

## GEM OF THE OCEAN

### Synopsis

August Wilson's *Century Cycle* begins in 1904, where we meet Citizen Barlow, a bewildered newcomer to Pittsburgh from the agrarian deep South. Citizen Barlow arrives at Aunt Ester's house seeking her help and a safe place from Caesar, the local constable. Aunt Ester, now 285 years old, takes him on a journey of self-discovery to the City of Bones, a city in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Here he makes startling discoveries and his sense of duty leads to his redemption.

### Characters

**AUNT ESTER:** Her name sounds like the word "ancestor" and she is the connector between the African past and the African American present. Her name suggests both Easter, the holiest day of the Christian calendar, and the biblical character Esther, Ahasureus' queen and the heroine of Purim, a Jewish holiday, which celebrates the saving of the Hebrew people. She is both the physical and the mystical link between present and past. Her home is a sanctuary where troubled people come to be cleansed of guilt and sorrow. Aunt Ester's birth, approximately 285 years prior to when the play takes place, coincided with the arrival of the first shipment of African slaves in the English colonies. She is both the keeper and the transmitter of African-American memory.

**CAESAR WILKS:** Black Mary's brother, a policeman, baker and land-owner. He is the villainous constable and venal slumlord in the play. His name means dictator or autocrat, which originated from the original Roman emperor, Julius Caesar. He is reminiscent of the plantation overseers of slavery times and represents the black-face authority who acts and speaks for the white world.

**BLACK MARY:** The protégée of Aunt Ester, she is trying to learn the wisdom and ways of the old woman. While supervising Ester's house, she serves her and washes her feet in a ritual reminiscent of the self-abasement of Mary, sister of Martha, at Bethany during the last days of Christ.

**CITIZEN BARLOW:** The seeker and confessor in the play. A migrant from Alabama, his intent is to work in a factory, but he steals a bucket of nails which results in an innocent man drowning to avoid false arrest. He insists on seeing Aunt Ester to confess his sin of black-upon-black violence. His mother named him Citizen "after freedom came," but Solly Two Kings reminds him that to truly be a Citizen, he'll have to fight to uphold freedom when it becomes a heavy load.

**ELI:** Aunt Ester's companion, bears the name of an Old Testament priest and mentor to young Samuel. As such, he is steady, reliable and maintains peace and security in Aunt Ester's house. He was Solly's comrade in his efforts on the Underground Railroad and for The Union Army.

**SOLLY TWO KINGS:** A sixty-seven year old former slave and conductor on the Underground Railroad whose earlier name was Uncle Alfred. After slavery he changed his name to David and Solomon, two Biblical kings. A friend and suitor to Aunt Ester, he makes a career of gathering up dog excrement, which he calls "pure", for manure.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-01  
Time: 1:15  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Inspirational  
Type 3:

Act 1; Scene 2

AUNT ESTER

It all will come to stand in the light, Mr. Citizen. Everything and everybody got to stand in the light. Jesus Christ stood in the light. The people saw him standing there and they killed him. But the judgment ain't with the people. The judgment with God. He the Big Master. God don't never lie. The people liable to do anything. They lie and cheat. That's why God didn't leave the judgment with the people. Say, "I am the beginning and the end." The people can't say that. They know they gonna come to an earthy grave. The end is already writ for them.

(CITIZEN has fallen asleep in the chair. AUNT ESTER begins to sing a lullaby.)

Go to sleep, my child  
You don't know the world yet  
Go to sleep, my child  
The world is not easy  
Go to sleep, my child  
I am here watching over you  
The world is not easy

Code: 00-02  
Time: 2:00  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Value of Life  
Type 3:

