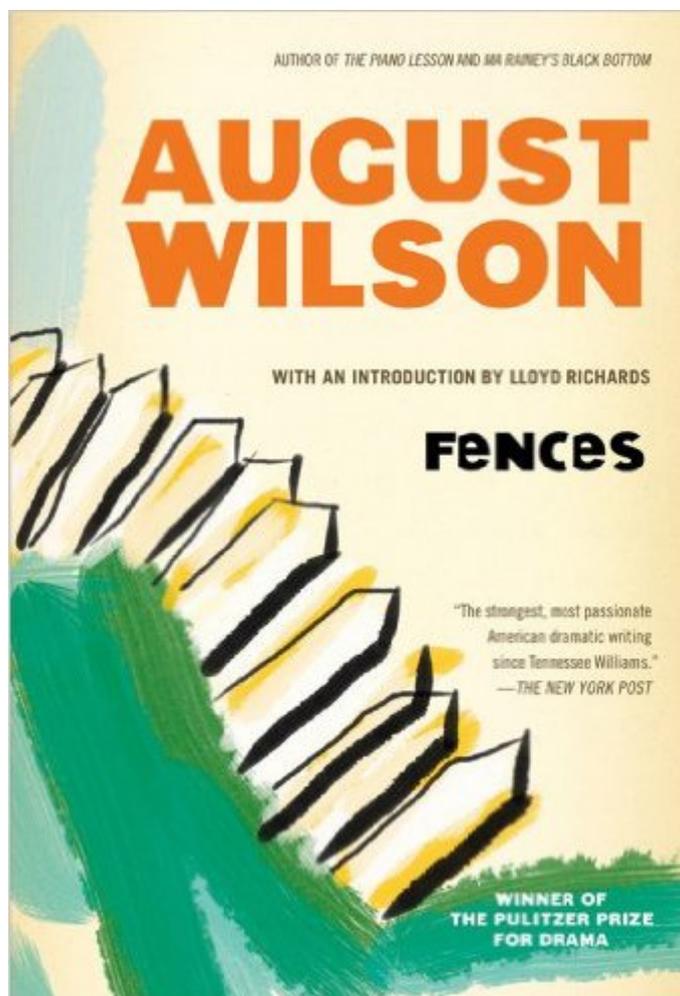


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# Fences



## Synopsis

Soon to be a Major Motion Picture starring Denzel Washington and Viola Davis Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the Tony Award for Best Play "In his work, Mr. Wilson depicted the struggles of black Americans with uncommon lyrical richness, theatrical density and emotional heft, in plays that give vivid voices to people on the frayed margins of life."âThe New York Times

From August Wilson, author of *The Piano Lesson* and the 1984-85 Broadway season's best play, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, is another powerful, stunning dramatic work that has won him numerous critical acclaim including the 1987 Tony Award for Best Play and the Pulitzer Prize. The protagonist of *Fences* (part of Wilson's ten-part "Pittsburgh Cycle" plays), Troy Maxson, is a strong man, a hard man. He has had to be to survive. Troy Maxson has gone through life in an America where to be proud and black is to face pressures that could crush a man, body and soul. But the 1950s are yielding to the new spirit of liberation in the 1960s, a spirit that is changing the world Troy Maxson has learned to deal with the only way he can, a spirit that is making him a stranger, angry and afraid, in a world he never knew and to a wife and son he understands less and less.

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## Customer Reviews

*Fences*, by August Wilson, is a play that portrays the many roles of an African-American family that lives during a difficult period of time when Africans were being segregated. In the play, Rose Maxson, a house wife in her early-fortys, has a difficult time handling her family. She always finds herself battling between the decisions that her husband, Troy Maxson, makes and with what she

thinks is right. Throughout the play, life for Rose was a great challenge, but even though the pain was great, she always holds her head up high and waits for better days. This play teaches us that being able to forgive and go on with your life portrays a lot of who you really are inside. When this script was placed in my hands, my head ached to the thought of having to read another boring book. To my surprise, when it was read out loud with great feeling, my heart jumped with excitement and joy. After I had gotten a sense of the characters feelings and language, I was unable to put it down. This book reached out to me like no other book has ever done before. The way that Rose was able to forgive so many inappropriate acts is very astonishing to me. I frankly admire Rose for being able to be a strong woman and for sticking to what she says. I wish that everyone that reads this script is able to take a bit of sweetness from Rose.

