

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf

In Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, the relationship between the husband and wife pair of George and Martha is one of tension and complexity. The couple, in order to deal with their inferred infertility, has created an imaginary son that they agree to hide from the rest of society. Martha initiates the breakdown that occurs at the end of the film where George brings to light that the pair had been imagining their son when she leaves the company, explaining that she needed to change for her son's birthday party. Martha, in her inability to acknowledge the truth, exemplifies the stereotypical female trait of hiding impurities from society. However, she also falls into stereotypical female behavior in the very nature that she offered private information so readily. Her failure to be honest with herself is extremely evident at the conclusion of the film when George sings "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" and Martha replies "I am."

George, on the other hand, deals with even more issues in the film than his and Martha's imaginary son. The dialogue suggests that the story George tells Nick while the two were outside in which a young boy kills both of his parents is actually an anecdote about George, not some mentally deranged boy. This shows that George too is failing to acknowledge the truth. Once George realizes that Martha has acknowledged their secret son in the presence of others, he determines to reveal the falsity of their son's existence. These two instances display George's stereotypically male trait of fearing inadequacy. He tries to hide the truth, rather than admit that he killed his parents and can't impregnate his wife. Overall, the couple's secret of an imaginary son, meant to unite them to deal with the pain of infertility, is the force that, ultimately, drew them apart.