

# Historical Heroes: Lorraine Hansberry

Lorraine Hansberry was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1930. Her parents fought for equal rights for African Americans. She also fought for civil rights when she was older.



A scene from the film, "A Raisin in the Sun."

When she was a small child, Hansberry's family moved to a neighborhood that was only for white residents. That was against the law at the time. Hansberry's father took the family's case to the Supreme Court. They fought to be able to live where they wanted. Her mother stayed to guard the home. She was ready to defend her children if she had to. The family won their case, but it was a hard time for them.

Lorraine Hansberry was a playwright. A playwright is a person who writes plays. She wrote a play called "A Raisin in the Sun." She used her experience as a child to write the story. It was the first Broadway play written by an African American.

Hansberry was only 29 years old when she won a big award. She won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play. She was the youngest African American playwright to win the award. Hansberry's promising career was cut short by her death from pancreatic cancer at the age of 34.

**Directions:** Answer the questions below. Use text evidence to support your answers.

1. Lorraine Hansberry wrote a Broadway play called \_\_\_\_\_.

2. How did Lorraine Hansberry's dad fight for his family?

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3. Where did Lorraine Hansberry get her ideas for "A Raisin in the Sun"?

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4. How old was Lorraine Hansberry when she won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play?

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