emotions that she undergoes over here; she is apologetic, she is disturbed, and she is also very passionately defensive over here, I am not an assimilationist.

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BENEATHA (*With incredulity*) You—you sent all the way home—for me?

ASAGAI (*With charm*) For you—I would do much more ... Well, that is what I came for. I must go.

BENEATHA Will you call me Monday?

ASAGAI Yes ... We have a great deal to talk about. I mean about identity and time and all that.

BENEATHA Time?

ASAGAI Yes. About how much time one needs to know what one feels. ✓

BENEATHA You see! You never understood that there is more than one kind of feeling which can exist between a man and a woman—or, at least, there should be.

ASAGAI (*Shaking his head negatively but gently*) No. Between a man and a woman there need be only one



The protest hangs in the room for a moment and Asagai studies her, his laughter fading. Such a serious one. So, you like the robes? You must take excellent care of them, they are from my personal that they are from my sisters personal wardrobe. You sent all the way a home for me? For you, I would do much more. Well, that is what I came for. I must go here. So, we have a great deal to talk about, I mean about identity and time and all that time. About how much time one needs to know what one feels.

So, here identity is a question about how one feels as well. Here we find that you know within the same family, Walter and Beneatha they grew up in you know under similar circumstances, yeah same kind of political climate, and socio cultural climate that they were acclimatized to. But they are very different in terms of how they feel about their identity.

So, identity in some sense you know in this plate becomes something which is very experiential; one can choose to experience in many different ways, irrespective of being put in the same similar circumstances. So, the experientiality of identity is something which gets foregrounded in the discussion over here.

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ASAGAI (*With charm*) For you—I would do much more ... Well, that is what I came for. I must go.

BENEATHA Will you call me Monday?

ASAGAI Yes ... We have a great deal to talk about. I mean about identity and time and all that.

BENEATHA Time?

ASAGAI Yes. About how much time one needs to know what one feels. ✓

BENEATHA You see! You never understood that there is more than one kind of feeling which can exist between a man and a woman—or, at least, there should be.

ASAGAI (*Shaking his head negatively but gently*) No. Between a man and a woman there need be only one kind of feeling. I have that for you ... Now even ... right



We never understood that there is more than one kind of feeling, which can exist between a man and a woman or at least, there should be. So, here you know this experientiality, which with respect to the identity is also you know about making a decision.

If you think about you know the decision that she makes at the end, its not purely a decision made out of love; it is you know much more than that, it is about how she feels about Asagai and also about how she feels about Asagai as an African, and how she feels about her own identity as an African. Because choosing to leave for Nigeria is also, it is also you know in some sense it means that she is you know willing to embrace the Africanness in her more than the African Americanness in her.

So, we do not know, you know the play does not give us a chance to figure out how this will eventually pan out, you know neither for Walter or Asagai or for Beneatha; but you know this is a chance, this is like a plunge that she takes.

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anywhere.
ASAGAI For a woman it should be enough.
BENEATHA I know—because that's what it says in all the novels that men write. But it isn't. Go ahead and laugh—but I'm not interested in being someone's little episode in America or—(*With feminine vengeance*)—one of them! (ASAGAI has burst into laughter again) That's funny as hell, huh!
ASAGAI It's just that every American girl I have known has said that to me. White—black—in this you are all the same. And the same speech, too!
BENEATHA (*Angrily*) Yuk, yuk, yuk!
ASAGAI It's how you can be sure that the world's most liberated women are not liberated at all. You all talk about it too much!



So, here you also see you know this Asagai has a very amused, a very amused kind of response to the feminist articulations of Beneatha.

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(MAMA enters and is immediately all social charm because of the presence of a guest)
BENEATHA Oh—Mama—this is Mr. Asagai.
MAMA How do you do?
ASAGAI (*Total politeness to an elder*) How do you do, Mrs. Younger. Please forgive me for coming at such an outrageous hour on a Saturday.
MAMA Well, you are quite welcome. I just hope you understand that our house don't always look like this. (*Chatterish*) You must come again. I would love to hear all about—(*Not sure of the name*)—your country. I think it's so sad the way our American Negroes don't know nothing about Africa 'cept Tarzan and all that. And all that money they pour into these churches when they ought to be helping you people over there drive out them French



It is how you can be sure that the world's most liberated women are not liberated at all; you all talk about it too much. So, at this point you know we can choose to agree or not agree with Asagai over here; because the kind of liberation that he is witnessing is not something that, he is used to you know given his the native traditions and the culture that he is used to.

But what Beneatha is also you know what she wants is perhaps, you know in some sense the best of both worlds; she wants to be able to embrace her identity, but at the same time claim the progressive ideas that the country of America is putting forward. So, here you know she is also introducing Asagai to her mother.

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(The mother flashes a slightly superior look at her daughter upon completion of the recitation)

ASAGAI *(Taken aback by this sudden and acutely unrelated expression of sympathy)* Yes ... yes ...

MAMA *(Smiling at him suddenly and relaxing and looking him over)* How many miles is it from here to where you come from?

ASAGAI Many thousands.

MAMA *(Looking at him as she would WALTER)* I bet you don't half look after yourself, being away from your mama either. I spec you better come 'round here from time to time to get yourself some decent home-cooked meals ...

ASAGAI *(Moved)* Thank you. Thank you very much. *(They are all quiet, then—)* Well ... I must go. I will call you



And you know we find that you know even before Asagai had arrived, you know that the entire family was schooled into how this guest from Africa would be treated; because you know they have a very different way in which here you know we find the mother being this a perfect figure through which we can analyze the complexities of race over here.

And the way you know her the identity of her race yeah is in some sense heavily influenced by her Americanness as well. So, there is no pure Africanness, there is no pure native tradition that any one of these characters and can claim to.

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over ... Right, see you then. *Arrivederci.*

(She hangs up)

MAMA *(Who has listened vigorously, as is her habit)* Who is that you inviting over here with this house looking like this? You ain't got the pride you was born with!

BENEATHA Asagai doesn't care how houses look, Mama—he's an intellectual.

MAMA *Who?*

BENEATHA Asagai—Joseph Asagai. He's an African boy I met on campus. He's been studying in Canada all summer.

MAMA What's his name?

BENEATHA Asagai, Joseph. Ah-sah-guy ... He's from Nigeria.



So, if we take a quick look at this instance, just before this episode where Beneatha is first introducing her mother, you know talking about Asagai to her mother. So, Asagai you are inviting over here with this house looking like this? You ain't got the pride, he was born with yeah. Asagai does not care how houses look, he is an intellectual.

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(She hangs up)

MAMA *(Who has listened vigorously, as is her habit)* Who is that you inviting over here with this house looking like this? You ain't got the pride you was born with!

BENEATHA Asagai doesn't care how houses look, Mama—he's an intellectual.

MAMA *Who?*

BENEATHA Asagai—Joseph Asagai. He's an African boy I met on campus. He's been studying in Canada all summer.

MAMA What's his name?

BENEATHA Asagai, Joseph. Ah-sah-guy ... He's from Nigeria.

MAMA Oh, that's the little country that was founded by slaves



Who? Asagai, Joseph Asagai is an African boy I met on campus. He is been studying in Canada all summer. What is his name? Asagai, he is from Nigeria. Oh that is a little country that was founded by slaves way back. No mama, that is Liberia yeah.

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way back ...

BENEATHA No, Mama—that's Liberia.

MAMA I don't think I never met no African before.

