

This is my story

*A story which is amazing: full
of illusions and full of wonder.*

*Traveling all over Europe,
I enchanted my audiences everywhere!*

I created magic

But being famous has its price.

*I was reviled by my colleagues,
hounded by the press.*

Jealousy is a terrible thing.

*Fleeing across Europe a broken man, I settled
in Amsterdam, the last safe place I could think of.
But even here they could not leave me in peace
and sabotaged my shows. In the end,
it costed me my most precious treasure,
the love of my life.*

I had to protect my secrets.

I wouldn't let myself be robbed.

*I wrote them down and hid them in the
only place I've ever felt at home: the theatre.*

*This little paper theatre is where I treasure my
past, where I relive my glory days
and long for the love of my life, I so tragically lost.
This stage, lit by our love for each other, invites you.*

Let the magic begin!

Christoff Charti

Synopsis

“The Paper Theatre: A Life Unfolds” – Attraction Synopsis

In our very first meeting, an idea was brought up which sprung directly from the criteria “creative use of materials” and “new ways to use old tools”. The idea of a paper theatre came to mind. And with that paper theatre in mind, we developed a rich storyline, with an emotional resonance worthy of theatre. We thought about a life sized paper theatre, but that meant current technical theatre solutions had to be stretched...literally.

We didn’t want to ride on the VR/AR wave. We wanted to do unusual things like taking an old school paper theatre play, but then blow it up and enrich it by using 3D mapping. It’s technically feasible and existing buildings can be used to install the theatre in. This makes it durable and adaptable to different building sizes. It’s location based entertainment in a most pure form. Even more than normal theatre, it immerses people into a realm of fantasy. People will be part of a story that transcends culture. In this particular case, guest will be drawn into the memories of an illusionist who is longing to perform his acts again. A tragic loss made him hide all his secrets. What those secrets are, what he lost and how that happened, is ready to unfold.

The experience is a combination of a show in a life size toy theatre, dining, retail and play areas. Guests enter the old apartment of the protagonist and relive his rise and fall. The story unfolds as the paper scenery comes to life and extends over the audience. After this visual spectacle, guests proceed to the play area in the theatre, where they can experience the life and work of the famed illusionist Christoff Charti.

“The Paper Theatre: A Life Unfolds” is an exciting story for the whole family.

Quest Journey

“The Paper Theatre: A Life Unfolds” – Guest Journey

In the next paragraphs the different sequences of the guest journey will be described, starting from the entrance all the way up to the exit.

Part I. Entrance (Theatre Foyer)

Guests begin their adventure by approaching the theatre. Being amazed by the beautiful facade of this Jugendstil styled theatre, they’re drawn to its magnificent entrance. Guests can buy a last minute ticket at an authentic ticket booth, if not yet bought online, and enter the foyer of the theatre to have a coffee, popcorn or another kind of refreshment. If they finally wish to see the story unfold, guests have to navigate to a secret door on the side of the entrance hall just outside the entrance. The door leads them to, what seems to be, an old apartment complex.



Part II. The Apartment

As guests pass through the seemingly nondescript door, they enter the dusty hallway of an old apartment. It clearly has seen better days. Through the milky glass in the door to their left, you can see shadows of people walking by outside. There is a staircase going up and down to the other floors and basement of the building. A bike of one of the residents leans against a wall. An old letterbox just near the entrance seems to need a bit of paint. The guests walk through a corridor with several doors to the left and right. At the very end of the hallway, a door opens slowly only to draw people into it. Guests enter an apartment and find it belonging to an illusionist of some sort, though it has clearly not been inhabited for a long time.

The guests gather in the room, tiptoeing past the clutter and furniture of its former resident. There are cupboards and sideboards along the walls, which are adorned with paintings and photos. Despite the fact that the room is indeed very abandoned, it is very cozy. As the guests walk in, they marvel at all the narrative images to be seen. The story behind the illusionist comes to life: the shrine with the photo of his deceased wife, photos of different cities, posters of his wonderful shows, relics from cities where he performed. But also, sadly more harrowing, newspaper clippings of slanderous allegations and defamations about the alleged magic in his beautiful productions.

One object stands out in particular: a paper theatre, just like many that were made around the turn of the century. It sits, slightly shimmering, on a shelf in the closet at the far end of the room. While the rest of the cabinet is full of beautiful books, the toy theatre sits alone on its very own shelf. It is immediately noticeable that this paper theatre doesn't look dusty or dilapidated. It sparkles among all the other sepia coloured stuff in the room.

