



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

Winter 2017

### Character Descriptions

**George:** 46. A history professor stuck at a low-level, but tenured position at a small college, even after working there for many years, George has a sordid and violent personal history, which he tried to capture in a novel that was never published. He feels bitterly towards Martha for siding with her father against him throughout their marriage. He never lived up to his potential, and he blames Martha, her father and the college for their misery. Nevertheless, he and Martha have stayed together, drawing strength from an imaginary scenario they have jointly concocted. But when Martha shares the story with their after-dinner guests, he sees it as the ultimate act of betrayal.

**Martha:** 52. Married to George and the daughter of the college's president, her aspirations were to marry a professor who would ascend to replace her father when he retired. She and her husband were never able to have children, and her father believes George to be an unsuitable match. She is full of rage at never having achieved her dreams and being stuck in a sort of limbo: no skills, no power, no purpose, and completely reliant on men for her self-worth. She now spends her time lashing out against George verbally and engaging in extramarital affairs with other professors.

**Nick:** 28. A clean-cut, blond, new and rising professor in the Biology Department, Nick is married to Honey, whom it seems he married both for her money and out of obligation. He is exactly the kind of man Martha's father respects, for his masculinity and unbridled American optimism. Nick represents the American amoral character: blond, bold and bright, but unfaithful and calculating in his ambitions.

**Honey:** 26. Like Martha, Honey's stated aspirations are to be a wife and mother and rise in status on campus. She is naïve and/or oblivious to the political and sexual machinations of the world, including her husband's infidelity and lack of love for her.