Quotations from Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*

**Asagai**

ASAGAI
...You came up to me and you said... "Mr. Asagai – I want very much to talk with you. About Africa. You see, Mr. Asagai, I am looking for my identity!" (He laughs) (1.2.98)

ASAGAI
Then isn’t there something wrong in a house – in a world – where all dreams, good or bad, must depend on the death of a man? I never thought to see you like this, Alaiyo. You! Your brother made a mistake and you are grateful to him so that now you can give up the ailing human race on account of it! You talk about what good is struggle, what good is anything! Where are all going and why are we bothering? (3.1.39)

**Beneatha**

BENEATHA (*Dropping to her knees*)
Well – I do – all right? – thank everybody! And forgive me for ever wanting to be anything at all! (*Pursuing him on her knees across the floor*) FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME! (1.1.123)

BENEATHA
[Assimilationist] means someone who is willing to give up his own culture and submerge himself completely in the dominant, and in this case oppressive culture! (2.1.51)

BENEATHA
...Did you dream of yachts on Lake Michigan, Brother? Did you see yourself on that Great Day sitting down at the Conference Table, surrounded by all the mighty bald-headed men in America? All halted, waiting, breathless, waiting for your pronouncements on industry? Waiting for you – Chairman of the Board!...I look at you and I see the final triumph of stupidity in the world! (3.1.60)

BENEATHA
I mean it! I’m just tired of hearing about God all the time. What has He got to do with anything? Does he pay tuition? (1.1.277)

BENEATHA
It is my business – where is he going to live, on the roof? (*There is silence following the remark as the three women react to the sense of it*) (1.2.54)

BENEATHA
Well – we are dead now. All the talk about dreams and sunlight that goes on in this house. It’s all dead now. (3.1.98)

**Mr. Lindner**

LINDNER (*Almost sadly regarding WALTER*)
You just can’t force people to change their hearts, son. (2.3.83)

LINDNER (*Looking around at the hostile faces and reaching and assembling his hat and briefcase*)
Well – I don’t understand why you people are reacting this way. What do you think you are going to gain by moving into a neighborhood where you just aren’t wanted and where some elements – well – people can get awful worked up when they feel that their whole way of life and everything they’ve ever worked for is threatened. (2.3.80)

LINDNER (*Turning a little to her and then returning the main force to WALTER*)
Well – it’s what you might call a sort of welcoming committee, I guess. I mean they, we – I’m the chairman of the committee – go around and see the new people who move into the neighborhood and sort of give them the lowdown on the way we do things out in Clybourne Park.

BENEATHA (*With appreciation of the two meanings, which escape RUTH and WALTER*)
Un-huh. (2.3.47-48)
LINDNER

.... I want you to believe me when I tell you that race prejudice simply doesn’t enter into it. It is a matter of the people of Clybourne Park believing, rightly or wrongly, as I say, that for the happiness of all concerned that our Negro families are happier when they live in their own communities. (2.3.65)

LINDNER

...most of the trouble exists because people just don’t sit down and talk to each other...That we don’t try hard enough in this world to understand the other fellow’s problem. The other guy’s point of view. (2.3.59)

Mama (Lena)

MAMA (Putting her finger on his nose for emphasis)
She went out and she bought you a house! (The explosion comes from WALTER at the end of the revelation and he jumps up and turns away from all of them in a fury. MAMA continues, to TRAVIS) You glad about the house? It’s going to be yours when you get to be a man. (2.1.156)

MAMA (Quietly)
Oh – (Very quietly)
So now it’s life. Money is life. Once upon a time freedom used to be life – now it’s money. I guess the world really do change... (1.2.229)

MAMA (Seeing the make-down bed as TRAVIS has left it)
Lord have mercy, look at that poor bed. Bless his heart – he tries, don’t he? (She moves to the bed TRAVIS has sloppily made up)
RUTH
No – he don’t half try at all ‘cause he knows you going to come along behind him and fix everything. That’s just how come he don’t know how to do nothing right now- you done spoiled that boy so. (1.1.148)

