

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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***The Witches of Eastwick* (1987)**

George Miller

OVERVIEW

Director George Miller was born in 1945 in Chinchilla, Queensland, Australia. From an early age, Miller was interested in both film and medicine: he practiced for several years as a medical doctor while simultaneously making short films with producer Byron Kennedy. Miller and Kennedy achieved huge international success with *Mad Max*, Miller's feature film debut. Kennedy Miller Productions went on to produce two *Mad Max* sequels and films by other Australian directors such as John Duigan and Phillip Noyce. Miller then directed high-profile and internationally acclaimed films including *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987), *Lorenzo's Oil* (1992), *Babe: Pig in the City* (1998), and *Happy Feet* (2006), for which he won an Oscar. Miller returned to *Mad Max* in 2015 with *Mad Max: Fury Road*, which earned widespread praise and prompted the writing of two additional sequels.

Film *The Witches of Eastwick* is based on a 1984 novel of the same name by John Updike. Both a fantasy and a commentary on gender relations in post-“women’s lib” America, the story follows three close female friends who unwittingly summon the devil to their small town in the form of a rich man named Daryl van Horne. The film takes a lighthearted approach as it depicts Daryl’s seduction of all three women and their subsequent expulsion of him when they realize who he is. The film frequently uses special visual effects to convey the story’s supernatural elements.

Background The film has a star-studded cast, featuring Jack Nicholson (Daryl), Cher (Alex), Susan Sarandon (Jane), and Michelle Pfeiffer (Sukie). It was shot in multiple locations, including Boston, various small towns in Massachusetts, and Beverly Hills. A town originally intended as a location—Little Compton, Rhode Island—backed out over townspeople’s misgivings about including their church in a movie about witchcraft and sex. Ultimately, *The Witches of Eastwick* received mixed reviews but was nominated for two Academy Awards, one for sound design and the other for John Williams’s score.

CHARACTERS

Alexandra Medford – sculptor and single mother living in Eastwick
Jane Spofford – school band conductor and musician living in Eastwick, recently divorced
Sukie Ridgemont – journalist and single mother of six living in Eastwick
Daryl Van Horne – mysterious newcomer to Eastwick
Clyde Alden – editor of Eastwick’s newspaper
Felicia Alden – Clyde’s wife
Fidel – Daryl’s manservant

SYNOPSIS

Three women named Alex, Jane, and Sukie live in the small New England town of Eastwick in modern times. Very close friends, all are single after losing their husbands to death or divorce; they all have careers, and two of them have children. One night, they talk together about what characteristics they look for in men. As they talk, a man from out of town drives into Eastwick. Strange things begin to happen. The man purchases an old mansion and moves in. This man, named Daryl van Horne, quickly becomes known to the townspeople. He meets Alex and invites her to lunch at his mansion; they end up in bed together, although Alex initially refuses and only consents after he describes her own boredom with her life in uncannily accurate terms. Soon after, Daryl goes to Jane’s house, where they play music together and end up kissing. The next day, all three women are invited to Daryl’s mansion for tennis. That night the women stay at the mansion, and Daryl and Sukie kiss. All four subsequently spend a lot of time

together at the mansion, sometimes accompanied by Sukie's and Alex's children. Impossibilities occur, as when the three women briefly fly over Daryl's swimming pool. Soon, the townspeople begin to gossip about them all, and a woman named Felicia Alden figures out that Daryl is the devil. As soon as she does, Daryl knows it, and he causes her death through supernatural means. Sukie, Jane, and Alex realize that they are all pregnant, and they also realize that Daryl is an evil spirit they have unwittingly summoned. They deliberately use witchcraft, for the first time, in order to hurt and expel him. In an epilogue, they are all living in Daryl's mansion with three new babies and their preexisting children.

SCENES

Three women – In a house in a small town, a woman makes small sculptures of female bodies while a young girl sits at the table with a textbook. Another woman exits a house with six children; they get in a minivan. A third woman conducts an elementary school band in rehearsal.



Rained out – Outside in the sunshine, the band (conducted by the same woman) performs while a fourth woman sings "America the Beautiful." A crowd of adults and children, including the other women and the children from the first scene, watches. A man gets up and gives a long speech about the modern decline in values. As the speech goes on, many in the crowd look bored or sleepy. The band conductor looks up at the sky; clouds gather and the wind picks up. Soon it begins to rain very hard. The crowd quickly disperses.



