

A Raisin in the Sun

By Lorraine Hansberry

What's Happening in 1959?

This production takes place in a two-bedroom apartment in the Southside of Chicago, during the Year 1959.

Cost of Goods

\$10,000 in '59 = \$85,008.26 in 2018

- Ave. Yearly Wages: \$5,010.
- New House: \$12,400
- Loaf of Bread: 20 cents
- Movie ticket: \$1.00
- 1 gallon of gas: 25 cents

- Interracial marriage is illegal in much of the US until *Loving v. Virginia* 1967.
- Abortion is illegal.
- From 1916-47 restrictive covenants prevented people of color from being able to buy, rent, or occupy property in certain areas in Chicago.
- The KKK and other white hate groups would set off bombs at the residences and buildings of black Americans to intimidate them.

Meet the Playwright

- **Lorraine Hansberry** was the first black female playwright to be produced on Broadway.
- She was born in the South Side of Chicago in 1930 and was the granddaughter of a slave.
- Her father owned buildings on the South Side, including the one where she grew up. At age 7, the family bought and moved to a home in the white neighborhood of Woodlawn.
- The family was harassed and violently attacked by their white neighbors. Forcing them to move out of their new home by court order. After an appeal the case went to the supreme court.
- *Hansberry v Lee* prompted the opening of 500 new properties for people of color.
- *Raisin in the Sun* premiered at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre 1959.
- Hansberry was frustrated by the prevailing interpretation of the play because she felt it white-washed the play to make it more palatable.
- Hansberry advocated for the rights of women, people of color and the LGBT community.

Think About It!

- 1) Walter dreams of becoming a businessman, but he feels his circumstances get in the way. What are your goals? Do you feel there are obstacles standing between you and your dream?
- 2) In the play the Younger family receives \$10,000 and must decide what to do with it. If you received a large sum of money, how would you spend it? (*note the inflation rate!*)
- 3) Lorraine Hansberry's passion for social justice and equality inspired her to write *Raisin*. Are there issues that you feel passionate about? In what ways could you use the arts to share your passion?

What to Expect

- Some explicit language
- Mild Sexual Content
- Mild Violence



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Runtime: Approximately 2 hours 30 minutes with two intermissions.

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