





Director's Concept

“Just because something ends doesn't mean it wasn't a great success.”

A story about life going on, *Failure: A Love Story* celebrates the lives and loves of the three Fail sisters. This ensemble-driven play by Philip Dawkins mixes whimsy and humor to capture the unexpected twists and turns of life - twists a contemporary audience is all too familiar with after the events of the past few years. Much like the Chicago River, time flows on. Survivors are left to collectively mourn, but then continue with their lives, encountering new challenges and different kinds of love.

The roaring 20s provide the ideal backdrop - full of youth, energy, and innovation. Design elements support the ensemble-based storytelling with lots of opportunities to quickly transform the space and create new characters. Light, neutral costumes for the ensemble and similarly neutral browns and greens for the set provide a backdrop for bright splashes of color whether they be accessories, overhead projections, or lights. A traverse stage highlights the journeys of the characters, while allowing for scenic playgrounds on either end of the space. Sound completes the experience and grounds the audience firmly in memories of the past even as we look to the future.

The Palette: 1910 to 1930



Solitude
AF-545



Tranquility
AF-490



Pomegranate
AF-295



Sonnet
AF-55



Etruscan
AF-355



Grape Juice
2074-10



Nightingale
AF-670



Greenbrook
517



El Cajon Clay
1260



w/ some of the
brighter colors
for costumes

Costumes

Gerty Fail (Becca)

- Demure, maybe light blue or green

Jenny June Fail (Nina Arbogast)

- Bold, can probably be in swimming outfit the whole time as long as the actor feels comfortable with it (leggings?)

Nelly Fail (Maggie Gunning)

- Full on flapper, bright colors

Mortimer Mortimer (John “Quinn” Stauton)

- Sweater vest (to set him apart from...)
- Slightly more color than ensemble

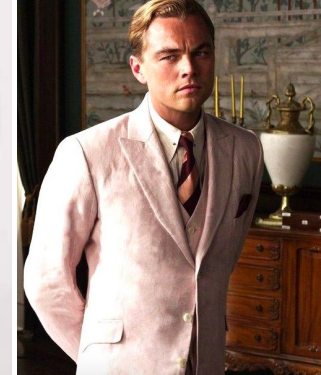
John N (Luke Staples)

- Vest and tie?
- Slightly more color than ensemble

Costumes

Marietta Fail, Counter Clock, Ensemble (Graci)
Henry Fail, Ensemble, adding 18th CENTURY SWISS QUARTER
CHIMING MANTLE CLOCK (Doug)
Coocoo Clock, Ensemble (Heather)
Dog, Ensemble (Walter)
Moses, Grandfather Clock, Ensemble (Trevor)
December, Ensemble (Star)
Mae, Ensemble (Kyia)
Grantland Rice, Wall Clock, Ensemble (Giovanni Romero)
Doctor, Front Door, Ensemble (Natasha)

I was thinking it'd be helpful for each ensemble to have a based costume (cream, white, light grey) and add small pieces when they transform into their characters (fascinators for the birds, a hat and/or coat for the Fails, etc.) Think the clocks may have frames to hold in front of their faces to suggest the clock face, but again the grandfather clock could have say a white mustache...



Hair and Makeup

Inclined towards the more delicate and subtle 1920s for the ensemble. Nods to characters in color choice and the like encouraged.

All three of the Fail sisters seem as if they likely have different makeup looks from understated to bare face to young flapper glam.



Scenic/Props/Lights

I haven't been in the space in awhile so I'm not entirely sure what all will fit but here are some asks:

- Alley/Traverse Stage
- House on one side, river on the other
- Levels on either side - ladder on river side, both if possible
- Free standing door (or door plus) on house side - solid or see through, whatever fits the design best
- Makeshift projection screen on both sides
- Space for overhead projector(s) when not in use

Scenic/Props/Lights

- Desk chair on wheels - no arms so actress can lay across it
- Five frames for clocks (could one be broken on stage?)
- Crates/suitcases/sawhorse to create car, desk, boat, etc with
- Gramophone
- Two cages
- Pocketwatch
- Old microphone (doesn't need to work)
- Glasses (for illegal booze)
- Net for catching a bird
- Cogs (for little Nelly to play with)
- Likely more that I've missed (although I think we'll do the bust with shadow puppets so we don't need that)