BENEATHA Well, do me a favor and don't ask him a whole lot of ignorant questions about Africans. I mean, do they wear clothes and all that—

MAMA Well, now, I guess if you think we so ignorant 'round here maybe you shouldn't bring your friends here—

BENEATHA It's just that people ask such crazy things. All anyone seems to know about when it comes to Africa is Tarzan—

MAMA (*Indignantly*) Why should I know anything about Africa?

BENEATHA Why do you give money at church for the missionary work?



So, we find that you know it is not as if the African Americans; they have it all sorted in their head about where their fellow you know Africans come from, you know it is a different country for them, it is a different culture for them and politically also they do not relate with them at all. So, here we find that Beneatha's mother is talking just like any other white woman over here; no mama that is Liberia. I do not think, I never met no African before.

Well, do me a favor and do not ask him a whole lot of ignorant questions about Africans. I mean, do they wear clothes and all that.

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BENEATHA Why do you give money at church for the missionary work?

MAMA Well, that's to help save people.

BENEATHA YOU mean save them from *heathenism*—

MAMA (*Innocently*) Yes.

BENEATHA I'm afraid they need more salvation from the British and the French.

(RUTH comes in forlornly and pulls off her coat with dejection. They both turn to look at her)

RUTH (*Dispiritedly*) Well, I guess from all the happy faces—everybody knows.

BENEATHA You pregnant?

MAMA Lord have mercy, I sure hope it's a little old girl. Travis ought to have a sister.



Well, now I guess if you think we are so ignorant around here, maybe you should not bring your friends here. It is just that people ask such crazy things, all anyone seems to know about when it comes to Africa is Tarzan. So, this here we find that you know Beneatha's family is no different from any other American family, the here where they exoticize the African culture; whether they you know it is very alien to them, it is so very non-American, irrespective of you know how similar they are in terms of the ethnicity that they share.

Why should I know anything about Africa? Why do you give money at church for the missionary work? Well, that is to help save people. You mean to save them from heathenism. Yes, I am afraid they need more salvation from the British and the French. So, here Lorraine Hansberry is taking this opportunity to critique colonialism as well. How the empire you know eventually became something from which these natives had to be saved from.

So, on the one hand, say people like Beneatha's mother they think that you know the Africans should be saved yeah, saved from their pagan practices; Christianity you know here becomes a tool, through which they could save the Africans. But Beneatha is getting very political over here and she is cutting into this religious discourse, the subtlety of this religious discourse and says they need more salvation from the British and the French; because I know and the most of the African countries, where French and British colonies and they were left in a very sad state yeah.

And we would not get in the details of it, but here we find a very subtle critique operating, a critique of colonialism operating over here.

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catastrophe) You mean you ain't read 'bout them colored people that was **bombed** out their place out there?

(RUTH straightens with concern and takes the paper and reads it. JOHNSON notices her and feeds commentary)

JOHNSON 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! *(With a tremendous and rather insincere sense of melodrama)* 'Course I thinks it's wonderful how our folks keeps on pushing out. You hear some of these Negroes 'round here talking 'bout how they don't go where they ain't wanted and all that—but not me, honey! *(This is a lie)* Wilhemenia Othella Johnson goes anywhere, any time she feels like it! *(With head movement for emphasis)* Yes I do! Why if we left it



So, in the middle of all this, there is also certain political realities and certain social realities which they cannot entirely ignore.

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mark off each word of the headline she can see in front of her) "NEGROES INVADE CLYBOURNE PARK—**BOMBED!**"

MAMA *(She and RUTH look at the woman in amazement)* We ain't exactly moving out there to get bombed.

JOHNSON Oh, honey—you know I'm praying to God every day that don't nothing like that happen! But you have to think of life like it is—and these here Chicago peckerwoods is some baaaad peckerwoods.

MAMA *(Wearily)* We done thought about all that Mis' Johnson.

(BENEATHA comes out of the bedroom in her robe and passes through to the bathroom. MRS. JOHNSON turns)



For instance when this character Johnson makes an appearance drawing attention to this news headline, Negroes invade Clybourne Park bombed. So, this creates an equal sense of panic; it is you know this is something which would create panic not just for the whites, but for families such as Walters family as well. So, a mother is saying, we are not exactly moving out there to get bombed.

Honey, you know I am praying to god every day that nothing like that happened; but you have to think of like life like it is and these here Chicago peckerwoods is some baaaad peckerwoods. So, we done thought about all that Mis Johnson. So, we do find that you know here there is some discomfort, while they are talking about this; because the implication is also that you know one community is more dangerous than the other.

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and vaguely reads the front page) Set off another bomb yesterday.

RUTH (*Maximum indifference*) Did they?

WALTER (*Looking up*) What's the matter with you?

RUTH Ain't nothing the matter with me. And don't keep asking me that this morning.

WALTER Ain't nobody bothering you. (*Reading the news of the day absently again*) Say Colonel McCormick is sick.

RUTH (*Affecting tea-party interest*) Is he now? Poor thing.

WALTER (*Sighing and looking at his watch*) Oh, me. (*He waits*) Now what is that boy doing in that bathroom all this time? He just going to have to start getting up earlier. I can't be being late to work on account of him fooling around in there.

RUTH (*Turning on him*) Oh, no he ain't going to be getting



And when they come across you know this news whether you know, where you know another bomb was set off yesterday. Did they? What is the matter with you? Are not nothing the matter with me.

And do not keep asking me that this morning. So, there is this social reality which is out there and this reference to this bombing of certain neighborhoods, it does create a lot of discomfort; but there is no attempt in the play to make these characters defensive about it, because this is seen a social problem, just the way you know another American family would, another white American family would see it.

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wait a minute and it'll change. *(She smiles happily at this cliché of clichés)* Everybody say it's got to do with them bombs and things they keep setting off. *(Pause)* Would you like a nice cold beer?

GEORGE No, thank you. I don't care for beer. *(He looks at his watch)* I hope she hurries up.

RUTH What time is the show?

GEORGE It's an eight-thirty curtain. That's just Chicago, though. In New York standard curtain time is eight forty.

(He is rather proud of this knowledge)

RUTH *(Properly appreciating it)* You get to New York a lot?

GEORGE *(Offhand)* Few times a year.

RUTH Oh—that's nice. I've never been to New York.

(WALTER enters. We feel he has relieved himself but



So, there is no need, there is no; there is no way in which you know they get into a defensive mode about the community; because you know as mentioned earlier, Walter is he as well as his mother they have imbibed the American spirit in so many ways, you know they do talk about the pride of the family, they took a talk about the pride of the individual and that is also know something why you know they it operates very differently for them as individuals as families.

But we do find that you know it is also got to, it has got to do largely about the way they have imbibed the spirit of individualism, you know from the country that they have chosen to live in. So, we will just take a look at you know how Johnson's, Johnson responds to this incident. You mean are not read about them colored people that was bombed out of their place out there?

Are not it something how bad this here white folks is getting here in Chicago. Lord, getting so you think you write down in Mississippi, with a tremendous and rather insincere sense of melodrama. Of course, I think it is wonderful how folks keeps on pushing out. You hear some of these Negroes round here talking about how they do not go where they are not wanted and all that, but not me honey.

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up to these here crackers, the poor niggers wouldn't have nothing—*(She clasps her hand over her mouth)* Oh, I always forgets you don't 'low that word in your house.

MAMA *(Quietly, looking at her)* No—I don't 'low it.

JOHNSON *(Vigorously again)* Me neither! I was just telling Isaiah yesterday when he come using it in front of me—I said, "Isaiah, it's just like Mis' Younger says all the time —"

MAMA Don't you want some more pie?

