Meghan Maldonado
Costume Design
Fool For Love Play Analysis

An Outline for Playscript Analysis &
A Designers Outline for Playscript Analysis.

1) Where are they?

a)Exact geographic location.

- They are at the edge of the Mojave Desert (Southern California/Arizona)

i) What images do those evoke?

- Dry sand, barren land, large rock formations, little to no greenery, isolated, heat glistening off the road.

ii) how does this affect mood?

- It makes the mood feel like a struggle. There is a sense of loneliness and exhaustion. The heat can suggest the passion or violence between the two characters.

iii) suggests what colors, images, texture?

- Earth tones (medium warm hues of red, shades and tints of browns and oranges). Nothing would be new. All houses, cars, etc. would be worn down and aged from dust and sandstorms. The texture would be rough and jagged rocks, prickly cacti, short and stubby Joshua trees.

2) When are they?

a)Day, month, year.

- The present time, May 1983

i) are there parallels to other times?

- The relationship between May and Eddie could happen at any time.

ii) why did the author set it there?

- The author set it here because the play is reflective of his passion and volatile relationships. His relationship with Jessica Lange centered around country life. He was quoted saying that western and country music being ultimately

sad was the definition of the American Male and Female character. That those relationships were impossible and terrible.

iii) what was happening in art, music, politics, theatre?

- I don't think it was the 1980's that inspired Shepard. I think it was the 1960's movement that was more important to the script. Meng Ye points out in his paper, the 1960's hippie culture could have greatly played into the loose relationships that the Old Man had during his teen and adult years. This would have greatly influenced Eddie's views on relationships. "The hippie cultural movement regards open sexual relations as a means to resist traditional society and seek personal freedom"

b) Note the significance of the season.

i) What images do those evoke?

- The desert would be hot and dry during the day, with cooler nights. Sweaty skin, damp hais, sagging curtains. Red/yellow lights.

ii) How does this affect mood?

- Heat affects the mood because it makes people less tolerable, more prone to anger, possibly having headaches from lack of water. It will feel hot, sticky, grimy.

iii) Suggests what colors, images, texture?

- The texture is gritty, with warm tones dominating the space. Small tones of turquoise and greens would be splashed around to suggest some moldy, old tones. Frizzy hair, sweaty skin.

3) Who are they?

a) Relationships and socioeconomics.

- Eddie and May are former lovers who are later revealed to be half-siblings. Their father, the Old Man, had relationships with both of their mothers and created two separate families. Eddie seems to have followed in his father's footsteps by being in love with May while also having a relationship with the countess. Martin is May's date and offers the possibility of a more normal and stable relationship.
  The characters appear to be mostly working class. May is living in a cheap motel, Martin works in maintenance, and Eddie makes his living working with horses and in rodeo. Eddie's outfit is held together with tape. There is not

much in the play to suggest that any of them have a lot of money. Before the play, Eddie and May were living in a trailer.

i) colors, images, texture associated with socioeconomics.

- Run down furniture, peeling wallpaper, dull colors, little to no art on the walls. Worn out clothing and upholstery, not a lot of personal items. Rusted or broken-down cars.

b) Under what government.

- The play takes place in the United States in the early 1980s.

i. Are there parallels to any other government in time?

- There is not a clear connection to another government in the play.

c) In what religious/spiritual environment?

- The characters do not seem to have any moral/religious/spirituality. Eddie and May are engaging in a nontraditional relationship that would be considered taboo but do not seem to care about the implications inside of a religion or societal rules.

d) Believing what about ethical conduct, sex, family, marriage.

- Eddie and May have a skewed sense of family due to the hardships of their own childhood. The trauma they faced has facilitated them repeating the mistakes of the Old Man. Eddie is consistently leaving May for other women and romanticizing their relationship. May is constantly running and then taking Eddie back.

4) What happened before the play began?

- May has left Eddie after living together in a trailer. She has been working as a cook and been on a couple of dates with Martin.

