**CHARACTER BREAKDOWN**

**MARTIN VANDERHOF**…or maybe **MARTHA VANDERHOF** (about 75 years old) – The years have treated him kindly. His face is youthful despite the lines that sear it. His eyes are very much alive. He is a man who made his peace with the world long, long ago, and his whole attitude and manner are quietly persuasive of this. [MALE or FEMALE]

**PENELOPE SYCAMORE** (50 to 55) – Daughter of Martin Vanderhof. Penny is the fluttery, gentle lady of the house. She decided to become a playwright when a typewriter was delivered to their house by mistake. Since that time this accidental playwright has spent much of her time writing works with titles such as *Poison Gas*.

**PAUL SYCAMORE** (mid-50s) – Penelope’s husband. Though middle aged he has a youthful air. His quiet charm and mild manner are distinctly engaging. However, under that unassuming exterior lies a man who lives for his fireworks…the ones he manufactures in the cellar.

**ESSIE CARMICHAEL** (about 29 years old) – Eldest daughter of Penelope and Paul. Very slight with a curious air of the pixie about her. She is always wearing ballet slippers and always practicing. She wants to be a dancer in the worst way–and, according to any unbiased observer, that is exactly what she is. However, she is blissfully unaware…or perhaps unconcerned…with this fact.

**ED CARMICHAEL** (mid-30s) – Essie’s husband. A non-descript young man with two passions –his printing press and his xylophone.

**ALICE SYCAMORE** (about 22) – Younger daughter of Penelope and Paul, and Essie’s sister. Because she is a secretary in a Wall Street office, she is in daily contact with the “outside” world and seems to have escaped the tinge of mild insanity that pervades the rest of the family; however, her familial devotion and love are readily apparent. In the course of the play she becomes engaged to marry Tony Kirby, her boss’s son.

**RHEBA** – The family’s housekeeper, she probably understands this unusual family better than anyone.

**DONALD** – Rheba’s boyfriend, Donald spends a lot of comfortable time at the Vanderhof home.

**DE PINNA** – Paul’s work associate/business partner. Years ago De Pinna was delivering ice to the Vanderhof home and just decided to stay. Now this mad genius of pyrotechnics assists Paul in the cellar.  
[MALE or FEMALE]

**KOLENKHOV** – Essie’s dance teacher, Kolenkhov is a hearty, explosive, Russian ballet-master/mistress.  
[MALE or FEMALE]

**GAY WELLINGTON** – An actress whom Penelope meets on a bus and invites home to read one of her plays. She is an alcoholic, gets very drunk and passes out shortly after arriving at the Sycamore's home.

**THE GRAND DUCHESS OLGA KATRINA** – She was one of the Grand Duchesses of Russia before the Revolution. Since then she has been forced to flee to America where she has found work as a waitress in Childs Restaurant. [This character will have a Russian accent]

**TONY KIRBY** (23 to 25) – The boss’s son…and Alice’s eventual fiancé. A personable young man not long out of Yale and Cambridge. Although he fits all the physical requirements of a boss’s son, his face (and his spirit) has something of the idealist in it, invoking in him a certain fondness for the Vanderhofs’ quirkiness.

**MR. KIRBY** – Tony’s father and Alice’s boss in the Wall Street office, Mr. Kirby is a successful businessman who wants his son to follow in his footsteps; thus, he is very disapproving of the Vanderhof family and of his son’s engagement to Alice.

**MRS. KIRBY** – Tony’s mother, Mrs. Kirby is of the same mind and temperament as her husband.

**HENDERSON** – An IRS agent who comes to collect the tax money owed by Grandpa, and can't understand why the Mr. Vanderhof refuses to pay income tax. He/She is in one…very funny…scene.  
[MALE or FEMALE]

**THREE FEDERAL AGENTS** – Three agents who come to investigate Ed because of the communist statements he’s printed…simply because he thought they would look nice in print…and he has a printing press, so why not?  
[MALE or FEMALE]