

Fences Act 2 Overview

September 2, 2015

Reminders:

- Friday, 9/4: College Essay Corrections (Google Drive or Printed)
- Wednesday, 9/9: Key Line/ID Test, Analysis Activities, Major Works Review

Act 2, Scene 1

- Cory says he will not quit football
 - Rose agrees to talk to Troy about it; she supports Cory.
- Troy spends \$50 to bail Gabe out of jail
 - Thinks the police arrest him just to make an easy \$50
- Bono and Troy start to work on building the fence
 - Troy again denies his affair with Alberta

Why does Rose want a fence?

● Bono says, “Some people build fences to keep people out...and other people build fences to keep people in. Rose wants to hold on to you all. She loves you.”

- Hints at Troy's affair, but won't say anything in front of Cory
- Rose knows family relationships are falling apart

How do other people use fences?

- Troy is using a fence (Alberta) to push Rose away.
- Troy is using a fence (football) to push Cory away.
- Troy is using a fence (money/music) to push Lyons away.

● Troy finally admits the affair to Bono, but shifts the blame to Alberta.

- “I wasn’t out there looking for nothing . . . This woman just stuck onto me where I can’t shake her loose.”
- Bono responds, “You’re in control. . . You responsible for what you do.”
- Bono says he’ll buy Lucille a refrigerator when Troy finishes the fence. The fence is a metaphor here for making things right with Rose, ending the affair.

● Troy admits the affair to Rose.

- “I’m gonna be a daddy.”
- “We can get a handle on this thing. We can talk this out.”
- Troy makes Rose part of his problem by using “we.”
- “I can step out of this house and get away from the pressures and problems.”
- Blames it on the stressed of his job and his home life
- “After eighteen years I wanted to steal second.”
- Selfish reasons, trying to lessen the severity

● Rose feels just as “stuck” as Troy.

- “I planted a seed and watched and prayed over it. I plated myself inside you and waited to bloom. And it didn’t take me no eighteen years to find out the soil was hard and rocky and it wasn’t never gonna bloom.”
- But she holds tighter to Troy in these instances instead of walking away.
- “You always talking about what you give ... and what you don’t have to give. But you take too. You take...and don’t even know nobody’s giving!”

● Scene ends when Cory overhears the conversation

- Troy has grabbed Rose's arm
- Cory punches Troy
- Surprises both Cory and Troy
 - Physical manifestation of their tension
 - Not being “obedient” to Troy

Act 2, Scene 2

● Six months later . . .

- Rose has not talked to Troy for six months
- Says he's been going to Taylor's but Rose knows that he's been going to Alberta's
 - Setting is again day before Friday, payday—notice how things have changed. Where's Bono?
- Troy thinks the fact that he still financially supports Rose somehow justifies his ongoing affair—doesn't end things with Alberta. Can he maintain both relationships?
 - “I don't mess up my pay...I take my pay and I give it to you...I just want to have a little time to myself.”
 - Echoes Troy's father—financial responsibility but no affection/love/care
 - Troy is actually going to the hospital to see Alberta have the baby

● Gabe has been taken to the asylum (locked him up)

- Troy signed papers allowing this; government/hospital takes half of his check and Troy gets the other half
- Troy thought he signed papers to get Gabe out of jail
 - Troy is illiterate and can't read; but still tries to deny it even though Rose has seen the signature
 - Rose makes the connection with Cory—Troy wouldn't sign the papers for Cory to play football

● Rose answers the phone—Alberta gave birth to a healthy baby girl but Alberta died during childbirth

- By “escaping,” Troy now has a huge responsibility—baby girl.
- Troy talks to Death again.
 - “I’ll be ready for you.”

Act 2, Scene 3

● Troy brings home the baby.

- Baby is a symbol of Troy's vulnerability
- He is depending on Rose to allow him to come in or he will be homeless.
- "Please, Mr. Engineer let a man ride the line."

● Rose agrees to "mother" the baby.

- Doesn't blame Raynell for the sins of her father.
- Will not honor her relationship with Troy
 - "This child got a mother. But you a womanless man."

