

MORGAN ARTS COUNCIL'S ICE HOUSE THEATER PROJECT

Audition Material

Edward Albee's

Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?

Contact the directors for information and/or an appointment to audition **before July 16th** @ 304-596-1367 or at TomsActors@gmail.com.

In addition to the open roles of Nick and Honey, please contact us if you are interested in set building, set painting, backstage assistance, and other crew positions.



Character Descriptions

MARTHA (*cast*) - a large boisterous woman, 52, looking somewhat younger; ample, but not fleshy

GEORGE (*cast*) - her husband, 46; thin, hair going gray

HONEY (*available*) – mid 20s, a petite girl; rather plain

NICK (*available*) - late 20s, her husband; well put-together, good-looking

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Considerations

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? contains adult language and adult content. The roles of George and Martha will be played by Tom and Beth Brooks. Performance dates are Sept 19–23, 27–30. Rehearsal schedule will be dependent on actor availability.

What if I don't fit the character description? Don't count yourself out. What's important is what you can bring to the role and how you jibe with the others—not what you think we want. The actor who plays Nick does need to be in decent shape by opening night.

What to Bring

Your audition will be at the Ice House at Mercer and Independence Streets in downtown Berkeley Springs, WV. Bring to your audition:

- An attitude of fun.
- Your summer schedule (all potential conflicts between now and the end of September).
- All contact information.
- Your copy of these audition scenes.

You might also:

- Bring a partner, if you like, to read with opposite you (as either Nick or Honey), whether or not this person wants to audition.
- Be asked to read additional portions of the play.

AUDITION SCENE 1

NICK AND HONEY WITH MARTHA AND GEORGE

MARTHA

Make me another drink . . . lover.

GEORGE

(Taking her glass)

My God, you can swill it down, can't you?

MARTHA

(Imitating tiny child)

I'm firsty.

GEORGE

Jesus!

MARTHA

(Swinging around)

Look, sweetheart, I can drink you under any goddamn table you want . . . so don't worry about me!

GEORGE

Martha, I gave you the prize years ago . . . There isn't an abomination aware going that you . . .

MARTHA

I swear . . . if you existed I'd divorce you . . .

GEORGE

Well, just stay on your feet, that's all . . . These people are your guests, you know, and . . .

MARTHA

I can't even see you . . . I haven't been able to see you for years . . .

GEORGE

. . . if you pass out, or throw up, or something . . .

MARTHA

I mean, you're a blank, a cipher . . .

GEORGE

. . . and try to keep your clothes on, too. There aren't many more sickening sights than you with a couple of drinks in you and your skirt up over your head, you know . . .

MARTHA

. . . a zero . . .

GEORGE

. . . your *heads*, I should say . . .

(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 chimes 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. Isn't it nice the way some people have manners, though, even in this day and age? Isn't it nice that some people won't just come breaking into other people's houses even if they *do* hear some sub-human monster yowling at 'em from inside . . . ?

MARTHA

SCREW YOU!

(Simultaneously with MARTHA's last remark, GEORGE flings open the front door. HONEY and NICK are framed in the entrance. There is a brief silence, then . . .)

GEORGE

(Ostensibly a pleased recognition of HONEY and NICK, but really satisfaction of having MARTHA's explosion overheard)

Ahhhhhhhhh!

MARTHA

(A little too loud . . . to cover)

HI! Hi, there . . . c'mon in!

HONEY AND NICK *(ad lib)*

Hello, here we are . . . hi . . . etc.

GEORGE

(Very matter-of-factly)

You must be our little guests.

MARTHA

Ha, ha, ha, HA! Just ignore old sour-puss over there. C'mon in, kids . . . give your coats and stuff to sour-puss.

NICK

(Without expression)

Well, now, perhaps we shouldn't have come . . .

HONEY

Yes . . . it *is* late, and . . .

MARTHA

Late! Are you kidding? Throw your stuff down anywhere and c'mon in.

GEORGE

(Vaguely . . . walking away)

Anywhere . . . furniture, floor . . . doesn't make any difference around this place.

NICK

(To HONEY)

I told you we shouldn't have come.

MARTHA

(Stentorian)

I said c'mon in! Now c'mon!

HONEY

(Giggling a little as she and NICK advance)

Oh, dear.

GEORGE

(Imitating HONEY's giggle)

Hee, hee, hee, hee.

MARTHA

(Swinging on GEORGE)

Look, muckmouth . . . you cut that out!

GEORGE

(Innocent and hurt)

Martha! *(To HONEY and NICK)* Martha's a devil with language; she really is.

MARTHA

Hey *kids* . . . sit down.

HONEY

(As she sits)

Oh, isn't this lovely!

NICK

(Perfunctorily)

Yes indeed . . . very handsome.

MARTHA

Well, thanks.

