

## Other Works by Lorraine Hansberry

By Faith Kuritz



Lorraine Hansberry was an African American writer who is best known for her first play, *A Raisin in the Sun*. Before writing this play, she had written many poems and articles for journals, and after the play debuted on Broadway she continued to pursue her career as a writer. Most of her works, including *What Use Are Flowers?*, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, and *Les Blancs* are intended to express the severity of various social issues.

Her work entitled *What Use Are Flowers?* was written in 1961 and was originally imagined to be a television special, but was performed as a play in 1962. In the beginning of this story, a group of non-verbal hungry children murder an animal and physically fight over its body. The

character, Sidney Brustein, becomes fascinated with a local reform politician, who is later discovered to be a corrupt sell-out. This part of the play expresses the message that it can be difficult to hold politicians accountable for their corrupt actions when they are idolized by supporters. The play was performed over 100 times before her death.

Along with a few of Hansberry's other works, *Les Blancs* was unfinished at the time of her death in 1965 but was completed by her husband Robert Nemiroff. The play was first performed on Broadway in 1970. Later, the play was revised and performed at the National Theatre in London. The play is about a man, Tshembe, who lives in England with his wife and son. He visits a fictional African country to attend his father's funeral during an independence movement. Although he sympathizes with the revolutionists, the conflict doesn't become personal to him until he realizes how the colonization had affected his mother. This plot line shows the audience how easy it can be to overlook important issues within society when they are not directly affected by them.

It is evident from the themes of her plays and other works that Hansberry was passionate about a variety of political and social issues. In her short life, she was able to use her talent as a writer to spread awareness about racism, violence, sexism, and colonialism.

## Works Cited

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