Gathering – The three women from the first scene gather at the house of Alex, the one who made the sculptures. They realize that all three of them were simultaneously thinking that it would be great if it rained so that they could escape the speech. Alex calls the conductor Jane and the other woman Sukie. As the three women drink martinis and eat snacks, Alex and Sukie congratulate Jane on her divorce, saying "welcome to the club." Alex expresses frustration, though, at their single lives, asking, "What are we doing with ourselves?" Jane counters, "Who should we be looking for?" They discuss wanting to find somebody nice, somebody you can talk to, somebody you can really be yourself with. As they talk, a car drives into Eastwick.



News – The next morning, on the phone in a small office building, Sukie says to Alex that someone bought the old Lenox mansion. But she finds that she cannot remember his name. Sukie gets off the phone when two people enter the office; Sukie addresses them as Clyde and Felicia. Sukie hands Clyde several pieces of paper and says she is still working on the article on toxic waste. When Sukie mentions that someone purchased the Lenox mansion, Felicia drops what she is holding and says she has a bad feeling about it.



Stranger in town – Jane plays cello onstage with three other string players as a crowd listens. A man begins to snore loudly. But when the concert ends and he wakes up, he applauds vigorously and shouts "Brava!" When Sukie and Alex talk after the concert, Sukie says that the man who bought the Lenox mansion apparently told the newspaper editor that he wanted Sukie to interview him. Others in the crowd discuss him, too, but no one can remember his name. Eventually, they all remember at once that the name is Daryl van Horne. Simultaneously, Felicia trips and falls down the stairs, breaking her leg.



Daryl and Alex – Alex rides her bike on a country road. Daryl appears and invites her to lunch; she accepts and eats with him at the mansion. He introduces his manservant, Fidel. He talks about his observations of the differences between men and women. Daryl gives Alex a tour of the house, ending in his bedroom. He asks her to have sex with him; she refuses, but then he begins to talk about her and her life, articulating the dissatisfaction she herself articulated to her friends earlier. She relents.



Felicia's fears – Clyde feeds Felicia in the hospital. Felicia accuses Clyde of printing frivolous articles in his newspaper and ignoring all the evil in the world. She gets very worked up. When she calms down, she says, "Something is inside me, Clyde."



Daryl and Jane – Jane practices cello alone at home. She becomes frustrated and breaks a string. The doorbell rings, and it is Daryl, holding a violin case. They have tea. She asks what brings him to Eastwick, and he says he was "drawn" there. She mentions that the old mansion where he lives was once a site of witch burning. Daryl comments that most women burned as witches were midwives, and that it was an example of the male-dominated establishment attacking powerful women out of fear. At Daryl's suggestion, he and Jane play music together. When she arrives at the frustrating passage from earlier, he encourages her to relax and let it go. They play together, faster and faster, until her cello catches on fire and she kisses him.



Daryl and Sukie – Alex, Jane, and Sukie go to Daryl's mansion to play tennis. Jane, who previously wore her hair in a tight braid, now has looser, curlier, brighter hair. Daryl pays special attention to Sukie, praising her journalistic work. When all four play tennis together, the ball sometimes remains up in the air for an unnaturally long time. After night falls, all four swim in Daryl's pool. Sukie and Daryl kiss.



All four together – Daryl, Alex, Jane, Sukie, and Sukie's and Alex's children play in the mansion's ballroom with a huge number of balloons. All three women dance with Daryl, and then all three of them fly. Then all four of them lounge in bathrobes; Daryl records the women with a camcorder as they discuss what they fear about the future.



Felicia's outburst – In the morning, many citizens of Eastwick, including Felicia and Clyde, attend church. Felicia has an outburst, repeatedly shouting "whores!", and Clyde drags her out of the church.



Fallout – Jane leads her students in band rehearsal; they are playing badly. She encourages them to throw aside the sheet music and to relax and let it go. They then play preternaturally well. Jane goes to the grocery store later but is called a slut by other women there; she sees a newspaper with the headline "Lenox Mansion Scandal." Sukie confronts Clyde about the article; he admits that Felicia encouraged him to write it.



The devil and Felicia – Sukie, Jane, Alex, and Daryl talk over dinner at his mansion; the women express anxiety as Sukie explains that the town is gossiping about them. Sukie says that Felicia thinks the devil is in Eastwick; Jane protests that if you were the devil, you wouldn't come to Eastwick, but Daryl says, "Oh, I don't know." He encourages the women to join him in eating cherries. Felicia, across town, begins to vomit up cherry pits and stems. She suddenly says, "I know who it is!" and says she has to warn those women or else they will bear his sons. Felicia vomits again, in excessive quantities, and dies.



