

2nd
READ

Reading with a Writer's Eye

Plot

- ◆ Explain that like any other piece of fiction, a play tells a story. The playwright reveals the plot through the characters' words and actions.
- ◆ *What has the writer told us to this point about the main problem of the play, based on the dialogue and stage directions? Langston wants to be a writer, but his father wants him to study engineering because he thinks it will bring Langston success.*
- ◆ *What does the writer achieve through the dialogue at the beginning of Scene 2? Possible Answer She creates suspense when Thad tells Langston that he should get out of town before Mr. Hughes arrives, and then Thad asks Langston why he is skipping classes. This makes us want to read further to find out what will happen when Langston finally speaks to his father.*



Vocabulary Tip

Point out the word *decent*. Ask students to use context clues to determine what the word means.



Langston (*Placing jacket on chair*):

I've tried to stick to my studies, Thad, but—(*Sighs*) my heart's just not in engineering.

Thad (*Rising*):

Do you think I enjoy studying all the time? Sometimes I'd like to forget this (*Points to book*) and go uptown with you. (*Pauses; glances at posters*) It sure would be great to dig some jazz and just unwind for a while. (*He moves back to desk.*) But I want to earn a **decent** living someday. A medical degree is my ticket to a good life. **11**

Langston:

I always thought you really wanted to be a doctor.

Thad:

I do want to be a doctor.

Langston:

But you just said that a medical degree is a *ticket* to somewhere.

Thad (*Defensively*):

It's a ticket to a comfortable home, a fine car, and all the other things I want in life. **12**

Langston (*Disappointed*):

I thought a man decided to become a doctor in order to help people.

Thad (*Shrugging*):

You're too idealistic, Lang.

97



Teacher Tip

ADDITIONAL READING

If students enjoy Scenes 1 and 2 of "Langston Hughes: Poet of the People," encourage them to find the play at the library so they can read the rest of the story.