NICK

(Indicating the abstract painting)

Who . . . who did the . . . ?

MARTHA

That? Oh, that's by . . .

GEORGE

. . . some Greek with a mustache Martha attacked on night in . . .

HONEY

(To save the situation)

Oh, ho, ho, ho, HO.

NICK

It's got a . . . a . . .

GEORGE

A quiet intensity?

NICK

Well, no . . . a . . .

GEORGE

Oh. *(Pause)* Well, then, a certain noisy relaxed quality, maybe?

NICK

(Knows what GEORGE is doing, but stays grimly, coolly polite)

No. What I meant was . . .

GEORGE

How about . . . uh . . . a quietly noisy relaxed intensity.

HONEY

Dear! You're being joshed.

NICK

(Cold)

I'm aware of that.

(A brief, awkward silence)

GEORGE

(Truly)

I am sorry.

(NICK nods condescending forgiveness)

What it is, actually . . . is it's a pictorial representation of the order of Martha's mind.

MARTHA

Ha, ha, ha, HA! Make the kids a drink, George. What do you want, kids? What do you want to drink, hunh?

NICK

Honey? What would you like?

HONEY

I don't know, dear. A little brandy, maybe. Never mix—never worry.”
(She giggles)

GEORGE

Brandy? Just brandy? Simple; simple. *(Moves to the portable bar)* What about you . . . uh . . .

NICK

Bourbon on the rocks, if you don't mind.

GEORGE

(As he makes drinks)

Mind? No, I don't mind. I don't think I mind. Martha? Rubbing alcohol for you?

MARTHA

Sure. "Never mix—never worry."

GEORGE

Martha's tastes in liquor have come down . . . simplified over the years . . . crystallized. Back when I was courting Martha—well, I don't know if that exactly the right word for it—but back when I was courting Martha . . .

MARTHA

(Cheerfully)

Screw, sweetie!

GEORGE

(Returning with HONEY and NICK's drinks)

At any rate, back when I was courting Martha, she'd order the damndest things! You wouldn't believe it! We'd go into a bar . . . you know, a *bar* . . . a whiskey, beer, and bourbon *bar* . . . and what she'd do would be, she screw up her face, and think real hard, and come up with . . . brandy Alexanders, creme de cacao frappes, gimlets, flaming punch bowls . . . seven layer liqueur things.

MARTHA

They were good . . . I liked them.

GEORGE

Real lady-like little drinkies.

MARTHA

Hey, where's my rubbing alcohol?

GEORGE

(Returning to the portable bar)

But the years have brought to Martha a sense of essentials . . . the knowledge that cream is for coffee, lime juice for pies . . . and alcohol *(Brings MARTHA her drink)* pure and simple . . . here you are, angel . . . for the pure and simple. *(Raises his glass)* For the mind's blind eye, the heart's ease, and the liver's craw. Down the hatch, all.

MARTHA

(To them all)

Cheers, dears. *(They all drink)* You have a real poetic nature, George . . . a Dylan Thomas-y quality that gets me right where I live.

GEORGE

Vulgar girl! With guests here!

MARTHA

Ha, ha, ha, ha! (*To HONEY and NICK*) Hey; hey!

(*Sings, conducts with her drink in her hand. HONEY joins in toward the end*)

Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf,

Virginia Woolf,

Virginia Woolf,

Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf . . .

(*MARTHA and HONEY laugh; NICK smiles*)

HONEY

Oh, wasn't that funny? That was so funny . . .

NICK

(*Snapping to*)

Yes . . . yes, it was.

MARTHA

I thought I'd bust a gut; I really did . . . I really thought I'd bust a gut laughing. George didn't like it . . . George didn't think it was funny at all.

GEORGE

Lord, Martha, do we have to go through this again?

MARTHA

I'm trying to shame you into a sense of humor, angel, that's all.

GEORGE

(*Over-patiently; to HONEY and NICK*)

Martha didn't think I laughed loud enough. Martha thinks that unless . . . as she demurely puts it . . . that unless you "bust a gut" you aren't amused. You know? Unless you carry on like a hyena you aren't having any fun.

HONEY

Well, I certainly had fun . . . it was a *wonderful* party.

NICK

(*attempting enthusiasm*)

Yes . . . it certainly was.

HONEY

(*To* MARTHA)

And your father! He's so marvelous!

NICK

(*As above*)

Yes . . . yes, he is.

HONEY

Oh, I tell you.

MARTHA

(*Genuinely proud*)

He's quite a guy, isn't he? Quite a guy.

GEORGE

(*At* NICK)

And you'd better believe it!

HONEY

(*Admonishing* GEORGE)

Ohhhhhhhhh! He's a wonderful man!

GEORGE

I'm not trying to tear him down. He's a god, we all know that.

MARTHA

You lay off my father!

