

Full Character Breakdown



One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest

Show Dates 10th to 13th March 2027

Pre-audition Workshop - Friday 30th October

Auditions - Monday 2nd November

By Dale Wasserman, from a novel by Ken Kesey
Directed by Julie Fitcher



Randle P. McMurphy – Playing age – 30's to 40's

Role: Protagonist

Personality: Charismatic, rebellious, loud, funny and manipulative, but ultimately compassionate.

Function: The catalyst for change on the ward. He challenges authority and awakens a sense of courage and individuality in the other patients.

Key traits: Confidence, defiance, physicality and humour that masks vulnerability.

Casting notes: Requires commanding stage presence, excellent comic timing and the emotional depth to make the final transformation believable.

Nurse Ratched – Playing Age – 30's to 50's

Role: Antagonist

Personality: Cold, controlled, passive-aggressive and authoritarian.

Function: Embodies institutional power, conformity and psychological control. She maintains order through calm manipulation, shame and carefully applied pressure.

Key traits: Calm menace, emotional restraint, precision and an ability to dominate without raising her voice.

Casting notes: Best played with understatement. Her power should come from stillness and restraint rather than overt anger.

Chief Bromden – Playing Age – 40's to 50's

Role: Narrator and central observer

Personality: Quiet and deeply perceptive. He pretends to be deaf and mute and carries profound trauma.

Function: Provides the story's psychological lens and represents both oppression and eventual liberation.

Key traits: Strong physical presence, inner depth, watchfulness and spiritual awakening.

Casting notes: Needs expressive physical acting and emotional subtlety, particularly during long periods with little or no dialogue.



Billy Bibbit – Playing Age 20's to 30's

Personality: Nervous, stuttering, childlike and desperate for approval.

Function: Represents vulnerability and the destructive power of shame.

Key traits: Fragility, innocence and dependency, particularly in relation to his mother.

Casting notes: Emotional authenticity is essential; the performance must avoid caricaturing his stutter or vulnerability.

Dale Harding – Playing Age – 40's to 60's

Personality: Intelligent, articulate, cynical and deeply insecure.

Function: Acts as the intellectual voice of the patients and expresses the ward's fear and self-awareness.

Key traits: Wit, verbal fluency, self-consciousness and insecurity about masculinity.

Casting notes: Requires strong verbal delivery, intelligence and emotional nuance.

Cheswick – Playing Age – 30's to 60's

Personality: Loud, excitable, emotionally volatile and dependent on others for courage.

Function: An early supporter of McMurphy whose experience reveals the danger of rebellion without the confidence to sustain it.

Key traits: Energy, frustration, volatility and a strong need to be heard.

Casting notes: Needs an expressive, high-energy performer who can also reveal genuine fear and dependence.

Martini – Playing Age – 30's to 60's

Personality: Delusional, whimsical, childlike and unpredictable.

Function: Brings surreal humour to the ward while reminding the audience of the patients' genuine illness and vulnerability.

Key traits: Innocent confusion, vivid imagination and unexpected responses.

Casting notes: Requires careful comic timing and physical acting without turning the character into a comic stereotype.



Scanlon – Playing Age – 30's to 50's

Personality: Paranoid, suspicious and preoccupied with control and explosions.

Function: Represents simmering anger, distrust and the desire to strike back at oppressive systems.

Key traits: Intensity, vigilance and restrained aggression.

Casting notes: A subtle but edgy presence works best; the character should feel watchful even when not speaking.

Doctor Spivey – Playing Age – 35 to 50's

Personality: Well-meaning, hesitant and easily influenced.

Function: Represents compromised authority. Although he is the doctor, Nurse Ratched controls the daily life and decisions of the ward.

Key traits: Nervous authority, decency and slightly comic uncertainty.

Casting notes: Benefits from gentle comic timing while retaining enough credibility to remain a believable doctor.

Warren and Williams — the Orderlies – Playing Age – 25 to 40's

Personality: Obedient, intimidating and capable of brutality.

Function: Act as the physical enforcement arm of the institution, carrying out the control that Nurse Ratched exerts psychologically.

Key traits: Physical authority, menace, detachment and lack of empathy.

Casting notes: Require strong physical presence and disciplined ensemble work. Their threat should feel real without becoming melodramatic.

Candy Starr – Playing Age – 20's to 30's

Personality: Warm, free-spirited and non-judgemental.

Function: Represents freedom, sexuality and ordinary human warmth beyond the institution.

Key traits: Kindness, openness, confidence and generosity.

Casting notes: Should feel natural and grounded; her warmth is more important than playing the character as a stereotype.



Sandra – Playing Age – 30's to 40's

Personality: Free-spirited, uninhibited and good-humoured.

Function: Supports Candy and strengthens the contrast between the ward's repression and the freedom of the outside world.

Key traits: Energy, openness and ease.

Casting notes: A lively ensemble performer who can establish the character quickly and confidently.

Ruckly – Playing Age – 25 to 50's

Personality: Severely brain-damaged and prone to explosive outbursts.

Key traits: Withdrawn, physically rigid, severely impaired, unpredictable, vulnerable and occasionally explosive. His limited communication and repetitive behaviour reflect the lasting damage caused by institutional treatment. The actor needs strong physical discipline and must remain visibly present and engaged, even when Ruckly is silent.

Function: Represents the lasting consequences of institutional punishment and invasive treatment.

Casting notes: A physical role with out-bursts of bad language.

Nurse Flynn – Playing Age – 25 to 50's

Personality: Nervous, conventional, dutiful and somewhat uncomfortable around the patients

Key traits: Anxious professionalism, obedience, caution and emotional restraint

Function: Helps with the ward's daily routine and reinforces Nurse Ratched's authority. She also demonstrates how Ratched controls not only the patients but the junior staff around her.

Casting notes: This role needs controlled physical comedy and expressive reactions. Flynn can provide moments of humour, but she should remain believable as a trained nurse rather than becoming a caricature.



Aide Turkle – Playing Age – 40's to 60's

Personality: Relaxed, weary, good-humoured and more approachable than the daytime aides

Function: Turkle is responsible for the ward during the night-time party. His willingness to accept a drink and bend the rules allows McMurphy's plan to go ahead.

Key traits: World-weariness, humour, warmth, fallibility and nervousness when consequences loom

Casting notes: Requires natural comic timing and warmth. The actor needs to shift convincingly from relaxed amusement to alarm as the party begins to unravel. Turkle should feel like an ordinary man making a poor decision, not simply a foolish or drunken character.