While the doors behind the last few guests slowly close, what little light there is in the already dark apartment dims. The various highlighted memorabilia that tell the illusionist's story are slowly becoming as dark as the rest of the room. Only the paper theatre still seems to sparkle, but even brighter than before. There is something more going on than the guests thought until then.

Part III. A life unfolds...

Against all notions of logic, the paper theatre seems to be growing. The small stage, which is ornately framed, seems to be pulled apart. The back wall of the apartment, including the closet, seem to have disappeared and the theatre is getting bigger and seems to be gaining depth. In front of the eyes of the guests, a life-size paper theatre in Victorian style unfolds. The faint light that shone on the paper theatre has now become a ghostlight, which seemed to have been hiding behind the stage. It floats through the growing theatre and rushes unto the stage. And while all of this is happening, the voice of a master of ceremonies grows louder and louder. At first the voice seems like an echo from a distant past, but slowly it becomes a clear and musically framed voice in the here and now, saying that the honoured audience should quickly sit down for the show that is about to begin.

As the paper theatre seems to stop its growth spurt, ornaments appear on the sides of the theatre. Some seem to be lights. Where at first the theatre seemed like a ghostly phenomenon that was only illuminated by the ghostlight, a warm and cozy theatre is now created in which people can take a seat. The ghostlight is in the middle of the stage. The lights of the theatre shine bright and embrace guests like a warm coat, until the ghostlight slowly dims and moves to a corner of the stage.

Part IV. The Show

The guests marvel at what's in front of them. The ornaments and fixtures seem to be made of paper and float between, so it seems, paper slides. The almost two-dimensional small theatre that in the closet just a moment ago, now seems to be stretched over the guests like a harmonica. The walls are not really visible and louvres seem to accentuate the places where they should be. The colours are a kind of polished sepia, with shades of old pink and Bordeaux red, with a hint of blue and mint. The disembodied voice of the MC tells them the show is about to start. The great illusionist will show his tricks.

The light slowly dim. A spotlight seems to be looking for the illusionist and suddenly lingers on one of the paper coulisses on the stage. What was just a paper sheet with beautifully drawn Victorian

ornaments now seems to change shape. In front of the eyes of the public, the first trick takes place. The coulisse turns into a person made of paper. The figure, with a beautiful Ottoman styled costume and impressive feathered headpiece, seems to tear himself loose from the coulisse. The figure begins to move and introduces himself to the audience. He looks too much like a paper figure to be real, but the movements are too real to be made of paper.

Out of nowhere and full of bravura, he produces a deck of cards. Cards that seem to float all over the stage. Life-sized, they dance around the stage, while the illusionist looks the other way and asks the audience to keep one card in mind. Shortly afterwards, the cards turn around and the illusionist redirects his gaze toward them. The illusionist seems to know which card the audience has picked and begins to walk to one of the huge cards. Just before he gets there, the cards seem to burn up in flames. For a moment, the lighting changes and the theatre is immersed in deep red light. The cards burn up and decay into a smouldering paper ball, while the magician watches in horror. The smouldering sphere of paper seems to get away, but nestles like a small obstruction in one of the wings...still visible to attentive guests.

The magician pulls himself together and tries to get the attention of the guests. He pulls a small piece of paper from the wings and begins to stretch it. He makes it bigger and makes it float. Slowly the piece of paper unfolds to become an elephant. One who seems to float over the stage while trumpeting. The guests don't know what they see and clap while the elephant looks at them with joy. But... somewhere at the top of the proscenium, a terrific fire suddenly erupts and sets the paper elephant on fire. He tries to run away from his fate and rushes towards the audience. Above the horrified guests, the elephant becomes a glowing ball of paper that, again, retreats. Just like the burning cards did.

Again, the illusionist tries to attract the guests' attention. This time, a large water tank appears on the stage. The tank unfolds in front of guests' eye and the illusionist is chained in. He hovers towards the top of the tank and plunges straight into it. In the style of Houdini, the illusionist starts his daring escape attempt confidently, but it soon turns out that his trick has been sabotaged. He panics and tries to break the glass walls with all his might. The moment

he succeeds, hundreds of gallons of water seem to cascade across the stage and towards the audience. The water flows into the hall, without the guests actually getting wet.

