

Edward Albee's

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

Directed by Dan Dryer

12th – 15th March 2025

Barn Theatre, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick Street, Southwick BN42 4TE

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? is a play by Edward Albee first staged in October 1962. It depicts the troubled marriage of George and Martha and the emotional and psychological games they play with each other and with their guests, a young couple names Nick and Honey.

The setting for the play is a professor's house on the campus of a New England university. At two o'clock in the morning, George, a professor of history, and his wife Martha return home after a party. Martha is the daughter of the president of the university where her husband teaches.

George is in his late forties and his wife is six years older, in her early fifties. Where he is somewhat cynical and world-weary, she is fiery and vulgar. She has invited a young couple back with them: Nick, a twenty-something biology lecturer at the university, and his wife Honey, a plain-looking woman also in her twenties.

Much drink flows and "Fun and Games" ensue. At times viciously funny and poignant, this three act play needs a strong, committed cast. American accents are required.



From the 1966 film of the play "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

Act 1

“Fun and Games”

Act 2

“Walpurgisnacht”

Act 3

“The Exorcism”

Characters (as described in the script):

Martha

Playing age fifty-two, looking somewhat younger. Ample, but not fleshy.

George

Her husband, playing age forty-six. Thin: hair going grey.

Honey

Playing age twenty-six, a petite girl, rather plain.

Nick

Playing age twenty-eight, her husband. Well put-together, good-looking.

Audition Dates

Tuesday 5th November 7:45

Monday 11th November 7:45

If you are unable to make either of these dates, please contact director Dan Dryer directly at dandryer123@hotmail.com to arrange another time to audition.

Rehearsals will be held on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings. However you will not need to be available for all three evenings every week. There will be some Sunday rehearsals later in the rehearsal run.

Rehearsals will start on Monday 6th January 2025.

Fees

You do not need to be a member of the Wick Theatre Company to audition, however if you are cast you will need to join. There is a membership fee of £25 a year (concessions £15). This will include your script and there is no show fee.

Audition Slip

Name	Mobile
Email	
Reading for the role(s) of	
Are you will to play another role?	
<p>Any days you cannot regularly rehearse:</p> <p>Details of holidays booked of other commitments:</p>	
Is there anything else the Director needs to know?	
Photography and Filming: Adults	
<p>During the course of our process there will be film and photography for publicity purposes.</p> <p>Could you please read and sign the relevant declaration below:</p> <p>I give / do not give* permission for photographs or film to be taken for publicity purposes</p> <p>Print Name: _____</p> <p>Signed: _____ Date: _____</p> <p><i>* delete as appropriate</i></p>	

Audition Pieces

George

GEORGE. Well, don't you let that get bandied about. The old man wouldn't like it. Martha's father expects loyalty and devotion out of his ... staff. I was going to use another word. Martha's father expects his ... staff... to cling to the walls of this place, like the ivy to come here and grow old ... to fall in the line of service. One man, a professor of Latin and Elocution, actually fell in the cafeteria line, one lunch. He was buried, as many of us have been, and as many more of us will be, under the shrubbery around the chapel. It is said ... and I have no reason to doubt it ... that we make excellent fertilizer. But the old man is not going to be buried under the shrubbery ... the old man is not going to die. Martha's father has the staying power of one of those Micronesian tortoises.

There are rumors ... which you must not breathe in front of Martha, for she foams at the mouth ... that the old man, her father, is over two hundred years old. There is probably an irony involved in this, but I am not drunk enough to figure out what it is. How many kids you going to have?

GEORGE. When I was sixteen and going to prep school, during the Punic Wars, a bunch of us used to go into New York on the first day of vacations, before we fanned out to our homes, and in the evening this bunch of us used to go to this gin mill owned by the gangster-father of one of us — for this was during the Great Experiment, or Prohibition, as it is more frequently called, and it was a bad time for the liquor lobby, but a fine time for the crooks and the cops — and we would go to this gin mill, and we would drink with the grown-ups and listen to the jazz. And one time, in the bunch of us, there was this boy who was fifteen, and he had killed his mother with a shotgun some years before — accidentally, completely accidentally, without even an unconscious motivation, I have no doubt, no doubt at all — and this one evening this boy went with us, and we ordered our drinks, and when it came his turn he said, I'll have bergin ... give me some bergin, please ... bergin and water. Well, we all laughed... he was blond and he had the face of a cherub, and we all laughed, and his cheeks went red and the color rose in his neck, and the assistant crook who had taken our order told people at the next table what the boy had said, and then they laughed, and then more people were told and the laughter grew, and more people and more laughter, and no one was laughing more than us, and none of us laughing more than the boy who had shot his mother. And soon, everyone in the gin mill knew what the laughter was about, and everyone started ordering bergin, and laughing when they ordered it. And soon, of course, the laughter became less general, but it did not subside, entirely, for a very long time, for always at this table or that someone would order bergin and a new area of laughter would rise. We drank free that night, and we were bought champagne by the management, by the gangster-father of one of us. And of course, we suffered the next day, each of us, alone, on his train, away from New York, each of us with a grown-up's hangover but it was the grandest day of my ...youth.

