

# Theatre studies yerma essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

As a performer, I aim to perform Juan in various ways in order to convey my interpretation of him to my audience. I think he would be tall because this would symbolise his high status as a man in a Spanish village in the 1930s and his authority as a husband. I feel that he would be athletic in build for similar reasons. I believe he would be in his late thirties because the play gives the sense that he has been married for years “ It’s been years”. He would have short, straight, dark brown hair and deep set dark eyes because this will give him an aura of power. In Act 1 Scene 1, Juan has an exchange with his wife.

As an actor, I would march onto the stage with a brisk and confident air because this would suit the crisp tone with which I will deliver the line “ Have the oxen gone by? ” As a performer, I would turn away abruptly as well as dismissively as this would give the impression that Juan finds his wife’s childlike behaviour unsettling. I want to give Juan the mannerism of running his fingers through his hair because this would show his frustration in an unconscious way to the audience. I believe that Juan would hunch his shoulders because this would portray his subconscious tension.

I will deliver lines like “ I manage” and “ rubbish” in an irritated tone. As a performer I can grin reluctantly and smile broadly because I believe that Juan both sympathises with and fears his wife’s mental instability. I would reach out my hand and take Yerma’s gently before hugging her around the waist calmly; “ Come here, see you tonight”, delivering the line “ The olives are doing well/the fields look good/money’s coming in” in a light tone to disguise deepening tension. As an actor, I interpret Juan as a character divided between conflicting feelings of love, irritation, frustration and fear.

I would deliver the line “ That’s enough/they’ll hear us” with calmness though glancing around to depict Juan’s anxiety. As a performer, I want to look helplessly at Yerma when delivering lines such as “ Sssh” and “ Yerma” and withdrawing quickly because this would suggest inability to cope with the situation. I think a typical male trait is to avoid situations that involve conflict. I would like to glance at Yerma in a resentful way because I think that Juan is feeling trapped in the marriage despite his love for his wife.

I intend to do this in order to allow the audience to sympathise with Juan. I will deliver the line “ What can we do/what is there to do but wait, be patient? ” with a forced composure. I think that Juan would walk off the stage swiftly because this would suggest that he is deeply relieved. I will cast an appealing glance at the audience because it would be effective if I introduced audience interaction when playing the role.

In Act 1 Scene 2, I would creep onto the stage in a furtive way delivering the line “ What are you doing here? in an accusatory tone because this want the audience to be slightly more critical of him, having sympathised with him in the previous scene. I would raise my eyebrows on delivery of the line “ Why aren’t you at home? You should be home by now. ” I believe Juan would mutter the line “ Oh fine/just the way to start people talking”. I will deliver calmly the line “ No I will be working outside tonight” and glance at Yerma with concern n delivery of the line “ You go to bed/get some sleep” because this will add to the subtlety of emotions portrayed.

In Act 2 Scene 1, I would avoid Yerma’s eyes when delivering the line “ Someone’s got to watch the sheep”. I would do so because I think that Juan

feels slightly guilty about asking his sisters to keep an eye on Yerma despite the fact that he is within his rights to do so as her husband. I will deliver in an agitated tone the line “ You think that’s how I feel, peaceful? ” with eyebrows furrowed. I believe that Juan would ask “ And whose fault is that? ” with distaste and look steadily at her when replying “ If I watch you, it’s for a good reason”.

As an actor I would gesticulate with my hands as I deliver Juan’s lines of “ You’ll live as I say. Who earns the food for your belly, the clothes for your back? ” in order to demonstrate his mounting anger. I will pose aggressively as I raise my hand to strike her, shaking my head when allowing my arm to fall, delivering “ never mind how I feel” in a weary tone. I think that Juan would shrug before delivering the lines “ Nothing you say makes sense/you are not deprived of anything” giving the audience a sidelong glance as though appealing for their help to reason with her.

This would be a good way of involving the audience. I will place emphasis on the line “ I know I have my faults/but all I want is to live in peace and quiet/with you”. I would fold my arms calmly when delivering the line “ I try not to think about it/I don’t think about it any more”. I will shake my head despairingly on delivery of the line “ Then stop banging your head on a rock/if you keep on it will drive you mad”. I think Juan would point at himself and deliver emphatically the line “ Yes, married. My wife. I have my family’s honour to protect”.

I would leave abruptly, walking with swift steps and closing my eyes briefly so as to imply mental pain. In his exchange with Victor, I would deliver lines

such as “ Hullo, are you off? ” in a light, casual tone, biting my lip to suggest underlying tension. I would deliver in a resentful tone “ It will if you work hard enough” and grip his hand with force when shaking hands to communicate the element of male competition. I will narrow my eyes slightly to suggest jealousy because I think Juan does genuinely love Yerma. I would move with a steady gait as I follow Juan’s sisters off stage.

In the final scene, I think Juan will deliver the line “ I listened” calmly as he steps out from behind the cart. I would look grave and deliver the line “ I have things to say as well as you” in a serious tone. I would grip Yerma’s hands when delivering the line “ I want you/not children/you”. I think he would try and help her up gently, delivering with clarity the line It’s not our fault/we’re not to blame”. I will firmly though kindly deliver the line “ Isn’t life easier without children”. In order to portray Juan’s anger I will strike my forehead with my fist and shout “ Didn’t you hear what I said? It’s not important any more”.

I would speak softly “ Give up” and “ accept it”. I can hold her hand when delivering the line “ We have each other/I’ll care for you/you’ll care for me” in a soothing tone, pulling her gently into an embrace and kissing her with passion “ like this/and this/and this”. I believe Juan would start back in horror at her shriek and give her a dazed look as she strangles him. So, this is how I would enact the role in order to portray Juan as a complex character who should be sympathised with despite his role as a man of higher status than a woman in the 1930s.