MAMA (Seeing the make-down bed as TRAVIS has left it)
Lord have mercy, look at that poor bed. Bless his heart – he tries, don’t he? (She hands it to RUTH) Put it away somewhere, Ruth. (She does not look at RUTH; her eyes seem to be seeing something somewhere very far off) Ten thousand dollars they give you. Ten thousand dollars. (1.2.169)

MAMA
...Big Walter used to say, he’d get right wet in the eyes sometimes, lean his head back with the water standing in his eyes and say, "Seem like God didn’t see fit to give the black man nothing but dreams – but He did give us children to make them dreams seem worth while." (1.1.206)

MAMA
Crazy ‘bout his children! God knows there was plenty wrong with Walter Younger – hard-headed, mean, kind of wild with women – plenty wrong with him. But he sure loved his children. Always wanted them to have something – be something. That’s where Brother gets all these notions, I reckon. (1.1.206)

MAMA
If you a son of mine, tell her! (WALTER picks up his keys and his coat and walks out. She continues, bitterly) You...you are a disgrace to your father’s memory. Somebody get me my hat! (1.2.240)

MAMA
It ain’t much, but it’s all I got in the world and I’m putting it in your hands. I’m telling you to be the head of this family from now on like you supposed to be. (2.2.113)

MAMA
No...something has changed. (She looks at him) You something new, boy. In my time we was worried about not being lynched and getting to the North if we could and how to stay alive and still have a pinch of dignity too...Now here come you and Beneatha – talking ‘bout things we ain’t never even thought about hardly, me and your daddy. You ain’t satisfied or proud of nothing we done. I mean that you had a home; that we kept you out of trouble till you was grown; that you don’t have to ride to work on the back of nobody’s streetcar – You my children – but how different we done become. (1.2.231)
MAMA
Lord, ever since I was a little girl, I always remembers people saying, "Lena – Lena Eggleston, you aims too high all the time. You needs to slow down and see life a little more like it is. Just slow down some." That’s what they always used to say down home – "Lord, that Lena Eggleston is a high-minded thing. She’ll get her due one day!" (3.1.69)

MAMA
Plenty. My husband always said being any kind of a servant wasn’t a fit thing for a man to have to be. He always said a man’s hands was made to make things, or to turn the earth with – not to drive nobody’s car for ’em – or – (She looks at her own hands) carry they slop jars. And my boy is just like him – he wasn’t meant to wait on nobody. (2.2.78)

MAMA
Son – I come from five generations of people who was slaves and sharecroppers – but ain’t nobody in my family never let nobody pay ’em no money that was a way of telling us we wasn’t fit to walk the earth. We ain’t never been that poor. (Raising her eyes and looking at him) We ain’t never been that – dead inside. (3.1.97)

MAMA
Them houses they put up for colored in them areas way out all seem to cost twice as much as other houses. I did the best I could (2.i)

MAMA
Walter Lee – it makes a difference in a man when he can walk on floors that belong to him... (2.1.170)

MAMA
Well, I always wanted me a garden like I used to see sometimes at the back of the houses down home. This plant is close as I ever got to having one. (She looks out of the window as she replaces the plant) Lord, ain’t nothing as dreary as the view from this window on a dreary day, is there? (1.1.296)

MAMA
Yes – death done come in this here house. (She is nodding, slowly, reflectively) Done come walking in my house on the lips of my children. You what supposed to be my beginning again. You – what supposed to be my harvest. (3.1.105)

MAMA
Yes, a fine man – just couldn’t never catch up with his dreams, that’s all. (1.1.208)

MAMA
You ain’t satisfied or proud of nothing [your dad and I] done. (1.2.231)

Ruth

RUTH
Mama, something is happening between Walter and me. I don’t know what it is – but he needs something – something I can’t give him anymore. He needs this chance, Lena. (1.1.187)

