

South Pacific –Character Breakdown

Principal Characters

Ensign Nellie Forbush

Age: 25–35

Vocal Range: Mezzo-soprano (belt to D $\flat$ 5)

Description: A spirited U.S. Navy nurse from Little Rock, Arkansas. Cheerful, optimistic, and somewhat naive, she falls in love with Emile de Becque but struggles with her internal prejudices. Over time, she learns to embrace love and acceptance, growing into a more mature and compassionate person.

Emile de Becque

Age: 40+

Vocal Range: Baritone (sometimes bass-baritone)

Description: A sophisticated French plantation owner living on the island. Noble, romantic, and brave, Emile has two children from his late Polynesian wife. He falls deeply in love with Nellie but fears their social differences. Ultimately, he risks his life for the Allied cause and finds love again.

Lieutenant Joseph Cable (USMC)

Age: 20–35

Vocal Range: Tenor (E3–G4)

Description: A handsome, intelligent young Marine officer sent on a dangerous mission behind Japanese lines. He falls in love with Liat but is conflicted by his upbringing and prejudices. His song “You’ve Got to Be Carefully Taught” reflects the show’s themes of racism and intolerance. He dies heroically on his mission.

Supporting / Featured Characters

Bloody Mary

Age: 35–50

Vocal Range: Mezzo-soprano (to C5)

Description: A shrewd and colorful Tonkinese woman who sells souvenirs to American sailors. Witty, loud, and street-smart, she’s also a devoted mother to Liat. She schemes to secure a better life for her daughter through marriage to Lt. Cable.

Luther Billis

Age: 30–45

Vocal Range: Baritone (to G2)

Description: A comic Seabee and troublemaker. Scheming, charming, and often irreverent, he brings humor to the show but proves resourceful and brave when it matters most.

Liat

Age: 16–20

Vocal Range: Mostly spoken role

Description: The beautiful and gentle daughter of Bloody Mary. She falls in love with Lt. Cable but faces heartbreak due to societal prejudice and war.

Ngana

Age: 8–12

Vocal Range: Child alto/mezzo

Description: Emile's daughter by his late Polynesian wife. Sings "Dites-Moi" with her brother Jerome and represents innocence and family love.

Jerome

Age: 8–12

Vocal Range: Child alto/mezzo

Description: Emile's son. Along with Ngana, symbolizes the family Nellie learns to embrace.

Additional Featured / Ensemble Roles

- Captain George Brackett (Age 40–60) – Commanding officer on the island. Authority figure, mostly spoken role.
- Commander William Harbison (Age 30–50) – Executive officer to Brackett. Stern but fair; supports the mission.
- Sailors / Seabees Ensemble – Ages 18–35; strong singers and movers. Provide comic energy and support in group numbers.
- Nurses (Ensigns Janet, Pam, Lisa, etc.) – Ages 18–35; mezzo-soprano voices; participate in ensemble scenes and harmonies.
- Henri – Emile's Polynesian servant; small spoken role.