GEORGE. You see, Martha, here, stops just when the going gets good ... just when things start getting a little rough. Now, Martha, here, is a misunderstood little girl; she really is. Not only does she have a husband who is a bog... a younger-than-she-is bog albeit ... not only does she have a husband who is a bog, she has as well a tiny problem with spiritous liquors — like she can't get enough ...

MARTHA. (*Without energy.*) No more, George.

GEORGE. ... and on top of all that, poor weighed-down girl, PLUS a father who doesn't really give a damn whether she lives or dies, who couldn't care less what happens to his only daughter ... on top of all that she has a son. She has a son who fought her every inch of the way, who didn't want to be turned into a weapon against his father, who didn't want to be used as a goddamn club whenever Martha didn't get things like she wanted them!

MARTHA. (*Rising to it.*) Lies! Lies!!

GEORGE. Lies? All right. A son who would not disown his father, who came to him for advice, for information, for love that wasn't mixed with sickness — and you know what I mean, Martha! - who could not tolerate the slashing, braying residue that called itself his MOTHER. MOTHER? HAH!!

Martha

MARTHA. Well, like I say, it was twenty years ago, and it wasn't in a ring, or anything like that, you know what I mean. It was wartime, and Daddy was on this physical fitness kick ... Daddy's always admired physical fitness ... says a man is only part brain ... he has a body, too, and it's his responsibility to keep both of them up... you know?

NICK. Unh-hunh.

MARTHA. Says the brain can't work unless the body's working, too.

NICK. Well, that's not exactly so ...

MARTHA. Well, maybe that isn't what he says ... something like it. But ... it was wartime, and Daddy got the idea all the men should learn how to box ... self-defence. I suppose the idea was if the Germans landed on the coast, or something, the whole faculty'd go out and punch 'em to death ... I don't know.

NICK. It was probably more the principle of the thing.

MARTHA. No kidding. Anyway, so Daddy had a couple of us over one Sunday and we went out in the back, and Daddy put on the gloves himself. Daddy's a strong man ... Well, you know.

NICK. Yes ... yes.

MARTHA. And he asked George to box with him. Aaaaannnd ... George didn't want to ...probably something about not wanting to bloody-up his meal ticket ...

NICK. Unh-hunh.

MARTHA. .. Anyway, George said he didn't want to, and Daddy was saying, "Come on, young man ... what sort of son-in-law are you?" ... and stuff like that.

Nick. Yeah.

MARTHA. So, while this was going on ... I don't know why I did it ... I got into a pair of gloves myself... you know, I didn't lace 'em up, or anything ... and I snuck up behind George, just kid-ding, and I yelled, "Hey George!" and at the same time I let go sort of a roundhouse right... just kidding, you know?

NICK. Unh-hunh.

MARTHA, ... and George wheeled around real quick, and he caught it right in the jaw ... Pow! I hadn't meant it ... honestly. Anyway .. POW! Right in the jaw ... and he was off balance ... he must have been ... and he stumbled back a few steps, and then, CRASH, he landed ... flat ... in a huckleberry bush! It was awful, really. It was funny, but it was awful. I think it's colored our whole life. Really I do! It's an excuse, anyway.

It's what he uses for being bogged down, anyway ... why he hasn't gone any-where. And it was an accident ... a real, goddamn accident!

MARTHA. I stand warned! So, anyway, I married the S.O.B., and I had it all planned out ... He was the groom... he was going to be groomed. He'd take over some day ... first, he'd take over the History Department, and then, when Daddy retired, he'd take over the college ... you know? That's the way it was supposed to be. (*To George, who is at the portable bar with his back to her.*) You getting angry, baby? Hunh? (*Now back.*) That's the way it was supposed to be. Very simple. And Daddy seemed to think it was a pretty good idea, too. For a while. Until he watched for a couple of years! (*To George again.*) You getting angrier? (*Now back.*) Until he watched for a couple of years and started thinking maybe it wasn't such a good idea after all ... that maybe Georgie boy didn't have the stuff... that he didn't have it in him!