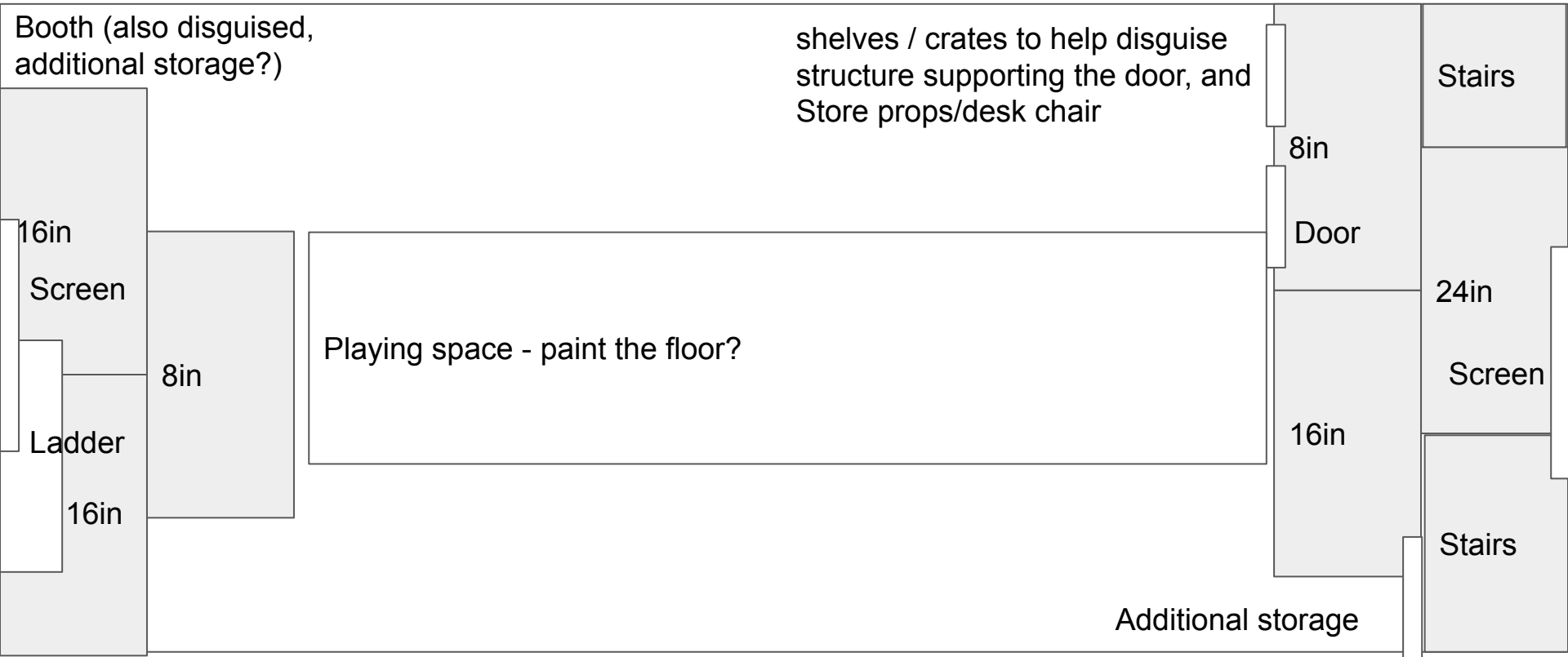
Scenic/Props/Lights

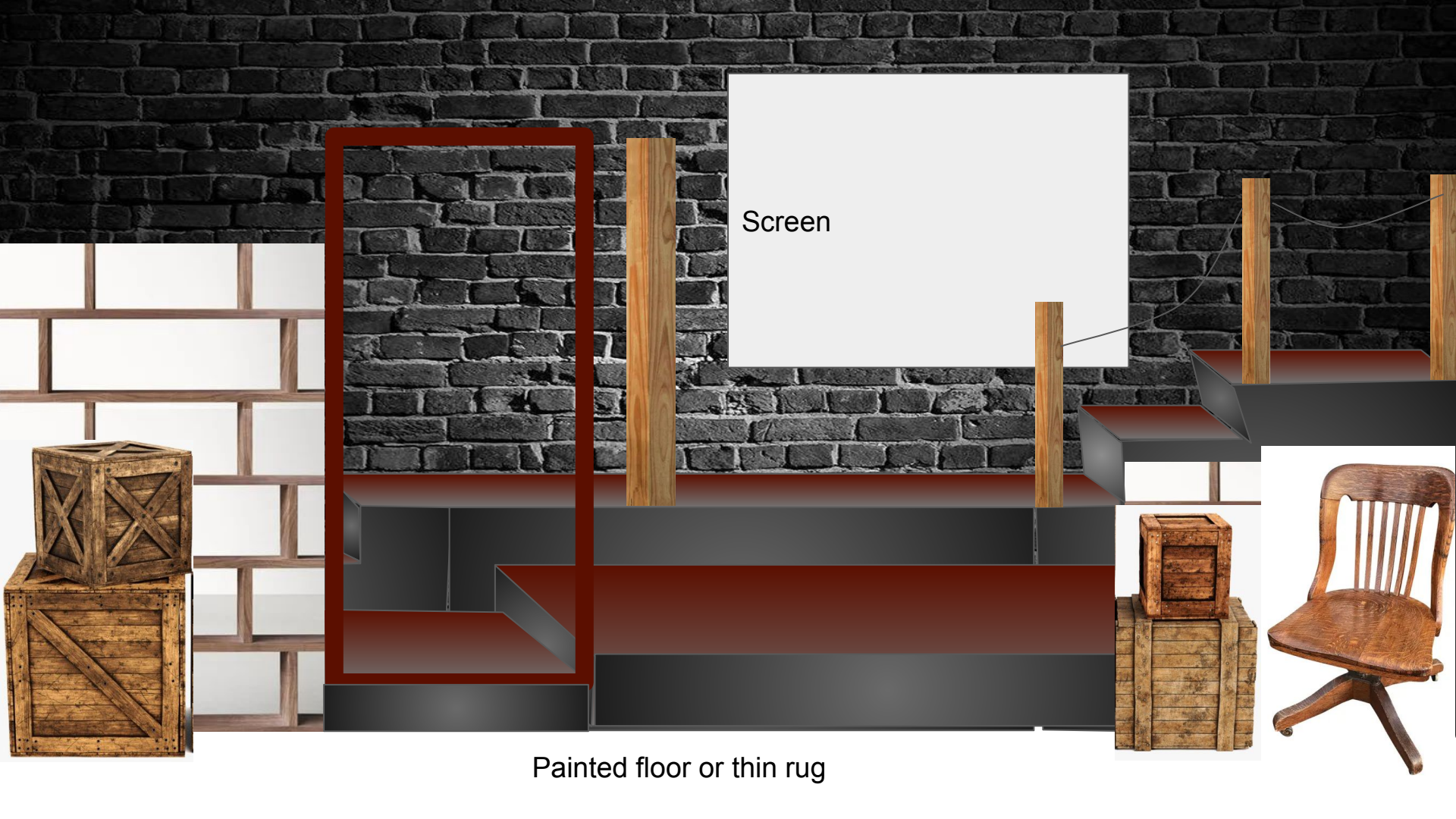
Specific asks (okay if the answer is no:)

- Practical lights up above (old school edison or strand lights)
- Clock gobo(s)
- Blue wash for June swimming in the river (in addition to standard lighting elsewhere)
- Overhead projectors









Screen

Painted floor or thin rug

Sound

Find songs from the script

Think about pre-show and underscoring

Gramophone sound

Prepare to share for Thursday after Spring Break

Sound Added in Rehearsal Reports

Pre-show: 1920s upbeat

Opening song: perhaps something more like the piano piece you shared with me (that song or your own composition)

Find: "Let me call you 'sweetheart,' I'm in love with you." - Flashdrive Friday

Find: "I can't give you anything but love, Baby." – Can we get this with lyrics

Find: "My partner, my partner / It's dancing time." – Add fast forward stop with lyric

Create: "I don't need anyone. All I need is you." pg 16 - Friday

Find: Gramophone "Wah wah"

Find: "Let me call you sweetheart, I'm in love with you."

Find: Gramophone - end of record for pg 46

Find: "I guess I'll have to change my plan / I should've realized they'll be another man" - Can we get this with lyrics

Find: "I can't give you anything, but love, Baby" - w or without

Create: "What is happening to me?" pg 57

Find: "The sky was blue / and high above / The moon was new" - can we get this with lyrics

Find: Gramophone - needle scratch

Create: Backward "I can't give you anything but love, Baby." pg 71-74

Closing song: do we go back to the opening song

Bows and post show - 1920s upbeat

Window breaking?