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S Y N O P S I S

Bigger Thomas, a 20-year-old embittered young negro lives in squalor in a single room with his mother, brother and sister in Chicago's South side. His home is not really a home. His family gets more heat from the sun than from the heater like whites'. The ghetto where he lives is a world of bleakness, and of poverty surrounded by the white world where food, money, comfort and privacy are well-provided. At home, he often confronts against his mom who commands him not to go around with his gang. She wants him to stay out of trouble and be a good boy.

That morning, he is startled with the hysterical screaming of his mother that signs to the presence of a huge rat in the room. Bigger brutally and hysterically chases and kills it by crushing its head.

While hanging around with Gus (his friend), his curiosity is generated to see a weaving motion in the sky. A plane is writing high up in the air. When he remarks his capability to fly the plane if he has a chance, it evokes a laughter from Gus. Gus reminds Bigger Thomas of his black complexion will ignore his wish. Bigger Thomas is painfully

aware of his status in a white man's world. The white world will not let him become 'a man'.

Having to face the shame of always being an outsider in a white-ruled society, he entertains the idea of robbing Blum's store (a white-owned grocery). But he knows he can never rob a white man because it will be a violation of the ultimate taboo and he is not ready to accept the consequence. He is too scared to carry out the plan. To hide his own feelings of shame, fear and inadequacy, he fights with Gus and nearly kills him. One of the ways Bigger escapes from shame and fear is by going to the movies where he can sit and dream at the glamour of his oppressor's world. But at the movies, he sees something else. Through the movie, he knows a communist as a villain, wild, crazy bomb thrower.

Through Home Relief, Bigger Thomas gets a job with Mr. Dalton, a wealthy realtor. Before entering a white's world, he takes his weapon with him. Those will function to lift his uneasiness and fear out. As he nears the Dalton, he becomes more aware of the laws and customs that separate him because of his skin color. When he first meets Mary and be asked whether he belongs to the Union or not, he takes prejudice on her. Although well-intentioned, Mr. Dalton and

his daughter Mary, have an inadequate understanding of Bigger and show their friendliness to him in a neurotic social service fashion.

Being a chauffeur of Mary Dalton brings him to be acquainted with Jan Erlone, a member of Communist party and Mary's boyfriend as well. With Jan, Bigger feels the same of fear. He is overwhelmed with panic when Jan shakes his hand and holds his shoulder, eating in the same restaurant and sitting in the same table with whites are social form which are alien from him. In Bigger's code, a white man does not really accept a black man as an equal. Jan and Mary do not belong to white world, nor he to their. They belong to the system which functions to restrict blacks from socializing with whites. He can accept a white man as a friend. He also prejudices them due to their concern about blacks life. Dazed by the soft heat of rum, he rides her. Taking the drunk Mary to her room, he is terrified with the appearance of Mrs. Dalton. His biological urge to compensate his sexual passion is displaced by his fear. He pushes the pillow hard over her face to prevent her screaming and it causes her death.

Bigger must protect himself. But he is unable to respond as a normal human being. He kills her because he is

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afraid of being discovered in the room of white girl.

Tied in a knot of impulse, Bigger struggles to become awake and to face the reality of what he has done. It makes him feel a wholeness and completeness as a living being. He becomes a very sharp person who can manipulate the white detective and arrange to stir police's investigation toward Jan. His idea of ransom money brings him to collaborate with Bessie.

When the case of Mary Dalton is disclosed, he runs away. Without a real motive except that he must save his own life, he kills Bessie. He should kill her because she knows a lot about his crime and his murder of Bessie is to keep her from talking. He then begins his flight. His flight over the roofs of blacks' houses is terrifying. The police should mobilize over hundreds person to catch him. It results a pride arising on him. Through a long term of the hunting, Bigger Thomas is finally captured and imprisoned into his confined ghetto, prison.

In jail, he rejects Reverend Harmond, his mother's black preacher. His anger is also challenged when his mother asks the Daltons' mercy for his life. Having a different vision, Jan tries hard to comprehend Bigger's deed. Though he finds out that Bigger has double-crossed

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him, he feels no anger to him. He insists Bigger to accept his friendship and introduces his communist friend, Mr. Max to defend him in the court.

Bigger Thomas first does not care about his life and not worry about his death. In the court, state presents Bessie's dead-body to charge him doing the same crime on Mary Dalton. The State and public deadly judge and condemn him before his trial.

Bigger Thomas does not regret for what he has done. But he feels pain after finding out that his death and action have no peculiar meaning. In the end of his life, he realizes that he never becomes a part of society. White world with its law and customs always keeps him as an outsider. At last, he faces his death in the electric chair.