The water seems to be crashing up against the skirting boards, only to then turn into flames. The paper walls catch fire and turn into balls of glowing paper. More and more are emerging and the entire proscenium, and ornaments and fixtures are now paper balls that head towards the stage. They seem to group behind the illusionist. Slowly a demonic face emerges from the gathered smouldering paper balls. All the collected denouncements, defamations, slander and sabotage have become a devilish monster, made entirely of burning paper. A mouth with huge teeth opens and moves towards the audience, determined to make everyone disappear into nothing. The illusionist is watching speechless, while the demonic face unfolds over the audience. All his secrets revealed, everything seems lost and he has endangered the public with his memories.

Suddenly the ghostlight, the one the guests saw at the start of the experience, begins to burn in the corner of the stage. At first dim, but increasingly brighter. A blue glow begins to "tame" the red colours of the smouldering monster. The red orange spheres seem to be commanded back to their original place in the theatre, faster and faster, until finally they are all back to the same place. Then, in a bright flash... this treacherous world of paper is the theatre again. The illusions and their illusionist have disappeared, assimilated into the paper decor. His soul and secrets are safe again. The ghostlight, however, is still present in the corner of the stage... softly burning and very slightly pulsating, as if to say comforting: "It's all good now".

Part V. Exit (Theatre Play Area)

Guests leaves the theatre through the stage and gains access to various rooms to learn more about the illusionist and his illusions. These are further explained in the next chapter.

Play Area

“The Paper Theatre: A Life Unfolds” – Play area descriptions

What follows is a description of the various rooms found in the theatre after the show in the theater, a.k.a. the Play Area.

I. Prop Storage Room

In this space, the illusionist and other performing artists store their props, machines and attributes. Guests can try their hand at performing their own acts and be photographed or filmed by roaming staff. They can be “sawed in half”, “escape a drowning death in a water tank”, “step into a coffin, disappear into it and emerge into another coffin”, “pretend to float”, “fool people with a card trick”, etc. The space has a somewhat industrial look and feel. The black high-gloss tiles against the walls provide a strange kind of reflection of the light, giving a bit of spooky atmosphere to the space. The light is reflected by all objects in the room. The different illusions are in a kind of storage, strewn about on shelves, which are made of heavy metal beams and painted black. The steel construction looks like a warehouse. There are bigger and smaller compartments, to fit the different shapes and sizes of the stored assets. The different proportions create a playful structure.

II. Dressing Room

This space is the most personal of all. In here are pictures of family and cities where our illusionist has been. Here you can learn more about him and his background. The space is attractively decorated... well, cluttered is perhaps a better word. Of course there is a large wall mounted mirror for his maquillage and a large standing mirror for last minute costume checks. The room has the same atmosphere as the foyer, in that it's ornate and full of personality. The furniture is upholstered with Gobelin fabrics and has a dark red colour as a base. The lamps are typically Victorian and emit a soft light. The space is therefore atmospheric and semi dark. Every time you stand in front of one of the illusionist's precious things, it seems to come to life and tell a story. Not because of magic, but because the illusionist liked to hide tricks and mechanisms in everything. Each of

these objects complement the overall story of our main character. It resembles a messy exhibition space of sorts. Organized in terms of the stuff he needs for his show, but messy when it comes to all the other things.

III. Costume Studio

This space is crammed from top to bottom with wide array of costumes, from different timelines and shows. Even the illusionist himself seems to have stored some of his own costumes here. It looks like a huge walk-in closet. A portion of the costumes is ‘real’ clothing that can be worn by guests and in which a photo can be taken. The surprise here is that there is a lot hidden between the clothes. For example, at the two dressing rooms, in which guests can change clothes, the photographer can pull on a rope. This creates a kind of tent structure, made of clothes, that serves as a dressing room. The wall that serves as the backdrop emerges by pulling another rope.

IV. Miscellaneous Rooms

Spread around the theatre are various smaller rooms that guests can explore and interact with. Examples include a technical workplace, a souvenir and/or magic shop and an exhibit on the history of toy theatres.



The Illusionist's Story

"The Paper Theatre: A Life Unfolds" – The Illusionist's Story

The trip was almost over. The train bellowed when it grinded to a halt and let out a thick plume of steam. The illusionist and his wife were in the last coupe. From there, they could see the edge of the majestic wrought-iron roof of Amsterdam Central Station slowly glide over them. They gathered their luggage and walked out of their berth, through the narrow hallway and finally disembarking unto the platform. Once there, the illusionist walked back to the very edge of the platform, admiring the station roof. He had often heard about a beautiful ornament that stood on top of the canopy and wanted to see it with his own eyes. High above him, he saw the metal sculpture of the Dutch steam train company. A metal train wheel sprouting two beautifully shaped wings, obviously a symbol of great technological importance. He thought of the mythical figure Pegasus and how the wheel and Pegasus fit together perfectly; before the advent of the steam locomotive, the train was a vehicle pulled by a horse. And now, by the power of fire and water, it flew many times faster over the steel roads, and through Europe's rolling countryside. The illusionist and his wife then walked out of the station hall and immediately saw the beautiful Victoria Hotel, just up the square. He had heard stories about this

