

Walter Young Character Analysis

As Mama's only son, Ruth's defiant husband, Travis's caring father, and Beneatha's belligerent brother, Walter serves as both protagonist and antagonist of the play. The plot revolves around him and the actions that he takes, and his character evolves the most during the course of the play. Most of his actions and mistakes hurt the family greatly, but his belated rise to manhood makes him a sort of hero in the last scene.

Throughout the play, Walter provides an everyman perspective of the mid-twentieth-century Black male. He is the typical man of the family who struggles to support it and who tries to discover new, better schemes to secure its economic prosperity. Difficulties and barriers that obstruct his and his family's progress to attain that prosperity constantly frustrate Walter. He believes that money will solve all of their problems, but he is rarely successful with money.

Walter often fights and argues with Ruth, Mama, and Beneatha. Far from being a good listener, he does not seem to understand that he must pay attention to his family members' concerns in order to help them. Eventually, he realizes that he cannot raise the family up from poverty alone, and he seeks strength in uniting with his family. Once he begins to listen to Mama and Ruth express their dreams of owning a house, he realizes that buying the house is more important for the family's welfare than getting rich quickly. Walter finally becomes a man when he stands up to Mr. Lindner and refuses the money that Mr. Lindner offers the family not to move in to its dream house in a white neighborhood