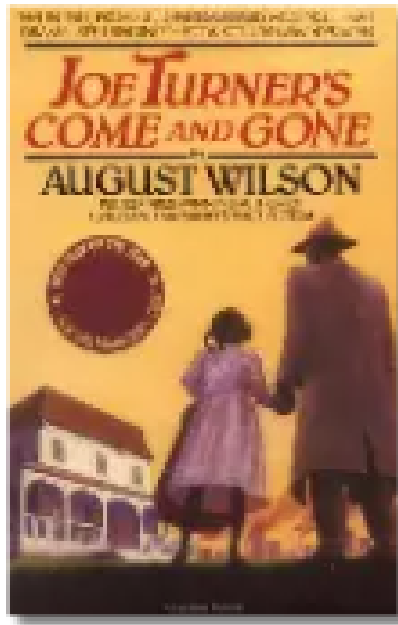


JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE

August Wilson



RESOURCE GUIDE

Reading + Writing + Analysis

NO PREP

PRINT & GO

HIGH SCHOOL ELA

About the Play

Joe Turner's Come and Gone is set in a Pittsburgh boarding house in the early 1900s, where African Americans are searching for connection, identity, and opportunity after the Great Migration. The play follows Herald Loomis, a man trying to find his wife while also searching for a sense of self after years of forced labor.

Through the interactions of the characters, the play explores how history, displacement, and personal struggle shape identity. It shows the importance of community, self-discovery, and reclaiming one's voice

KEY THEMES

- Identity and self-discovery
- Displacement and migration
- Community and belonging
- History and memory
- Freedom and independence

BEFORE YOU READ

- What does it mean to find your identity?
- How might moving to a new place affect someone's sense of belonging?
- Why is community important during times of change?
- How can past experiences impact a person's future?

Section Breakdown

- **Section 1: Act 1, Scene 1**

Introduction to the boarding house, characters, and setting

- **Section 2: Act 1, Scene 2**

Herald Loomis arrives and begins his search

- **Section 3: Act 2, Scene 1**

Rising tension, identity struggles, and personal conflict

- **Section 4: Act 2, Scene 2**

Resolution, self-discovery, and reclaiming identity

Comprehension Questions:

SECTION 1

1. Where does the play take place, and what is the setting like?

2. Who are the main characters introduced at the beginning?

3. What role does Seth and Bertha's boardinghouse play in the story?

4. How are power and control shown in this section?

5. What early hints suggest that the characters are searching for something?

Quick Discussion

Time to Reflect

How can a place bring people together during difficult times?

Comprehension Questions

SECTION 2

1. Who is Herald Loomis, and what is his situation?

2. What is Loomis searching for?

3. How do other characters respond to Loomis?

4. What does Bynum represent in the story?

5. How does the idea of “finding yourself” begin to develop?

Quick Discussion

Time to Reflect

What does it mean to search for identity?

Comprehension Questions

SECTION 3

1. What internal conflict does Loomis experience?

2. What role does Bynum play in helping others?

3. How do past experiences affect
Loomis's actions?

4. What moments reveal deeper emotional
struggles?

5. What begins to change in Loomis during this
section?

Quick Discussion

Time to Reflect

How can past trauma affect a person's present life?

Comprehension Questions

SECTION 4

1. What realization does Loomis come to by the end?

2. How is his search for identity resolved?

3. What role does community play in the outcome?

4. How do other characters contribute to the resolution?

5. What message does the play leave about identity and freedom?

Quick Discussion

Time to Reflect

What does it mean to truly find yourself?

DRAMA ANALYSIS

Elements of Drama

- Dialogue reveals internal and external conflict
- Stage directions create mood and tension
- Symbolism helps express deeper meaning
- Character interactions drive the story

HISTORICAL CONNECTION

Post-Slavery Era & Forced Labor

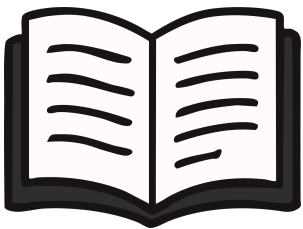
After slavery ended, many Black men were illegally forced into labor through systems like chain gangs. One such system was led by a man named Joe Turner, who would capture Black men and force them to work for years.

Connection to the play:

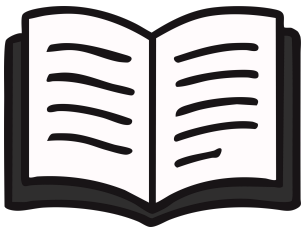
Herald Loomis's story reflects the trauma of being taken and losing years of his life. His journey represents the struggle to reclaim identity and freedom after oppression.

Extension Activity

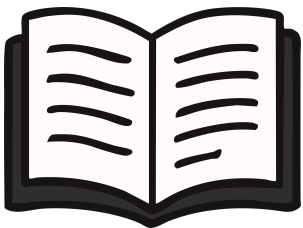
Choose one activity to complete.



- Research post-slavery labor systems and present findings



- Compare Loomis to another character searching for identity

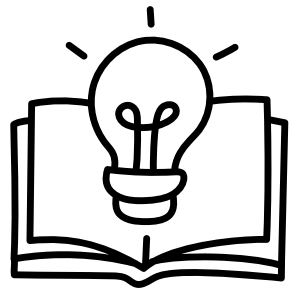


- Create a character map showing relationships and growth

Understanding the Big Ideas

This story explores:

- Identity and self-discovery
- The impact of the past
- Freedom and independence
- Community and connection



How does August Wilson show the importance of identity and self-discovery through Herald Loomis? Use examples from the play to support your response.

Final Project

- Analyze Loomis's journey toward self-discovery
- Explain how history influences the characters
- Create a presentation on identity and freedom in the play

Character Notes

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