

Clybourne Park Character Descriptions

RUSS/DAN (White)

Audition Focus: Needs an actor with exceptional emotional range who can play heavy, simmering grief that naturally detonates into explosive, raw anger. Also needs to be able to display a level of logic and indifference.

Russ (ACT I, 40s-50s): Grieving father and bitter homeowner selling his house after his son's tragic suicide. He is defensive, angry and indifferent. Paralyzed by the tragic suicide of his son, a Korean War veteran, he has checked out of community life, masking deep, volatile depression with a detached, stoic exterior. When pushed too far by his neighbors' racism, his repressed fury explodes.

Dan (Act II – Age: 40s–50s): A local, salt-of-the-earth handyman digging up the backyard of the old Stoller home. He is pragmatic, completely unbothered by the tense racial debate happening around him, and serves as a grounded, working-class contrast to the highly educated lawyers and buyers.

BEV/KATHY (White)

Audition Focus: Requires a high-energy actress skilled in comedic timing, capable of projecting performative politeness that masks underlying anxiety or corporate coldness.

Bev (Act I – Age: 40s–50s): Russ's well-meaning, traditional 1950s housewife. She copes with her son's suicide through manic optimism, aggressive hospitality, and frantic domesticity. While she considers herself open-minded, her deep-seated racial biases surface in awkward, passive-aggressive ways.

Kathy (Act II – Age: 40s–50s): Steve and Lindsey's sharp, professional real estate lawyer. She is highly verbal, fiercely protective of her clients' financial interests, and uses corporate politeness and legal jargon to maintain control of the room while staying detached from the social drama.

FRANCINE/LENA (Black)

Audition Focus: A powerhouse actress who can masterfully transition from a position of forced, quiet subjugation in Act I to a position of absolute authority, dignity, and intellectual dominance in Act II.

Francine (Act I – Age: 30s–40s): The Stollers' housekeeper. She is an expert at navigating the dangerous emotional minefields of her white employers. She uses extreme politeness, quiet compliance, and hyper-vigilance to protect herself and her husband from the neighborhood's boiling racial hostility.

Lena (Act II – Age: 30s–40s): A proud, successful professional and the great-niece of the family that bought the house in 1959, The Youngers, named after her great-aunt Lena Younger. Representing the neighborhood association, she is highly articulate, politically conscious, and fiercely protective of the area's Black cultural history against white gentrification.

Albert / Kevin (Black)

Audition Focus: Actor with excellent charismatic charm, capable of playing a peacemaker who is forced to navigate shifting levels of racial and social entitlement across both eras.

- **Albert (Act I – Age: 30s–40s):** Francine's husband, who arrives to help her pack boxes. Like Francine, he understands the lethal nature of 1959 racial politics. He is deeply polite, non-confrontational, and uses humor and deference to de-escalate tension and protect his wife.
- **Kevin (Act II – Age: 30s–40s):** Lena's wealthy, charismatic husband. He is an affluent, progressive professional who acts as the ultimate mediator. He initially tries to laugh off microaggressions to keep the real estate deal moving forward, but his patience erodes when pushed too far.

Karl Lindner / Steve (White)

Audition Focus: A complex role requiring an actor who can play unlikable, textually aggressive arguments without losing their humanity. Must handle incredibly tense, fast-paced dialogue.

Karl Lindner (Act I – Age: 30s–40s): The neighborhood representative (originally from *A Raisin in the Sun*). He is a fastidious, nervous man who uses pseudo-intellectual sociology and "economic common sense" to mask his overt, unyielding white supremacy. He is terrified of integration.

Steve (Act II – Age: 30s–40s): A modern, affluent homebuyer. He represents fragile, highly defensive white male privilege. He strongly believes he is a progressive ally, but when he feels cornered, he weaponizes "logic" and political correctness arguments, eventually telling an offensive joke to prove a point.

Betsy / Lindsey (White)

Audition Focus: Act I requires an actress with strong physical acting skills and expressive body language (knowledge of ASL or period-accurate deaf communication is a plus). Act II requires a hyper-verbal delivery of performative allyship to Blacks in the neighborhood. An actor with knowledge of ASL is a plus.

Betsy (Act I – Age: 20s–30s): Karl Lindner's pregnant, deaf wife. She is physically and culturally isolated from the vicious racial argument exploding in the living room around her, relying heavily on her husband to interpret and navigate the social space.

Lindsey (Act II – Age: 20s–30s): Steve's highly verbal, fiercely defensive, pregnant wife. She is desperate to prove her progressive, anti-racist credentials to Lena and Kevin. This desperate need to be liked makes her hyper-sensitive, over-apologetic, and prone to defensive crying when challenged.

TOM / KENNETH / JIM (Male, Age 20s–30s, Any Ethnicity)

Jim (Act I): Well-meaning but socially clumsy local pastor trying to counsel Russ.

Tom (Act II): Precise, formal lawyer for the neighborhood association.

Kenneth (Act I Flashback/Coda): Russ and Bev's son. Appears briefly at the end of the play as he is writing his suicide note