Act 1; Scene 5

AUNT ESTER

You think you supposed to know everything. Life is a mystery. Don't you know life is a mystery? I see you still trying to figure it out. It ain't all for you to know. It's all an adventure. That's all life is. But you got to trust that adventure. I'm on an adventure. I been on one since I was nine years old. That's how old I was when my mama sent me to live with Miss Tyler. Miss Tyler gave me her name. Ester Tyler. I don't tell nobody what I was called before that. The only one know that is my mama. I stayed right on there with her till she died. Miss Tyler passed it on to me. If you ever make up your mind I'm gonna pass it on to you. People say it's too much to carry. But I told myself somebody got to carry it. Miss Ester carried it. Carried it right up till the day she died. I didn't run from it. I picked it up and walked with it. I got a strong memory. I got a long memory. People say you crazy to remember. But I ain't afraid to remember. I try to remember out loud. I keep my memories alive. I feed them. I got to feed them otherwise they'd eat me up. I got memories go way back. I'm carrying them for a lot of folk. All the old timey folks. I'm carrying their memories and I'm carrying my own. If you don't want it I got to find somebody else. I'm getting old. Going on three hundred years now. That's what Miss Tyler told me. Two hundred eighty five by my count.

I told myself Black Mary got to make up her mind. I don't know how much time I got left.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-03  
Time: 2:00  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Value of Life  
Type 3:

Act 1; Scene 5

AUNT ESTER

I know a man used to raise pigs. Great big old pigs. To him the pig was the beginning of everything. And it was the end of everything. Wherever he looked he saw pigs. He saw pigs in the sky and he saw pigs in the ground. To him the pig was the center of his life. One day another man come along and killed all his pigs. He lost everything he had. He lost the center of his life cause it wasn't inside him. It wasn't something nobody could take away. See, Mr. Citizen, right now that bucket of nails is at the center of your life. You only have one life, Mr. Citizen. It's your life. Can't nobody else claim it. You ain't never gonna forget that man who jumped in the river. There are times when it will come and take hold of you and shake you. There ain't nothing you can do about that. It's them in-between times that you can do something about. You got to find something else to be at the center of your life. You got to find out why it was important for Garret Brown to die rather than to take his thirty days. Do you know why he didn't come out the water, Mr. Citizen? Do you know why he chose to die rather than to be branded a thief?

We know he didn't do it. But why, Mr. Citizen. That's what we trying to find out why he would rather die than to say he was a thief.

He didn't care if anybody else knew if he did it or not. He knew. He didn't do it for the people standing around watching. He did it for himself. He say I'd rather die in truth than to live a lie. That way he can say that his life is worth more than a bucket of nails. What is your life worth, Mr. Citizen? That what you got to find out. You got to find a way to live in truth. If you live right you die right. Like Garret Brown.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-04  
Time: 1:00  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Inspirational  
Type 3: Metaphorical

Act 1; Scene 5

AUNT ESTER

Do you know the story of Peter from the Bible? Peter denied Jesus three times before the cock crowed. That's what the bible say. Say, "Verily verily I say unto you before the cock crow you will deny me thrice." They asked Peter, "Do you know this man?" And Peter said, "No, I don't know him." Not once, Mr. Citizen. Three times. He say it one time then he had a chance to think about it before he said it again. Right there he could have redeemed himself. What do you think, Mr. Citizen? Why did he deny him three times? Would you have denied him three times?

The Bible say, Peter denied Christ three times. I always wondered about that. He had his redemption handed to him on a silver platter but he didn't take it. I wonder will you take yours, Mr. Citizen.

Code: 00-05  
Time: 2:30  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Inspirational  
Type 3: Metaphorical

Act 2; Scene 1

AUNT ESTER

Take a look at this map, Mr. Citizen. See that right there...that's a city. It's only a half mile by a half mile but that's a city. It's made of bones. Pearly white bones. All the buildings and everything is made of bones. I seen it. I been there, Mr. Citizen. My mother live there. I got an aunt and three uncles live down there in that city made of bones. You want to go there, Mr. Citizen? I can take you there if you want to go. That's the center of the world. In time it will all come to light. The people made a kingdom out of nothing. They were the people that didn't make it across the water. They sat down right there. They say, "Let's make a kingdom. Let's make a city of bones." The people got a burning tongue, Mr. Citizen. Their mouths are on fire with song. That water can't put it out. That song is powerful. It rise up and come across the water. Ten thousand tongues and ten thousand chariots coming across the water. They on their way, Mr. Citizen. They coming across the water. Ten thousand hands and feet coming across the water. They on their way. I came across that ocean, Mr. Citizen. I cried. I had lost everything. Everything I had ever known in this life I lost that. I cried a ocean of tears. Did you ever lose anything like that, Mr. Citizen? Where you so lost the only thing that can guide you is the stars. That's all I had left. Everything I had ever known was gone to me. The only thing I had was the stars. I say well I got something. I wanted to hold onto them so I started naming them. I named them after my children. I say there go Cephus and that's Jasper and that's Cecilia, and that big one over there that's Junebug. You ever look at the stars Mr. Citizen? I bet you seen my Junebug and didn't even know it. You come by here sometime when the stars are out and I'll show you my Junebug. You come by anytime you want. You got the stars but it's that wind what drive the boat, Mr. Citizen. Without the wind it would just sit there. But who drives the wind? What god