hotel, which had opened in 1890. And standing here, on the other side of the water that separated the so-called "station island" from Damrak square, it was even more fantastic and romantic than he would have dreamed. They rushed to the hotel because he had to be in the theatre in an hour. A theatre where he would perform for several months.

While waiting at the reception of the hotel, memories of recent years were flashing through his mind. He was banned from all almost every country in Europe. Nowhere could he practice his profession anymore. Nowhere he and his wife were safe, now that the newspapers were full of defamatory and slanderous articles. Only here, in the Netherlands, didn't the problem occur yet. That is why they came here, their last refuge. After obtaining the keys to their room, they walked towards the elevator. Travelling up to the eighth floor, the illusionist sank even deeper into his thoughts. He had never understood why people do the most terrible things out of jealousy. In almost every big city in Europe, where his performances took him in recent years, there was a kind of hostility against him. He knew he was good at his profession. But that other magicians and illusionists wanted to steal his tricks because of that, he couldn't understand. Once arrived in the room, the couple couldn't be happier. It was a beautiful room, full of artisanal decorations and Baroque ornaments. They would stay here for a few nights. After that they were going to go and rent an apartment near the theatre, hopeful that this time everything would be different.

Unfortunately, Amsterdam didn't turn out to be as liberal as expected. Only a short while after settling in, a heavily religious journalist of a local newspaper claimed that the illusionist was using black magic. A true scandal! That initial report, which inspired other journalists, swiftly led to some small riots at the entrance to the theatre. Fortunately, this theatre had a secret door between the theatre and the apartment complex where the illusionist lived. Only theatre staff knew of it, so he could leave the theatre unnoticed. The riots didn't stop him from performing. However, for the last few days, he had asked his wife to come to the theatre with him. Maybe he sensed the assailants knew where they lived and he didn't want the love of his life to be in danger. On the very last night of



performing, things ultimately got out of hand... The secret entrance was discovered.

Some protesting citizens gathered there towards the end of showtime. Fortunately, city police came to the fore and kept the crowds at a distance and sent them away. However, there was one man who escaped the police's upheaval of the protest. He was wearing unusual clothes, which made him look like an actor who wanted to rehearse, at least in the eyes of the police. In reality, it was a competitor, taking advantage of the uproar to steal his tricks. As police urged the rioters to go home, the competitor walked towards the door unnoticed. Through a small hallway, he walked into the back of house, looking for the illusionist's dressing room. The competitor wasn't aware that the illusionist's wife was in the theatre too. She was backstage looking at her husband performing, which she greatly enjoyed. Amid the tumultuous times they were in, seeing her husband perform gave her a sense of ease and contentment. If it weren't for her eyes getting heavier, she could've watched for hours more, but decided to go to his dressing room to get some rest. Once nearby, she heard strange rumblings coming out of the dressing room. How odd... Everyone was at work in and around the show at this moment. Who could this be?

From the doorway, she saw a strangely dressed man rummaging through their belongings. It quickly became clear to her that he was looking for the book in which her husband had described all his tricks. Only her husband would never take that to the theatre; he usually left it in their apartment. She turned around to get help, but stopped when she heard a shout from the intruder. She turned her head and looked at him, while he took a few steps in her direction and asked her what she was doing there. Before she could answer, the intruder realized who she was. Instinctively, she started running through the corridor towards the stage. If only she could get on stage in front of the audience, the competitor couldn't do anything to her. She feared the worst, sprinting through the corridors towards the stage. Just before she could reach the stage, she was grabbed by the intruder. He held her tightly and wrapped his hand around her mouth. The short scream was lost in the noises of the show. The illusionist didn't notice a thing.

