

THE ELEVATOR FAMILY
By
Douglas Evans

Based on his book The Elevator Family

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Douglas Evans
2819 Piedmont Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94705
(510) 848-3925
E-mail: devans@wtmelon.com

Cast of Characters:

Walter Wilson: about 40, big-bellied father. Wears suspenders.
Winona Wilson: about 40, easy-going mother.
Whitney Wilson: age 10, daughter, twin of Winslow.
Winslow Wilson: age 10, son, twin of Whitney.
Gavin: age 18, bellhop, wears red jacket and black bowtie.
Elderly man and woman: hotel guests, silent role
Mr. Brown: about 30, salesman of fads. Wears brown suit.
Cathy: age 18, clerk in flower stall,
Mrs. Goldengate: about 70, society woman, lives in penthouse
with white poodle Oui-Oui.
Joe: about 50, night watchman, wears security guard hat.
Natacha: about 25, waitress at party, wears long apron.
Woman Kidnapper: wears black outfit and sunglasses.
Man Kidnapper: wears black outfit and sunglasses.
Lizzy Chronicle: age 12, bratty rich girl.
Hotel Manager: 40, wears tie and blazer
Reporters: double roles

8 male/ 8 female roles

Staging Suggestions

Use a freestanding elevator-shaped set, that rotates easily. One side of the set (Set Side A) appears as the outside of the elevator. A wide sliding doors opens and shuts. When open, audience looks in on the Wilson family.

The reverse side (Set Side B) appears as the interior of the elevator. A button panel and white telephone hang on one wall. When the door slides open in rear, the audience looks past the Wilsons into the hotel lobby or hallway.

To indicate that elevator is moving, an elevator hum is heard. When door opens a bell rings.

Prop List:

Small table
 Two clothes trunks
 Two folding chairs
 Housekeeping cart holding linen, pillows, and blankets
 Newspaper for WALTER
 Sketch pad for WINONA
 Paperback books for WHITNEY and WINSLOW
 Daffodil bouquet for GAVIN.
 Flowers in vases to set around room.
 Embroidered framed sampler that reads HOME SWEAT HOME
 Food cart for GAVIN filled with dishes.
 White stuffed poodle for MRS. GOLDEN GATE
 Pick-up sticks for FOUR WILSONS
 Two baseball caps with visors front and back
 Sound effects needed: elevator hum, elevator bell, elevator music, dog yapping.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE:

Lights up. Elevator exterior view (Set Side A). GAVIN, bellhop, stands before closed elevator doors in hotel lobby. Two clothes trunks stand beside him. Elevator door opens. Bell rings. The four WILSONS, WALTER, WINONA, WINSLOW, and WHITNEY stand inside. They smile and wave to GAVIN.

WALTER

(stepping from elevator. He pulls suspenders with thumbs.)

Splendid! A gem of a place, young man. The kind woman at the front desk said the hotel is full. But here is this first-rate room. And it appears to be vacant.

(snaps suspenders on chest.)

Only the best for this family. Only the best! Nothing less will do for the Wilsons.

WINONA

(turns, admiring elevator.)

There's a full-length mirror, a telephone, wall-to-wall carpeting. And listen.

(elevator music plays)

Music from the ceiling. How lovely.

WINSLOW

(points to button panel)

Fantabulous! Check out all the buttons. I wonder what they're for.

(WINSLOW presses button. Door starts to slide shut. WHITNEY bumps it and door reopens. Bell rings.)

WHITNEY

Wow! The doors are entertaining!

(Door shuts again. Elevator hums to indicate movement. Moments later, door opens. Bell rings.)

WINSLOW

Fantabulous! Our room even moves!

WHITNEY

We went up and we went down. I wonder where we went.

WALTER

A mobile room with all the extras. I say we take this fine room for our family vacation. Only the best! Only the best will do for us. All in favor of moving in right away say aye.

FOUR WILSONS

Aye! Aye!

WALTER

(to GAVIN)

Splendid, young man. Push those trunks right in here. We'll take this room for three nights if it's available.

GAVIN

(pulls at collar)

Sir? You want this room, sir? Are you sure, sir?

WINONA

The room needs a few items...bed linen and towels and whatnot. But it's small and cozy, just the way we like it. We're a close-knit family.

WINSLOW

This room is about the size of the cabin we discovered while hiking last summer. It sat on top of a tall tower and had a great view of the forest in all directions.

