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Fences can only block out what we do not let it

Robert Frost said, "Good fences make good neighbors." In August Wilson's *Fences*, we read and hear about Troy who is the main character of this play. He is building a fence that his wife Rose has been begging for, and he is doing it with his son (Cory). The movie *Fences*, was not just based on one specific message. In fact, it taught faith, friendship, responsibility, culture, racism, and ect. August Wilson's unique way of showing most of the difficult times African-American's endured during the 1950's. Wilson's writing truly conveyed the message of family, drama, love, nurturing, and the importance of togetherness.

The play is set in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania during the 1950's. Keying in on a black man (Troy), who works for sanitation, but can only be the lifter of the trash instead of having the opportunity to drive the truck. Troy knew what discrimination was and since a kid, he was a victim of it, (Mazelis). He is trying hard to be recognized not for the color of his skin, but for the job well done and time he has put into working for this establishment. He has his flaws, such as alcoholism. Fortunately, he does not allow that to impact his work ethic, but it does affect his relationship with his family. Everyday, Troy goes home to a beautiful and loving family who does not judge him based on his decisions but in fact, just wants to spend more time with him and wants him to understand them. As a black man in the 1950's, it was difficult to live. Especially, if he had to provide for his

family and when he was not treated as an equal at his job. Troy was a strong man though, and he endured the rough times the best way he knew how. Unfortunately, he could withstand too much pressure and eventually he broke down.

An important character of the play is Troy's youngest son Cory. His aspirations are to play in a High School game and be scouted for a college football scholarship, but his father deeply resented this idea. (Mazelis). Troy was angry that as a young man, he had the talent that could have taken him to Major League Baseball. He could not possibly let his son do better than what he did, so he had to try and take it away from Cory. Troy's downfall was, instead of pushing Cory to be the best he can be, he pushed him away, and eventually Cory resented his dad for it. As opposed to Troy teaching Cory how not to let the world take away his morals, he fought him verbally and physically, and ultimately kicked him out the house.

The one thing that stood out throughout this play, was the undeniable love Rose (Troy's wife) had for Troy. Through alcoholism, mixed values, and infidelity, Rose stayed loyal and stood by her husband. That is why it is always good to have a friend that is in your corner and not afraid to tell you when you are right or wrong. Luckily, Troy had that friend and his name was Bono. He was also a coworker of Troy. They would have weekly gatherings after work and go to the bar or hang out in the backyard of Troy's house, (Mazelis). Their friendship went beyond work though, Bono showed his loyalty, and as the play goes on we see a glimpse of that loyalty. Bono told Troy that he followed him, as he felt something was off with the way Troy was acting, and he found out that Troy was having an affair with a woman (Alberta) they knew from a bar they

both attended. Bono did not yell or fuss, but he told Rose in front of Troy what a great woman and wife she was, proving that he had Troy's best interest at heart.

Once Troy tells Rose about the affair and the fact that his mistress has a baby on the way, of course she is hurt and feels betrayed by him, but her decision to stay and reconcile with her husband showed the nurturing and forgiving spirit she had. It would have been easy for her to walk away, but she showed tremendous courage by standing with her husband and showing strength and willingness to fight for her marriage, (Mazelis). She even took care of the baby as her own child, since Alberta died from childbirth.

Troy also had an older son (Lyons) from another woman before he met Rose, who he did the same to. Instead of nurturing and allowing Lyons to chase after his dreams of becoming a musician, he wanted to control Lyons and have him be as miserable as he was.

Unfortunately, this all came crashing down on Troy and death that he did not fear, overcame him. Troy died from a heart attack. Although it was an unexpected death, it was hard for some of the family to feel hurt and sorrow because of the way it was hard to love him.

August Wilson took death, friendship, race, background, and family to produce a play that was arguably one of his best. He created a story that not just showed the bad, but also showed countless times how love and forgiveness is a big factor in someone's life.

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