5) What do the characters think about their world?

- Eddie seems to believe in the fantasy of what his world could look like. He imagines his childhood with May much differently than May. He believes himself to be a successful rodeo and stuntman. He sees May taking him back and living on a farm with chickens. May sees the realistic world. She recalls the story of their childhood more factually than Eddie. She states the facts

behind their meeting. She doesn't fantasize that Eddie is coming right back. She sees the truth of the world but can't seem to escape from Eddie trying to reel her back into his.

6) What is the function of each character?

a)Who is the protagonist?

- May is the protagonist if we view this as May's play. She could stop the play by telling Eddie to leave, but she demands that he stays.

i) does this character suggest images, animal, color, texture.

- May reminds me of a cornered animal. They are going to lash out to survive. They will bite the hand that tries to feed them. She would have a rough texture to one or two articles of clothing, suggesting that she is willing to fight and claw her way out of the situation. She is not timid or worried about saying the wrong thing.

ii) how do they grow

- May doesn't grow. At the end of the play, she packs her suitcase, knowing that Eddie has left again, and presumable goes to find another location to hide from Eddie until the next time he comes to find her.

iii) what is their objective?
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- Their objective is to get over Eddie and move on with their life, without Eddie constantly reappearing in her life.

b) Who is the antagonist?

- Eddie is the antagonist. He is stopping May from moving on by constantly showing up to where she is and toying with her decision to move on.

i) does this character suggest images, animal, color, texture.

- This character suggests a bull in the cage at a rodeo. They look calm waiting in the pen for that gate to open. Then, they bolt as soon as they see the chance to fling their rider off. He is gritty from work and thinks himself as an authentic person. The texture of leather and rope come to mind for this character, as well as the colors of red clay from the desert.

ii) how do they grow

- Eddie also doesn't grow. He is going to keep repeating the same pattern until the relationship ends in ruin. Much like his relationship with the countess.

iii) what is their objective?

- To get May to come with him and be where he can access her whenever he wants.

c) Which characters lead and which support?

- Eddie and May lead the action, with Martin and the Old Man supporting the action.

i) does this character suggest images, animal, color, texture.

- **Eddie:** leather, denim, dust, brown, faded blue, straw, rough textures
- **May:** softer fabrics mixed with worn textures; faded reds, creams, dusty colors
- **Old Man:** Same as Eddie but more worn down: worn leather, aged denim, tobacco brown and gray.
- **Martin:** cotton, workwear, simple checks or plaids, blue and tan, dirty on his hands and knees

ii) how do they grow

- I feel like the only character who could potentially grow is Martin. Eddie and May are destined to keep repeating the mistakes of the past 15 years. Martin has witnessed something disturbing and untraditional. If Martin is the audience, then I assume that he does not think that this relationship is following healthy social norms. He stays as he is in the scene and simply watches this twisted relationship happen. He doesn't take a stand to either approve or question the situation before him. If Martin is the audience, then he has the potential to learn from this event and go on to change the next time he witnesses something that doesn't follow his belief system.

iii) what is their objective?

- Martin's objective is to take May to the movies.

d) Identify and describe stereotypical characters.

- There are not any significant stereotypical characters in the play that

would affect the characters.

i) does this character suggest images, animal, color, texture.

ii) how do they grow

iii) what is their objective?

e)Identify and describe crowds.

- No crowds in this production

i) does this character suggest images, animal, color, texture.

ii) how do they grow

iii) what is their objective, if any.

7) What is the dialogue mode?

a)sense of movement and lyric quality

i) Naturalistic- I feel that this describes the play best. The way the characters speak to each other is in simplistic terms with a lot of repeating dialogue. Words such as “go” “smell” “look”. Slang is used for shortening words. This also correlates with the socioeconomic theory that the characters do not seem to have a lot of money. The dialogue used is extremely blunt and simplistic.

ii) Literary

iii) Poetic

iv) Sound and grammar (how do they speak)

v) Ambiguity

8) What is the play's action?

a)What happens in the play?

i) are there repeating motifs, ideas: flowers, death, water, birth?

