

Misanthrope Character Descriptions by Dan Smith

ALCESTE [pronounced al-SEST]: A radical truth-teller with significant charisma. Almost everyone likes him, even though he may come across as rude or obnoxious in railing against insincerity. He is in love with Célimène, whose personality is very different from his.

CÉLIMÈNE [selly-MEN, or SELL-a-men]: A 20-year-old widow whose husband was probably much older, and wealthy. The play takes place in her home. In addition to Alceste, her suitors include Oronte, Clitandre, and Acaste. She claims to love Alceste exclusively, but has no interest in settling down with him. She makes an art of saying nasty things about people behind their backs. Perhaps her willingness to insult Alceste to his face is what keeps them together?

PHILINTE [phil-ANT]: Alceste's best friend, who knows how to use tact effectively and attempts to persuade Alceste to be more polite to people he dislikes. He's baffled by Alceste's love for Célimène, partly because he is interested in her cousin Eliante. Philinte is a keen observer who starts off as a confidant/exposition machine, but later becomes a player in the games of love.

ELIANTE [ELLIE-aunt]: Célimène's cousin, who carries a torch for Alceste and seems like she would be a better match for him than her cousin is. She is very sweet, but also has the wit to hang with the mean girls. She is surprised by Philinte's declaration of love for her.

ORONTE [or-AUNT]: A courtier who tries too hard and seeks everyone's approval. He thinks he is a good poet, but he isn't. He is Alceste's main rival for Célimène's affection.

ARSINOÉ [ar-SEEN-oh-ay]: A false prude, and enemy of Célimène. Other characters perceive her to be past her prime. She has a thing for Alceste and enjoys stirring the pot, though she claims to be deeply religious.

ACASTE [ah-CAHST]: Young, handsome, claims to be rich. Interested in fashion. Loves the ladies. Talks a big game, but probably doesn't follow through. One of Célimène's suitors; she calls him the "little marquess" (but not to his face). Clitandre's frenemy.

CLITANDRE [clee-TAHN-dra]: Young, rich, foppish. Interested in fashion. Enjoys the ladies' company, but probably more interested in gossip and fashion than women. Another member of Célimène's entourage. Acaste's frenemy.

DU BOIS: Alceste's valet; he has one very comic scene.

BASQUE: Célimène's maid.

GUARD: Brings a message for Alceste (possibly played by the same actor who plays DuBois)