JOHNSON No—no thank you; this was lovely. I got to get on over home and have my midnight coffee. I hear some people say it don't let them sleep but I finds I can't close my eyes right lessen I done had that laaaast cup of coffee ... *(She waits. A beat. Undaunted)* My Goodnight coffee, I calls it!

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Wilhemenia Othella Johnson goes anywhere, anytime she feels like it. Yes, I do. Why if we left it up to these here crackers, the poor niggees would not have nothing. I always forgets you do not love that word in your house yeah, I do not love it yeah. Me neither, I was just telling Isaiah yesterday when he came it in front of me, when he when he come using it in front of me; I said Isaiah, just like Miss Younger says all the time.

So, here you know we also find a lot of differences between these different communities, these different families, who all you know share their you know racial identity. So, Niger is not a word that the Younger family finds acceptable. And we find that you know for them, even Asagai is an outsider; he is not seen as someone you know who shares their culture, who shares their philosophy, who shares their view of life.

So, this is perhaps you know the most challenging as well as most complex thing about this play, where it becomes difficult to slaughter the characters. So, race here becomes, the discriminatory practice of race here becomes an enemy for both the white as well as the black characters, for the African Americans as well as you know characters like Asagai who is an African from Nigeria. But you know that said put aside we find that, you know race does not become something which is acceptable to any of these characters.

Race is something you know racism the discriminatory practices that come out of racism is something that, all the characters equally try to you know stay away from; but you know there is a of course, a difference in the way they respond to it based on their gender locations,

based on their class locations deep or even based on you know the kind of intellectual engagement that they have with these sort of discourses.

Because in the characters of Beneatha and Asagai that is what we see, it is also about how they process it yeah, it is also about how they try to engage with the discourse in an intellectual sense.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:17)

(RUTH and BENEATHA exchange amused glances)

MAN (*Regarding WALTER, and sitting*) Well—My name is Karl Lindner ...

WALTER (*Stretching out his hand*) Walter Younger. This is my wife—(*RUTH nods politely*)—and my sister.

LINDNER How do you do.

WALTER (*Amiably, as he sits himself easily on a chair, leaning forward on his knees with interest and looking expectantly into the newcomer's face*) What can we do for you, Mr. Lindner!

LINDNER (*Some minor shuffling of the hat and briefcase on his knees*) Well—I am a representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association—

WALTER (*Doing*) Why don't you sit your things on the



So, now, we will come to the almost a final segment of this play, where Lindner comes and you know meets up with Walter hoping to convince him. So, my name is Karl Lindner, Walter Younger, this is my wife; Ruth my sister.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:33)

glances)

MAN (*Regarding WALTER, and sitting*) Well—My name is Karl Lindner ...

WALTER (*Stretching out his hand*) Walter Younger. This is my wife—(*RUTH nods politely*)—and my sister.

LINDNER How do you do.

WALTER (*Amiably, as he sits himself easily on a chair, leaning forward on his knees with interest and looking expectantly into the newcomer's face*) What can we do for you, Mr. Lindner!

LINDNER (*Some minor shuffling of the hat and briefcase on his knees*) Well—I am a representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association—

WALTER (*Pointing*) Why don't you sit your things on the



So, Lindner says, I am a representative of the Clybourne park improvement association. So, that is a neighborhood, you know where they have this property and they are thinking of moving in over there.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:44)

floor?

LINDNER Oh—yes. Thank you. (*He slides the briefcase and hat under the chair*) And as I was saying—I am from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association and we have had it brought to our attention at the last meeting that you people—or at least your mother—has bought a piece of residential property at—(*He digs for the slip of paper again*)—four o six Clybourne Street ...

WALTER That's right. Care for something to drink? Ruth, get Mr. Lindner a beer.

LINDNER (*Upset for some reason*) Oh—no, really. I mean thank you very much, but no thank you.

RUTH (*Innocently*) Some coffee?

LINDNER Thank you, nothing at all.



As I was saying, I am from the Clybourne park improvement association and we have had it brought to our attention at the last meeting that you people or at least your mother has bought a piece of residential property at four o six Clybourne street. That is right. Care for something

to drink? Ruth get Mister Lindner a beer. So, Lindner no, really I mean thank you very much, but no thank you.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:04)



(BENEATHA *is watching the man carefully*)

LINDNER Well, I don't know how much you folks know about our organization. (*He is a gentle man; thoughtful and somewhat labored in his manner*) It is one of these community organizations set up to look after—oh, you know, things like block upkeep and special projects and we also have what we call our New Neighbors Orientation Committee ...

BENEATHA (*Drily*) Yes—and what do they do?

LINDNER (*Turning a little to her and then returning the main force to WALTER*) Well—it's what you might call a sort of welcoming committee, I guess. I mean they, we—I'm the chairman of the committee—go around and see the new people who move into the neighborhood and sort of give



Down Up Mark Give Watch History Help Log Out

Some coffee? Nothing at all, because you know he is not going to talk to them about something which would actually you know help him to receive any hospitality. Well, I do not know how much you folks know about your organization; he is a gentleman, thoughtful and somewhat labor in his manner. It is one of these community organizations set up to look after or you know things like block upkeep and special projects and also we have what we call our new neighbors orientation committee and so they will continue to listen.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:33)

BENEATHA (From a letter that you have just read about our organization. *(He is a gentle man; thoughtful and somewhat labored in his manner)*) It is one of these community organizations set up to look after—oh, you know, things like block upkeep and special projects and we also have what we call our New Neighbors Orientation Committee ...

BENEATHA (*Drily*) Yes—and what do they do?

LINDNER (*Turning a little to her and then returning the main force to WALTER*) Well—it's what you might call a sort of welcoming committee, I guess. I mean they, we—I'm the chairman of the committee—go around and see the new people who move into the neighborhood and sort of give them the lowdown on the way we do things out in Clybourne Park.



Well, it is what you might call a sort of welcoming committee, I mean they are; we I am the chairman of the committee, go around and see the new people who move into the neighborhood and sort of give them the lowdown the way we do things out in Clybourne Park.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:49)

BENEATHA (*With appreciation of the two meanings, which escape RUTH and WALTER*) Un-huh.

LINDNER And we also have the category of what the association calls—*(He looks elsewhere)*—uh—special community problems ...

BENEATHA Yes—and what are some of those?

WALTER Girl, let the man talk.

LINDNER (*With understated relief*) Thank you. I would sort of like to explain this thing in my own way. I mean I want to explain to you in a certain way.

WALTER Go ahead.

LINDNER Yes. Well. I'm going to try to get right to the point. I'm sure we'll all appreciate that in the long run.

BENEATHA Yes.

WALTER Be still now!



So, there is a clearly you know, there is a sense of community feeling over here; not just in terms of the Clybourne Park, it is also we find that it is a white man who is talking and we

know who is we and who is us over here, who is them over here. We also have a category of what the association calls, a special community problems.

So, now Beneatha is getting very impatient and trying to interfere and Walter is allowing him to talk, you know Walter certainly you know despite the flaws that he has; he comes across as more accommodating in some sense yeah, he comes across as very practical, very down to earth irrespective of you know the ideas that he has and how you know he loses his money all of that.

So, thank you. I would sort of like to explain thing in my own way. I mean I want to explain to you in a certain way. I am going to try to get right to the point, I am sure we all appreciate that in the long run.