Guilt – In the morning, Sukie, Jane, and Alex talk outside Felicia and Clyde’s house, as her body is carried out; Sukie insists that they inadvertently caused Felicia’s death and need to stay away from Daryl. That night at his mansion, Daryl sits alone, angrily. He calls Alex and asks why no one is coming to see him; she explains that it is because Felicia is dead.



Punishment – Daryl goes to Sukie’s house, but she refuses to let him in. He goes to Jane’s house, but she is not there. She is at the doctor’s office, where they tell her she is pregnant. She goes to Daryl’s mansion that evening and is let in by Fidel. She comes upon Daryl watching the recording he had made of her and her friends describing what they are afraid of. Jane, who had revealed a fear of getting old and dying, has a hallucination of her skin being horribly wrinkled. She runs away from the house. Meanwhile, Alex, who spoke of being afraid of snakes, has a nightmare that she is surrounded by snakes. Sukie, afraid of pain, begins to be wracked by real physical pain as Daryl cuts into a piece of fruit.



Sukie in danger – Jane, Alex, and Sukie’s and Alex’s children visit Sukie in the hospital, where the doctor admits that he does not know what is wrong. Sukie tells Jane and Alex that she is pregnant; they discover that all three of them are. Alex goes to the mansion to confront Daryl, who is sulkily ironing his shirts and watching TV. She tells him Sukie is very ill but he says he has nothing to do with that. They kiss, and she says, “What are we gonna do with you?” Meanwhile, at the hospital, Sukie says, “It’s stopped.”



Playing nice – That night, the three women arrive together at the mansion. They each kiss Daryl and speak sweetly. They all get on his bed at once and smile at him. The next morning, Daryl gets in the car with Fidel, saying the ladies have a craving for bagels and ice cream.



Witchcraft – The three women run through the house, gathering various objects, including a book called *Maleficio*, some hair, and some candles, the latter of which they melt. Alex shapes the wax into a figurine of a man. Looking at *Maleficio*, they recall the things they all said the night Daryl came to town. They poke the figurine with pins, causing Daryl, across town, to shout with pain. They also blow on the figurine, causing Daryl to be blown around by a powerful wind. “Girls, what are you doing?” he shouts. He gets blown into the church and interrupts a service, shouting complaints about women in general.



Devil defeated – The women stop. Agreeing that they cannot be sure whether their efforts worked or not, they clean up and hide all traces of their witchcraft. Daryl comes back to the mansion to find them all in the library. Looking disheveled, he walks slowly toward them, then waves his arms, causing them all to be thrown down the stairs. They get up and run into the kitchen, pursued by an increasingly demonic-looking Daryl. They break and burn the wax figurine of Daryl; outside the window, they see a creepy-looking figure, somewhat like a baby with Daryl’s face. It turns into a spark and vanishes.



One big happy family – Eighteen months later, three babies take a bath together in Daryl’s mansion, with Fidel, Sukie, Jane, Alex, and Alex’s and Sukie’s other children also present. Alex accuses Jane of thinking about Daryl, which the three women have agreed is too risky to do when they are all together. Jane admits that she does miss him. The three baby boys are briefly left alone in the living room; Daryl appears on the TV and talks to them, saying, “Come to Daddy!” The three women appear together in the doorway. “Oh,



ladies, come on!” Daryl says, but Sukie smiles and pushes a button on the remote control, switching off the TV.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Alexandra Medford – Alex is a widow in her thirties who works as a sculptor and has one daughter. She loves her best friends, Jane and Sukie, but expresses a feeling that there must be more to life than what she has so far experienced.

Artistic – We first see Alex at work sculpting wax figurines, which she goes on to sell to a local shop. After a suggestion from Daryl that she increase the scale of her work, she makes a larger-than-life version. Alex later uses her artistic skills to make a sort of voodoo doll of Daryl.

Forthright – Alex speaks her mind to her friends and to Daryl. She expresses her dissatisfaction to her friends, even though it is painful to them. She is also forthright with Daryl, both in their initial meeting and at a later time when she goes straight to him to tell him to stop hurting Sukie.

Unsatisfied – Alex wants more from life. She does not precisely state (or perhaps know) whether she is most unsatisfied professionally, personally, or in some other way, but she expresses a hunger for something more and is responsive when Daryl articulates that feeling on her behalf.

