

Fences - Act I, Scene i

Please complete the following questions on a separate sheet of paper, with complete sentences and at least two MLA citations per section.

Characterization

1. August Wilson writes that Troy “is fifty-three years old, a large man with thick, heavy hands; it is this largeness that he strives to fill out and make an accommodation with.” What do you think that Wilson means by this? Specifically, what does he mean by “accommodation?”
2. Rose is described as ignoring or forgiving Troy’s faults, though she is only aware of some of them. Based on what you’ve read so far, what do you believe some of faults may be, and why would she ignore them?
3. Rose and Troy disagree fairly strongly on the subject of where to purchase bread and vegetables. What does their disagreement tell you about each of these characters?
4. Troy’s son Cory has been recruited by a college football team, but Troy doesn’t seem particularly excited about it. Why do you think that Troy might be hesitant to support Cory’s achievement?
5. Troy’s oldest son, Lyons shows up and crashes Bono and Troy’s Friday night ritual. Why does Lyons arrive, and what can you infer about his relationship with his father from this exchange?
6. Bonnie, Lyons’ wife, is largely supporting him in his attempts to make a living as a musician, and his father thinks he is lazy. Why doesn’t Lyons take a job at the garbage company with his father?
7. Rose ultimately concedes to Lyons’ request for money, lending him ten dollars. What does this tell you about her relationship with both Lyons and Troy?

Symbolism and Motif

1. As the play opens we find Bono and Troy discussing Troy’s recent complaint with the garbage collection company. Troy has accused the company of only allowing white men to drive the trucks, while only allowing black men pick up garbage.
 - What do you think this job might be symbolic of?
 - Do you predict that he will be successful in challenging company policy? Why or why not?
2. Troy says that “Death ain’t nothing. I done seen him. Done wrassled with him. You can’t tell me nothing about death. Death ain’t nothing but a fastball on the outside corner.” Based on what you know about Troy (and the rest of this passage), how do you interpret Troy’s view of death?

Hint: You might have to ask a baseball player...

Analysis

1. Think back to the beginning of the year, when we discussed the role of fiction. We said that fiction often creates new and different worlds that are unlike our own, but that it helps us learn about our own world when we can find places where it overlaps with our own.
 - In what ways is Troy’s Pittsburgh similar to the world that you live in?
 - In what ways is it different?