drives the wind? That's what I asked myself but I didn't have no answer. So I just started singing. Just singing quietly to myself some song my mother had taught me. After that it was all right for a little while. But the wind did drive the boat right across the water. What it was driving me to I didn't know. That's what made it so hard. And I didn't have my mother to tell me. That made it harder.

Code: 00-06  
Time: 1:50  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Inspirational  
Type 3: Metaphorical

Act 2; Scene 1

AUNT ESTER

You see that, Mr. Citizen. That's a boat. You gonna take a ride on that boat.  
(She hands it to him.)

Do you believe you can take a ride on that old boat, Mr. Citizen? That not what you call your ordinary boat. Look at that boat, Mr. Citizen. That's a magic boat. There's a lot of power in that boat. Power is something. It's hard to control but it's hard to stand in the way of it. God sweep the stars aside, Mr. Citizen. He don't let nothing stand in his way. God don't know nothing but the truth. That boat can take you to that city, Mr. Citizen. Do you believe it can take you to that city?

If you believe it can take you. God got room for everybody. I don't know if you ever seen him but God wear all different kinds of clothes. He got all kinds of faces and he got a sword. It's a big sword. The Bible say it's a mean and terrible swift sword. And when he get to waving that sword around he can do anything. I can take you to that city, but you got to want to go. Do you want to go, Mr. Citizen? Do you want to get your soul washed?

Listen to what I tell you. We gonna go to the City of Bones tonight but first you got to get ready. I want you to go and take a bath. Get scrubbed real good. Then I want you to put on your best clothes then go into your room and pray. Even if you don't know how to pray I want you to try. Black Mary, heat up some water for Mr. Citizen and then go get things ready. I'm going to get myself ready. Do not disturb me.



GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-07  
Time: 1:45  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Conjuring  
Type 3: Metaphorical

Act 2; Scene 2

AUNT ESTER

You ever seen a boat, Mr. Citizen? A boat is made out of a lot of things. Wood and rope. The sails look like bed sheets blowing in the wind. They make a snap when the winds catch them. Wood and rope and iron. The workmen with their hammers ringing. A boat is something. It takes a lot of men to make a boat. And it takes a lot of men to sail a boat. Them was some brave men. They left their family and didn't know if they was ever gonna see them again. They got on that boat and went out into the world. The world's a dangerous place, Mr. Citizen. It's got all kinds of harms in it. It take God to master the world. The world is a rough place. But there's gold out there in the world. There's good luck out there in the world. Them brave men went looking for it. Remember I told you you could take a ride on that boat? The wind catch up in them sails and you be off across the ocean. The wind will take you every which way. You need a strong arm to steer that boat. Don't you feel it, Mr. Citizen? Don't you feel that boat rocking? Just a rocking and a rocking. The wind blowing. Just a rocking and a rocking. The wind blowing and the birds following behind that boat. They follow whenever it go. What is they following for, Mr. Citizen? The wind snapping them sails and the birds following. The birds following and singing and the fish swimming and the wind blowing—

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-08  
Time: 1:10  
Type 1: Serio-Comedic  
Type 2: Money  
Type 3:

Act 1; Scene 3

CAESAR WILKS

Here...here go a quarter. I'm gonna see what you do with that. These niggers take and throw their money away in the saloon and get mad when it's gone. I give one fellow a quarter and he turn around and give it to the candy man. I say he could have did something with that quarter. It wasn't much but it was twenty-five cents more than he had. He took and threw it away. He can't see past his nose. He can't see it's all set up for him to do anything he want. See, he could have took and bought him a can of shoe polish and got him a rag. If he could see that far he'd look up and find twenty-five dollars in his pocket. Twenty-five dollars buys you an opportunity. You don't need but five dollars to get in the crap game. That's five opportunities he done threw away. The candy man gonna get him a bigger wagon and another five pound of sugar. He gonna be digging a ditch the rest of his life. I'm gonna see what you do. You turn that twenty-five cents into five dollars and you come and see me and I'll give you a job.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-09  
Time: 2:25  
Type 1: Serio-Comedic  
Type 2: Societal Order  
Type 3: Crime

Act 1; Scene 3

CAESAR WILKS

I'd say I didn't do it too if the law was after me. You arrest somebody for loitering and they'll swear they ain't standing there. That don't mean nothing to me 'cause he say he didn't do it. I had witnesses. Five hundred people standing around watching the man drown. I tried to break it up. Get them to go home. But they wanna stand around and watch a damn fool drown himself in the river. I tried to save him but he ain't had enough sense to save himself. People wanna blame me but I got to keep order. Just like them niggers wanna riot over a bucket of nails. Talking about they ain't going to work. Talking about closing the mill down. They don't understand the mill is what hold everything together. If you close down the mill the city would be in chaos. The city needs that tin. They need that tin in Philadelphia. They need it in Detroit and Cincinnati. Industry is what drive the country. Without industry wouldn't nobody be working. That tin put people to work doing other things. These niggers can't see that. They ought to be glad the mill is there. If it wasn't for the mill these niggers wouldn't have no way to pay their rent. Close down the mill and wait and see what happen then. I'll tell you. A hundred niggers is going to jail for trying to steal something. That's what's gonna happen. A hundred niggers is going to jail for loitering. A hundred niggers is going to jail for disturbing the peace after they get mad and start fighting each other. Five hundred babies is gonna go hungry. You gonna have a hundred new prostitutes. People gonna be living on the streets begging for a dime. And all because some damn fool took it upon himself to steal a bucket of nails and run and jump in the goddamn river. You close down the mill you ain't got nothing. Them niggers can't see that. Want to blame me. You know whose fault it is. I'll tell you whose fault it is. It's Abraham Lincoln's fault. He ain't had no idea what he was doing. He didn't know like I know. Some of these niggers was better off in slavery. They don't

know how to act otherwise. You try and do something nice for niggers and it'll backfire on you every time. You try and give them an opportunity by giving them a job and they take and throw it away. Talking about they ain't going to work.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-10  
Time: 2:30  
Type 1: Serio-Comedic  
Type 2: Societal Order  
Type 3: Family

Act 1; Scene 3

CAESAR WILKS

I got to play the hand that was dealt to me. You look around and see you black. You look at the calendar. Slavery's over. I'm a free man. I can get up whatever time I want to in the morning. I can move all over and pick any woman I want. I can walk down the street to the store and buy anything my money will buy. There ain't nothing I can't have. I'm starting out with nothing so I got to get a little something. A little place to start. You look and see the race you got to run is different than somebody else's. Maybe it's got more hills. It's longer. But this is what I got. Now what to do with it?

I look around and see where niggers got to eat and niggers got to sleep. I say if I had some bread I'd be a rich man. I got some bread. In the valley of the blind the one-eyed man is king. I started selling hoe cakes off the back of a wagon. I'd cook them over the coals. I got me some beans. Selling them right out the pot. I even put a little pork in them. Police ran me off the corner. Say I needed a license. It took me awhile but I got me a license. I had to pay six or seven people but I got me a license.

Niggers say my bowls was too small. I got bigger bowls. Say I didn't put enough pork in the beans. I put in more pork. I got me some chickens. I charged extra for the big ones and the people got mad. One man told me the chickens had big feet but they didn't have big wings. I seen I was in the wrong business. Said I was gonna let niggers eat on their own and give them a place to sleep. Only I didn't have no money to buy no property.

Went down to the bank to borrow some money. They told me I needed some collateral. Say you need something to borrow money against. I say all right, I'll get me some collateral. I opened me up a gambling joint in the back of the barbershop. Sold whiskey. The police closed it down. I had to put some bullet holes in a couple of niggers and the police arrested me. Put me on the county farm. I had to bust a couple of niggers upside the head for trying to steal my food. A couple tried to escape. I caught them. That don't do nothing but make it harder on everybody. They out there enjoying their freedom ducking and dodging the law and everybody else on half rations and got to make up their work.