Jane Spofford – Childless and recently divorced, Jane is the conductor of the local elementary school band and also a concert cellist. She is devoted to Alex and Sukie, saying that their get-togethers are the only opportunities she has to really relax.

Musical – Jane plays or conducts music constantly—during her day job as a conductor, while playing onstage as part of a string quartet, and when at home by herself. Whatever the context, she always appears very focused on the music and is emotionally invested in it—frustrated when it goes badly, ecstatic when it goes well.

Timid – Unlike Alex, Jane approaches the world with some timidity. She is the first to express doubts when Alex suggests that they shake up their lives. As a cellist, Jane is sometimes held back by her fear of making a mistake. More than Alex or Sukie, Jane is initially very nervous in the presence of Daryl.

Sukie Ridgemont – Sukie is slightly younger than her friends Alex and Jane. She is divorced, her husband having left her after the birth of their sixth child. In addition to caring for those children, Sukie works as a journalist for the local newspaper in Eastwick.

Professional – Sukie is very invested in her status as a professional. She works hard as a journalist and sometimes questions her editor’s judgment. When Alex questions Daryl’s motivation for requesting Sukie as the one to interview him, Sukie insists that it must be because he knows she is a good writer.

Conscientious – Sukie is the most conscientious of the three friends. It is she who initially and consistently argues that they are accidentally causing supernatural events together. Sukie is also the one who insists that they stay away from Daryl after Felicia’s death, worried that Daryl could misuse their powers again.

Daryl van Horne – Daryl appears in Eastwick early in the film. No one knows anything about his background, but he purchases a mansion. Initially seeming to be an ordinary wealthy playboy, Daryl turns out to be the devil in disguise.

Hedonistic – The first thing we learn about Daryl is that he is a hedonist, pursuing pleasure in food, drink, sex, and other activities. His disguise as a wealthy playboy suits him very well. Meals at Daryl’s mansion are extravagant, and he rapidly seduces all three of the female protagonists.

Misogynistic – Initially, Daryl paints himself as a supporter of women’s liberation. In conversations with Alex and with Jane, he deplores men’s tendency to dismiss and dominate women. But later in the film,

when he has dropped his disguise, Daryl reveals himself to be a misogynist, ranting about how much he cannot stand women.

Evil – Daryl is, after all, the devil. Although he initially presents himself as the fulfillment of the three women's wishes, his real plan is to use them as vessels for his spawn. After he has murdered Felicia and attacked Alex, Jane, and Sukie, it is clear that he really is evil.

THEMES

Society

Gender Gender is perhaps the most prominent theme in *The Witches of Eastwick*. Characters explicitly discuss the societal roles of men and women and their relationships with each other. Alex, Sukie, and Jane discuss their own status as women who have been married but are no longer. Sukie and Alex both have children but seem to spend little time with those children. All three women are invested in their careers. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that all three women are interested in finding another man. As they are heterosexual women in late-twentieth-century American society, the film suggests, this is the natural order of things. All three women are shown to fall pretty easily for Daryl's persuasive tricks. Once they do so, they become the target of criticism from other women in town, who call them sluts and whores. Felicia Alden, the wife of the town newspaper editor and a prominent citizen, seems to represent a more traditional, conservative form of womanhood (she attends church, champions morality, and sings the national anthem at a town event), but she is also assertive, frequently criticizing her husband for being too cowardly to publish articles in the newspaper about the town's real problems.

Illustrative moment: Early in the film, Alex, Sukie, and Jane get together for drinks and discuss their lives as women in the aftermath of losing their husbands to death or divorce. Alex complains that even though she loves spending time with the other women, it feels like they have "locked [themselves] up and thrown away the key," presumably with regard to relationships with men. Jane and Sukie protest in defense of their all-female friendship. All three agree that they have many interests other than men, but Jane asks, "Why do we always end up talking about them, then?"

Patriarchy A more specific theme under the heading of gender is patriarchy. *The Witches of Eastwick* contains multiple conversations about male domination of women, and it also dramatizes it. Daryl presents himself as a critic of patriarchy. For example, when Daryl first visits Jane and they discuss the fact that the mansion he has just purchased was once a site of witch burning, he comments that witch hunts were really men's excuse to murder midwives they feared. He calls this another example of male-dominated society mistreating women. Later in the film, though, after the women start retaliating against him, he shows his true colors, spewing misogynistic comments. On the one hand, the film is anti-patriarchy, depicting three female protagonists who have careers and ultimately live together without a man. On the other hand, the film reinforces patriarchal stereotypes by depicting the women as dissatisfied when they do not have romantic relationships with men. Even at the end, after the revelation of Daryl's true nature and while she is living happily with her friends and all their children, Jane admits that she misses Daryl.