- The biggest repeating motifs is repetition itself. Eddie is repeating the mistakes of his father, wanting multiple women at once. May repeats the same mistake of being with Eddie countless times. The characters physically

circulate around the stage, suggesting a clock (time and mistakes repeating itself). They constantly have the same argument, and May even says that they have been doing this over and over again for 15 years.

We also see that repeat in the dialogue of the play itself. Vaidehi Ramanathan points out in his article that Eddie and May are constantly choosing dialogue that puts them in a constant repetition of placating and quarreling speech.

ii) which images are central or represent the theme of the play?

- The motel, the desert, the Old Man in the rocking chair with the alcohol, Eddie's truck and the horses, the cowboy regalia on Eddie.

iii) how do images change from scene to scene?

- The motel begins as May's attempt at a new life but becomes another place where Eddie finds her. Eddie's cowboy image also changes. At first it makes him appear confident, independent, and suave, but as his history is revealed, that image becomes less cowboy hero and more lecherous. The truck ends up burning and the horses are loose. This shows a physical breaking of the things that represent Eddie's persona.

b) Create an action chart:

i) Stasis

- May is living alone in a cheap motel at the edge of the Mojave Desert. She is waiting to go on a date with Eddie.

ii) inciting incident

- Eddie tries to leave, and May begs him to not go.

iii) complications (rising action)

- Eddie and May argue about their relationship and the countess. They embrace intimately. Martin arrives for his date with May. Eddie and May begin revealing their history and the fact that they are half-siblings.

iv) Climax

- The Old Man and May reveal the truth behind their families. The double life the Old Man left shows the destruction of both families. Eddie and May's relationship is shown to be continuing the same destructive pattern. The

countess attacks Eddie's truck, releases the horses, and sets the truck on fire.

v) falling action (dénouement)

- Eddie embracing May and announces that he will be right back. Martin offers May a ride as she begins packing and asks if she is going with Eddie. She simply states, “He’s gone”.

c) Outline the action of each scene.

- The play is only one extended scene.

9) What is the play's theme?

- That we do foolish things for love that may be toxic, unhealthy, illegal, or just plain dumb. Our passions for another can cloud all of our sound judgment.

10) Why did the author write the play? Which aspect of the human condition were they trying to illuminate?

- I feel like knowing Shepard’s volatile upbringing and moving around a lot due to the military service of his father led him to explore unconventional relationships between men and women. His relationship with Jessica Lange was known to be extremely passionate and violent. Shepard also struggled with alcohol abuse. I think the play was trying to show the messiness surrounding unconventional relationships and the harm they can cause to future generations.

11) Make some statement as to the general visual world of the play, based on all the above.

- The visual world of the play is muggy, dusty, itchy, sickly and uncomfortable. The colors are muted and dulled from any liveliness. The only spots of bright colors are May’s dress, and the bathroom walls of red. Everything in the motel rooms is run down, sagging, old. Eddie is, at first glance, a rustic, handsome cowboy. Looking closer, the audience sees the tape on the boot and his hand. He is messier the more you take in. May is broken and edgy. She is despondent at first and then becomes a cat with the hair standing up on her back. She starts out in comfortable clothing, to suggest that she was alone getting ready for her date and not worried about putting on a front. She uses the change to the red dress, not only to gain power back from Eddie, but as a shield so she no longer appears vulnerable. The Old Man is haunting with his inattentiveness until it behooves himself to pay attention. He is dressed like

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Eddie, just a duller and more worn version. Martin is stagnant, caught in the middle of the mess. He is the eyes of the audience, cable of viewing the mess, but not capable of stopping history from repeating. He is slow, calm, and only has the one outburst when he first enters the scene. His clothing should have little to no personality.

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