"Fences," by August Wilson, is a wonderful mix of drama and comedy that emphasizes the tribulations and confusions people were going through, during the changing sixties. In this two-act play, Troy Maxson is a middle-aged African American who is struggling to raise a son, keep a family together and deal with the new desires and needs everybody is beginning to feel as social standards slowly begin to change. As a child growing up, Troy did not have a great father figure, and he was not able to pursue his dream of becoming a great baseball player as he grew older, because of racial limitations of the time period. Now as things begin to change for the better, he is still afraid of these limitations and overcoming them. His son wants to play football, but Troy doesn't want him to. He wants him to get a job and become good with his hands. As he refuses to let his son play, he pushes him away. He begins to push his wife away too, because he feels he needs his own space and has new desires. This play becomes a struggle for Troy to try to pass on morals he thinks are right and to be a proud man in a time where hatred is strong and boundaries are being broken. Troy Maxson is having to change his ways according to change and he grew up doing what he could to survive, so changing after so many years of living a certain way to survive is harder than anything he has had to deal with before. Will he come out of it successful? A wonderful blend of characters, hysterical, beautiful, bold, courageous and passionate; this play is sure to win your favor.

From the opening scene we as audience members are dropped whole into the world of the characters in August Wilson's classic play. The dialect of the characters, the hints of jargon, and the references that aren't explained but simply ARE allow us to be immersed in his setting. This back porch, with its visible foibles (exposed icebox, half-built fence) make Troy Maxson, his family, and

his friends into new beings that become larger than their own lives--and very like our own lives. There is nothing in this play we don't all have to face from day to day. Work, marriage, family disputes, mental illness, adultery, violence, and more events populate this play as surely as the characters do. Yet the clear, Sophoclean way they are addressed makes them matter to us in an immediate, powerful way. The play is broken up into two acts, comprising eleven scenes. The first ten take place over a span of a few months, while the final provides an epilogue some years later. Some modern theatre purists will balk at this many divisions, and yet the way Wilson makes them pop will let an audience that loves theatre to both enjoy and understand what's happening to the characters. This is a difficult piece of theatrical literature, yet one of the most important and compelling of the last twenty years. For all its faults (slipshod editing, internal contradictions, great length) it remains a valuable play, and one that hasn't received nearly the acclaim it deserves.

Fences, by August Wilson, is a drama about what black people were going through during the sixties. This play contains two acts about the life of Troy Maxson, a middle-aged African American who is trying to raise his son, keep his family together, and deal with an ever changing society. One of Troy's problems is that Troy's son, Cory, wants to play football and get a college scholarship. Troy, on the other hand, continues thinking that the white person wouldn't truly allow his son to play. In addition Cory has a job at a grocery store called the A&P and his job interferes with football. Troy deals with this problem by making Cory drop football for his job because Troy wants Cory to have some responsibility. Cory doesn't like Troy for that, but Troy is one of those 'You live under my roof, you live by my rules and when I ask you to jump you say how high!' type of dad. During this play one gets an understanding of the social classes. The white garbage men get to drive the truck while the colored do the lifting; the white person gets all meat in his soup, while the black person gets nothing but vegetables in restaurants. This play was like a documentary of a sixties black family. I think the best way to relate to the people of this play is to act out the play in one's class or at home. I thought it was a good play that seemed realistic and I would recommend this "script," although as a warning, I caution that few people in my class thought it was boring.

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