



SUMMARY

In this musical comedy based on the 1992 film, Hollywood actress Madeline Ashton and struggling author Helen Sharp are friends until Madeline steals Helen's fiancé. As Helen plots her revenge and Madeline's career declines, their world is turned upside down by Viola Van Horn, a mysterious woman with a secret. Madeline and Helen face the question: What would you do if you could live forever?

CHARACTER GUIDE

Madeline Ashton: A charismatic, aging Hollywood actress whose career is in decline and worries about how others perceive her.

Helen Sharp: An author who plots her revenge against Madeline.

Ernest Menville: Celebrity plastic surgeon. He leaves Helen for Madeline and reluctantly subjects to his new wife's whims.

Viola Van Horn: A mysterious, immortal woman with a potion that can make anyone live forever.

Chagall: One of Viola's loyal followers who helps in conducting her deals.

Stefan: Madeline's long-suffering assistant.



EXERCISES & ACTIVATIONS

Writing

Madeline and Helen take Viola Van Horn's potion and trade fame and fortune for eternal youth. Students should reflect on questions such as, "If you had the choice to live forever, would you do it? Why or why not?" Have them list the pros and cons of living forever after.

At the end of *Death Becomes Her*, Madeline and Helen regret taking the potion but cannot change their decision. Students should reflect on questions such as, "If you could go back in time and do anything different, what would it be?" and "Is there a decision you would change for good?"

Embodying

Arrange seats in a circle and have students practice standing up with "3,2,1 ACTION." Then, have them rehearse different ways of standing based on what they know about each character. How would they stand as?

- The most famous actor in the world?
- A jealous person?
- An immortal god?
- A zombie?

Students can also choose their own characters to embody and explore how to present themselves in those roles.

Contextual

In the last scene of *Death Becomes Her*, Madeline and Helen reflect on the choices that have brought them to this moment of immortality and being together forever, especially when they didn't like each other at the beginning of the show. Ask students to reflect on the following question: "What do you think is the moment in the show that makes them decide that they are 'each other's person?'"

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