A fellow named John Hanson started a riot. I seen that wasn't gonna be nothing but bad news. I took him on one-to-one. Man-to-man. He busted my eye. That's why I can't see but so good out my one eye. He busted my eye but I put down the riot. They gave me a year. I did six months when the Mayor called me in to see him. Say he wanted to put me in charge of the Third Ward. Told me say you fry the little fish and send the big fish to me. They give me a gun and a badge. I took my badge and gun and went down to the bank and laid it on the counter. Told them I wanted to borrow some money on that.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-11  
Time: 1:20  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Love  
Type 3: Relationships

Act 1; Scene 5

BLACK MARY

Here, Mr. Citizen. Here. You got a woman in your hands. Now what? What you got? What you gonna do? Time ain't long, Mr. Citizen. A woman ain't but so many times filled up. What you donna do? What you gonna fill me up with? Love? Happiness? Peace? What you got, Mr. Citizen? I seen it all. You got something new? Fill me up, Mr. Citizen. What you got for me, you got something I ain't seen? Come on. What can I be without you?

Leroy. And John. And Cujoe. And Sam. And Robert. One after the other they come and they go. You can't hold on to none of them. They slip right through your hands. They use you up and you can't hold them. They all the time taking till it's gone. They ain't tried to put nothing to it. They ain't got nothing in their hand. They aint got nothing to add to it. They too busy taking. They taking cause they need. You can't blame them for that. They so full of their needs they can't see you. Now here you come. You don't even know what you need. All you see is a woman. You can't see nothing else. You can't think nothing else. That blinds you.

Okay, Mr. Citizen. I'll come to your room tonight. But the morning got to come, Mr. Citizen. What you got then? You tell me tomorrow. You wake up and look at your hands and see what you got.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-12  
Time: 1:00  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Domestic Order  
Type 3: Family

Act 2; Scene 3

BLACK MARY

Here! You cook it! You turn it down! I can't do everything the way you want me to. I'm not you. You act like there ain't no other way to do nothing. I got my own way of doing things. I like the fire high. That's the way I cook. You like it down. That's the way you cook. If you ain't cooking you ain't got nothing to say about it. All you got to worry about is the eating.

It's been three years now I can't do nothing to satisfy you. I may as well lay down somewhere and forget about it. You got something to say about everything. Turn the fire down. Wash the greens in the other pot. Shake that flour off that chicken. Tuck in the corners of the sheets. That too much starch. That ain't enough salt. I'm tired of it! Your way ain't always the best way. I got my own way and that's the way I'm doing it. If I stay around here I'm doing it my own way.



GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-13  
Time: 1:00  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Family  
Type 3: Value of Life

Act 2; Scene 5

BLACK MARY

Caesar, I gave you everything. Even when I didn't have to give you. I made every way for you. I turned my eyes away. I figured if I didn't see it I couldn't hold fault. If I held fault I couldn't hold on to my love for you.

But now you standing in the light and I can't turn away no more. I remember you when you was on the other side of the law. That's my brother. The one selling hoe cakes off the back of a wagon. The one that helped Mrs. Robinson and the kids when nobody else would. That's my brother. The one who used to get out of bed to take me to school. The one who believed everybody had the same right to life...the same right to whatever there was in life they could find useful. That's my brother. I don't know who you are. But you not my brother. You hear me, Caesar? You not my brother.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-14

