

# The Life of Lorraine Hansberry

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Photo of a young Lorraine Hansberry (retrieved from Creative Commons)

The accomplished playwright Lorraine Hansberry was born in Chicago on May 19, 1930. She descended from a family of middle-class African Americans who were well acquainted with many literary greats, such as Langston Hughes and W.E.B Du Bois; with exposure to such accomplished writers, it is no surprise that Hansberry developed a love for literature. She began to explore the world of theater during high school, and consequently dropped out of college in order to focus on her writing career. Her most renowned work, originally entitled *The Crystal Stair* before being finalized to *A Raisin in the Sun*, was performed in March of 1959.

Though she grew up middle-class, it is evident that *A Raisin in the Sun* was loosely based on her own childhood experiences. Hansberry's family also attempted to integrate a Caucasian neighborhood in Chicago. Similar to the play's storyline, her family was not welcomed to the neighborhood like they should have been. Unfortunately, reality was much worse because they were the target of racist attacks. In addition, they were kicked out of their house due to a Supreme Court decision that ruled in favor of the segregation practice.

To her credit, Hansberry was able to turn her negative experiences into a profit by writing *A Raisin in the Sun*. Therefore, one could say that her childhood struggles were certainly not experienced in vain. She passed away at the young age of 34 due to cancer complications. However, her impact on the world continues to be recognized to this day.

#### Works Cited

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