



Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Winter 2017

Discussion Questions

1. Why does George repeatedly describe Honey as "slim-hipped?" Is it a compliment or a slight?
2. What similarities exist between Martha and Honey? Between George and Nick?
3. Do George and Martha love each other?
4. Why do you think this play was controversial, yet a big hit, when it opened in 1962?
5. Albee said in a 1966 interview that, "...Of course, who's afraid of Virginia Woolf means who's afraid of the big bad wolf . . . who's afraid of living life without false illusions." What are the false illusions in this play?
6. What false illusions are there in your life?
7. Compare the aspirations of the women in this play with those of women today.
8. How is this play still relevant?
9. Martha's father figures prominently in this play, and yet we never see him. Does this make him a symbol, and if so, symbolic of what?
10. For which character(s) do you feel sympathy?
11. Martha says, "I'll make you sorry you ever let yourself down." Is she more disappointed in George's lack of success or his lack of confidence?
12. The Edward Albee Foundation maintains this play can be performed only by white actors. Why might this be they want that? Do you agree?
13. George reads during the party, which infuriates Martha. He reads aloud, "'And the west, encumbered by crippling alliances, and burdened with a morality too rigid to accommodate itself to the swing of events, must...eventually...fall.'" How does this statement relate to George and Martha's marriage?
14. Why might it matter that George is six years younger than Martha?
15. The characters drink throughout the play. Why might Albee have chosen to write this into the script?
16. What do you think will happen to George and Martha the morning after this play takes place?
17. As George says Catholic prayers for their dead what has really died?
18. How is the college (the play's setting) a character in this play?
19. At the end of the play George says "it will be better" to Martha. What does he mean?
20. Have you ever been to a party as frightful as this?