



SUMMARY

A musical comedy inspired by the NBC TV show, which premiered in 2012. It tells the backstage story of *Bombshell*, a fictional musical about Marilyn Monroe and the mischief that ensues as its leading lady gets into character.

CHARACTER GUIDE

Ivy Lynn: The Broadway veteran playing Marilyn Monroe in *Bombshell*. She's a kind, down-to-earth performer who becomes troubled and arrogant after she discovers method acting.

Nigel: The dramatic but seasoned director of *Bombshell* who falls for an actor in the musical. He must choose between his job and his personal life.

Tracy: Jerry's wife and half of the writing team for *Bombshell*. She has a strong desire to give the "Broadway comedy" more depth by adding sadder elements of Marilyn Monroe's story, but not everyone agrees. In the end, she fights for Ivy to keep her job despite how awful she is to work with.

Jerry: Husband to Tracy, and the other half of the writing team. The stress of this production leads him to an alcohol dependency that causes him to leak details of a sensitive discussion to people who weren't meant to know.

Susan Proctor: Ivy's new mentor at The Actors Studio. She's an older woman who often lingers around in a black hooded cape. She continually pushes Ivy to be Marilyn through drugs and a promise that it's the only way to do the role justice.

Karen: An extremely humble and hardworking actress who has been cast as Ivy's understudy for the musical. She and Ivy begin as extremely good friends, but being passed over for roles Ivy gets, has her frustrated with show business.

Chloe: The Assistant Director who knows the show inside out. Having been typecast as an ensemble player and not a lead her entire career, she finds power in her moment to take the stage as Marilyn when no one else can.

Anita: A producer who constantly has to consider money and image in business decisions. She's strong, demanding, and good at her job.



EXERCISES & ACTIVATIONS

Writing

At the end of *Smash*, after a defeat at the box office for *Bombshell*, the characters decide instead to "write what they know." They discuss writing the musical they just performed, which features their own dramatic experience of writing and producing a musical about Marilyn Monroe.

If you had to write a show about any one of your own experiences, which one would you choose? What characters would be needed to tell the story? Would it be a musical? A play? What makes this story stand out to you? What lesson might others learn from watching it?

Embodying

Ivy used method acting to try to become Marilyn 24/7. She embodied not just the way Marilyn dressed, but also the way she walked, talked, and treated others. First, choose a character either from history or fiction that inspires or excites you, whose shoes you might like to try on. Do they have a couple of obvious characteristics or mannerisms that you can play up? Now, choose an otherwise mundane daily task, such as making your bed, preparing your breakfast, or walking your dog. Consider how this character might approach the task, and get up and try it out! If you have the opportunity to partner up, see if you can add in some conversation and feed off of their character's energy.

Contextual

The song "Secondhand White Baby Grand" is written from the perspective of Marilyn Monroe, who experienced much of her childhood in foster homes and an orphanage before marrying at the age of 16. With this context in mind, read the lyrics of the song. What is the "white baby grand?" What does it represent to Marilyn? In the larger context, is there a statement that this song makes about how culturally we place value on things that are new versus old?