

Annie at the Eccles: A Timeless and Relevant Triumph

Description



The Orphans in the North American Tour of ANNIE. Photo by Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade

SALT LAKE CITYâ??The iconic musical *Annie* plays May 10-12 at the George S. and Dolores DorÃ© Eccles Theater in Salt Lake City, UT. Directed by the talented **Jenn Thompson**, with a book by **Thomas Meehan**, music by **Charles Strouse**, and lyrics by **Martin Charnin**, this production is a heart-warming journey through hope, resilience, and the power of community.

The cast of *Annie* delivers standout performances, breathing new life into beloved characters while staying true to the spirit of the original production. In the titular role, **Rainier (Rainey) TreviÃ±o**, embodies the plucky optimism and indomitable spirit of Annie with remarkable grace and charisma. Her heartfelt rendition of classics such as â??Tomorrowâ?• and â??Maybeâ?• resonated deeply with the audience, serving as a powerful reminder of the enduring power of hope in the face of adversity. TreviÃ±o has a powerful voice, and the audience could feel her presence throughout the theater.

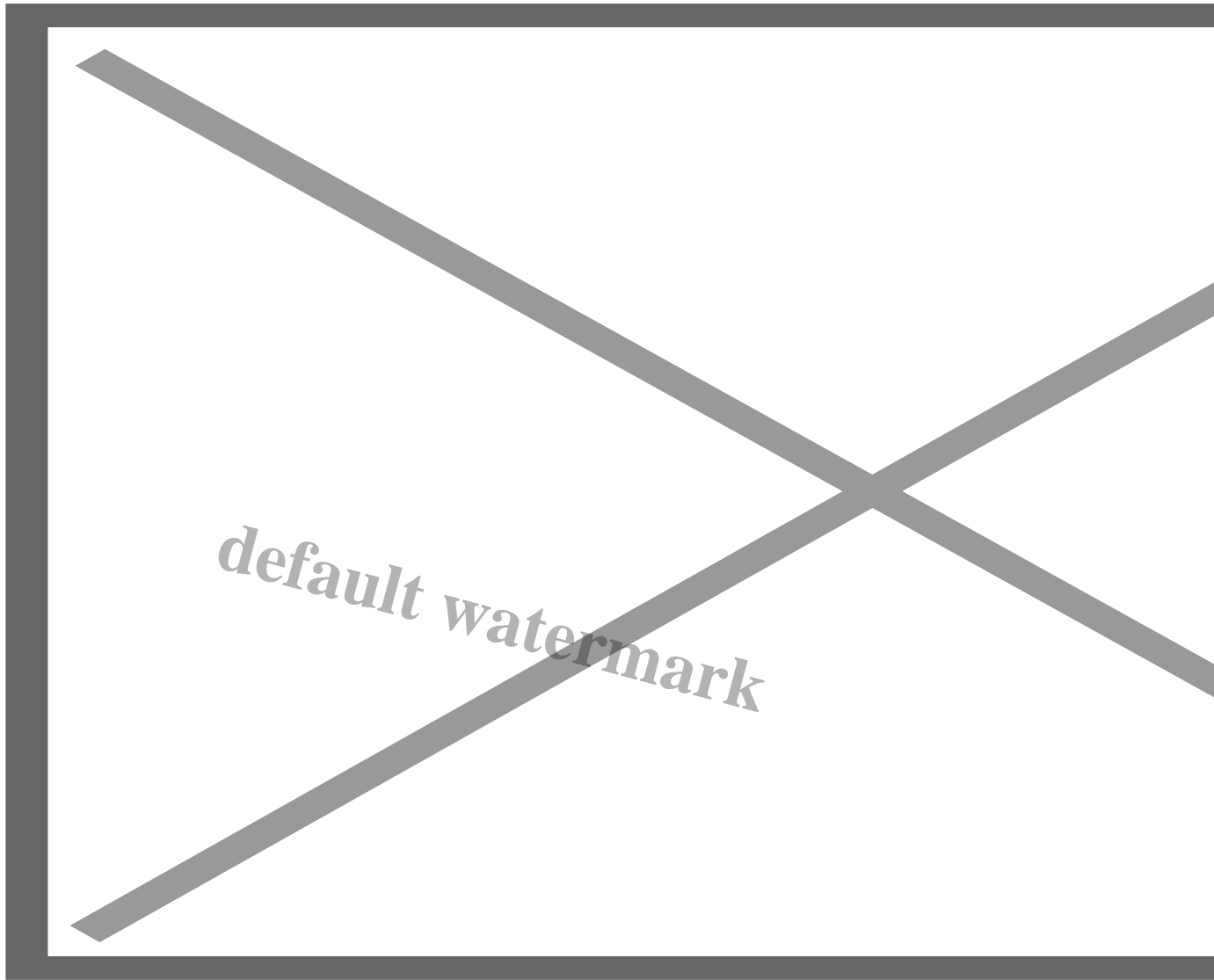
Opposite of TreviÃ±o, **Christopher Swan** portrays the enigmatic billionaire Oliver Warbucks with a perfect blend of stern authority and underlying warmth. Swan captures the evolution of Warbucks from a stoic businessman to a compassionate father figure, making his eventual bond with Annie all the more poignant and heartfelt.