Time: 2:10

Type 1: Dramatic

Type 2: Societal Order

Type 3: Money

Act 1; Scene 2

CITIZEN BARLOW

Alabama. I only been up here four weeks. When I left Alabama they had all the roads closed to the colored people. I had to sneak out. Say they didn't want anybody to leave. Say we had to stay there and work. I told my mama I was going and she say okay. Told me, "there a big world out there." I kissed her. She told me she loved me and I left. I almost got caught a couple of times. I had to go out the back way and find my own roads. Took me almost two weeks. There was some other people out on the road and we helped each other. Me and a fellow named Roper Lee went over to the mill. They say they was paying two dollars a day but when we got there they say a dollar fifty. Then they say we got to pay two dollars room and board. They sent us over to a place the man say we got to put two dollars on top of that. Then he put two men to a room with one bed. The fellow I was with want to fight about it. I'm just starting out I don't want no trouble. I told him I would sleep on the floor. I wasn't planning on sleeping there long. I'm just starting out sleeping there. I asked one fellow what board meant. He say they supposed to give you something to eat. They ain't give us nothing. I say okay. I can't make them give me nothing. What I'm gonna do? I got to eat. I bought a loaf of bread for a dime. A bowl of soup cost ten cents around the corner. I wasn't desperate. I had sixty five cents to make it to payday. I ate half the bread and say I would get a bowl of soup tomorrow. Come payday they give me three dollars say the rest go on my bill. I had to give the man what own the house two dollars. What I'm gonna do, Miss Tyler? I told the people at the mill I was gonna get another job. They said I couldn't do that 'cause I still owed them money and they was gonna get the police on me. I was gonna go to another city but then before I had a chance I killed a man. I don't know, Miss Tyler. I feel like I got a hole inside me. People say you can help

me. I don't want to go to hell, Miss Tyler. My mama cry every time something bad happen to me.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-15  
Time: 2:45  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Value of Life  
Type 3: Love

Act 2; Scene 3

CITIZEN BARLOW

You got on that blue dress. I met this gal at a dance one time had on a blue dress. She had on a blue dress and she had her hair slicked back. Her mouth made her face look pretty. She was dancing and she had tears in her eyes. I asked her why she was crying. She said she was lonesome. I told her I couldn't fix that but if she wanted somebody to walk her home after the dance I'd walk her. See that she got home safe. She thanked me and went on crying. Say she felt better, and after the dance I could walk her home since I was going that way. She had a good time dancing with some of the other men. I danced with her some more. She was smiling but she still had tears in her eyes. After the dance I walked her home. I seen at the dance that she had a nice way about her. When she was walking home she put her hand in mine. She asked me did I want to stay the night. I told her yes. I told her I was at the dance looking for a woman. She asked me why didn't I tell, her we could have saved each other some time. I woke up in the morning and she was laying there crying. I didn't ask her about it. I didn't try and stop her. I lay there awhile trying to figure out what to do. I ended up holding her in my arms. She started crying some more. I held her awhile and then I left. I said goodbye to her and started walking away. She was standing in the door. I looked back and she was standing so she fit right in the middle of the door. I couldn't see if she was crying. She kind of waved at me. I got a little further on and turned and looked back and she was still there. Look like she had got smaller like she might have sat down in the doorway. That's what it looked like to me. I can still see her standing there. Had a green door and I can see her standing in it. I don't know what happened to her. I'd like to look on her face again. Just to know that she all right and if she stopped crying. If I could see her face I believe that would be enough.

Sometimes I lay awake at night when I be lonely and ask myself what I would say to her. Sometimes I tell her to stop being lonely. I tell her it's something she doing to herself. But then I'm laying there lonely too and I have to ask myself was it something I was doing to myself? I don't know. I ain't lonely now. I ain't got no woman but I still don't feel lonely. I feel all filled up inside. That's something I done to myself. So maybe I did make myself lonely. That's what I'd tell her! I believe she was looking for somebody else to make her right with herself. That's why she was crying.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-16  
Time: 1:10  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Value of Life  
Type 3: Death

Act 1; Scene 1

ELI

They had a man named Garret Brown who jumped into the river. Caesar chased him and he jumped in and wouldn't come out. They say he stole a bucket of nails. He said he didn't do it. They having his funeral today.

They gonna bury him this afternoon. They gonna bury him out of Reverend Tolliver's church. They was supposed to bury him yesterday out of Reverend Flowers' church but Caesar stopped them. He went up to Reverend Flowers and told him it was against the law. The Christian law. Man ain't set foot in a church for thirty years talking about the Christian law. Caesar's just mad at him 'cause he didn't get a chance at him.

Caesar told him he wasn't gonna arrest him. Told him he'd give him a bowl of soup and some dry clothes. He told Caesar to go to hell. Told his whole family to go to hell. He talking about you, Black Mary.

