

A Raisin in the Sun

Act 2 Study Guide KEY

Act 2, Scene 1

1. When does Act II begin? What is Beneatha doing as the first scene opens? What is she wearing?
Later the same day; she is wearing ceremonial clothing from Africa and doing a tribal dance
2. Beneatha calls George an “assimilationist.” What does she mean by that?
An “assimilationist” is someone that has conformed or integrated into the dominant culture; she is accusing him of forgetting his African heritage
3. What is Walter’s attitude toward George?
He is very rude to George; he is angry that George has no idea what it is like to be poor or to have to work for things.
4. What is George’s attitude toward Walter?
He looks down upon Walter; he has no time for him.
5. What evidence is there that Walter and Ruth still love each other, despite their problems?
Even though Walter is rude to Ruth, she offers him hot milk and coffee and attempts to take care of him;
Walter goes to her after he is mean to her.
6. What news does Mama break to the family in this scene?
She has put a down payment on a house.
7. How do Ruth and Walter react to Mama’s news? What does Walter accuse Mama of?
Ruth is excited; Walter is angry. Walter accuses Mama of “butchering up” his dream.
8. In what condition is the apartment when Beneatha arrives home from a date with George?
There are packing crates throughout the apartment in preparation for the move.

Act 2, Scene 2

1. What sort of woman does George say he wants Beneatha to be?
He wants a “nice, simple, sophisticated girl” and that he doesn’t want to “hear all about [her] thoughts.”
Essentially, he wants a trophy wife.
2. When Beneatha asks George why he goes to college, what is his reply?
He says “You read books—to learn facts—to get grades—to pass the course—to get a degree. That’s it -
it has nothing to do with thoughts.” He goes to college because that is what he is supposed to do –
not because he wants to.
3. After George leaves, Mama asks Beneatha if she had a good time on her date. Beneatha replies that “George is a fool.” Why does she think this?
She says he is a fool because she feels he has no respect for himself, his culture, or her.
4. How does Ruth find out that Walter has not been to work for three days? What has Walter been doing instead of going to work?
His boss’s wife calls; he has been driving around the city during the day and going to the bar at night.

5. What does Mama give Walter, and how does Walter react to being entrusted with it?
She gives him the remainder of the money (\$6,500). Walter's entire demeanor changes and he immediately becomes more positive and optimistic about the future.
6. Walter tells Travis he wants to hand him the world. What sort of life is Walter envisioning for his family?
He is envisioning a life of ease and luxury. He wants to be able to provide for his family and give his son opportunities that he never had.

Act 2, Scene 3

1. Beneatha and Ruth are busy packing when Ruth tells Beneatha how happy she is with the change in Walter. What are three examples that show Walter has changed in the past week?
They go to the movies together, they holds hands, and he dances with her in the living room.
2. Why does Mr. Lindner come to the Youngers' apartment?
He comes on behalf of the welcoming committee of Clybourne Park and informs the Youngers that the community does not want them to move into their neighborhood.
3. Why don't the residents of Clybourne Park want the Youngers in their neighborhood?
Because they're black. They feel the Youngers should stay with "their kind" and that everyone would be happier if things stayed the way they are.
4. How does Walter react to Lindner's offer?
He is insulted and orders Linder to "get out of [his] house."
5. What is significant about Mama's preparing her plant for the move as she listens to the details of the encounter with Lindner?
The plant symbolizes Mama's hope for the future. In continuing to prepare the plant, it shows that she is not affected by Linder's comments and that her hope remains.
6. How does Walter respond to Mama's determination?
He follows her lead; he gives her a hug and begins to sing.
7. What gifts does the family give Mama? Why are the gifts appropriate?
They give her gardening tools and a huge gardening hat; she has always dreamed of having a garden.
8. Why doesn't Walter answer the door immediately when the bell rings?
He is expecting Willie and Bobo and feels that this is the moment that will change his life; he says that "sometimes it's hard to let the future begin!"
9. Who is at the door? What news does this person bring, and how does Walter react to the news?
Bobo is at the door, and he has come to tell him that Willie ran away with the money. Walter is devastated and confused by this information. He asks many questions to which Bobo has no answer.
10. What is Mama's immediate reaction after learning of the loss of the money?
She starts to "beat [Walter] senselessly in the face;" she is angry with her son and feels helpless. She turns to God for strength.