â??Little Girlsâ?• and â??Easy Streetâ?• might have been my favorite songs of the night because of how Londino performed themâ??she brought a fresh take to them that had me laughing out loud, completely impressed, especially when she started to crow, like a rooster.

~Rhetorical Review~

Supporting performances are equally impressive, with **Stefanie Londino** delivering a standout turn as the conniving yet ultimately redeemable Miss Hannigan. Londinoâ??s comedic timing and dynamic stage presence brought depth and complexity to the character, eliciting both laughter and sympathy from the audience. Londino is an alum of the University of Utahâ??s MFA program and brought so much personality to the stage that I found myself looking forward to every scene with her. â??Little Girlsâ?• and â??Easy Streetâ?• might have been my favorite songs of the night because of how Londino performed themâ??she brought a fresh take to them that had me laughing out loud, completely impressed, especially when she started to crow, like a rooster.

Other standout performances include **Savannah Fisher**, featured in a solo in â??N.Y.C.â?• The rich tone in Fisherâ??s voice made me turn to my guest and say, â??Wow!â?• **Jerquintez A. Gipson**, who played Rooster Hannigan on the night I attended, was another favorite part of this show for me. Gipson is a strong actor with a smooth voice, and his duet with Londino, â??Easy Street,â?• was a song I could listen to repeatedly; they played off each other so well.



Ensemble members Sannash Fisher and Jerquintez A. Gipson

Sandy, the dog, played by **Addison**, was rescued by **Bill Berloni** through the Humane Society of New York In 2017. She had been a stray that was picked up and brought to a kill shelter in North Carolina before Bill found her and had her transferred to NYC. She made her theatrical debut at the Papermill Playhouse as the “stray mutt” in *Annie* in 2017 and played Sandy at the Forestburgh Playhouse in the summer of 2018 and other theaters nationwide. Sandy was trained and directed by **William Berloni** (*Animal Director and Trainer*) 2011 Tony Honoree for Excellence in Theatre. William found and adopted the original Sandy for *Annie*’s original production. Since then, all the animals he trains have been rescues.



Rainier Rainey Treviño and Georgie in the North American Tour of ANNIE. Photo by Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade

The production's direction by **Jenn Thompson** weaves together moments of humor, heartache, and joy to create a cohesive and emotionally resonant narrative. From the bustling streets of Depression-era New York City to the opulent interiors of Warbucks's mansion, the staging transported audiences to a bygone era while simultaneously drawing parallels to contemporary issues of social inequality and the search for belonging.

