

## **The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee High School Edition Synopsis**

An eclectic group of six mid-pubescents vie for the spelling championship of a lifetime. While candidly disclosing hilarious and touching stories from their home lives, the tweens spell their way through a series of (potentially made-up) words, hoping never to hear the soul-crushing, pout-inducing, life un-affirming "ding" of the bell that signals a spelling mistake. As they navigate the tournament's pressures, the eccentric group finds a new sense of belonging. Along the way, they learn that there is more to life than winning a trophy. This charming coming-of-age tale also invites four volunteers from the audience to participate in each performance, ensuring new and unexpected comedy every show. Six spellers enter; one speller leaves! At least the losers get a juice box. A riotous ride, complete with audience participation, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* is a delightful den of comedic genius.

Please note that the High School Edition of this show has cuts, edits, and changes to the original show (including songs and characters, changes included below).

### Musical Numbers

1. The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee - *Company*
2. The Spelling Rules/my Favorite Moment of the Bee - *Panch, Rona and Spellers*
3. My Friend the Dictionary - *Panch, Rona, Olive & Company*
4. The First Goodbye - *Company*
5. Pandemonium - *Chip & Company*
6. I'm Not That Smart - *Leaf Coneybear*
7. The Second Goodbye - *Company*
8. Magic Foot - *Mr. Barfee & Company*
9. Pandemonium (Reprise) - *Chip, Mitch, Rona & Company*
10. My Favorite Moment of the Bee 2
11. Prayer of the Comfort Counsellor - *Mitch & Company*
12. Why We Like Spelling - *Spellers*
13. Woe Is me - *Schwarzy, Schwarzy' Parents & Company*
14. I'm Not That Smart (Reprise) - *Coneybear*
15. I Speak Six Languages - *Marcy & Girls*
16. The I Love You Song - *Olive, Rona & Mitch*
17. Woe Is me (Reprise) - *Schwarzy & Company*
18. My Favorite moment of the Bee 3
19. Second - *Rona, Olive, Barfee & Company*
20. Finale - *Company*
21. The Last Goodbye - *The Company*

## **Spelling Bee High School Edition Characters**

\*Character may be played by any gender cast member

**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 himself distracted at an inopportune moment.

**Logainne Schwartzandgruenierre (Schwartz)** Logainne is the youngest and most politically aware speller. She is driven by internal and external pressure, but above all by a desire to win to make her parents 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. S/he is home-schooled and comes from a large family of former hippies. S/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** A recent transfer from Virginia, Marcy placed ninth in last year's nationals. She speaks six languages, is a member of all-American hockey, a championship rugby player, plays Chopin and Mozart on multiple instruments, sleeps only three hours a night, hides in the bathroom cabinet, and is getting very tired of always winning. She is the poster child for the Over-Achieving, and attends a Catholic school called "Our Lady of Intermittent Sorrows." She is also not allowed to cry.

**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. 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/her community service with the Bee, and hands out juice boxes to losing students. She/he has no idea how to offer comfort, but does find her/himself wishing s/he could find a way to make the kids feel better.

**Carla Mom** Schwarzzy's main trainer, the more intense and competitive of Schwarzzy's parents.

**Dan Dad** the more laid back and ineffectual of Schwarzzy's parents.

**Leaf's Mom, Dad, And Siblings** All more academically gifted than Leaf, they are even more surprised than he is by his success.

**Olive's Dad** A fantasy version of Olive's dad coming to the bee from work.

**Olive's Mom** A fantasy version of Olive's mom at her Ashram in India.

**Company Ensemble** Audience and other family members or friends watching the Spelling Bee.