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WALTER'S QUESTION.
LINDNER Well—
RUTH (*Still innocently*) Would you like another chair—you don't look comfortable.
LINDNER (*More frustrated than annoyed*) No, thank you very much. Please. Well—to get right to the point I—(*A great breath, and he is off at last*) I am sure you people must be aware of some of the incidents which have happened in various parts of the city when colored people have moved into certain areas—(*BENEATHA exhales heavily and starts tossing a piece of fruit up and down in the air*) Well—because we have what I think is going to be a unique type of organization in American community life—not only do we deplore that kind of thing—but we are trying to do something about



So, you look at this, you know it is a very long prefatory discussion over here. So, Lindner also finds it very uncomfortable to come straight to the point and this discomfort shows that, race over here, racial discrimination of any kind is a common enemy of all characters over here.

And again you know I reiterate the this over here, Lorraine Hansberry's play you know one of the most successful elements of this play is this aspect, where all characters are equally uncomfortable when it comes to addressing race. The reason for the discomfort could be

many you know it could be because you know the ancestors were perpetrators, could be because the ancestors were victims.

But regardless of that we find that the discomfort is there making raise the common enemy, racism the common enemy over here. And he continues to get straight to the point yeah; I am sure you people must be aware of some of the incidents which have happened in various parts of the city when colored people have moved into certain areas.

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... (LINDNER) ... you don't look comfortable.



LINDNER (*More frustrated than annoyed*) No, thank you very much. Please. Well—to get right to the point I—(*A great breath, and he is off at last*) I am sure you people must be aware of some of the incidents which have happened in various parts of the city when colored people have moved into certain areas—(BENEATHA *exhales heavily and starts tossing a piece of fruit up and down in the air*) Well—because we have what I think is going to be a unique type of organization in American community life—not only do we deplore that kind of thing—but we are trying to do something about it. (BENEATHA *stops tossing and turns with a new and quizzical interest to the man*) We feel—

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Well, because we have what I think is going to be a unique type of organization in American community life, not only we do deplore that kind of thing, but we are trying to do something about it.

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(gaining confidence in his mission because of the interest in the faces of the people he is talking to)—we feel that most of the trouble in this world, when you come right down to it—(He hits his knee for emphasis)—most of the trouble exists because people just don't sit down and talk to each other.

RUTH *(Nodding as she might in church, pleased with the remark)* You can say that again, mister.

LINDNER *(More encouraged by such affirmation)* That we don't try hard enough in this world to understand the other fellow's problem. The other guy's point of view. ✓

RUTH Now that's right.

(BENEATHA and WALTER merely watch and listen with genuine interest)



We feel, we feel that most of the trouble in this world when you come right down to it, most of the trouble exists; because people just do not talk, just do not sit down and talk to each other. So, they are continuing that, we do not try hard enough to understand the other fellows problem, the other guys point of view.

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(BENEATHA and WALTER merely watch and listen with genuine interest)

LINDNER Yes—that's the way we feel out in Clybourne Park. And that's why I was elected to come here this afternoon and talk to you people. Friendly like, you know, the way people should talk to each other and see if we couldn't find some way to work this thing out. As I say, the whole business is a matter of *caring* about the other fellow. Anybody can see that you are a nice family of folks, hard working and honest I'm sure. *(BENEATHA frowns slightly, quizzically, her head tilted regarding him)* Today everybody knows what it means to be on the outside of *something*. And of course, there is always somebody who is out to take advantage of people who don't always understand.

WALTER What do you mean?

LINDNER Well—you see our community is made up of



He says he is coming straight to the point, but he still has not. That is a way we feel out in Clybourne Park, that is why I was elected to come here this afternoon to talk to you people friendly, like you know the way people should talk to each other and see if we could not find

some way to work this thing out. As I say the whole business is a matter of caring about the other fellow, anybody can say that you are a nice family of folks hard working and honest I am sure.

Today everybody knows what it means to be on the outside of something and of course, there is always somebody who is willing to, who is out to take advantage of people who do not always understand. So, we find that you know he is forced to go about in this very long and winding way; because this is a very uncomfortable situation, he really cannot come straight to the point. Here language comes very handy to in some sense you know capture the discomfort over here.

So, there is no right vocabulary to talk about the practice of racism and that is also something that this play you know it is beginning to foreground over here. It is about three pages of this continuous rambling about Lindner, setting the stage to just begin a conversation, an ordinary conversation with another ordinary set of a people, where you know he is struggling to get the right kind of vocabulary.

So, here is where you know we begin to wonder, whether it is mutilation or assimilation; we begin to wonder you know the kind of you know whether it is an equal race towards this American dream as Walter wants it to be. Well, you see our community has is made up of people, who worked hard as a dickens for years to build up that little community.

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and talk to you people. Friendly like, you know, the way people should talk to each other and see if we couldn't find some way to work this thing out. As I say, the whole business is a matter of *caring* about the other fellow. Anybody can see that you are a nice family of folks, hard working and honest I'm sure. (BENEATHA *frowns slightly, quizzically, her head tilted regarding him*) Today everybody knows what it means to be on the outside of *something*. And of course, there is always somebody who is out to take advantage of people who don't always understand.

WALTER What do you mean?

LINDNER 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



They are not rich and fancy people; just hardworking, honest people who do not really have much.

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have much but those little homes and a dream of the kind of community they want to raise their children in. Now, I don't say we are perfect and there is a lot wrong in some of the things they want. But you've got to admit that a man, right or wrong, has the right to want to have the neighborhood he lives in a certain kind of way. 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. I want you to believe me when I tell you that race prejudice simply doesn't enter into it. It is a matter of the people of Clybourne Park believing, rightly or wrongly, as I say, that for the happiness of all concerned that our Negro families are happier when they live in their own communities.

BENEATHA (*With a grand and bitter gesture*) This, friends, is the Welcomina Committee!



But those little homes and a dream of the kind of community they want to raise their children in. So, it is you know we find a very complex mix of race and class operating over here yeah and there is an anxiety, which is not based entirely on you know how individuals think about things; it is an anxiety of a community, it is an anxiety of a society, it is a historical anxiety which has been passed down and which is why you know this intense struggle to find the right kind of vocabulary in a politically correct way to talk about this.

Now, I do not say we are perfect and there is a lot wrong in some of the things they want; but you have got to admit that a man right or wrong has a right to want to have the neighborhood, he lives in a certain kind of way and you know it just continues with this rambling. And 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.

So, this is very significant, yeah on the one hand here you know I want you to pause and think about how this play is critiquing American dream over here; it is getting to the heart of the problem, getting to the root of the problem by it saying that, while there is a notion, there is a sense of the American dream out there, which promises all kinds of material success and

fame and reputation and fulfillment to anyone who wants to you know go for it, irrespective of their background.

We find that you know there is no common background to begin with, there is no common background no palpable agreeable common background in terms of race or in terms of class. This is a fundamental difference that we know not just in this play; but also you know in zoo story yeah and in a death of a salesman, while certain families, certain individuals are born into, some kind of an inheritance some are expected to work towards it.

So, it is never a common background to begin with, I want you to believe me when I tell you that race prejudice simply does not enter into it; it is a matter of the people of Clybourne Park believing rightly or wrongly as I say that for the happiness of all concerned, that our negro families are happier when they live in their own communities.

So, how would you refute the logic in it and how would you address the logic in this. So, it is there it is just logical enough and how does it you know if you place this logic in dialogue with the many political reforms and social cultural reforms, you know how would you begin to address this. And he also states that in a very awed sense that it is not race prejudice; but of course, we know that you know this is one of the most subtle ways in which race prejudice operates too.