The musical numbers, choreographed with precision and flair by **Patricia Wilcox**, were a highlight of the production, with ensemble numbers such as "It's the Hard-Knock Life" and "NYC" showcasing the incredible talent and energy of the cast. The live orchestra, under the expert direction of **Jennifer Christina**, brought **Charles Strouse's** iconic score to life with passion and gusto, further elevating the overall theatrical experience. Crafting a traveling set for a production as grand as *Annie* is no small feat. **Wilson Chin's** scenic design masterfully captures the vibrant essence of each location, from the bustling streets of NYC to the quaint orphanage and the opulent mansion. Each set piece embodies the quintessential and unique aspects of its respective setting, transporting audiences into the heart of 1930s New York City.



The North American Tour of ANNIE. Photo by Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade

Equally impressive are the costumes, hair, and wig designs, which are a testament to the immense talent and dedication of **Alejo Vietti** and **Ashley Rae Callahan**. Their meticulous attention to detail and boundless creativity breathe life into the characters, creating a visual spectacle that enchants and mesmerizes viewers. From the lavish costumes to the intricate hairstyles, every element of their designs harmonizes seamlessly, immersing audiences in the glittering world of *Annie* and adding an extra layer of wonder to an already enchanting production.



Christopher Swan and Rainier Rainey Trevini in the North American Tour of ANNIE.
Photo by Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade

Annie the Musical, a beloved classic, is renowned for its uplifting story, memorable characters, and catchy tunes. However, one aspect that often draws mixed reviews is the portrayal of homelessness through its songs. While the musical attempts to shed light on the struggles faced by the homeless, some critics argue that it falls short in its depiction, lacking depth and nuance.

~Rhetorical Review~

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The homeless characters in *Annie* are primarily depicted through ensemble numbers such as "We'd Like to Thank You, Herbert Hoover" and "A New Deal for Christmas." These songs attempt to capture the desperation and frustration of those affected by the Great Depression, but they often come across as caricatures rather than fully fleshed-out individuals. The lyrics, while catchy, can sometimes veer into stereotypical portrayals, relying on clichés rather than offering genuine insight into the complexities of homelessness.

To stay relevant, this musical might consider updating *Annie* to address this issue or expanding a character like the soloist in "N.Y.C." portrayed by Savannah Fisher who has just arrived in New York City with two suitcases full of dreams.

~Rhetorical Review~

Furthermore, some critics argue that the portrayal of homelessness in *Annie* lacks empathy and fails to confront the systemic issues that contribute to poverty and displacement. The musical presents homelessness as a temporary obstacle that can be easily overcome through the intervention of wealthy benefactors, such as Oliver Warbucks. This simplistic portrayal overlooks the structural inequalities and social injustices that perpetuate homelessness, offering a rose-tinted view of poverty that may ring hollow for some audiences. To stay relevant, this musical might consider updating *Annie* to address this issue or expanding a character like the soloist in "N.Y.C." portrayed by Savannah Fisher who has just arrived in New York City with two suitcases full of dreams.

NYC

Just got here this morning

Three bucks

Two bags

One me

NYC

I give you fair warning

Up there

In lights

I'll be

Go ask the Gershwins or Kaufman and Hart

The place they love the best

Though California pays big for their art

Their fan mail comes addressed to NYC

Tomorrow a penthouse

That's way up high

Tonight

The "Yâ"

Why not

It's NYC

Despite these criticisms, it's important to acknowledge that *Annie* was written in a different time and context, and its portrayal of homelessness reflects the attitudes and sensibilities of its era. While the musical may not offer a nuanced exploration of the issue, it does serve as a starting point for conversations about poverty and inequality, particularly for younger audiences who may be encountering these concepts for the first time.

Annie is a remarkable testament to the enduring appeal of this beloved musical and story. This rendition breathes new life into the classic tale, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of its audience. It stands as a shining example of the talent and dedication of a cast and crew who bring the story to life with passion and skill. More than just a musical, *Annie* is a production for all ages, offering a timeless story that resonates across generations. It serves as a perfect introduction to the magic of musical theatre for young audiences while captivating seasoned theatergoers with its enduring charm and universal themes.

In conclusion, *Annie* is a triumph of storytelling and stagecraft, offering audiences a timeless tale of hope, resilience, and the transformative power of love and community. As the curtain fell on this production, it was clear that the enduring themes and universal appeal of *Annie* continue to resonate with audiences of all ages, making it a relevant theatrical event for, hopefully, years to come.