Act 2, Scene 4

- Cory graduated from high school; Lyons missed it for a music gig.
 - Cory trying to find a job → Troy never gave in and let him play football
 - Lyons suggests asking Troy for help finding a job

● Troy's payday—repeat of the setting

- No Bono; Troy sings the blues
- Rose leaves as she pleases for the church bake sale—wont' tell him when she'll be back

● Bono does stop by

- Troy and Bono don't work together anymore since Troy drives the truck--loneliness
- Bono plays dominoes now on Friday night with another man—now independent of Troy
- Troy did finish the fence and Bono bought refrigerator
- Agree to meet up one day—we all know how those promises go; both realize Troy's mistakes have caused this

● Troy's loneliness

- Lonely at work—doesn't work with Bono
- Lonely at home
 - Rose
 - Alberta
 - Cory

● Cory returns home, steps over Troy without saying anything

- Troy starts to argue with him, picks a fight
- Cory refuses to say “excuse me”
- Troy talks about how much he provided for Cory; Cory will not acknowledge him

● Cory's defiance

- “I ain’t got to say excuse me to you. You don’t count around here no more.”
- “You ain’t never gave me nothing! You ain’t done nothing but hold me back. Afraid I was gonna be better than you.”

● Cory brings up his father's affair

- Role reversal—Cory is the parent scolding his child (Troy); Cory has become a man
- Troy threatens to kick Cory out of the house
- Cory brings up that Gabe paid for the house

● Fight with the baseball bat

- Bat is a symbol of Troy's dreams; using these dreams to "beat down" Cory
- Cory could have hit Troy but doesn't; Troy struggles to get the bat back
- Kicks out Cory
- Troy says he'll leave Cory's belongings on the other side of the fence

● Troy's relationship with his father

- Fighting, physical violence
- Troy had to leave home early—angered at his father, not respected
- Troy took Cory's football
 - Troy's father took his girlfriend

● Troy feels triumphant because he “defeated” Cory

- Taunts “Death” again—ready to die but will fight death

Act 2, Scene 5

- 7 years later
- Raynell playing in her garden, seeds have not yet grown
 - Allusion to Rose's monologue
- Troy died from a heart attack while swinging a baseball bat

● Troy's funeral

- Lyons come home
 - Bonnie broke up with him
 - Has been in jail for cashing other people's checks
- Cory comes home
 - Engaged to be married
 - Been in the Marines
 - Doesn't want to attend his father's funeral

● Lyons and Cory reminisce about Troy

● “You gotta take the crooked with the straights.”

- Lyons finally agrees with his father on something.
- Have to accept the bad (Troy's relationship with his father, time in jail, failure to make it in baseball, loss of Rose, mistake with Gabe, argument with Cory) with the good

● Rose wants him to attend

- “Disrespecting your daddy ain’t gonna make you a man. You got to find a way to come to that on your own.”

● Cory has mixed memories of Troy

- “Papa was like a shadow that followed you everywhere. It weighed on you and sunk into your flesh. . . I’m just saying I’ve got to find a way to get rid of that shadow, Mama.”
- “I don’t know if he was right or wrong...but I do know he meant to do more good than he meant to do harm.”

● Rose seems to have forgiven Troy

- Realizes Troy's mistakes but also where those mistakes came from—where he comes from, what he knows

● Cory and Raynell

- She sleeps in “Cory’s room”—what Troy calls it
- Raynell had a “parent” in Troy
 - Troy was not a good parent to Cory
 - Lyons never even knew Troy as a father

● Raynell=symbol of change

- As a daughter, she changes the pattern of father-son violence
- Knows the blues song about Old Blue—Blue may be a symbol of Troy
 - “a good old dog”

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- Cory tells Raynell, “You go on in the house and change them shoes like Mama told you so we can go to Papa’s funeral.”
 - Has had a change of heart

● Gabe shows up for the funeral

- Ready to blow the trumpet to open the gates of heaven for Troy
- Blows his trumpet but no sound will come out
- Gabe does an improved dance, howling, and the gates of heaven finally open
 - Troy wouldn't do anything the easy or typical way

Themes

- A topic is an abstract idea: love, death, suffering, family relationships
- A theme is a statement about the topic.
 - What is the author conveying about the topic?
 - What does he want the reader to understand about _____?

Theme Statement Template

- August Wilson's play *Fences* is about topic and reveals that theme.

August Wilson's play *Fences* is about family relationships and reveals that one's ability to parent is heavily influenced by the way one was parented.

- "Theme" should be an independent clause, complete sentence.
- No "2nd person pronouns" (you, your) or specific references to the book (character's names.)

● August Wilson's play *Fences* is about:

- Manhood
- The struggle of African-Americans
- Loneliness
- Change
- Survival
- Escaping Reality

● Bellringer #12: Create at least three theme statements following the template provided.

● August Wilson's play *Fences* is about topic and reveals that theme.