And this is also being placed as a gesture which would be acceptable for the Negro families, because you know they would be also be happier when they live in their own community. So, this except clearly a divide over here of us and them, yeah irrespective of you know how the polity is shaping up the us, them divide seems to be creating a huge you know you know say difference over here.

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is the Welcoming Committee!

WALTER (*Dumbfounded, looking at LINDNER*) IS this what you came marching all the way over here to tell us?

LINDNER Well, now we've been having a fine conversation. I hope you'll hear me all the way through.

WALTER (*Tightly*) Go ahead, man.

LINDNER You see—in the face of all the things I have said, we are prepared to make your family a very generous offer ...

BENEATHA Thirty pieces and not a coin less!

WALTER Yeah?

LINDNER (*Putting on his glasses and drawing a form out of the briefcase*) Our association is prepared, through the collective effort of our people, to buy the house from you at a financial gain to your family.



And of course you know this is the welcoming committee, Beneatha remarks very bitterly over here. So, Lindner still thinks they are having a fine conversation yeah and things you know they are a very generous family.

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you came marching all the way over here to tell us?

LINDNER Well, now we've been having a fine conversation. I hope you'll hear me all the way through.

WALTER (*Tightly*) Go ahead, man.

LINDNER You see—in the face of all the things I have said, we are prepared to make your family a very generous offer ...

BENEATHA Thirty pieces and not a coin less!

WALTER Yeah?

LINDNER (*Putting on his glasses and drawing a form out of the briefcase*) Our association is prepared, through the collective effort of our people, to buy the house from you at a financial gain to your family.

RUTH Lord have mercy, ain't this the living gall!

WALTER All right, you through?



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LINDNER Well, I want to give you the exact terms of the financial arrangement—

WALTER We don't want to hear no exact terms of no arrangements. I want to know if you got any more to tell us 'bout getting together?

LINDNER (*Taking off his glasses*) Well—I don't suppose that you feel ...

WALTER Never mind how I feel—you got any more to say 'bout how people ought to sit down and talk to each other? ... Get out of my house, man.

(*He turns his back and walks to the door*)

LINDNER (*Looking around at the hostile faces and reaching and assembling his hat and briefcase*) Well—I don't understand why you people are reacting this way. What do you think you are going to gain by moving into a neighborhood where you just aren't wanted and where



And the association is prepared to you know continue this discussion and all that.

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WALTER Never mind how I feel—you got any more to say 'bout how people ought to sit down and talk to each other? ... Get out of my house, man.

(*He turns his back and walks to the door*)

LINDNER (*Looking around at the hostile faces and reaching and assembling his hat and briefcase*) Well—I don't understand why you people are reacting this way. What do you think you are going to gain by moving into a neighborhood where you just aren't wanted and where some elements—well—people can get awful worked up when they feel that their whole way of life and everything they've ever worked for is threatened.

WALTER Get out.

LINDNER (*At the door, holding a small card*) Well—I'm sorry, it went like this.

WALTER Get out.



So, and he also you know, Walter suddenly asking him to get out of the house. And Lindner says, I do not understand why your people are, why you people are reacting in this way. What do you think you are going to gain by moving into a neighborhood, where you just are not wanted and where some elements, where people can get awful walked up and they feel that their whole way of life and everything they have worked for this threatened. Pay attention to these words over here.

First he talks about protecting the Negro family, keeping them happy by making them live you know among the their own kinds, you know and that seems to be the agenda, the overall you know the community welfare seems to be the agenda. Now, you know when they are continuing this conversation we find that, one community, the African community, the African American community, their Negroes are the as the play continues to refer to it, you know they are the ones who are seen as threats.

So, the welfare, the social welfare and the happiness quotient and everything that he is talking about, the Lindner is talking about it is only for the white community. So, here while he is trying to talk about you know this in very balanced way; we also know that he has come here, you know he is come to Walters home you know as the Younger families home as a spokesperson of the white community.

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they've ever worked for is threatened.

WALTER Get out.

LINDNER (*At the door, holding a small card*) Well—I'm sorry it went like this.

WALTER Get out.

LINDNER (*Almost sadly regarding WALTER*) YOU just can't force people to change their hearts, son.

(He turns and put his card on a table and exits. WALTER pushes the door to with stinging hatred, and stands looking at it. RUTH just sits and BENEATHA just stands. They say nothing. MAMA and TRAVIS enter)

MAMA Well—this all the packing got done since I left out of here this morning. I testify before God that my children



So, this also you know incidentally, it suddenly becomes a bonding moment for the family.

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BENEATHA Four o'clock. You had a caller, Mama.

(She is smiling, teasingly)

MAMA Sure enough—who?

BENEATHA *(Her arms folded saucily)* The Welcoming Committee.

(WALTER and RUTH giggle)

MAMA *(Innocently)* Who?

BENEATHA The Welcoming Committee. They said they're sure going to be glad to see you when you get there.

WALTER *(Devilishly)* Yeah, they said they can't hardly wait to see your face.

(Laughter)

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They share a light moment right after that. So, Beneatha you know they are imitating, they are mimicking the situation; who the welcoming committee, who the welcoming committee. They said they are sure going to be glad to see you when you get there.

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MAMA *(Sensing their facetiousness)* What's the matter with you all?

WALTER Ain't nothing the matter with us. We just telling you 'bout the gentleman who came to see you this afternoon. From the Clybourne Park Improvement Association.

MAMA What he want?

RUTH *(In the same mood as BENEATHA and WALTER)* TO welcome you, honey.

WALTER He said they can't hardly wait. He said the one thing they don't have, that they just *dying* to have out there is a fine family of fine colored people! *(To RUTH and BENEATHA)* Ain't that right!

RUTH *(Mockingly)* Yeah! He left his card—

BENEATHA *(Handing card to MAMA)* In case.

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Yeah, they said they cannot hardly wait to see your face. So, here no we find that for the first time perhaps in the play, they are beginning to bond, they are beginning to see that you know the real enemy is perhaps out there. And of course, you know they are not blaming Lindner either over here yeah; it is about the peculiar way in which the system has you know

fashioned itself into, which is telling about the gentleman who came to see you this afternoon from the Clybourne Park improvement association and now they are you know relaying everything to the mother.

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MAMA Father, give us strength. (*Knowingly—and without fun*) Did he threaten us?

BENEATHA Oh—Mama—they don't do it like that any more. He talked Brotherhood. He said everybody ought to learn how to sit down and hate each other with good Christian fellowship.

(*She and WALTER shake hands to ridicule the remark*)

MAMA (*Sadly*) Lord, protect us ...

RUTH You should hear the money those folks raised to buy the house from us. All we paid and then some.

BENEATHA What they think we going to do—eat 'em?

RUTH No, honey, marry 'em.

MAMA (*Shaking her head*) Lord, Lord, Lord ...

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And about you know the money they raised to buy the house from us all we paid and then some.

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the money those folks raised to buy the house from us. All we paid and then some.

BENEATHA What they think we going to do—eat 'em?

RUTH No, honey, marry 'em.

MAMA (*Shaking her head*) Lord, Lord, Lord ...

RUTH Well—that's the way the crackers crumble. (*A beat*) Joke.

BENEATHA (*Laughingly noticing what her mother is doing*) Mama, what are you doing?

MAMA Fixing my plant so it won't get hurt none on the way ...

BENEATHA Mama, you going to take *that* to the new house?

