

Fences ~ August Wilson ~ Introduction and Epigraph

The Introduction to *Fences* was written by Lloyd Richards, the first director of August Wilson's play in 1983/1985. You'll see, just after the title page, that Wilson dedicated the play to Richards, writing, "for Lloyd Richards, who adds to whatever he touches."

Read Richards's Introduction, and answer the following questions:

1. In your own words, explain what audiences value in Wilson's storytelling.
2. What do you know so far about Troy Maxson, the main character?
 - a. What did he learn from his father?
 - b. Name one conflict he is faced with as a black American.
3. Reread the last sentence of the Introduction. What significance do you think this will have in the play?

The Epigraph of the play was written by Wilson and says this:

When the sins of our fathers visit us
We do not have to play host.
We can banish them with forgiveness
As God, in His Largeness and Laws.

4. Where does the phrase "the sins of [the] father" come from? (You may have to do a quick search to answer.)
5. Think through this Epigraph, and write what you think it means. If you need guidance, consider these questions:
 - a. What does it mean for children to pay for the sins of their fathers?
 - b. What do you think Wilson is suggesting by writing, "We can banish [the fathers' sins] with forgiveness"?