Epic Fail

A Comedy in One Act

By
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STORY OF THE PLAY

Teenagers are faced with failure every day. Some mornings it feels like they have the letter F stamped on their foreheads in bright red ink. In a series of hilarious vignettes, five students take on a multitude of challenges, each from a different perspective. From driving a car that has a mind of its own to having an argument with a bag of chips in a vending machine, these teenagers discover that the only way to succeed is to stare failure in the face. And if they're going to take that risk, they might as well make it epic!

Performance time: 30-35 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Entirely gender flexible cast of 5-30+)

STUDENTS:
There are five core students. They are entirely gender neural (including their names); simply change the pronouns at your discretion.

AVERY
CHRIS
PARKER
LOGAN
ROBIN

CHORUS:
The chorus should have at least three members, but could be infinitely larger. They may say all of their lines in unison, split the sentences between them, or a combination of both. For the smallest possible cast, the chorus could be eliminated altogether. If this is the case, their dialogue should be spoken in unison by the students.

ENSEMBLE:
There are many roles in the ensemble and they may be assigned individually, doubled up by the students, or played by members of the chorus. Also, it is perfectly acceptable to have the actors portray both genders.

PRINCIPAL	**DRAMA TEACHER**
MATH TEACHER	**ENGLISH TEACHER**
INSTRUCTOR	**ACCELERATOR**
BRAKE	**GEAR SHIFT**
HEART	**BRAIN**
GOOD CRUSH	**BAD CRUSH**
CHIPS	**SODA**
CARROTS	**MILK**
MOM	**DAD**
SISTER	**BROTHER**

SETTING

All that's required is a bare stage, with a few blocks that will be rearranged for each setting.

LIGHTS AND SOUND

There are no special light or sound effects. Music may be used in between scenes, but there should be no blackouts. This will help keep the play moving along at a brisk pace.

COSTUMES

The students wear white button-up shirts and blue jeans. Underneath these button-ups, they wear T-shirts that have the letter F stamped across the chest, in bright red ink. The chorus wears brightly colored clothes to differentiate them from the students. No special costumes are necessary for characters in the ensemble, but if you have any fun ideas, go for it!

PROPS

The props can be real or imagined. If you decide to use props, keep them minimal. List of properties: three exams, can of soda, small bag of chips, small carton of milk, small bag of baby carrots.

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(AT RISE: The CHORUS is huddled up center stage, wearing brightly colored outfits. The five STUDENTS are scattered around them on various levels, dressed in matching button-up white shirts and blue jeans.)

AVERY: A.
CHORUS: Awesome. Assured. Amazing.
CHRIS: B.
CHORUS: Bright. Brainy. Balanced.
PARKER: C.
CHORUS: Competent. Capable. Common.
LOGAN: D.
CHORUS: Dicey. Dopey. Dumb.
ROBIN: F.
CHORUS: Foolish. Futile. Failure.

(On the following lines, the STUDENTS rip open their button-up shirts, revealing the letter "F" in bright red ink on their shirts underneath.)

AVERY: Fail.
CHRIS: Fail.
PARKER: Fail.
LOGAN: Fail.
ROBIN: Fail.

(The CHORUS stamps their feet.)

CHORUS: Fail.
ROBIN: How come they skip the letter “E” when they pass out grades?
LOGAN: Because “E” stands for something else.
PARKER: What does it stand for?
CHORUS: Epic.
CHRIS: Epic what?
CHORUS: Epic fail.

(As AVERY speaks to the audience, the STUDENTS exit and the CHORUS moves the blocks around to form a principal's office.)

AVERY: That sounds about right. I'm not exactly what you'd call the sharpest knife in the drawer. I'm not even the pointiest fork. When it comes to cutlery, I'm more like a slotted spoon. I understand the big stuff, but it's the details that slip through the cracks. Unfortunately, teachers are pretty big on details. So when it comes time to collect my homework, chances are pretty good it will be accompanied by the F word.
CHORUS: Fail!

(The CHORUS exits as AVERY takes a seat in the principal's office. Across from him are the PRINCIPAL, DRAMA TEACHER, MATH TEACHER and ENGLISH TEACHER.)

PRINCIPAL: You're probably wondering why I've called this meeting.
AVERY: No.
PRINCIPAL: Really?
AVERY: I'm pretty sure it's because I'm an idiot.
PRINCIPAL: I never said you're an idiot.
AVERY: You don't have to. I know I am.
PRINCIPAL: You're not an idiot.
AVERY: True or false. I failed my math test.
MATH: True.
AVERY: I failed my English test.
ENGLISH: True.
AVERY: I failed my drama test.
DRAMA: True.
AVERY: See. Idiot.
PRINCIPAL: Is there something going on at home that you'd like to talk about? Perhaps we could help you.
AVERY: Home is not my problem.
PRINCIPAL: Then what is your problem?
AVERY: Passing tests. Duh.