MAMA Un-huh—

BENEATHA That raggedy-looking old thing?

MAMA (*Stopping and looking at her*) It expresses ME!

RUTH (*With delight, to BENEATHA*) SO there, Miss Thing!

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So, this is actually you know a lot of money over there; you know what they get as an offer to forego the property in Clybourne is perhaps you know more than the money that they got by way of insurance.

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behind her and squeezes her in his arms with all his strength. She is overwhelmed by the suddenness of it and, though delighted, her manner is like that of KUTH and TRAVIS)

MAMA Look out now, boy! You make me mess up my thing here!

WALTER (*His face lit, he slips down on his knees beside her, his arms still about her*) Mama ... you know what it means to climb up in the chariot?

MAMA (*Gruffly, very happy*) Get on away from me now ...

RUTH (*Near the gift-wrapped package, trying to catch WALTER'S eye*) Psst—

WALTER What the old song say, Mama ...

RUTH Walter—Now?



And of course, you know they do not go ahead with it.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:08)

*When I get to heaven gonna put on my wings,
Gonna fly all over God's heaven ...
(The little man just stares at him)
Heaven—
(Suddenly he stops and looks past the little man
into the empty hallway) Where's Willy, man?*

BOBO He ain't with me.

WALTER (*Not disturbed*) Oh—come on in. You know my wife.

BOBO (*Dumbly, taking off his hat*) Yes—h'you, Miss Ruth.

RUTH (*Quietly, a mood apart from her husband already, seeing BOBO*) Hello, Bobo.

WALTER You right on time today ... Right on time. That's the way! (*He slaps BOBO on his back*) Sit down ... lemme



And as we come to the end of the play and as we come to the end of the play, we find that you know all of them are taking making of a few very quick and crisp decisions yeah.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:15)

BOBO (*Dumbly, taking off his hat*) Yes—h'you, Miss Ruth.
RUTH (*Quietly, a mood apart from her husband already, seeing BOBO*) Hello, Bobo.
WALTER You right on time today ... Right on time. That's the way! (*He slaps BOBO on his back*) Sit down ... lemme hear.

(*RUTH stands stiffly and quietly in back of them, as though somehow she senses death, her eyes fixed on her husband*)

BOBO (*His frightened eyes on the floor, his hat in his hands*) Could I please get a drink of water, before I tell you about it, Walter Lee?

(*WALTER does not take his eyes off the man.*)

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The decisions which were the point of conflict all throughout the play, all throughout you know in some sense you know that is the point of conflict in their family life entirely. So, we find you know mother is deciding to give some money to Walter, you know whatever is remaining and there is suddenly a trust which is placed on Walter, which makes him happy and it also makes that makes it possible for them to face the future together. Beneatha also takes the decision to leave for Nigeria to work there as a doctor.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:47)

BOBO Lemme tell you—Walter Lee. (*Looking at Ruth and talking to her more than to WALTER*) YOU know how it was. I got to tell you how it was. I mean first I got to tell you how it was all the way ... I mean about the money I put in, Walter Lee ...

WALTER (*With taut agitation now*) What about the money you put in?

BOBO Well—it wasn't much as we told you—me and Willy— (*He stops*) I'm sorry, Walter. I got a bad feeling about it. I got a real bad feeling about it ...

WALTER Man, what you telling me about all this for? ... Tell me what happened in Springfield ...

BOBO Springfield.

RUTH (*Like a dead woman*) What was supposed to happen in Springfield?

BOBO (*To her*) This deal that me and Walter went into with

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And they all seem to be happy about the choices that they have made.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:54)

me what happened in Springfield ...

BOBO Springfield.

RUTH (*Like a dead woman*) What was supposed to happen in Springfield?

BOBO (*To her*) This deal that me and Walter went into with Willy— Me and Willy was going to go down to Springfield and spread some money 'round so's we wouldn't have to wait so long for the liquor license ... That's what we were going to do. Everybody said that was the way you had to do, you understand, Miss Ruth?

WALTER Man—what happened down there?

BOBO (*A pitiful man, near tears*) I'm trying to tell you, Walter.

WALTER (*Screaming at him suddenly*) THEN TELL ME, GODDAMMIT ... WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?

BOBO Man ... I didn't go to no Springfield yesterday



It is almost you know they seems, they seem to have developed the enemy out there.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:56)

WALTER Man, what are you talking about!

BOBO I'm talking about the fact that when I got to the train station yesterday morning—eight o'clock like we planned ... Man—*Willy didn't never show up.*

WALTER Why ... where was he ... where is he?

BOBO That's what I'm trying to tell you ... I don't know ... I waited six hours ... I called his house ... and I waited ... six hours ... I waited in that train station six hours ... (*Breaking into tears*) That was all the extra money I had in the world ... (*Looking up at WALTER with the tears running down his face*) Man, *Willy is gone.*

WALTER Gone, what you mean Willy is gone? Gone where? You mean he went by himself. You mean he went off to Springfield by himself—to take care of getting the license —(*Turns and looks anxiously at RUTH*) You mean maybe he didn't want too many people in on the business down



And they seem to have more clarity about who they are.

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—(*Turns and looks anxiously at RUTH*) You mean maybe he didn't want too many people in on the business down there? (*Looks to RUTH again, as before*) You know Willy got his own ways. (*Looks back to BOBO*) Maybe you was late yesterday and he just went on down there without you. Maybe—maybe—he's been callin' you at home tryin' to tell you what happened or something. Maybe—maybe—he just got sick. He's somewhere—he's got to be somewhere. We just got to find him—me and you got to find him. (*Grabs BOBO senselessly by the collar and starts to shake him*) We got to!

BOBO (*In sudden angry, frightened agony*) What's the matter with you, Walter! *When a cat take off with your money he don't leave you no road maps!*

WALTER (*Turning madly, as though he is looking for WILLY in the very room*) Willy! ... Willy ... don't do it ... Please



And how they should be dealing with these different circumstances you know and the realization that there is no other way in which they can deal with and unless and until you know they work together. And if you come to the just you know very gradually go through the final bits over here.

(Refer Slide Time: 34:23)

BOBO Lemme tell you—

WALTER Man—didn't nothing go wrong?

BOBO Lemme tell you—Walter Lee. (*Looking at RUTH and talking to her more than to WALTER*) YOU know how it was. I got to tell you how it was. I mean first I got to tell you how it was all the way ... I mean about the money I put in, Walter Lee ...

WALTER (*With taut agitation now*) What about the money you put in?

BOBO Well—it wasn't much as we told you—me and Willy—(*He stops*) I'm sorry, Walter. I got a bad feeling about it. I got a real bad feeling about it ...

WALTER Man, what you telling me about all this for? ... Tell me what happened in Springfield ...

BOBO Springfield.



Where Walter comes to know from Bobo that, you know they he is lost the money.

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waited ... six hours ... I waited in that train station six hours ... *(Breaking into tears)* That was all the extra money I had in the world ... *(Looking up at WALTER with the tears running down his face)* Man, Willy is gone.

WALTER Gone, what you mean Willy is gone? Gone where? You mean he went by himself. You mean he went off to Springfield by himself—to take care of getting the license —*(Turns and looks anxiously at RUTH)* You mean maybe he didn't want too many people in on the business down there? *(Looks to RUTH again, as before)* You know Willy got his own ways. *(Looks back to BOBO)* Maybe you was late yesterday and he just went on down there without you. Maybe—maybe—he's been callin' you at home tryin' to tell you what happened or something. Maybe—maybe—he just got sick. He's somewhere—he's got to be somewhere. We just got to find him—me and you got to find him.