GEORGE

Yes, love. (*To* NICK) All I mean is . . . when you've had as many of these faculty parties as I have . . .

NICK

(*Killing the attempted rapport*)

I rather appreciated it. I mean, aside from enjoying it, I appreciated it. You know, when you're new at a place . . .

(*GEORGE eyes him suspiciously*)

Meeting everyone, getting introduced around . . . getting to know some of the men . . . When I was teaching in Kansas . . .

HONEY

You won't believe it, but we had to make our own way, all by *ourselves* . . . isn't that right, dear?

NICK

Yes, it is . . . We . . .

HONEY

. . . We had to make our own way . . . I had to go up to the wives . . . in the library, or at the supermarket . . . and say, "Hello, I'm new here . . . you must be Mrs. So-and-so, Doctor So-and-so's wife." It really wasn't very nice at all.

MARTHA

Well, *Daddy* knows how to run things.

NICK

(Not enough enthusiasm)

He's a remarkable man.

MARTHA

You bet your sweet life.

GEORGE

(To NICK . . . a confidence, but not whispered)

Let me tell you as secret, baby. There are easier things in the world, if you happen to be teaching at a university, there are easier things than being married to the daughter of the president of that university. There are easier things in this world.

MARTHA

(Loud . . . to no one in particular)

It *should* be an extraordinary opportunity . . . for *some* men it would be the chance of a lifetime!

GEORGE

(To NICK . . . a solemn wink)

There are, believe me, easier things in this world.

NICK

Well I can understand how it might make for some . . . awkwardness, perhaps . . . conceivably, but . . .

MARTHA

Some men would give their right arm for the chance!

GEORGE

(Quietly)

Alas, Martha, in reality it works out that the sacrifice is usually of a somewhat more private portion of the anatomy.

MARTHA

(A snarl of dismissal and contempt)

NYYYYYAAAAHHHHH!

HONEY

(Rising quickly)

I wonder if you could show me where the . . . *(Her voice trails off)*

GEORGE

(To MARTHA, indicating HONEY)

Martha . . .

NICK

(To HONEY)

Are you all right?

HONEY

Of course, dear. I want to . . . put some powder on my nose.

GEORGE

(As MARTHA is not getting up)

Martha, won't you show her where we keep the . . . euphemism?

MARTHA

Hm? What? Oh! Sure! *(Rises)* I'm sorry, c'mon. I want to show you the house.

HONEY

I think I'd like to . . .

MARTHA

. . . wash up? Sure . . . c'mon with me. *(Takes HONEY by the arm. To the men)* You two do some men talk for a while.

HONEY

(To NICK)

We'll be back, dear.

MARTHA

(To GEORGE)

Honestly, George, you burn me up!

GEORGE

(Happily)

All right.

MARTHA

You really do, George.

GEORGE

O.K., Martha . . . O.K. Just . . . trot along.

MARTHA

You really do.

GEORGE

O.K. O.K. Vanish.

MARTHA

(Practically dragging HONEY out with her)

C'mon . . .

AUDITION SCENE 2
NICK WITH GEORGE

GEORGE, *by himself*: NICK *reenters*.

NICK

(After a silence)

I . . . guess . . . she's all right. *(No answer)* She . . . really shouldn't drink.
(No answer) She's . . . frail. *(No answer)* Uh . . . slim-hipped, as you'd
have it. *(GEORGE smiles vaguely)* I'm really very sorry.

GEORGE

(Quietly)

Where's my little yum yum? Where's Martha?

NICK

She's making coffee . . . in the kitchen. She . . . gets sick quite easily.

GEORGE

(Preoccupied)

Martha? Oh no, Martha hasn't been sick a day in her life, unless you
count the time she spends in the rest home . . .

NICK

(He, too, quietly)

No, no, *my* wife . . . *my* wife gets sick quite easily. Your wife is Martha.

GEORGE

(With some rue)

Oh, yes . . . I know.

NICK

(A statement of fact)

She doesn't really spend any time in a rest home.

GEORGE

Your wife?

NICK

No. Yours.

GEORGE

Oh! Mine. *(Pause)* No, no, she doesn't . . . *I* would; I mean if I were
. . . her . . . she . . . *I* would. But I'm not . . . and so I don't. *(Pause)* I'd
like to, though. It gets pretty bouncy around here sometimes.

NICK

(Coolly)

I'm sure.

GEORGE

Well, you saw an example of it.

NICK

I try not to . . .

GEORGE

Get involved. Um? Is that right?

NICK

Yes . . . that's right.

GEORGE

I'd imagine not.

NICK

I find it . . . embarrassing.

GEORGE

(Sarcastic)

Oh, you do, hunh?

NICK

Yes. Really. Quite.

GEORGE

(Mimicking him)

Yes. Really. Quite. *(Then aloud, but to himself)* IT'S DISGUSTING!

NICK

Now look! I didn't have anything . . .

