

## Unit Test: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### I. True/False

In the space provided, mark each true statement T and each false statement F.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Before the play begins, Walter, Lee, Bobo, and Willy discuss buying a liquor store.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. George Murchison encourages the Younger's to take a greater interest in African history and culture.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Mama uses part of the money from Big Walter's insurance policy to buy a house in an all-white neighborhood.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The remainder of the money is lost when Willy swindles Walter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Lindner returns to the Younger's apartment because he wants to offer them more money not to move.

### II. Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer of the following items.

- 6. A conflict takes place in Act I when
  - a. Walter Lee struggles to keep his job as a chauffeur.
  - b. Walter Lee struggles with other family members over money.
  - c. Travis struggles to keep up his grades in school.
  - d. Mama struggles with Ruth for control of the household.
- 7. Walter would like to see his family's life change in many ways. More than anything else, though, he wants to
  - a. buy Ruth nice things and live with her and Travis in a bigger house.
  - b. send Travis to a private school.
  - c. own a drycleaning business, like Charlie Atkins.
  - d. own a liquor store with some friends.
- 8. Joseph Asagai does not give Beneatha
  - a. money for her medical training.

- b. Nigerian records and clothing.
- c. a Yoruba name
- d. a lecture on assimilation

9. When Mama finally decides what to do with the insurance money, she

- a. puts \$3,500 down on a house and gives the \$6,500 to Walter to use as he wishes.
- b. puts aside \$3,500 for a European vacation, puts aside \$3,500 for Beneatha's medical schooling, and gives the rest to Walter and Ruth.
- c. puts aside \$3,500 for a European vacation and asks Walter to decide how to spend the rest.
- d. puts \$3,500 down on a house, gives the rest to Walter to manage, and tells him to set aside \$3,500 for Beneatha's medical schooling.

10. Mama decides to continue with the move to the house when

- a. she learns of Walter's plan to sell out to Lindner.
- b. she opens the present of gardening tools.
- c. she sees Travis cry at the thought of staying in the apartment.
- d. she finds out that Walter has managed to save some money.

### III Short Answer

11. What is the difference between what George Murchison wants for Beneatha and what Joseph Asagai wants for her?

12. Think about how the scene that opens Act I inspires Walter and Beneatha to take pride in their heritage. How does that same kind of pride inspire both characters again near the end of the play?

13. What is the symbolism of Mama's plant? What theme does it represent?

#### IV Essay

14. In his review of *A Raisin in the Sun* on its opening in 1959, critic Brooks Atkinson wrote that the play is "about human beings who want, on one hand, to preserve their family pride and, on the other hand, to break out of the poverty that seems to be their fate." Think back over the play. Then explain, briefly, the point that *A Raisin in the Sun* makes about these major and minor themes. (1 to 2 sentences on each)

\*family pride

\*humor

\*pain

\*escape from poverty

\*the influence of environment on character

Answers:

I.

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. False

II.

6. B
7. D
8. A
9. D
10. A

III.

11. George Murchison wants Beneatha to look good for him (and thus to make him look good) but not to try to change him in any way. Joseph Asagai wants Beneatha to become all she can be; in particular, he wants her to “live the answer” to the problems that seem to stand in the way of her dreams, as he does with his own problems.

12. Walter talks about the family’s pride in its members and tells Lindner that Travis is the sixth generation of the family in the United States ( a reminder that the family’s origins are in Africa). He then turns down the buyout offer out of faithfulness to the memory of his father, who earned the house for them “brick by brick.” Walter’s pride in his heritage makes him “come into his manhood” at this pivotal moment. Inspired by Walter’s example, Beneatha also recaptures her dream of helping others. She ends the play with a revised dream, of taking the skills she will learn back to Africa, the land of their heritage.

13. The plant represents the importance of enduring. As Mama manages to keep it alive, despite less than ideal circumstances, the Younger’s manage to stay together as a family and see some of their dreams come true. The plant also represents growth, and several of the characters in the play (Walter, Mama, Beneatha) mature as they work through their problems.

#### IV.

14.

Family pride:

- \*pride in heritage and present generation

- \*problems can spin out of control when family members are driven by wrongful pride

Escape from poverty:

- \*it takes great courage to escape from poverty

- \*the chance to escape may cause people to reassess their values

Humor:

- \*if you look, you can find humorous moments throughout the day

- \*humor can diffuse a tense situation

Pain:

- \*we would get along better if we understood each other's private pain

- \*sometimes the people who give us the greatest joy cause us the deepest pain

The influence of environment on character:

- \*people who have to do without for a long time might act out of character to change their situation

- \*if a person lives in an environment where dreams are lovingly encouraged, that person will make dreams come true

## Unit Test: *A Raisin in the Sun* (2)

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9. When Mama finally decides what to do with the insurance money, she

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10. Mama decides to continue with the move to the house when

- a. she learns of Walter's plan to sell out to Lindner.
- b. she opens the present of gardening tools.

Tell me what you know about the following themes from *A Raisin in the Sun*:

Family pride:

Escape from poverty:

Humor:

Pain:

The influence of environment on character:

## Answers (2)

1. True
2. False
3. True

4. b
5. b
6. a
7. b

### 8. Family pride:

- \*pride in heritage and present generation

- \*problems can spin out of control when family members are driven by wrongful pride

### Escape from poverty:

- \*it takes great courage to escape from poverty

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### The influence of environment on character:

- \*people who have to do without for a long time might act out of character to change their situation

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