Gone, what do you mean Willy is gone? Gone where? You mean he went by himself. You mean he went off to Springfield by himself to take care of things of getting the license.

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Springfield by himself—to take care of getting the license —*(Turns and looks anxiously at RUTH)* You mean maybe he didn't want too many people in on the business down there? *(Looks to RUTH again, as before)* You know Willy got his own ways. *(Looks back to BOBO)* Maybe you was late yesterday and he just went on down there without you. Maybe—maybe—he's been callin' you at home tryin' to tell you what happened or something. Maybe—maybe—he just got sick. He's somewhere—he's got to be somewhere. We just got to find him—me and you got to find him. *(Grabs BOBO senselessly by the collar and starts to shake him)* We got to!

BOBO *(In sudden angry, frightened agony)* What's the matter with you, Walter! *When a cat take off with your money he don't leave you no road maps!*

WALTER *(Turning madly, as though he is looking for WILLY in the very room)* Willy! ... Willy ... don't do it ... Please



You mean maybe he did not want too many people in on the business down there? So, here is you know he is getting cheated, yeah he is trying to invest in the liquor business and he is being treated by he is cheated by Willy. And it is again you know it is not he is not cheated by a person like Lindner; yeah Lindner is someone you know if you think about it in very pragmatic terms is, you know if you break down this in a very technical sense, we find that

Lindner is someone who is offering him money, offering him money to just stay out of the white neighborhood.

And Willy in fact you know cheats him and runs away with his money. But still we find that you know it is a very different kind of politics at work over here; it is difficult to choose a side over here, difficult to say you know what would be the safest bet in terms of you know whether to go trust the white community, which is skeptical about you. But they are willing to offer money just to keep you away or do you continue to trust the likes of Willy, yeah where do you know you also can bond in many other ways.

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her Man ... *(He starts to pound the floor with his fists, sobbing wildly)* THAT MONEY IS MADE OUT OF MY FATHER'S FLESH—

BOBO *(Standing over him helplessly)* I'm sorry, Walter ...
(Only WALTER'S sobs reply. BOBO puts on his hat) I had my life staked on this deal, too ...

(He exits)

MAMA *(To WALTER) Son—(She goes to him, bends down to him, talks to his bent head)* Son ... Is it gone? Son, I gave you sixty-five hundred dollars. Is it gone? All of it? Beneatha's money too?

WALTER *(Lifting his head slowly)* Mama ... I never ... went to the bank at all ...

MAMA *(Not wanting to believe him)* You mean ... your



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So, my mother is also you know obviously heartbroken; is it gone? I give you sixty five hundred dollars. Is it all gone? All of it? Beneatha's money too?

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ACT III



An hour later.

At curtain, there is a sullen light of gloom in the living room, gray light not unlike that which began the first scene of Act One. At left we can see WALTER within his room, alone with himself. He is stretched out on the bed, his shirt out and open, his arms under his head. He does not smoke, he does not cry out, he merely lies there, looking up at the ceiling, much as if he were alone in the world.

In the living room BENEATHA sits at the table, still surrounded by the now almost ominous packing crates. She sits looking off. We feel that this is a mood struck perhaps an hour before, and it lingers now, full of the

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So, this is the final act over here.

(Refer Slide Time: 37:02)



An hour later.

At curtain, there is a sullen light of gloom in the living room, gray light not unlike that which began the first scene of Act One. At left we can see WALTER within his room, alone with himself. He is stretched out on the bed, his shirt out and open, his arms under his head. He does not smoke, he does not cry out, he merely lies there, looking up at the ceiling, much as if he were alone in the world.

In the living room BENEATHA sits at the table, still surrounded by the now almost ominous packing crates. She sits looking off. We feel that this is a mood struck perhaps an hour before, and it lingers now full of the empty sound of profound disappointment. We see on a line from her brother's bedroom the sameness of their attitudes. Presently the bell rings and BENEATHA rises

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So, an hour later, we will take some time to quickly go through this.

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... something. She looks up and turns in her seat)

BENEATHA (*Hissingly*) Yes—just look at what the New World hath wrought! ... Just look! (*She gestures with bitter disgust*) There he is! *Monsieur le petit bourgeois noir*—himself! There he is—Symbol of a Rising Class! Entrepreneur! Titan of the system! (*WALTER ignores her completely and continues frantically and destructively looking for something and hurling things to floor and tearing things out of their place in his search.* BENEATHA ignores the eccentricity of his actions and goes on with the monologue of insult) Did you dream of yachts on Lake Michigan, Brother? Did you see yourself on that Great Day sitting down at the Conference Table, surrounded by all the mighty bald-headed men in America? All halted, waiting, breathless, waiting for your pronouncements on industry? Waiting for you—



And so, in this final life things are beginning to fall into place for Beneath and Asagai.

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(He turns back to the contract)

WALTER (*A beat; staring at him*) And my father—(*With sudden intensity*) My father almost beat a man to death once because this man called him a bad name or something, you know what I mean?

LINDNER (*Looking up, frozen*) No, no, I'm afraid I don't—

WALTER (*A beat. The tension hangs; then WALTER steps back from it*) Yeah. Well—what I mean is that we come from people who had a lot of *pride*. I mean—we are very proud people. And that's my sister over there and she's going to be a doctor—and we are very proud—

LINDNER Well—I am sure that is very nice, but—

WALTER What I am telling you is that we called you over here to tell you that we are very proud and that this—

(*Signaling to TRAVIS*) Travis, come here. (*TRAVIS crosses*



So, at this point you know the family is in a the kind of a crisis over here; there are decisions to be made, money is lost. And towards the end of third act, we find that you know Walter transforms into a very different individual altogether. And this father who was an invisible character until at that point, you know who from you know was of course seen as a source of that money; but he becomes a larger than life character towards the end, almost you know becoming a like a savior over here.

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(Signaling to TRAVIS) Travis, come here. (TRAVIS crosses and WALTER draws him before him facing the man) This is my son, and he makes the sixth generation our family in this country. And we have all thought about your offer—

LINDNER Well, good ... good—

WALTER And we have decided to move into our house because my father—my father—he earned it for us brick by brick. *(MAMA has her eyes closed and is rocking back and forth as though she were in church, with her head nodding the Amen yes)* We don't want to make no trouble for nobody or fight no causes, and we will try to be good neighbors. And that's *all* we got to say about that. *(He looks the man absolutely in the eyes)* We don't want your money. *(He turns and walks away)*

LINDNER *(Looking around at all of them)* I take it then—that you have decided to occupy ...



So, Walter towards the end, you know when he is meeting Lindner, he comes you know he arrives at this decision; we have decided to move into our house, because my father, my father he earned it us for earned it us for us brick by brick.

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(Signaling to TRAVIS) Travis, come here. (TRAVIS crosses and WALTER draws him before him facing the man) This is my son, and he makes the sixth generation our family in this country. And we have all thought about your offer—

LINDNER Well, good ... good—

WALTER And we have decided to move into our house because my father—my father—he earned it for us brick by brick. *(MAMA has her eyes closed and is rocking back and forth as though she were in church, with her head nodding the Amen yes)* We don't want to make no trouble for nobody or fight no causes, and we will try to be good neighbors. And that's *all* we got to say about that. *(He looks the man absolutely in the eyes)* We don't want your money. *(He turns and walks away)*

LINDNER *(Looking around at all of them)* I take it then—that you have decided to occupy ...