GEORGE

DISGUSTING! *(Quietly, but with great intensity)* Do you think I like that . . . whatever-it-is . . . ridiculing me, tearing me down, in front of . . . *(Waves his hand in a gesture of contemptuous dismissal)* YOU? Do you think I care for it?

NICK

(Cold—unfriendly)

Well, no . . . I don't imagine you care for it at all.

GEORGE

Oh, you don't imagine it, hunh?

NICK

(Antagonistic)

No . . . I don't. I don't imagine you do!

GEORGE

(Withering)

Your sympathy disarms me . . . your . . . your compassion makes me weep! Large, salty, unscientific tears!

NICK

(With great disdain)

I just don't see why you feel you have to subject *other* people to it.

GEORGE

IP

NICK

If you and your . . . wife . . . want to go at each other, like a couple of . . .

GEORGE

I! Why *I* want to!

NICK

. . . animals, I don't see why you don't do it when there aren't any . . .

GEORGE

(Laughing through his anger)

Why, you smug, self-righteous little . . .

NICK

(A genuine threat)

CAN . . . IT . . . MISTER!

(Silence)

Just . . . watch it!

GEORGE

. . . scientist.

NICK

I've never hit an older man.

GEORGE

(Considers it)

Oh. *(Pause)* You just hit younger men . . . and children . . . women . . . birds. *(Sees that NICK is not amused)* Well, you're quite right, of course. It isn't the prettiest spectacle . . . seeing a couple of middle-aged types

hacking away at each other, getting all red in the face and winded, missing half the time.

NICK

Oh, you two don't miss . . . you two are pretty good. Impressive.

GEORGE

And impressive things impress you, don't they? You're . . . easily impressed . . . sort of a . . . pragmatic idealism.

NICK

(A tight smile)

No, it's that sometimes I can admire things that I don't admire. Now, flagellation isn't my idea of good times, but . . .

GEORGE

. . . but you can admire a good flagellator . . . a real pro.

NICK

Unh-hunh . . . yeah.

GEORGE

Your wife throws up a lot, eh?

NICK

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

GEORGE

Oh. I thought by sick you meant . . .

NICK

Well, it's true . . . She . . . does throw up a lot. 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.

(Pause)

GEORGE

Oh? (Pause) 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.

GEORGE

(At the bar, still)

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 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 at that someone would order beer and a new area of laughter would rise. We drank free that night, and we were brought 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.

(Hands NICK a drink on the word)

NICK

(Very quietly)

Thank you. What . . . what happened to the boy . . . the boy who had shot his mother?

GEORGE

I won't tell you.

NICK

All right.

GEORGE

The following summer, on a country road, with his learner's permit in his pocket and his father on the front seat to his right, he swerved the car, to avoid a porcupine, and drove straight into a large tree.

NICK

(Faintly pleading)

No.

GEORGE

He was not killed, of course. And in the hospital, when he was conscious and out of danger, and when they told him that his father was dead, he began to laugh, I have been told, and his laughter grew and he would not stop, and it was not until after they jammed a needle into his arm, not until after that, until his consciousness slipped away from him, that his laughter subsided . . . stopped. And when he was recovered from his injuries enough so that he could be moved without damage should he struggle, he was put into an asylum. That was thirty years ago.

NICK

Is he . . . still there?

GEORGE

Oh, yes. And I am told that for these thirty years he has . . . not . . . uttered . . . one . . . sound.

AUDITION SCENE 3

HONEY AND NICK WITH GEORGE AND MARTHA

MARTHA

Here we are, a little shaky, but on our feet.

GEORGE

Goodie.

NICK

What? Oh . . . OH! Hi, Honey . . . you better?

HONEY

A little bit, dear . . . I'd better sit down, though.

NICK

Sure . . . c'mon . . . you sit by me.

HONEY

Thank you, dear.

GEORGE

(Beneath his breath)

Touching . . . touching.

MARTHA

(To GEORGE)

Well? Aren't you going to apologize?

GEORGE

(Squinting)

For what, Martha?

MARTHA

For making the little lady throw up, what else?

GEORGE

I did not make her throw up.

MARTHA

You most certainly did!

GEORGE

I did not!

HONEY

(Papal gesture)

No, now . . . no.

MARTHA

(To GEORGE)

Well, who do you think did . . . Sexy over there? You think he made his own little wife sick?

GEORGE

(Helpfully)

Well, you make me sick.

MARTHA

THAT'S DIFFERENT!

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 and NICK exchange glances)

MARTHA

(*To* GEORGE)

Get me a drink.

(GEORGE *moves to the bar*)

George makes everybody sick . . . When our son was just a little boy,
he used to . . .

GEORGE

Don't, Martha.

MARTHA

. . . he used to throw up all the time, because of George . . .

GEORGE

I said, don't!