The intruder knew what he was doing. He didn't just want the illusionist's book for himself. He also

wanted something to happen to him. If the illusionist continued to live, he would recognize his own tricks being used by the competition. So it was important that the illusionist would be seriously injured by an "accident". Now that he had his wife, he wanted to snuff her out. Trying to keep her composure, she stealthily grabbed one of the ropes that hung from the rafters. It was one of the ropes that set the curtain system in motion. He tried to pull her further, but the rope tightened itself around the wife's hand. He pulled even harder. Due to the tension, her arm began to tingle. The skin of her hands sanded over the rope. As he tried to get her along, he jerked a few times hoping she would let go. The third time he jerked, it seemed to work. Upon doing so, an ominous sound came from the theatre trusses. A sound that wasn't supposed to be there. Then, it all went quiet. The rope relaxed and quietly fell down onto the floor. The curtains did not open in the normal way, but seemed to come falling down. The full glow of the show lighting made for a kind of sunrise against the back of the stage. Slowly the darkness gave way and everything became visible. It became clear what danger was heading to the wife and the intruding competitor. One of the pulleys from the highest trusses of the theatre had come loose, because of the sabotage. It swung with a large arc from top to bottom and seemed to have just a single target in mind: the woman and the competitor.

While all of this was happening, the illusionist looked around in surprise and confusion. As if in slow motion, he turned his head towards where his entire audience was looking at. In an instant, he saw that there was no stopping what happened. The pulley flew at great speed towards his wife and a man unknown to him. With a dull blow, the heavy metal part hit his wife, who in turn hit the competitor with a terrible noise. The competitor flew a few meters towards the wings, realizing that he had fallen prey to his own sabotaged trap. Like a macabre canon, the woman and the competitor fell to the ground with two rhythmic thuds. The illusionist was stunned. He couldn't move. Behind him was an auditorium full of people, looking breathlessly at the scene. When the first shock seemed to wain, he walked slowly to his wife. He knelt down beside. She had died instantly.

Ever since the accident, the illusionist slept badly. He neglected the apartment where they had lived together. He couldn't think anymore and didn't know what to do. Did he want to continue with his work

or... It was all too much to think about. Ultimately, he took a drastic decision. To make sure he no longer had to fear that his secrets, that cost him his love, would be found, he wanted to burn the book. But not before he came up with a plan to preserve all his knowledge in a different, unrecognizable form. He looked around the room and found exactly what he was looking for.

Several years ago, his wife had given him a beautiful toy theatre. A beautiful Victorian miniature, complete with a little spotlight. Now, he wanted to build one himself, out of small pieces of paper. On those pieces of paper, he would write down his illusions in a secret language. That way, he could never lose them again. Thieves would never find it. In the paper theatre, he placed paper figures of himself and his wife, and recreated the scenery he had used in his shows. He finished it after working tirelessly on it for a few weeks... and decided to think about another place to live for a while. It was too much to stay in Amsterdam for now, even though it was once intended as the final destination.

He took nothing but a small suitcase with him and made his last journey to the train station. On his way, he passed the theatre. It had been closed since the incident. Something in him wanted to see it again, even though he knew it would probably hurt him. He found his way to the secret door. It didn't take him long to unlock it. It was dark inside, but he found his way to the stage. There was nothing there. Only a ghostlight in the middle of the stage gave a pale mystic light to the room. He looked towards the empty chairs. It was dead silent. No sound at all. It was as if the theatre had respect for his presence and his grieve. He whispered to himself, saying to his wife that he misses her so much and that he has ensured that his illusions are hidden forever, something strange happened: the ghostlight flashed. It was very subtle. When he looked at the light, he saw a figure... someone very familiar... someone he had loved very much.

He walked out, the sadness still with him, but now with hope for the future. He knew he would see his wife again... one day.