He just treading water. Holding on to the barge. Caesar see he wasn't gonna come out he tried to beat him over the head with a two by four. Talking about he wasn't gonna do nothing to him. I believe he would have killed him right on the spot if he came out.

Well, as it is he dead.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-17  
Time: 2:20  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Slavery  
Type 3: Value of Life

Act 2; Scene 2

SOLLY TWO KINGS

Ain't nothing worse than slavery! I know. I was there. Dark was the night and cold was the ground. Look at that...

(He hands CITIZEN a chain link.)

That's my good luck piece. That piece of chain used to be around my ankle. They tried to chain me down but I beat them on that one. I say, I'm gonna keep this to remember by. I been lucky ever since. I beat them on a lot of things. I beat them when I got away. I had some people who helped me. They helped show me the way and looked out for me. I got all the way to Canada. There was eight of us. I was in Canada in 1857. I stood right there in Freedomland. That's what they called it. Freedomland. I asked myself, "What I'm gonna do?" I looked around. I didn't see nothing for me. I tried to feel different but I couldn't. I started crying. I hadn't cried since my daddy knocked me down for crying when I was ten years old. I breathed in real deep to taste the air. It didn't taste no different. The man what brought us over the border tried to talk with me. I just sat right down on the ground and started crying. I told him say, "I don't feel right." It didn't feel right being in freedom and my mama and all the other people still in bondage. Told him "I'm going back with you." I stopped crying soon as I said that. I joined the Underground Railroad. Look at that...

(Solly shows Citizen his stick)

That's sixty-two notches. That's sixty-two people I carried to Freedom. I was looking to make it sixty-three when Abraham Lincoln come along and changed all

that. Him and General Grant. I never did join the Union Army but I showed them where to go. I know all the routes. Me and Eli worked together many a time.

I was what we called the dragsman. I'd guard the rear. You had to fight a lot of times. I done been bit nine times by dogs.

(Solly shows Citizen his battle scars)

Look here...see that? A dog tried to tear my leg off one time. I got a big part of my arm missing. Tore out the muscle and everything. He was going for my throat. I told myself I was lucky. It was a good thing I found that pure otherwise I'd have to kill every dog I see.



GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-18  
Time: 1:10  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Slavery  
Type 3: Value of Life

Act 2; Scene 2

SOLLY TWO KINGS

They got civilized people up there. I seen them. White as cotton. Got smiles on their faces. Shake your hand and say, "Welcome." I seen them. Don't never let nobody tell you there ain't no good white people. They got some good white people down here but they got to fight the law. In Canada they ain't got to fight the law. Down here it's a war. And the battlefield's bloody! The field of battle is *always* bloody. It can't be no other way.

Ain't no sense in you getting mad 'cause it's rough out here. It's supposed to be rough. You ain't supposed to complain when you see some blood. I found out you could bleed and you didn't have to die. I said this is too good to be true! Since then I ain't never been afraid of losing some blood. I said they gonna have to kill me. I can give up some blood all day long if it'll keep coming back. Your blood is like a river it don't never stop till you dead. Life's got lots of comeback but death ain't got no comeback. That's the only way life have any meaning. Otherwise don't nothing count.

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Code: 00-19  
Time: 1:10  
Type 1: Dramatic  
Type 2: Societal Order  
Type 3: Value of Life

Act 2; Scene 3

SOLLY TWO KINGS

They never made Emancipation what they say it was. People say, “Jesus turn the water into wine what you look like telling him it was the wrong kind?” Hell, maybe it is the wrong kind! If you gonna do it ... do it right! They wave the law on one end and hit you with a Billy club with the other. I told myself I can't just sit around and collect dog shit while the people drowning. The people drowning in sorrow and grief. That's a mighty big ocean. They got the law tied to their toe. Every time they try and swim the law pull them under. It's dangerous out here. People walking around hunting each other. If you ain't careful you could lose your eye or your arm. I seen that. I seen a man grab hold to a fellow and cut off his arm. Cut it off at the shoulder. He had to work at it a while ...but he cut it clean off. The man looked down saw his arm gone and started crying. After that he more dangerous with that one arm then the other man is with two. He got less to lose. There's a lot of one-arm men walking around.