

Character Breakdown

Chip Tolentino

An athletic, social, boy scout and champion of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, he returns to defend his title, but he finds puberty hitting at an inopportune moment.

Logainne Schwartzandgrubeniere (Schwartzzy)

Logainne is the youngest and most politically aware speller, often making comments about current political figures. She is driven by internal and external pressure, but above all by a desire to win to make her two fathers proud. She is somewhat of a neat freak, speaks with a lisp, and will be back next year.

Leaf Coneybear

The second runner-up in his district, Leaf gets into the competition on a lark and finds everything about the bee incredibly amusing. He is home-schooled and comes from a large family of former hippies. He has severe Attention Deficit Disorder and spells words correctly while in a trance.

William Barfee

A Putnam County Spelling Bee finalist last year, he was eliminated because of an allergic reaction to peanuts and is back for vindication. His famous "Magic Foot" method of spelling has boosted him to spelling glory, even though he only has one working nostril and a touchy, bullying personality. He develops a crush on Olive.

Marcy Park

The ultimate over-achiever, Marcy has never been given another option. She comes from a family where excellence is expected and so simply produced. A parochial school student, she assumes God, too, expects perfection. She sees herself as a mass of problems but she keeps them to herself. Having moved often because of her parents' work, she knows she can beat the local competition. Her many talents include piano, dance, martial arts, baton twirling, and/or whatever special gifts you can find in your casting pool.

Olive Ostrovsky

A young newcomer to competitive spelling. Her mother is in an ashram in India, and her father is working late, as usual, but he is trying to come sometime during the bee. Having found comfort in its words and vastness, Olive made friends with her dictionary at a very young age, helping her to make it to the competition. She starts enormously shy, and shyly blossoms.

Rona Lisa Peretti

The number-one realtor in Putnam County, a former Putnam County Spelling Bee Champion herself, and the returning moderator. She is a sweet woman who loves children, but she can be very stern when it comes to dealing with Vice Principal Panch and his feelings for her. Her interest in the competition is unflagging and drives it forward.

Douglas Panch

The Vice Principle. Frustrated with his life, he finds the drive of the young spellers alien to him. After five years' absence from the Bee, Panch returns as judge. There was an "incident" at the Twentieth Annual Bee, but he claims to be in "a better place" now, thanks to a high-fiber diet and Jungian analysis. He is infatuated with Rona Lisa Peretti, but she does not return his affections.

Mitch Mahoney

The Official Comfort Counselor. An ex-convict, Mitch is performing his community service with the Bee, and hands out juice boxes to losing students. He has no idea how to offer comfort, but does find himself wishing he could find a way to make the kids feel better.

Carl Dad

Schwarzy's main trainer, the more intense and competitive of Schwarzy's fathers.

Dan Dad

The more laid back and ineffectual of Schwarzy's fathers.

Jesus Christ

Deity invoked by a speller in need. Normally played by the actor playing Chip.

Leaf's Mom, Dad, And Siblings

All more academically gifted than Leaf, they are even more surprised than he is by his success. Normally played by the spellers and audience volunteers as indicated in the script.

Olive's Dad

A fantasy version of Olive's dad coming to the bee from work. Normally played by the actor playing Mitch.

Olive's Mom

A fantasy version of Olive's mom at her Ashram in India. Normally played by the actor playing Rona.