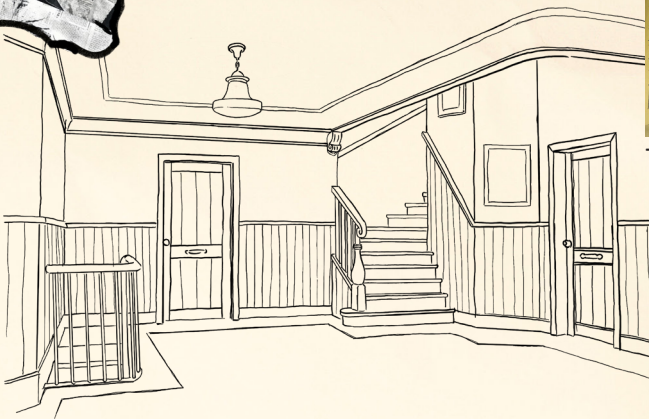
Sketches



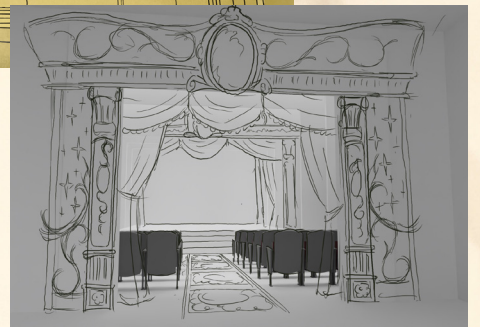
Newspaper face



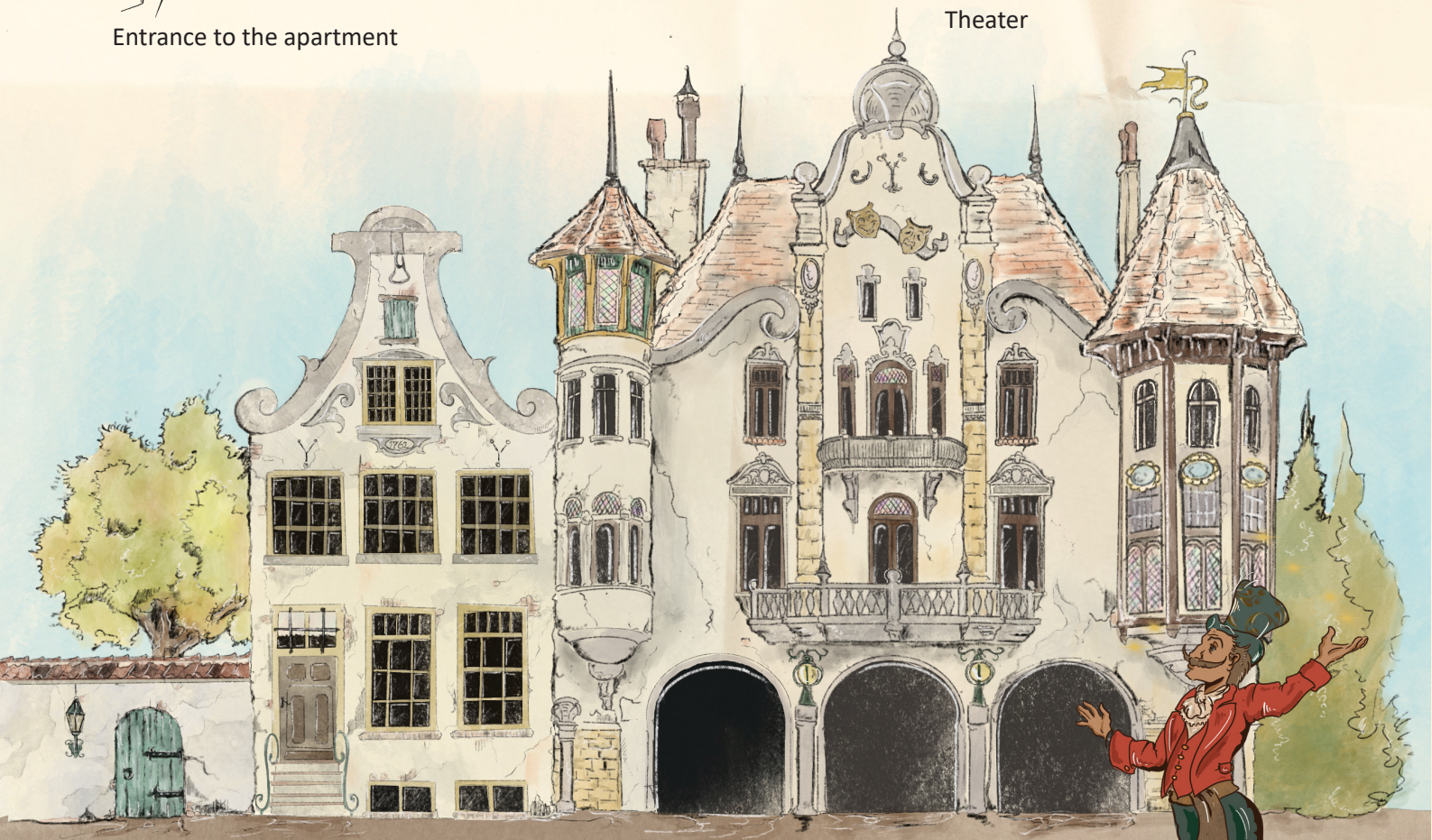
Theater lobby



Entrance to the apartment



Theater



Early facade

THE
Paper Theatre
A LIFE UNFOLDS...