Zions Bank/Broadway at the Eccles Presents: *Annie*
Book by *Thomas Meehan*, Music by *Charles Strouse*, and Lyrics by *Martin Charnin*
Directed by Jenn Thompson

The George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Theater
131 Main St, Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Duration: 2 hrs, 30 mins with 1 intermission.

Friday May 10th, 2024; 8pm

Saturday May 11th, 2024; 2pm, 8pm

Sunday May 12th, 2024; 1pm, 6:30pm

Tickets are \$59 - \$149

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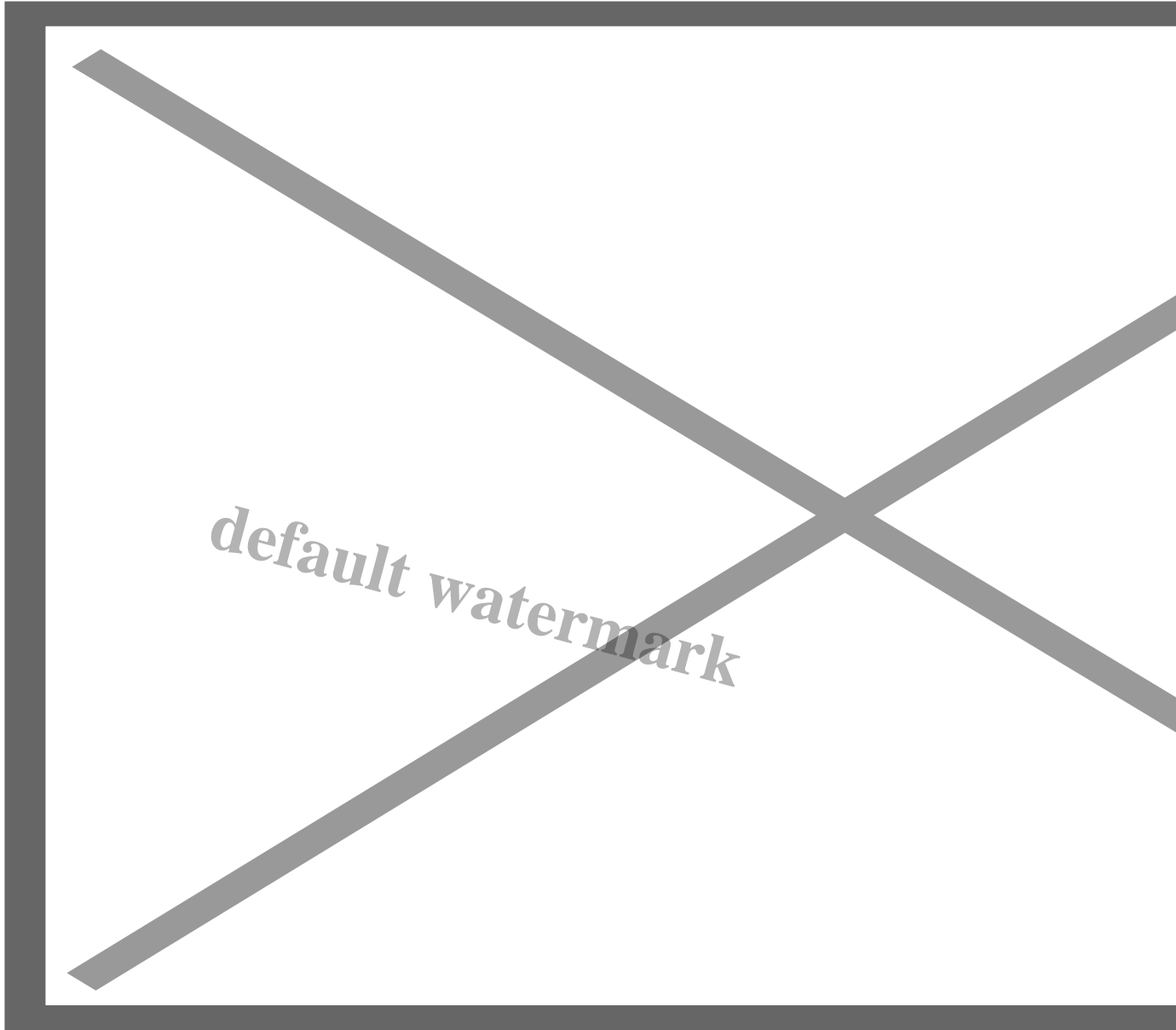
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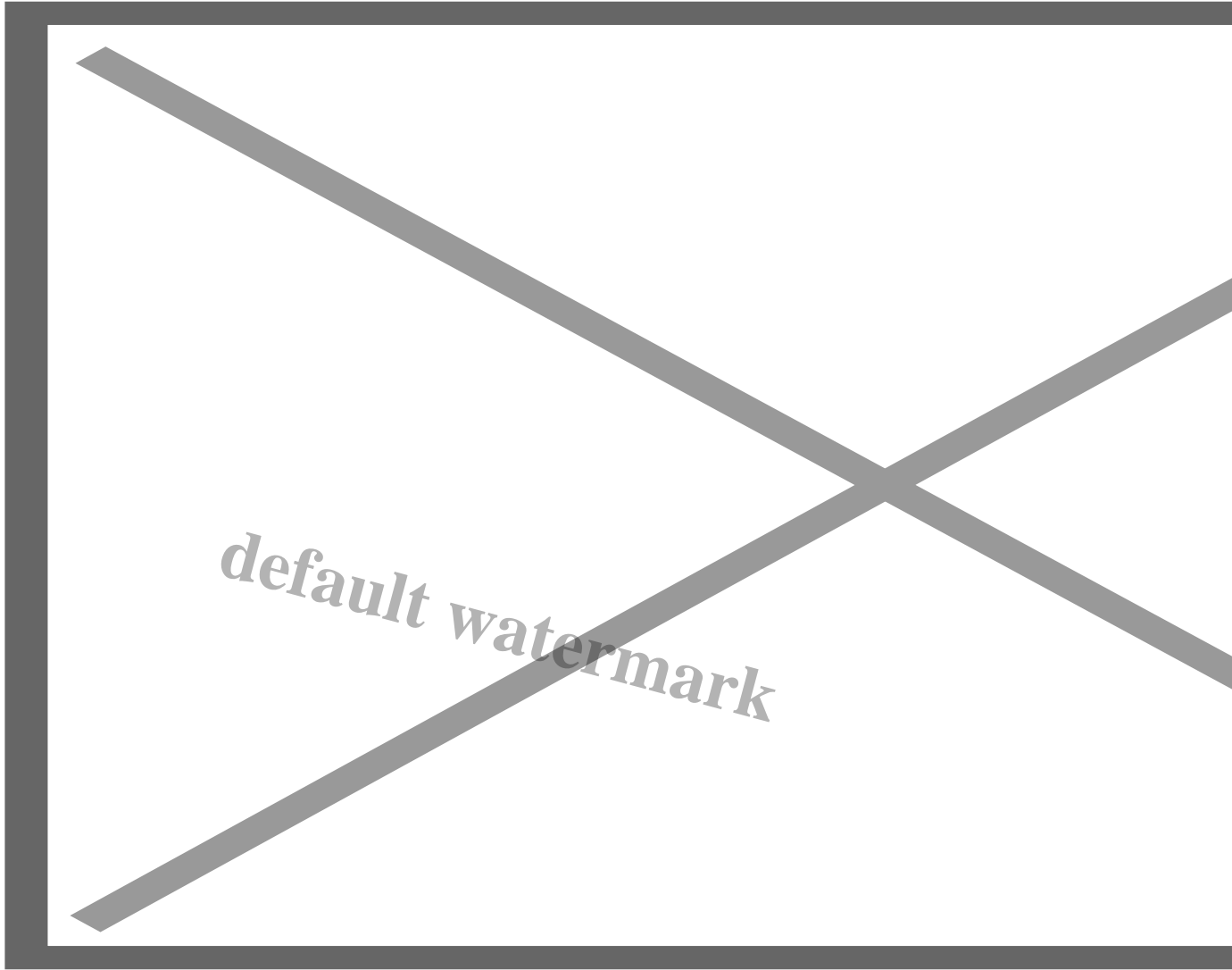