Illustrative moment: Near the end of the film, Jane, Alex, and Sukie use witchcraft in an attempt to injure and expel Daryl. When he realizes what is happening, Daryl almost immediately goes off on a misogynistic rant. Having been blown into the church by their supernatural wind, he interrupts the service and speaks angrily for several minutes, concluding that God must have made women because he wants men to suffer. The passion with which he speaks makes clear that this—not the anti-patriarchal statements he had made when trying to seduce the women earlier in the film—represents Daryl's true opinion.

Religion Another prominent theme in the film is religion, especially its dark side of witchcraft and demonic possession. Felicia and Clyde Alden are seen attending church, which is presented in a neutral way and without any doctrinal detail. The church is fairly full, suggesting a high percentage of participation in this small town. Sukie, Jane, and Alex do not appear to attend church. Nevertheless, it is by accident

that they become witches (apparently by means of their weekly get-togethers and inherent powers) and summon the devil to Eastwick. Only in the film's penultimate sequence do they deliberately engage in witchcraft. Until that point, they have as little agency as Felicia does when she becomes possessed, temporarily but repeatedly, by Daryl. This possession takes the form of verbal outbursts. Daryl, as the devil, apparently also has the ability to murder Felicia from a distance after causing her to choke on the very cherries that he and the three women are eating. Felicia, of course, becomes his target because she figured out his true identity and was ready to warn Alex, Jane, and Sukie. Although Felicia is not a very sympathetic character, the film is precise about the terms of her moral crusade: she says to Clyde, "I've got nothing against a good fuck. But there is something evil here." The movie does not really present a stance on either Christianity or sexual morality.

Illustrative moment: The second-to-last sequence in the film showcases the supernatural powers of the witches and of the devil. Using a book called *Maleficio* for guidance, Alex, Jane, and Sukie make a sort of voodoo doll of Daryl; they pierce it with pins, cover it with feathers, and blow on it, causing similar effects on Daryl himself across town. When he comes back to the mansion to confront them, he partially drops his human disguise, appearing as the devil he is. He uses his powers to attack them (hurling them down the stairs from a distance, for example), while they ultimately defeat him by breaking and burning the voodoo doll. This sequence confirms that the film is presenting a world in which the devil and witchcraft are real.

Relationships

Desire The film's three protagonists are all women who have had sexual relationships with men in the past and are interested in doing so again but find this difficult because they live in such a small town. When Daryl first appears and interacts with Alex, he forthrightly expresses his desire for her. She responds that he is the most unattractive man she has ever met. However, she still ends up having sex with him; he convinces her by correctly identifying her desire to do something new. Daryl next stokes desire in Jane by playing music well and helping her to improve her own playing. Finally, he compliments Sukie on her writing. Even though he is physically unattractive, Daryl generates desire in the women by tapping into other things that they want. On a broader scale, the townspeople of Eastwick are suspicious of desire, calling Jane, Sukie, and Alex "sluts" and "whores." The film's final say on desire is hard to identify. On the one hand, it leads the three women into intimacy with the devil and thus into danger, while on the other hand, it leads to the birth of their three children, who appear to be normal and to make them happy.

Illustrative moment: Jane is shown to be transformed by the fulfillment of sexual desire. In the film's early scenes, she is presented as somewhat uptight and timid, and she wears her brown hair in a tight braid. Then, during the scene in which Daryl seduces her, her hair begins to come undone and her physical movements to be looser and more confident. Her cello playing, too, becomes less rigid and more passionate. The next morning, her hair has become a brighter reddish color, as well as curlier, and she wears it loose. She also puts on lipstick and more colorful and revealing clothing.

Family *The Witches of Eastwick* features a surprisingly complicated and even queer portrayal of family. All three protagonists have broken families at the beginning, as a consequence of either death or divorce of their husbands. Male dissatisfaction with the nature of their families apparently drove both divorces: Alex observes that Jane's husband left her because she appeared unable to have children, while Sukie's left her because she had too many. At one point, Jane says to Sukie and Alex, "You are my family." Once the three of them begin spending significant amounts of time with Daryl and each other at his mansion, they refer to themselves several times as a family. Daryl does this particularly often, and when Sukie warns him early on that she gets pregnant very easily, he smiles and says that that is not a problem. The townspeople suspect the women of having sex with each other as well as Daryl: someone tells Alex's daughter that her mother is a "dyke." Although the film does not show the women engaging in sexual activity with each other, the film's final scene does show that they have become a family without Daryl, as they live in his mansion with their three babies fathered by Daryl and their older children.

