

Character Descriptions - The Man Who Came To Dinner

- **Sheridan Whiteside (Male, 35-60) This part has already been cast.**

Inspired by real-life drama critic Alexander Wollcott, Whiteside is an obnoxious, but famous, writer, critic and radio host. He travels the country giving lectures on literature and theatre, and is an overbearing and demanding house guest of the Stanleys. He has multitudes of famous friends and depends upon his long-time secretary, Maggie, to keep his life in order, just the way he likes it. Whiteside is quick-witted, often difficult, bigger than life. Will need strong articulation, the ability to memorize large amounts of text, and excellent comedic timing. Whiteside is in a wheelchair for most of the play.
- **Maggie Cutler (Female, 25-40)**

Whiteside's executive assistant, very businesslike most of the time, but also a romantic who falls in love with Bert Jefferson. Whiteside's private secretary and chief interference runner for years. She is sarcastic and cynical, and she knows where the bodies are buried. Maggie does everything for Whiteside, and until now, he has totally monopolized her time. After she falls in love with Bert Jefferson, she decides that the fast lane with Whiteside is infinitely less preferable than a conventional, happy, domestic life. The fear of losing a good secretary prompts Whiteside to try to destroy the blossoming relationship, but her seriousness about her feelings for Bert eventually brings Whiteside around to the idea. Will need excellent comedic timing and a strong stage presence.
- **Bert Jefferson (Male, 25-40)**

The owner and editor of the Mesalia Journal. He is an "interesting looking young man," smart, and a genuinely nice-guy. Bert has written a producible play. He is an easy-going man, but can be assertive and ambitious at times. Bert naïvely allows himself to be lured by Lorraine and the chance of making it to the big time, even if it means the sacrifice of personal happiness. He truly loves Maggie.
- **Lorraine Sheldon (Female, 25-40)**

A snobby, beautiful actress. Based on Gertrude Lawrence. She is the vicious epitome of the glamorous, acid-tongued, self-serving, superficial superstar. She is busy trying to get Lord Cedric Bottomly to marry her (she wants to be a high society woman, and is a bit of a gold digger). She is always dramatic. Whiteside lures her to Ohio by telling her that Jefferson's play has a marvelous part in it for her. She unwittingly lets herself be used to break up the romance between Jefferson and Maggie. Seducing a man for some sort of benefit is, for her, all in a day's work. Requires a big personality and some physical comedy.
- **Miss Preen (Female, 18+)**

Frantic Nurse attending to Whiteside, not enjoying the task of taking care of him. She tends to be stressed and unhappy. She becomes the constant butt of his insults and name-calling, to which she reacts with routine indignation. Strong comedic and sarcasm skills needed. Lots of physical comedy!
- **Dr. Bradley (Male, 45+)**

Whiteside's doctor while Whiteside is in Mesalia. He diagnosed Whiteside's injuries in error by looking at the wrong X-rays. He is also an aspiring author who repeatedly tries to get Whiteside to read his book, "Forty Years an Ohio Doctor." Requires excellent sense of timing.
- **Beverley Carlton (Male, 25-50)**

English playwright, actor, songwriter, musician. A flamboyant Noël Coward-like character who dashes around the world composing and writing plays and being devastatingly

charming. Over the top! Ego as big as a Buick! He breezes in to visit Whiteside and wish him a Merry Christmas. During his visit, he sings a number from his most recent show, and Maggie enlists him in an attempt to lure Jefferson away from Lorraine Sheldon. Actor must sing a song, and must be able to do an upper-class British accent. Ability to play piano a plus, but not required.

- **Banjo (Male, 25-50)**

A famous Hollywood comedian in the style of the Marx brothers and Jimmy Durante, a grown-up adolescent. He is as loony off-screen as he is on-screen! Banjo drops in to visit Whiteside, but he good-heartedly allows himself to be the means by which Maggie can retrieve her happiness. Requires a strong character actor a good handle on physical comedy.

- **Mr. Ernest W. Stanley (Male, 40-60)**

Wealthy factory owner, uptight. Frustrated and put out by the audacity of his unexpected long-term guest. He tends to be stuffy. Very much the man of the house, whose word is the law--until Whiteside comes along.

- **Mrs. Daisy Stanley (Female, 40-60)**

Mr. Ernest W. Stanley's wife. Always trying to play the hostess, and keep her husband from flying off the handle. Rarely speaks her own mind, unless she just has to! She is a sweet but somewhat high-strung woman.

- **Richard Stanley (Male, 17-25)**

Grown son of Ernest and Daisy. A talented amateur photographer, who wishes he could travel the world and take pictures.

- **June Stanley (Female, 17-25)**

Grown daughter of Ernest and Daisy. She wants to get married to Sandy, a young labor organizer who is stirring up union trouble at the factory her father owns.

- **Harriet Stanley (Female, 45-65)**

Ernest Stanley's eerie live-in sister, who floats in and out when Whiteside is alone. Harriet is very eccentric, with a sinister past. Character is based on Lizzie Borden.

- **John (Male, 35+)**

The Stanley's butler, who has been around awhile. Genuinely a very nice person. Efficient, and star-struck by Whiteside.

- **Sarah (Female, 35+)**

The Stanley's cook and housekeeper, who has been around awhile. She is very sweet, a great cook, and is star-struck by Whiteside.

- **Professor Metz (Male, 30+)**

"A strange-looking little man," an entomologist. He is the first of three eccentrics to visit Whiteside during his recovery. He brings the great man a gift: a colony of ten thousand roaches. Ability to do a German accent a plus! Will require strong characterization.

- **Sandy (Male, 17-25)**

Youthful visionary, handsome, big & strong. A labor-organizer trying to unionize the workers in Mr. Stanley's factory. In love with Mr. Stanley's daughter, June.

- **Mrs. Dexter (Female, 25+)**

Visiting society friend of Mrs. Stanley. A local busy-body. A fan of Sheldon Whiteside. May also be included in the local choir, or double other small ensemble roles. TBD.

- **Mrs. McCutcheon (Female, 25+)**

Visiting society friend of Mrs. Stanley. A local busy-body. A fan of Sheldon Whiteside. May also be included in the local choir, or double other small ensemble roles. TBD.

- **Additional Roles (Age Varies)**

Luncheon Guests/Prisoners, Westcott (Head Radio Man, who handles Whiteside's broadcast), Radio Technicians, Mr. Baker (Prison Guard), Local Choir, a Plainclothes Man, Delivery Men and Deputies. These roles will likely be doubled.