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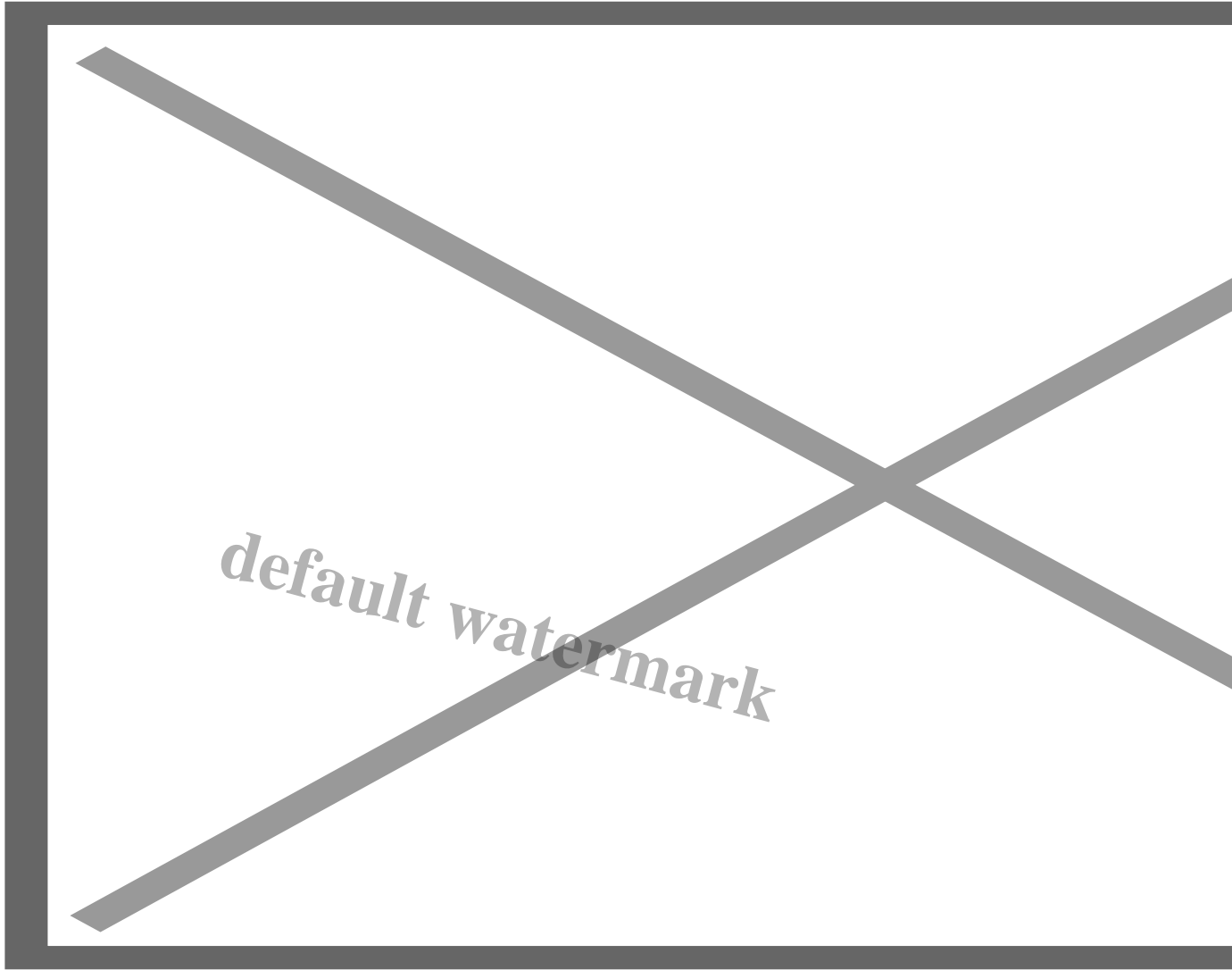
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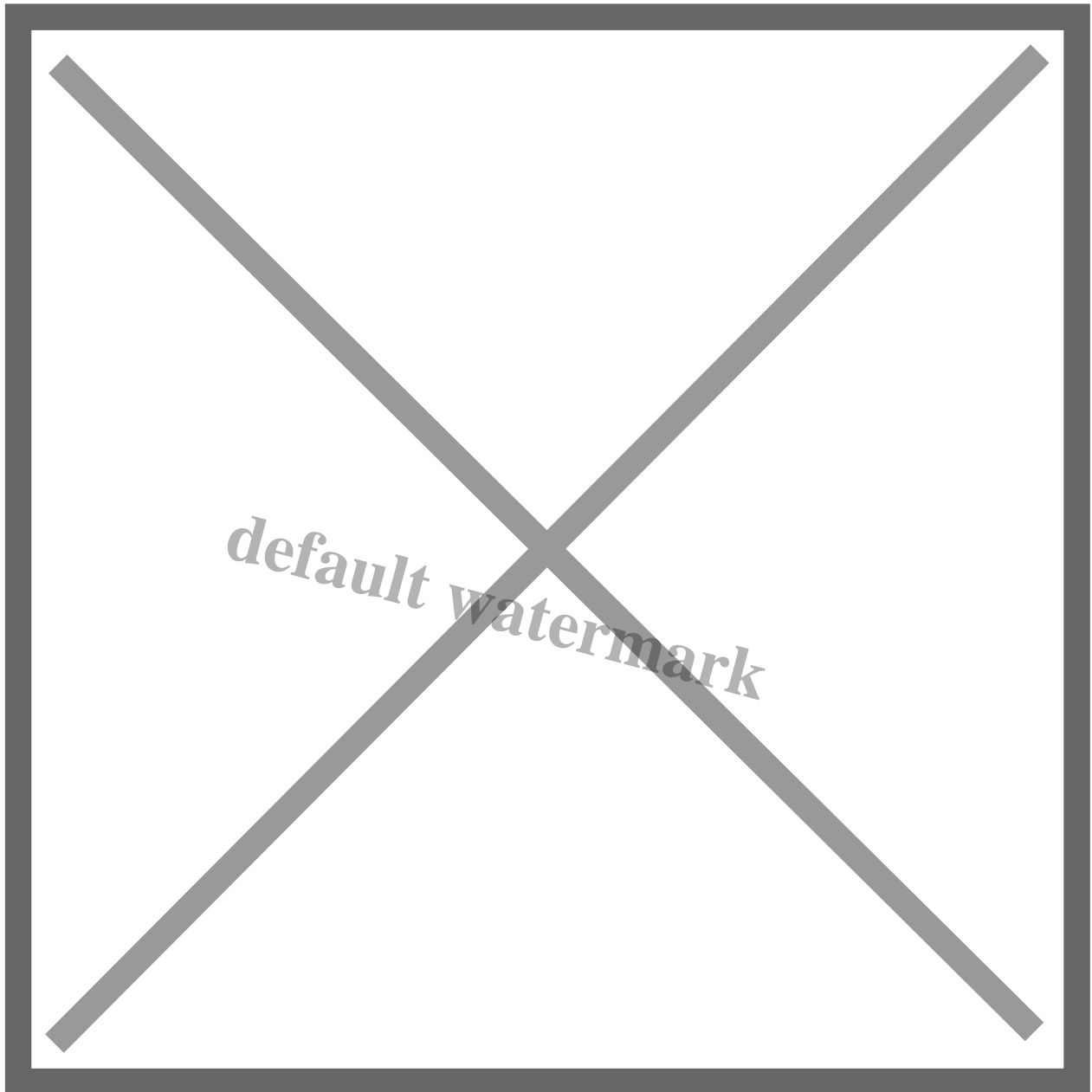


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