Illustrative moment: The seriousness with which Daryl thinks of them as a family becomes clear when the three women shut him out after Felicia's death. He becomes very upset and inflicts hallucinations on Alex and Jane and real physical pain on Sukie in revenge. When Alex confronts him about this, he says, "I want my family back together, that's all—you, and Sukie, and Jane." Even though he has already impregnated them with his spawn by this point, he also wants to continue living with them as a family, and he seems surprised that they have left him.

Friendship Alex, Sukie, and Jane are best friends and appear to have been so for a long time, given their comfort with each other and their knowledge of the intimate details of each other's lives and histories. Their friendship takes several forms. They get together every Thursday night (a weekly gathering that Jane refers to as her only opportunity to really relax). They sometimes care for each other's children. They speak supportively to one another but also share hard truths. When they discover that they are sleeping with the same man, Sukie and Alex are totally unconcerned. Jane is initially jealous, but she seems to get over it in a matter of hours. The three women quickly transition to a new phase of their friendship in which they are all spending time with Daryl together. In the end, they are raising their new children together. Other than Sukie, Jane, and Alex's friendship, the film does not show any others, nor do those women seem to have any additional friends. In the world of this film, friendship is relatively rare but all-encompassing when it exists.

Illustrative moment: Sukie is hospitalized for extreme pain when Daryl is taking revenge on all three women for leaving him after Felicia's death. Jane and Alex get to the hospital right away, with Sukie's children in tow so that they are not left alone in the house with no supervision. When Jane and Alex are allowed to speak to Sukie, they realize that all three of them are pregnant with Daryl's children, and that Daryl has inflicted revenge on all of them (only in the form of hallucinations for Jane and Alex). Immediately, they prioritize their friendship, beginning to form a plan to neutralize Daryl together. The first step is that Alex goes to Daryl's mansion to try to get him to stop hurting Sukie—which she is only able to do by sleeping with him, even though she no longer wishes to.

Politics

Power Power shifts repeatedly throughout the film. In addition, people sometimes have power without knowing it. This is true of Alex, Jane, and Sukie, who have accidentally formed a witches' coven by gathering regularly once per week. The film does not explore where their supernatural powers ultimately come from. In any case, they have enough power to summon the devil to town in response to their wishes. What Daryl then offers them is in many ways what they want: adventure for Alex, better musical abilities for Jane, and professional praise for Sukie, in addition to sex. However, Daryl also has power over them, inhering both in his disguise (which prevents them from being on their guard) and in his supernatural powers. He also exerts power over them by impregnating them. Ultimately, though, their power as witches and as friends is greater than his power over them. Meanwhile, Felicia has power in her perceptive abilities, making her able to identify the devil. Before she can use that power to practical effect by warning the other women, though, Daryl's own powers of perception and of supernatural evil lead to Felicia's death. Daryl's power is ultimately greater than Felicia's but not greater than that of Sukie, Alex, and Jane.

Illustrative moment: The power that Jane, Sukie, and Alex have is both supernatural (witchy) and ordinary (friendship and loyalty to each other). Both kinds are on display in the movie's second-to-last sequence, in which the three friends, leaving all previous jealousies and disagreements behind, join forces to defeat Daryl with witchcraft. They collaborate well, drawing on Sukie's linguistic abilities to interpret the *Maleficio* book and on Alex's to make wax sculptures (in this case, the voodoo doll of Daryl). Their determination to protect each other is as important to their success as their powers of witchcraft.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Watching the film several decades after its release in 1987, do you find its portrayal of women outdated? Why or why not?

2. Think of another film, TV show, or literary work that depicts the devil taking on a human form (examples include *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, *The Devil's Advocate*, and *Master and Margarita*) or simply appearing as himself (*Paradise Lost*, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, and of course the Book of Genesis). Compare and contrast this work with *The Witches of Eastwick*.

3. What do you think of the character of Felicia?

4. What arguments would you make for and against a queer reading of the film?

5. If you were writing a sequel to *The Witches of Eastwick*, what would you imagine happening next in the lives of the characters?