GEORGE. (*Still with his back to them all.*) Stop it, Martha.

MARTHA. (*Viciously triumphant*) The hell I will! You see, George didn't have much ... push ... he wasn't particularly ...aggressive. In fact he was a sort of a ... (*Spits the word at Georges back.*) ... a FLOP! A great ... big ... fat ... FLOP!

MARTHA. (*Dismissing him.*) You're all flops. I am the Earth Mother, and you're all flops. (*More or less to herself.*) I disgust me. I pass my life in crummy, totally pointless infidelities... (*Laughs rue-fully.*) would-be infidelities. Hump the Hostess? That's a laugh. A bunch of boozed-up ... impotent lunk-heads. Martha makes goo-goo eyes and the lunk-heads grin, and roll their beautiful, beautiful eyes back, and grin some more, and Martha licks her chops, and the lunk-heads slap over to the bar to pick up a little courage, and they pick up a little courage, and they bounce back over to old Martha, who does a little dance for them, which heats them all up ... mentally ... and so they slap over to the bar again, and pick up a little more courage, and their wives and sweethearts stick their noses up in the air ... right through the ceiling, sometimes ... which sends the lunk-heads back to the soda fountain again where they fuel up some more while Martha-poo sits there with her dress up over her head ... suffocating — you don't know how stuffy it is with your dress up over your head — suffocating! waiting for the lunk-heads; so, finally they get their courage up ... but that's all, baby! Oh my, there is sometimes some very nice potential, but, oh my! My, my, my. (*Brightly.*) But that's how it is in civilized society. (*To herself again.*) All the gorgeous lunk-heads. Poor babies. (*To Nick, now; earnestly.*) There is only one man in my life who has ever ... made me happy. Do you know that? One!

Nick

NICK. I didn't say that ... I said she gets sick quite easily.

GEORGE. Oh. I thought that by sick you meant ...

NICK. Well, it's true ... Once she starts... there's practically no stopping her ...I mean she'll go right on ... for hours. Not all the time, but... regularly.

GEORGE. You can tell time by her, hunh?

NICK. Just about.

GEORGE. Drink?

NICK. Sure. (*With no emotion, except the faintest distaste, as George takes his glass to the bar.*) I married her because she was pregnant.

GEORGE. Oh? But you said you didn't have any children ... When I asked you, you said ...

NICK. She wasn't ... really. It was a hysterical pregnancy. She blew up, and then she went down.

GEORGE. And while she was up, you married her.

NICK. And then she went down. (*They both laugh, and are a little surprised that they do.*)

GEORGE. Uh ... Bourbon is right.

NICK. Uh ... yes, Bourbon.

NICK. We were talking about my wife's money ... not yours.

GEORGE. OK ... talk.

NICK. No. (*Pause.*) My father-in-law... was a man of the Lord, and he was very rich.

GEORGE. What faith?

NICK. He... my father-in-law... was called by God when he was six, or something, and he started preaching, and he baptized people, and he saved them, and he traveled around a lot, and he became pretty famous ... not like some of them, but he became pretty famous... and when he died he had a lot of money.

GEORGE. God's money.

NICK. No ... his own.

GEORGE. What happened to God's money?

NICK. He spent God's money ... and he saved his own. He built hospitals, and he sent off Mercy ships, and he brought the outhouses indoors, and he brought the people outdoors, into the sun, and he built three churches, or whatever they were, and two of them burned down ... and he ended up pretty rich.

GEORGE. (*After considering it.*) Well, I think that's very nice.

NICK. Yes. (*Pause. Giggles a little.*) And so, my wife's got some money.

GEORGE. But not God's money.

NICK. No. Her own.

NICK. My God, you've gone crazy too.

MARTHA. Clink?

NICK. I said, you've gone crazy too.

MARTHA. (*Considers it.*) Probably ... probably.

NICK. You've all gone crazy: I come back downstairs, and what happens ...

MARTHA. What happens?

NICK. ... my wife's gone into the can with a liquor bottle, and she winks at me ... winks at me!....

MARTHA. (*Sadly.*) She's never wunk at you; what a shame ...

NICK. She is lying down on the floor again, the tiles, all curled up and she starts peeling the label off the liquor bottle, the brandy bottle ...

MARTHA. .. well never get the deposit back that way

NICK. and I ask her what she's doing, and she goes: shhhhhh! nobody knows I'm here; and I come back in here, and you're sit-ting there going Clink!, for God's sake. Clink!

