

BAC p. 180 • Island of a Thousand Springs

“I’m on my way to see Lady Wentworth to return this.” She pulled a small, beautifully bound book from her lace-trimmed bag and held it towards Simon.

“Barbados,” the wrinkle that invariably appeared on Simon’s forehead when he was worried smoothed itself out at the sight of the book, “I would’ve liked to read it, too.”

Nora nodded. “I know, but I have to bring it back. The Wentworths are leaving for the Virgin Islands tomorrow. They have a plantation there, you know. They were just here to ...”

Simon wasn’t listening any longer, but instead, was flipping through the book. He could imagine why the Wentworths were in England. They probably just had to leave their West Indian properties to buy a seat in Parliament, or to look after one that already belonged to their family. The sugar cane growers from Jamaica, Barbados, and other growing regions of the Caribbean jealously guarded the resale-price maintenance¹ of their products and the import embargos from other countries. To this end, they consolidated their power through the acquisition of seats in the House of Lords, which were offered up by impoverished nobles such as Simon’s own family. As far as Simon knew, the representatives of Greenborough County now included a member from the Codrington family, who owned a large part of the small Caribbean island of Barbuda.

Nora didn’t linger on the Wentworth family for long. Instead, she looked again at the book that she’d already read several times. “Isn’t it lovely?” she commented on a drawing.

Simon had just turned to a page that illustrated an etching² of a shore in Barbados. Palm trees and a sandy beach which seemed to then go directly into the dense jungle. Nora leaned eagerly over the book and Simon was then so close to her that he could take in the scent of her hair: not talcum powder, but rose water.

“And there is our hut!” she fantasized and pointed to a sort of clearing.
“Covered with palm branches...”

Simon smiled. “As far as that goes, you’ll have to decide sometime,” he teased her. “Do you want to live with the natives in their huts or run a tobacco plantation for your father?”

Nora and Simon were in agreement that England in general, and London in particular, was not where they wanted to spend the rest of their lives.

Nora devoured all of the literature about the colonies that she could find, and Simon dreamed of the letters that he’d written for her father regarding Jamaica, Barbados, or Cooper Island. Thomas Reed imported sugar cane, tobacco, and cotton from all parts of the British Empire. He maintained frequent contact with the local growers and, as such, Nora already had her own plan for realizing her desires. All the better, as in England there was perhaps no future for her and Simon ... but, if they opened a branch of the Reed business somewhere in the colonies ... Currently, Barbados was her dream location.

Sarah Lark, *Island of a Thousand Springs*, 2014

1. fixed price 2. *gravure*

BAC p. 182 • Clybourne Park Association

Introduction: The scene takes place in the 1950s. Walter Younger and his family are about to move in a new house in the white neighborhood of Clybourne Park.

Lindner: Well—you see our community is made up of people who've worked hard as the dickens for years to build up that little community. They're not rich and fancy people; just hard-working, honest people who don't really have much but those little homes and a dream of the kind of community they want to raise their children in. Now, I don't say we are perfect and there is a lot wrong in some of the things they want. But you've got to admit that a man, right or wrong, has the right to want to have the neighborhood he lives in a certain kind of way. And at the moment the overwhelming majority of our people out there feel that people get along better, take more of a common interest in the life of the community, when they share a common background. 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.

Walter (Dumbfounded, looking at Lindner): Is this what you came marching all the way over here to tell us?

Linder (Putting on his glasses and drawing a form out of the briefcase): Our association is prepared, through the collective effort of our people, to buy the house from you at a financial gain to your family.

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, Act III, scene 2, 1959

BAC p. 182 • Housing discrimination persists

In the midst of riots in 1968 after civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was slain, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act.

The federal legislation addressed one of the bitterest aspects of racism in the U.S.: segregated housing. It prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion and national origin when selling and renting housing.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD, has administered the act with some success. From 1970 to 2010, the share of African-Americans living in highly segregated neighborhoods declined by half. But in areas that remained highly segregated in 2010, there were no signs of improvement. In several cities, such as Baltimore and Philadelphia, average levels of segregation had actually increased.

The Fair Housing Act's dual mission was to eliminate housing discrimination and to promote residential integration. The communities, its authors imagined, were desegregated and open to all people. [...]

However, HUD's current secretary, Ben Carson, appointed by President Donald Trump, has proposed a new mission statement.

One of the key differences between these two mission statements is the goal. While the former focused on building inclusive communities, the new mission focuses on individuals being self-sufficient. This shift reflects an age-old debate about the role of the government in helping poor people secure housing. Recent actions by conservatives suggest they are interested in decreasing government assistance for housing to poor people.

theconversation.com, 2018