PRINCIPAL: It's not just that you failed them that concerns me. It's the way you failed them that I find, for lack of a better word, spectacular.
AVERY: *(Smiles proudly.)* Yeah. I figured if I was going to fail them anyway, I might as well make it interesting.
PRINCIPAL: So your answers were on purpose?
AVERY: That depends on which ones you're talking about.
PRINCIPAL: Exactly why I called you here. I've asked your teachers to read a couple of examples and then afterward you can explain yourself.
AVERY: Shoot.
PRINCIPAL: Don't worry. We're not going to hurt you.
AVERY: No. I meant, "Go ahead."
PRINCIPAL: Oh. Then go ahead.
MATH: *(Reads from a piece of paper.)* "Confusion is a strange affliction. Panic, fear and contradiction. Never sure what's fact or fiction. Leads me to a drug addiction."
PRINCIPAL: What do you have to say for yourself?
AVERY: I'd say that was pretty good. Wouldn't you?
MATH: Perhaps. But this is a math test.
AVERY: So?
MATH: So I asked for the quadratic formula.
AVERY: Which is just as confusing as poetry.
MATH: Interesting, but not relevant. In fact, you answered every equation with a poem.
ENGLISH: And on your English test, you answered in equations.
PRINCIPAL: For instance?
ENGLISH: *(Reads from a piece of paper.)* Question. "In *The Scarlet Letter*, what letter was Hester Pryne forced to wear across her chest?" Answer. "E equals M C squared."
AVERY: Pretty funny, right?
PRINCIPAL: Jon Stewart is funny. Ellen DeGeneres is funny. Carrot Top is funny. You are not funny.
DRAMA: Are you bored in class?
AVERY: No.
MATH: Overwhelmed?
AVERY: No.
ENGLISH: On drugs?

AVERY: No!
ENGLISH: But you wrote, and these are your own words, "Leads me to a drug addiction."
AVERY: Oh, that.
PRINCIPAL: So you can see why we're concerned.
AVERY: It's not what you think. I'm on drugs, all right. But not the kind that make me happy. The kind that make me "normal."
DRAMA: You mean for A-D-D?
MATH: Or O-C-D?
ENGLISH: Or O-D-D?
AVERY: Letters, letters, letters. Everywhere I turn, more letters! I can't get away from them. The letter A plus the letter B equals the letter C. *The Scarlet Letter*. And why did Shakespeare have to write so many stupid love letters?
PRINCIPAL: Interesting.
AVERY: Not really. Although you think Carrot Top is funny, so I guess anything's possible.
PRINCIPAL: Has anyone ever suggested that you might be dyslexic?
AVERY: Dys-what-sic?
PRINCIPAL: Dyslexic.
AVERY: Again with the letters. That's an awful lot of X's and Y's.
DRAMA: I think you might be onto something.
PRINCIPAL: So you agree with me?
DRAMA: That would explain why he thought Lady Macbeth said: "Out, out, damn pots."
AVERY: Didn't I get that one correct?
DRAMA: It's *spot*. "Out, damned spot."
AVERY: Oh, that makes sense! I wondered why she was doing the dishes.
PRINCIPAL: Dyslexia is a disorder that impairs your ability to read.
AVERY: Are you saying I have another disorder?
PRINCIPAL: I think so.
AVERY: Fine. Just add it to the list.
PRINCIPAL: It still doesn't excuse your failing grades.

AVERY: But you just said it's not my fault. So I think I should pass.
DRAMA: Not so fast.
ENGLISH: You could have told us you were having difficulty reading.
MATH: Instead, you decided to play tricks on us.
PRINCIPAL: Which is just as crippling in my books.
AVERY: My life is nothing but A-D-D and O-C-D and O-D-D. I figured the least I could do is make someone L-O-L.
PRINCIPAL: I'm not laughing.
AVERY: That's because you have your own disorder.
PRINCIPAL: What's that?
AVERY: S-U-T-B.
PRINCIPAL: S-U-T-B?
AVERY: Yeah. Stick up the butt.

(The TEACHERS laugh.)

PRINCIPAL: You think that's funny, do you?
ENGLISH: No, sir.
MATH: Not at all.
DRAMA: Well, you are a little rigid.
PRINCIPAL: What?!
ENGLISH and MATH: O-M-G.
PRINCIPAL: Now see here!
AVERY: Wait! Don't get mad at them. I'm the idiot. I'll suffer the consequences.
PRINCIPAL: What do you suppose would be an appropriate punishment?
AVERY: *(Smiles.)* You could make me proofread the yearbook.
PRINCIPAL: Be serious.
AVERY: Detention works, too.
PRINCIPAL: Fine. And Avery...
AVERY: Yeah?
PRINCIPAL: You're not an idiot.
AVERY: Tell that to my parents, would ya? T-T-Y-L.

(THEY clear the stage as CHRIS enters with the CHORUS.)

CHORUS: Epic.
CHRIS: I wish I had the Midas touch.
CHORUS: Fail.
CHRIS: Instead, everything I touch turns to rust.
CHORUS: Epic fail.

(As CHRIS speaks to the audience, the CHORUS moves the blocks around to form an automobile.)

CHRIS: I hate it when Mom asks me to go grocery shopping. I always end up with carts that have minds of their own. I try to push them straight, but they keep swerving in all directions.
CHORUS: Slam!
CHRIS: Into the canned goods.
CHORUS: Slam!
CHRIS: Into the produce. I can't even steer a shopping cart, so how am I supposed to drive a car? But try telling that to my instructor. He thinks anyone can learn how to drive. So I opened the door and climbed into the driver's seat.
CHORUS: Slam!

(The CHORUS exits as CHRIS sits in the car, next to the INSTRUCTOR. Under her feet are actors playing the ACCELERATOR and BRAKE. To her side is another actor playing the GEAR SHIFT.)

INSTRUCTOR: Is this your first time behind the wheel?
CHRIS: Yes.
INSTRUCTOR: Are you excited?
CHRIS: No.
INSTRUCTOR: No? I thought all kids your age were excited to start driving.
CHRIS: Not me.
INSTRUCTOR: Are you nervous?
CHRIS: There's so much sweat pouring out of my armpits that I could water your lawn.
INSTRUCTOR: Would you like me to turn on the air conditioning?

End of Freeview

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