MARTHA. CLINK!

NICK. You've all gone crazy.

MARTHA. Yes. Sad but true.

NICK. Where is your husband?

MARTHA. He is vanish-ed. Pouf!

NICK. You're all crazy: nuts.

MARTHA. (*Affects a brogue.*) Awww, 'tis the refuge we take when the unreality of the world weighs too heavy on our tiny heads. (*Normal voice again.*) Relax; sink into it; you're no better than any-body else.

NICK. (*Wearily.*) I think I am.

MARTHA. (*Her glass to her mouth.*) You're certainly a flop in some departments.

NICK. (*Wincing.*) I beg your pardon...?

MARTHA. (*Unnecessarily loud.*) I said, you're certainly a flop in some ...

NICK. (*He, too, too loud.*) I'm sorry you're disappointed.

MARTHA, (*Braying.*) I didn't say I was disappointed! Stupid!

NICK. You should try me some rime when we haven't been drinking for ten hours, and maybe ...

Honey

HONEY, No, now. I ... I throw up ... I mean, I get sick... occasionally, all by myself... without any reason.

GEORGE, Is that a fact?

NICK. You're ... you're delicate, Honey.

HONEY. (*Proudly.*) I've always done it.

GEORGE. Like Big Ben.

NICK. (*A warning.*) Watch it!

HONEY. And the doctors say there's nothing wrong with me ... organically. You know?

NICK. Of course there isn't.

HONEY. Why, just before we got married, I developed... appendicitis... or everybody thought it was appendicitis... but it turned out to be ... it was a ... (*Laughs briefly.*) ... false alarm.

GEORGE. How They Got Married. Well, how they got married is this ... The Mouse got all puffed up one day, and she went over to Blondies house, and she stuck out her puff, and she said ... look at me.

HONEY. (*White ... on her feet.*) I ... don't ... like this.

NICK. (*To George.*) Stop it!

GEORGE. Look at me ... I'm all puffed up. Oh my goodness, said Blondie ...

HONEY. (*As if from a distance.*) ... and so they were married ...

GEORGE. ... and so they were married ...

HONEY. ... and then ...

GEORGE....and then ...

HONEY. (*Hysteria.*) WHAT? ... and then, WHAT?

NICK. NO! NO!

GEORGE. (*As if to a baby.*).. and then the puff went away ... like magic ... pouf!

NICK. (*Almost sick.*) Jesus God ...

HONEY. ... the puff went away ...

GEORGE. (*Softly.*) ... pouf.

NICK. Honey ... I didn't mean to ... honestly, I didn't mean to ...

HONEY. You ... you told them ...

NICK. Honey... I didn't mean to ...

HONEY. (*With outlandish horror.*) You..... told them! You told them! OHHHH! Oh, no, no, no, no! You couldn't have told them ... oh, nooooo!

NICK. Honey, I didn't mean to ...

HONEY, (*Grabbing at her belly.*) Ohhhhh ... nooooo.

NICK, Honey ... baby ... I'm sorry... I didn't mean to

GEORGE, (*Abruptly and with some disgust.*) And that's how you play Get the Guests.

HONEY, I'm going to ... I'm going to be sick ...

GEORGE. Naturally!

NICK. Honey ...

HONEY. (*Hysterical.*) Leave me alone ... I'm going ... to ... be ... sick. (She runs out of the room.)

HONEY (*the worse for wear, half asleep, still sick, weak, still staggering a little ... vaguely, in something of a dream world*) Bells. Ringing. I've been hearing bells. I couldn't sleep ... for the bells. Ding-ding, bong ... it woke me up. What time is it? (*confused and frightened*) I was asleep, and the bells started... they BOOMED! Poe-bells ... they were Poe-bells ... Bing-bing-bong-BOOM! I was asleep, and I was dreaming of... something...and I heard the sounds coming, and I didn't know what it was. And I didn't want to wake up, but the sound kept coming ... and it FRIGHTENED ME! And it was so... cold. The wind was... the wind was so cold! And I was lying somewhere, and the covers kept slipping away from me, and I didn't want them to... and there was someone there ...(*frightened*): And I didn't want someone there....I was ... naked ...! (*still with her dream*) I DON'T WANT ANY...NO ...! NO!... I DON'T WANT ANY ... I DON'T WANT THEM.... GO 'WAY.... (*Begins to cry*) I DON'T WANT...ANY...CHILDREN. ... I... don't... want... any... children. I'm afraid! I don't want to be hurt....PLEASE!