**The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013 Film) Character List**

***Written by Timothy Sexton***

**Walter Mitty**

The film adaptation takes enormous liberties with the original character created by James Thurber. In the film, Mitty is younger, single and works at Life Magazine. Notably, Mitty’s job is one that requires him to enjoy the exciting adventurous photography for which the magazine was famous in a way disconnected entirely from the exotic locales and fascinating cultures. Mitty’s safe and unadventurous lifestyle is juxtaposed with that of the photographer with whom he works most closely but is ironically equally alienated from on a personal level.

**Sean O'Connell**

Sean O’Connell is the legendary photojournalist whose images reveal a man living the kind of adventure that exist for Walter only in his fantasy life. This is the type of relationship that might well set up O’Connell as the antagonist to Walter, but in fact they turn out to be more similar than one might expect. O’Connell’s legendary photos, in turns, are often the result not of great adventure, but patiently sitting in the same place for hours, much like Walter does.

**Ted Hendricks**

The real foil for Walter turns out not to be the guy out living the kind of life he only fantasies about, but another guy in a suit working in an office. Hendricks is a corporate number cruncher charged with saving Life Magazine from being another corporate titan destroyed the paradigm shift of the digital revolution. Whereas Walter has an imagination capable of creating larger than life fantasies from focusing on a single tiny detail, Hendricks is motivated to downsize Life by being incapable of focusing on anything larger than the numbers on a balance sheet.

**Cheryl Melhoff**

The most substantial change to the cast of the original short story is the elimination of Mitty’s wife for the adaptation. In her place is Cheryl Melhoff, a co-worker of Walter’s. While not technically a romantic comedy, much of the narrative is driven by the burgeoning but complicated relationship that develops between Cheryl and Walter. Cheryl is essential to plot less for the romance with Walter than for the fact she becomes one of the employees who is downsized out of a job by Hendricks.

**Edna Mitty**

Edna is Walter’s mother who does not appear in Thurber’s story. Edna is thematically essential to the story because of her unexpected connection to the elusive O’Connell and how Walter experiences a delay in getting an important piece of information because at the time he is consumed by one of his fantasies which allow him to escape the drudgery of focusing on the details by being allowed to enjoy the big picture.