

# August Wilson's **FENCES**

## Discussion/Essay Questions

1. To document the African-American experience, August Wilson wrote a play for every decade of the 20th Century, all set in Pittsburgh. If he had lived into the 2000's, what might the next two decades' plays be about?
2. What does the character Gabriel highlight about the effect of military service on African Americans who served in World War II?
3. What is the significance of Troy's name?
4. How did you feel when Troy admits his affair to Rose but won't promise to end the affair??
5. The playwright makes the case that "sons repeat the sins of their fathers." Do you think Cory and Lyons will repeat Troy's mistakes? If they are repeating it, what would it take to break that cycle?
6. Do you believe Troy when he says he doesn't want Cory to be at all like him? What does he want for his son?
7. How much of Troy's bitterness comes from pain he still feels from growing up with his own father?
8. Did Rose know about Troy's affair all along? Do you think this was the first time it had happened?
9. When she learns of the affair, she remains in the marriage. What social, emotional or financial reasons might have made her stay?
10. Is the fence in the play meant to keep people out or keep people in?
11. What if the fence Wilson is really talking about is the limitations some people face in the world? What invisible, but powerful, fences created the circumstances for the Maxon family in this play?
12. When Troy talks about the devil selling him furniture what is he really talking about?
13. Who is more like Troy, Cory or Lyons?
14. How did your feelings about Troy change during the play?
15. Who is the protagonist in the play, and what does he/she want most?
16. If you were writing Troy's eulogy, what would you say about him?
17. What does it mean that Cory joins the military at the end of the play?
18. If you had to write a play about where you come from and your experience there, what would it be about?
19. Troy challenges a rule that black sanitation workers can't drive the trucks. Why do you think this rule existed in the first place?
20. Why is there so much music in this play, whether sung, played on an instrument, or mentioned in conversation?

