

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 chime 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. (*Moving toward the door.*) 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 come breaking into other people's houses even if they *do* hear some subhuman monster yowling at 'em from inside...?

MARTHA. FUCK 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 at having Martha's explosion overheard.*) Ahhhhhh-hhhhhh!

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.*) ... you cut that out!
GEORGE. (*Innocence 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 one 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's 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 damnedest 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'd screw up her face, think real hard, and come up with ... brandy Alexanders, crème de cacao frappés, 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 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! Oh! He is 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.*) Ohhhhhhhhhh! 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 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 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 a 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.)* NYYYYYAAAAH-HHHH!
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. OK, Martha ... OK. Just ... trot along.
MARTHA. You really do.
GEORGE. OK. OK. Vanish.
MARTHA. *(Practically dragging Honey out with her.)* C'mon.
GEORGE. Vanish. *(The women have gone.)* So? What'll it be?
NICK. Oh, I don't know ... I'll stick to bourbon, I guess.
GEORGE. *(Takes Nick's glass, goes to portable bar.)* That what you were drinking over at Parnassus?
NICK. Over at...?
GEORGE. Parnassus.
NICK. I don't understand.
GEORGE. Skip it. *(Hands him his drink.)* One bourbon.
NICK. Thanks.
GEORGE. It's just a private joke between li'l ol' Martha and me. *(They sit.)* So? *(Pause.)* So ... you're in the math department, eh?
NICK. No ... uh, no.
GEORGE. Martha said you were. I think that's what she said. *(Not too friendly.)* What made you decide to be a teacher?
NICK. Oh ... well, the same things that ... uh ... motivated you,