RUTH
Shallow – what do you mean he’s shallow? He’s rich!...Well – what other qualities a man got to have to satisfy you, little girl? (1.1.249)

RUTH
Well, I ain’t got no fifty cents this morning...I don’t care what teacher say. I ain’t got it. Eat your breakfast, Travis. (1.1.28)

Walter

WALTER
I want so many things that they are driving me kind of crazy...Mama – look at me. (1.2.222)

WALTER (All in a drunken, dramatic shout...He makes his weaving way to his wife’s face and leans in close to her)
In my heart of hearts – (He thumps his chest) – I am much warrior! (2.1.15)
WALTER (Picks up the check)
Do you know what this money means to me? Do you know what this money can do for us? (Puts it back)
Mama – Mama – I want so many things... (1.2.220)

WALTER (Quietly)
Sometimes it’s like I can see the future stretched out in front of me – just plain as day. The future, Mama. Hanging over there at the edge of my days. Just waiting for me – a big, looming blank space – full of nothing. Just waiting for me. But it don’t have to be. (1.2.226)

WALTER (Rising and coming to her and standing over her)
You tired, ain’t you? Tired of everything. Me, the boy, the way we live – this beat-up hole – everything. Ain’t you? (She doesn’t look up, doesn’t answer) So tired – moaning and groaning all the time, but you wouldn’t do nothing to help, would you? You couldn’t be on my side that long for nothing, could you? (1.1.73)

WALTER (Straightening up from her and looking off)
That’s it. There you are. Man say to his woman: I got me a dream. His woman say: Eat your eggs. (Sadly, but gaining in power)
Man say: I got to take hold of this here world, baby! And a woman will say: Eat your eggs and go to work. (Passionately now)
Man say: I got to change my life, I’m choking to death, baby! And his woman say – (In utter anguish as he brings his fists down on his thighs) – Your eggs is getting cold! (1.83)

WALTER (Without even looking at his son, still staring hard at his wife)
In fact, here’s another fifty cents...Buy yourself some fruit today – or take a taxicab to school or something! (1.1.59)

WALTER
...Baby, don’t nothing happen for you in this world ‘less you pay somebody off! (1.81)

WALTER
...Just tell me where you want to go to school and you’ll go. Just tell me, what it is you want to be – and you’ll be it....Whatever you want to be – Yessir! (He holds his arms open for TRAVIS) You just name it, son...(TRAVIS leaps into them)
and I hand you the world! (2.2.131)

WALTER
...There ain’t no causes – there ain’t nothing but taking in this world, and he who takes most is smartest – and it don’t make a damn bit of difference how. (3.1.94)

WALTER
A job. (Looks at her) Mama, a job? I open and close car doors all day long. I drive a man around in his limousine and I say, "yes, sir; no, sir; very good, sir; shall I take the Drive, sir?" Mama, that ain’t no kind of job...that ain’t nothing at all. (Very quietly) Mama, I don’t know if I can make you understand. (1.2.224)

WALTER
Anybody who talks to me has got to be a good-for-nothing loudmouth, ain’t he? And what you know about who is just a good-for-nothing loudmouth? Charlie Atkins was just a "good-for-nothing loudmouth" too, wasn’t he! When he wanted me to go in the dry-cleaning business with him. And now – he’s grossing a hundred thousand a year. A hundred thousand dollars a year! You still call him a loudmouth! (1.71)

WALTER
Mama – sometimes when I’m downtown and I pass them cool-quiet-looking restaurants where them white boys are sitting back and talking ‘bout things...sitting there turning deals worth millions of dollars...sometimes I see guys don’t look much older than me – (1.2.226)

WALTER
Nobody in this house is ever going to understand me. (1.1.131)

WALTER
That is just what is wrong with the colored woman in this world...Don’t understand about building their men up and making ‘em feel like they somebody. Like they can do something. (1.1.91)