Mama has her eyes closed and is rocking back and forth as you see we are in church with her head nodding in the Amen yes. We do not want to make no trouble for nobody or fight no causes and we will try to be good neighbors. And that is all we have got to say about that; he looks at the man absolutely in the eyes, we do not want your money.

So, when the this family, when they are taking this decision, when they are taking this decision together; it is also a statement about the kind of individuals they are, the kind of family they are, and the kind of community that they want to project themselves as.

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BENEATHA That's what the man said.

LINDNER (*To MAMA in her reverie*) Then I would like to appeal to you, Mrs. Younger. You are older and wiser and understand things better I am sure ...

MAMA I am afraid you don't understand. My son said we was going to move and there ain't nothing left for me to say. (*Briskly*) You know how these young folks is nowadays, mister. Can't do a thing with 'em! (*As he opens his mouth, she rises*) Good-bye.

LINDNER (*Folding up his materials*) Well—if you are that final about it ... there is nothing left for me to say. (*He finishes, almost ignored by the family, who are concentrating on WALTER LEE. At the door LINDNER halts and looks around*) I sure hope you people know what you're getting into.



So, Lindner says I take it then that you have decided to occupy and they are also together you know Beneatha, Walter, mama, Ruth, yeah Asagai they are a united front at this point. And Lindner says then I would like to appeal to you Mistress Younger you are older and wiser and I understand things better, I am sure, I am afraid you do not understand.

My son said we was going to move and there are not left, there are not nothing left for me to say; you know how these young folks is nowadays, mister. Cannot do a thing with them; you know she is also letting Walter take this decision, because you know she knows it is the right decision.

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(He shakes his head and exits)

RUTH *(Looking around and coming to life)* Well, for God's sake—if the moving men are here—LET'S GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!

MAMA *(Into action)* Ain't it the truth! Look at all this here mess. Ruth, put Travis' good jacket on him ... Walter Lee, fix your tie and tuck your shirt in, you look like somebody's hoodlum! Lord have mercy, where is my plant? *(She flies to get it amid the general bustling of the family, who are deliberately trying to ignore the nobility of the past moment)* You all start on down ... Travis child, don't go empty-handed ... Ruth, where did I put that box with my skillets in it? I want to be in charge of it myself ... I'm going to make us the biggest dinner we ever ate tonight ... Beneatha, what's the matter with them stockinos? Pull them thins up, girl ...

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And if you are final about it, there is nothing left for me to say and he bits goodbye and leaves. So, now you know there is a lot of energy in the family too; they are getting ready to move out of this home and you know occupy that white neighborhood.

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BENEATHA *(Mama, Asagai asked me to marry him today and go to Africa—)*

MAMA *(In the middle of her getting-ready activity)* He did? You ain't old enough to marry nobody—*(Seeing the moving men lifting one of her chairs precariously)* Darling, that ain't no bale of cotton, please handle it so we can sit in it again! I had that chair twenty-five years ...

(The movers sigh with exasperation and go on with their work)

BENEATHA *(Girlishly and unreasonably trying to pursue the conversation)* To go to Africa, Mama—be a doctor in Africa ...

MAMA *(Distracted)* Yes, baby—

WALTER *Africa!* What he want you to go to Africa for?

BENEATHA *To practice there ...*

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So, Beneatha also you know says you know she is getting ready to go to Africa to become a doctor; yeah also she also says you know this Asagai has proposed and she would want to go to Africa to practice there.

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WALTER *Africa!* What he want you to go to Africa for?
BENEATHA To practice there ...
WALTER Girl, if you don't get all them silly ideas out your head! You better marry yourself a man with some loot ...
BENEATHA (*Angrily, precisely as in the first scene of the play*) What have you got to do with who I marry!
WALTER Plenty. Now I think George Murchison—
BENEATHA *George Murchison!* I wouldn't marry him if he was Adam and I was Eve!

(WALTER and BENEATHA go out yelling at each other vigorously and the anger is loud and real till their voices diminish. RUTH stands at the door and turns to MAMA and smiles knowingly)

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And the moment you know George Murchison is brought again, brought up again; Beneatha also dismisses him as and I would not marry him, if I was Adam and I was if he was Aam and I was eve yeah.

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RUTH Yeah—they're something. Let's go, Lena.
MAMA (*Stalling, starting to look around at the house*) Yes—I'm coming. Ruth—
RUTH Yes?
MAMA (*Quietly, woman to woman*) He finally come into his manhood today, didn't he? Kind of like a rainbow after the rain ...
RUTH (*Biting her lip lest her own pride explode in front of MAMA*) Yes, Lena.

(WALTER'S voice calls for them raucously)

WALTER (*Off stage*) Y'all come on! These people charges by the hour, you know!
MAMA (*Waving RUTH out vaguely*) All right, honey—go on down. I be down directly.

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So, there seems to be a closure in some sense for each one of them yeah. And we find that eventually a mother you know also seems to approve of what Walter has become; the kind of person that Walter has become through this entire process, he finally come into his manhood today did not he, kind of like a rainbow after the rain.

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... (pressing them out together) ... go on
down. I be down directly.



(RUTH hesitates, then exits. MAMA stands, at last alone in the living room, her plant on the table before her as the lights start to come down. She looks around at all the walls and ceilings and suddenly, despite herself, while the children call below a great heaving thing rises in her and she puts her fist to her mouth to stifle it, takes a final desperate look, pulls her coat about her, pats her hat and goes out. The lights dim down. The door opens and she comes back in, grabs her plant, and goes out for the last time)

Curtain

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So, Ruth agrees to it; yes Lindner you all come on these people charges by the hour you know and then they are getting ready to leave, he will just read this last bit together. Ruth hesitates and exits. Mama stands at last alone in the living room, her plant on the table before her as the lights start to come down. She looks around at all the walls and ceilings and suddenly, despite herself by the children call below a great heaving thing will rises in her and she puts her fist to her mouth to stifle it and takes a final desperate look, pulls her coat about her, pats a hat and goes out.

The light dims out, the door opens and she comes back and grabs her plant and goes out for the last time. So, this is very symbolic; the way she chooses to leave this house, how the family as a united you know they put up a united front and they are choosing to leave this house, you know it is very symbolic about the next bold step they are taking.

So, I want you to very briefly think about you know what kind of assimilation is this yeah; whether you know this is the boldest step that they are going or whether you know they are about to do something very stupid.

Because all this while the entire family they thought that you know they were assimilated, they were very well assimilated; they were embracing the American culture, you know Walter was moving towards the American dream, a mother could not even differentiate between Nigeria and Liberia.

And in through her intellectual self, yeah Beneatha thought that you know she knew what to appropriate from her Americanness and how she would you know eventually belong to the her Africanness. So, in these negotiations of identity, never for a moment they thought that you know the divide was always like between us and them.

So, this instance about them, getting a property in Clybourne park and how they are continue to be seen as them, as the other, as the community who might you know bring with them some threat, you know discomfort you know and even you know painful instances such as bombings and massacre.

So, this is how their community is being seen. The moment they begins to they begin to realize that, they also take this final step of you know deciding to move into the white neighborhood, of deciding to claim their share of what the American society offers to them.

So, on this note we bring this discussion to an end and we find that you know this play also had sparked of a lot of debates and discussions in the context of the twentieth century America, about you know how race needs to be, how racism needs to be tackled in this while one is also you know glorifying the American dream and its multiple possibilities. So, thank you for your time and I look forward to seeing you in the next session.