



A RAISIN IN THE SUN

Director: Nancy Crouse

Performances November 2, 3, 9, 10 and 11, 2018

AUDITIONS: MONDAY, APRIL 30 @ 6:30 pm
PLACE: Florissant Civic Center Theatre
CALL BACKS: TUESDAY, MAY 1 @ 7:00 pm

AUDITION DETAILS:

- Auditions will consist of readings from the script.
- Sides are available for the characters of Beneatha, Mama, Mrs. Johnson, Ruth, Asagai, Bobo, George, Travis, Walter. Please download for the role(s) you are interested in and review prior to auditions.
- Some improv may be used.

SHOW SYNOPSIS:

Walter and Ruth Younger, their son Travis, along with Walter's mother Lena (Mama) and Walter's sister Beneatha, live in poverty, crowded into a dilapidated two-bedroom apartment on Chicago's south side in the late 1950s. Walter barely makes a living as a chauffeur, yet he aspires to become wealthy like the white men he drives. Already exhausted, Ruth, who takes in laundry, deliberates options when confronted with an unwanted pregnancy. Walter's dream is to invest in a liquor store in partnership with Willy and Bobo, his street-smart friends.

At the beginning of the play Mama and her children await a life insurance check for \$10,000 because of her husband's recent death. Walter sees its arrival as an opportunity to get his liquor license and open a bar, but Mama has religious objections to alcohol. Beneatha hopes some of the money will go towards her educational dream of becoming a doctor. Mama dreams of the family getting out of the ghetto and having their own home. When the check arrives, Mama secretly puts some of the money down on a new house, choosing the all-white Clybourne Park neighborhood over a black one for practical reasons: it's larger and cheaper. Later she gives the rest of the money to Walter to invest with the provision that he reserves \$3,000 for Beneatha's education. Walter passes all remaining money on to a naive sidekick Bobo, who gives it to Willy, who disappears with it. On moving day, Bobo tearfully tells Walter the money is gone, depriving both Walter and Beneatha of their dreams, though not Mama's of their new home. Earlier Karl Lindner, a white representative of the Clybourne Park neighborhood association, offers to buy them out to avoid neighborhood angst because a Black family intends to integrate the previously all-white neighborhood. Lindner's offer offends the three women, whose horror increases when Walter prepares to accept the offer as a solution to his financial loss.

A primary subplot follows Beneatha's character and direction in life, which is defined by two different men: Beneatha's wealthy and educated boyfriend George Murchison, a "fully assimilated black man" who denies his African heritage with a "smarter than thou" attitude, and by Joseph Asagai, a Nigerian prince, who patiently teaches Beneatha about her African heritage. When Beneatha becomes distraught at the loss of the money, Joseph upbraids her materialism.

At the end of the play Walter redeems himself and regains his pride by changing his mind and not accepting the buyout offer, stating that the family is proud of who they are and will try to be good neighbors. The play closes with the family leaving for an uncertain future in their new Clybourne Park home, a future that has already been negatively characterized by their neighbor Mrs. Johnson.

ROLES:

Walter Lee Younger (*Black Male, mid 30's*)

Hansberry describes her protagonist Walter as a lean and intense man. He's a dreamer who's tired of waiting for economic parity with white men his age. He's frustrated by how little he has acquired and accomplished and by his wife, his mother and his sister because he feels they don't understand or support him and his dream of investing his father's insurance money with his friends, Bobo and Willy Harris. When the play opens, he's preoccupied with discovering a quick solution to his family's various problems.

Lena Younger (Mama) (*Black Female, old enough to be mother to Walter and grandmother to Travis*)

She's the strong matriarchal central force of the family, a rock who doesn't tolerate her family disputing her wisdom, though she has a weak spot for her grandson Travis. She has recently lost her husband Walter, Sr., and must now determine how best to use his \$10,000 life insurance check to better her family. She's highly observant, thoughtful, religious, moral, and maternal.

Beneatha Younger (*Black Female, early 20's*)

Walter's idealistic, attractive, and intellectual sister is a college student, making her better educated than the rest of her family and distancing her from her conservative mother and sister-in-law, and feeling superior to her brother. She has worked hard to refine her speech and enjoys expressing herself in various ways, possessing modern ideas and philosophies on race, class, and religion. She dreams of being a doctor and struggles to determine her identity as a well-educated black woman.

Ruth Younger (*Black Female, early 30's*)

Walter's wife and Travis' mother is exceptionally pretty, but is aging before her time because of her hard work, worries and impoverished surroundings that estrange her from Walter and even her son. During her 11 years of marriage she has borne the responsibility of keeping the household running in addition to working as a domestic servant, and her new pregnancy adds to her dismay at how to deal with their limited resources.

Travis Younger (*Black Male preteen, age 10 or 11*)

Walter and Ruth's sheltered young son. He earns some money by carrying grocery bags and likes to play outside with other neighborhood children, but he has no bedroom and sleeps on the living-room sofa, but is somewhat oblivious of the limitations and tension around him.

Joseph Asagai (*Black Male, mid-to late 20's*)

A proud and thoughtful Nigerian Prince, a classmate of Beneatha's, who is falling in love with her thirst for knowledge and self-realization. Asagai is very proud of his African heritage, and Beneatha hopes to learn about her African heritage from him. He eventually proposes marriage to her and hopes she will return to Nigeria with him.

George Murchison (*Black Male, early 20's*)

Beneatha's well-spoken "boyfriend," also a college student, is from a wealthy, African-American family admired by most of Beneatha's family. The Youngers approve of George, but Beneatha dislikes his willingness to submit to white culture and forget his African heritage. He challenges the thoughts and feelings of other black people including Beneatha, whose mind is not what attracts him.

Karl Lindner (*White Male, could be most any age*)

This white, middle-aged representative from the Clybourne Park Improvement Society is the only white character in the play. Mr. Lindner arrives at the Youngers' apartment from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association to offer the Youngers a deal. This role can be played a number of ways, but he should be trying to keep the peace, despite his motives.

Bobo (*Black Male, could be most any age*)

A fellow investor in the liquor business with Willy and Walter, but he's also being taken advantage of by Willy, who completely dupes him once he has the money. Can be played several ways.

Mrs. Johnson (*Black Female, of any age*)

The playwright described this neighbor of the Youngers as “a rather squeaky wide-eyed woman” who grates against Lena and Ruth because she takes advantage of the Youngers’ hospitality and warns them about moving into a predominately white neighborhood. Hers is a short, but important optional scene, but if I have the right person I am planning on using it.

Note: Ages are approximate. The director wants actors able to look the right age, despite real age.

SCHEDULE AND CONFLICTS:

Performances are November 2, 3, 9, 10 and 11, 2018. Tech week begins Sunday, October 28.

Schedule and Conflicts: Conflicts will not necessarily eliminate you from being cast. However, excessive additional conflicts after being cast may result in a role being recast. **Please do not audition if you are not available for all performances and all rehearsals during tech week.** Rehearsals will be at the North Hills UM Church in Florissant. Read through will be Saturday, August 11, if all available. Rehearsals are tentatively set for Sundays (3:30-9:30 pm), Mondays and Wednesdays or Thursdays (6:30-9:30 pm), from September through October. Move-in is October 27.

HAWTHORNE PLAYERS MEMBERSHIP:

Individuals cast are expected to become a paid member of Hawthorne Players to cover insurance, photos of the show and eligibility for Hawthorne’s annual awards presentation and banquet. The cost to join Hawthorne Players for the last show of the season only is \$10 for an individual and \$15 for a family.

For additional questions, please email hawthorneplayers@att.net