

## HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE PREP ENGLISH IIA

### *A Raisin in the Sun* Student Questions

#### Act I, Scene One

In Act I, Scene One, the setting and the major characters are introduced. We see that each character has a dream that conflicts with those of the others in the household.

1. Describe the setting of the Youngers' household.
2. Describe each of the following characters. Who are they? What is their physical appearance? What role do they have in the family?
  - a. Ruth
  - b. Walter
  - c. Mama (Lena)
  - d. Beneatha
3. What is the source of the money that the family is expecting?
4. What dream does each of these characters have? How do they expect to achieve it?
  - a. Ruth
  - b. Walther
  - c. Mama
  - d. Beneatha
5. What conflict or argument do you see happening between each of the following:
  - a. Ruth and Walter
  - b. Mama and Walter
  - c. Beneatha and Walter
6. Who is Travis? How is he treated by his parents?
7. Who is George Murchison? What does Beneatha think about him?

#### Act I, Scene Two

1. What phone call does Walter receive? What is discussed and decided?
2. Who is Joseph Asagai?
  - a. Where is he from?
  - b. Why doesn't he like Beneatha's hair?

3. What nickname does he give Beneatha? What does it mean? Why do you think she likes the name?
4. What does Ruth announce to Mama and Beneatha?
  - a. How does Mama react?
  - b. How does Beneatha react?
5. Mama and Walter have a long conversation on pages 70 – 75. What does Walter say his problems are?

### ***Act Two, Scene One***

1. How does the relationship between Walter and Ruth seem to change?
2. What news does Mama have for the family?
  - a. How does Ruth react?
  - b. How does Walter react?
3. What worries the family about the location of the house?

### **Act Two, Scene 2**

1.
  - a. What is George's idea of how a woman should be?
  - b. What does George think the purpose of education is?
  - c. Why do you think Beneatha decide George is a fool?
2. What newspaper article did Mrs. Johnson show the family?
3. What does Mama tell Mrs. Johnson is wrong with being a chauffeur?
4. Mrs. Johnson quotes Booker T. Washington as saying, "Education has spoiled Many a good plow hand." What do you think is meant by this quote?
5. What does Mama decide to give to Walter? Why does she do this?
6. What does Walter say the future will be like for the family and Travis?

### **Act Two, Scene Three**

1. How are these pairs getting along at the beginning of the scene?
  - a. Ruth and Walter
  - b. Beneatha and Walter

2. Who is Mr. Lindner? What offer does he make to the family?
3. Mr. Lindner denies that he is racially prejudiced. What do you think?
4. What news does Bobo bring?

### *Act Three*

1. How does Beneatha feel about her dreams and her future after the loss of the money?
2. What does Asagai say in order to restore her idealism? What does he offer?
3. Why does Walter call Mr. Lindner?
4. How do Mama and Beneatha react to his decision to call him?
5. What do you think Mama means when she says to Beneatha, “There is always something left to love. And if you ain’t learned that, you ain’t learned nothing?”
6. What does Walter decide when Mr. Lindner arrives? Why do you think he makes this decision?

### **Critical Thinking Questions**

1. Mama’s plant is not just a plant. It is a symbol of another larger idea. What do you think that the plant symbolizes?
2. In Act One, when Ruth says to Walter, “Eat your Eggs,” what is she really saying? Why does Walter get so angry when she says this to him?
3. The playwright did not believe she was writing a happy ending. Explain why you agree to disagree with her that the ending is not happy.
4. What does the absence of light in the Youngers’ apartment symbolize?
5. What can you tell from the play about the character of Beneatha and Walter’s father (Mama’s deceased husband)?
6. What kind of statement was Beneatha making when she cut her hair?
7. What does the Youngers’ new home mean to Ruth and to Mama?
8. How does Lindner use language to make his proposal to the Youngers sound almost reasonable? Is it true that a man has the right to have his neighborhood a certain way even if his right infringes on the rights of others?

9. Beneatha says that she is searching for her identity. How does she do this? Does she find her identity by the end of the play?
10. Why, in your opinion, is the Youngers' poverty so much harder on Walter than on the rest of the family?
11. Do you think Beneatha would find her life easier and more fulfilling today than in the 1950's?
12. What purpose do the Act and scene divisions serve in a play?

