

Drama Club I

Unit 4 of 8

The first performance of Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf was held in New York in 1962, immediately becoming a huge success and award winner. The playwright, Edward Albee, born in 1928, began his writing career with poetry and novels (neither very successful) before turning to drama. As is true in many of his plays, the two lead characters in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, Martha and George, are abrasive and sarcastic in how they relate to each other. After many years of marriage, they know exactly how to expose and ridicule each other's weaknesses. The title is a joke that came out of a cocktail party they just attended; alcohol was necessary to find such hilarity in the play on words, (substituting author Virginia Wolfe for "the big bad wolf" in the children's song). Unbeknownst to George, Martha has invited a younger couple, Nick and Honey, over for a nightcap after the party.

This play is famous for being an "audience teaser", as the audience teeters between laughing and not the entire time.

(The front doorbell chimes)

MARTHA
Party! Party!

GEORGE *(Murderously)*
I'm really looking forward to this, Martha...

MARTHA *(Same)*
Go answer the door.

GEORGE *(Not moving)*
You answer it.

MARTHA
Get to that door, you.

(He does not move)

I'll fix you, you...

GEORGE *(Fake-spits)*
...to you...

(Door chime again)

MARTHA
(Shouting...to the door)
C'MON IN! *(To GEORGE, between her teeth)* I said,
get over there!

GEORGE
(Moves a little toward the door, smiling slightly)
All right, love...whatever love wants. *(Stops)* Just
don't start on the bit, that's all.

MARTHA

The bit? The bit? What kind of language is that? What are you talking about?

GEORGE

The bit. Just don't start in on the bit.

MARTHA

You imitating one of your students, for God's sake? What are you trying to do? WHAT BIT?

GEORGE

Just don't start in on the bit about the kid, that's all.

MARTHA

What do you take me for?

GEORGE

Much too much.

MARTHA *(Really angered)*

Yeah? Well, I'll start in on the kid if I want to.

GEORGE

Just leave the kid out of this.

MARTHA *(Threatening)*

He's mine as much as he is yours. I'll talk about him if I want to.

GEORGE

I'd advise against it, Martha.

MARTHA

Well, good for you. *(Knock)* C'mon in. Get over there and open the door!



1. How does Albee create mystery behind the couple?
2. Would you say this is a comedy? Why or why not?
3. What are some ways a character's personality is revealed without bluntly describing him/her?
4. Come up with two other comedic relationships between characters.
5. What do you think "the bit" is about? List two different possibilities.

6. Write a scene (twenty lines or more) that holds some mystery.

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes

**Appendix
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Citations:

<http://percysseattle.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/whos-afraid-of-virginia-woolf.jpg>

<http://ghosthat.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/67-VirginiaWoolfPromo.jpg>