

## Notes for Skin of our Teeth

- Human heart
  - Let's keep it very small
  - “O fear not in a world like this, and thou shalt know ere long, know how sublime a thing it is to suffer and be strong”. *The Light of the Stars* by H.W. Longfellow
  - How will we go on. Tribute to human spirit
  - Each act has its own perspective.
  - The Skin of our teeth was a remarkable tribute to an American entrenched in **catastrophe**, a tribute to the trait of **human endurance**. *Paula Vogel*
  - Theater is not about understanding what's going on. It's about meeting something you don't know. (Anne Bogart)
  - Who does Mr. Antrobus need to bring home?
  - A complicated tribute to the family.
  - Perpetually caught in crisis, but also perpetually surviving.
  - we keep what we want
  -
- Gilded Frame

### ACT I 1942 Excelsior, New Jersey. Antrobus Home as the Ice Age approaches

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Catastrophe is an iceberg

Ideal home

Pit down one step. Fish bowl and bird cage

Color: Glacial aqua, plums rusts muted grayed down

Genesis 6pm daylight

- Upstage
- Screen
- **What parts of the stage will be used for acting? How far upstage? Full left and right? All of the forestage?** Forestage No side stages. Up to mid stage mostly
- **Projections page 5-7. Where will screen be? How large? How will it move in and out? Rolling screen like the marker board.**
- The opening scene should reinforce the traditional “auditorium space”.
- Is the announcer a character, a recorded voice or a live “voice”. Should this have a historical visual value? Are we choosing a historical period/ date for this opening and for “present day”?
- **What are the moving details for the sections of the walls.** Where do they start, when do they move and where do they move to? Page 8 and 9, 15. No movement on these pages. Only adjustment between acts.
- page 10- we came through the depression by the skin of our teeth.... (pdf page 12)
- page 14 (pdf page) baby dinosaur peeks in window.
- **Fire-** do we have an imaginary one and is there any lighting needed? PDF PAGE 18
- Tableau by Raphael PDF PAGE 24
- PDF PAGE 23 Refugees entrance? “Back wall”. They will enter downstage.

- **Can I use floor cycs behind the cyclorama?** Yes. What height would a ground row need to be? Could it curve into the stage floor like a skateboard ramp?
- PDF PAGE 24 Switch to house light?

## ACT II 1977 Atlantic City Boardwalk

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Storm/ flood Late afternoon early evening

Just pre-dawning the AIDS epidemic. Decadent. Place where you could go to be naughty

Colorful Sick Eggplant color

Red white blue, scary green storm

- PDF PAGE 32 "*The screen becomes a Transparency*" Has this moment been discussed/ worked out? This could refer to a "slide". It could be represented as an enormous human-sized slide that we view the actors through.
- Which stores have signs
- Fortune teller/ conveyers sequence- lighting needs here? PDF PAGE 36-37
- Roller chairs on the Boardwalk
- **PDF PAGE 39 Sabina enters from Bingo parlor- is there a Bingo parlor?** Salt water taffy store?
- **PDF PAGE 40 How does the storm signal work?** Disks are always there- they change by rotating. How are the disks changed?
- PDF PAGE 43 Stage Mgr- Going out of the world of the play. Lighting change?>
- PDF PAGE 45. Ant and Sabina enter the cabana. **Location for cabana?**
- PDF PAGE 45 (Page 77)- Note from Dona/Helen: could we have Mr. Antrobus' (and Sabina's) outline visible as a silhouette behind the curtain of the Bingo Parlor?
- PDF PAGE 45-47 Storm coming. By page 49, it has grown dark.
- PDF PAGE 49 "**Strange veering lights** start whirling about the stage"
- PDF PAGE 51- **Do they go into the aisle?** Both aisles are used

## Act III 2014 Excelsior, New Jersey. Antrobus Home. Digging out from Bombing

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Post apocalyptic The sun is down moving toward darkness.

Military colors and outfits current day

Stars and galaxy above.

I'd like to begin act III **in darkness and end as dawn breaks**. The very end of the play flips back to the act I action, and would repeat the act I light, but just before that, and just after the night sky, going to just the very start of a new day after the quotes.

I'd like to have Gladys (in the background) hold her baby up to the dawning sun.

- PDF PAGE 53- Stage manager- Lights please
- PDF PAGE 53- **Is there a scenery change or addition- fly** the cyc to reveal scaffold, etc? NO
- PDF PAGE 56 It has grown lighter

- PDF PAGE 56 Mrs Antrobus' entrance- **through trapdoor or other?** NO trapdoor- just the little lean-to
- PDF PAGE 63: Stop the play again
- PDF PAGE 64: **Some lights are coming** on.
- PDF PAGE 67 **The back wall has disappeared**, revealing the platform.
- PDF PAGE 67 End of the play Blackout as suggested? Deep blue starry sky?

## Dramaturg

Themes and allusions cyclical understanding of human progress

Structure

Sixes and sevens.

## Lighting ideas:

- Define the space- the physical space, the quality of the space, the change of the space, the atmospheric qualities of the three acts, the visual focus.
  - How much visual range is needed for the production? What is the role of lighting in creating the visual imagery and visual range.
  - Visual focus- where should the attention be at each moment in the timeline of the play.
  - The three acts- Is there a unique image idea for each- what will that be?? How will lighting support the looks of each act?
  - The background: The scenic design has a cyclorama at the back of the stage. How will that be used and what will the light be like? What options will exist for the light on that surface? What locations are the scenery pieces using? What lighting positions and equipment are available?
  - Special lighting needs
- Strange veering lights start whirling about the stage