WHITNEY

And last Christmas we stayed in a small hut on the ice in Minnesota. I just hope Winslow keeps his socks clean this vacation.

GAVIN

(rakes fingers through hair, and shrugs.)

Well, I'm only a bellhop. I sure don't make the rules around here.

(GAVIN pulls trunks into elevator.)

WALTER

(steps back into elevator)

But tell us your name, young man.

GAVIN

Gavin, sir.

WALTER

(pulls on suspenders)

Well, Gavin, you've given us excellent service. Stop in anytime. Guests will always be welcome in our new home.

(GAVIN steps out, shrugging.)

GAVIN

(to audience)

Sure. I've seen stranger things in this hotel, that's for sure.

WINONA

One more thing, Gavin. Could you tell us the number of our mobile room?

GAVIN

I'm not sure, ma'am.

WINSLOW

(pointing to bottom of doorway)

Fantabulous! Look what's engraved on the golden doormat.

WHITNEY

Splendid! Our room doesn't have a number. It has a name.

FOUR WILSONS

(leaning toward doorway and reading)

Otis!

(Elevator door shuts. Lights fade.)

SCENE TWO:

Lights up. The elevator hums. The elevator set has revolved (Set Side B). The interior is visible with the doors closed in rear. The WILSONS stand motionless in the middle of the room.

WINONA

First things first. We must put Otis in order.

WALTER

(rolling up shirt sleeves)

Come on, family. Help me with the trunks.

(The WILSONS push the two trunks against the elevator side for seats and beds. Door slides open revealing the wall across the hallway. Bell rings. A small table stands against the wall. ELDERLY MAN and WOMAN stand in the entrance holding suitcases.)

WINONA

How lovely. At every stop our room gives us a different view.

WALTER
(to couple)
Greetings, fellow travelers.

WINONA
(to couple)
I'm so sorry. We just decided to take this room.

(ELDERLY COUPLE exchange looks)

WINSLOW
But I think the room next door is vacant.

WHITNEY
It was on the first floor, but it might have moved by now.

(ELDERLY COUPLE exit left.)

WINONA
Now our compact room needs a few thing to make it homey

(WINSLOW exits elevator, grabs
table in hallway, and sets it in
the middle of elevator.)

WINSLOW
There. A table where we can have meals and play Pick-Up-
Sticks.

WHITNEY
I know what we need next.

(WHITNEY exits elevator. She returns
holding three folding chairs.)

WHITNEY
(setting up chairs)
And chairs to sit on while we read.

(HOUSEKEEPER passes the elevator,
pushing a linen cart. WINONA holds
up a finger and exits elevator.)

WINONA
(stepping to HOUSEKEEPER)
You don't mind if we made up our own beds today, do you?

HOUSEKEEPER
(looks pleased)
Be my guest! This is a first.

(WINONA grabs sheets and blankets off carts. HOUSEKEEPER moves on, pushing cart. Inside elevator WINONA, WHITNEY, and WINSLOW begin making up beds.)

WALTER

Splendid! Splendid! Now for the finishing touch.

(WALTER opens one trunk and removes framed sampler with the words home sweat home.)

WHITNEY

Not that old thing again, Dad. Do you have to hang it up in here?

WINSLOW

We made that way back in second grade before we could spell very well.

(WALTER hangs sampler on elevator wall.)

WALTER

(admiring sampler)

HOME SWEAT HOME hangs wherever the Wilsons stay. (laughs)
Only the best for this family. Nothing less will do.

WINONA

Yes, it all looks homey and comfortable. Now I think it's lunchtime.

WALTER

Splendid. Let's call room service to have our meal delivered right to our room.

(lifts white phone from wall
and speaks into it.)

Hello, front desk? This is Walter Wilson in the Otis room. Could we please have lunch delivered. Bring us the best your restaurant has to offer.

(pauses to listen)

What? No, madam, this is not an emergency. Unless you call being very hungry an emergency.

(hangs up phone. To family)

Well, the receptionist didn't sound too friendly. She must be very busy.

WINSLOW

(inspects button panel)

The bottom button is marked L. Perhaps that stands for lunch.

(WINSLOW presses button. Door slides shut. Elevator hums.)

WALTER

Let's sit down everyone.

WINONA

Instead of our lunch coming to our room, it seems our room travels to the lunch.

(WILSONS sit around table, WINONA and WALTER in chairs, WHITNEY and WINSLOW on trunks. Door opens. Bell rings. GAVIN stands in entrance next to food cart.)

WALTER

(to GAVIN)

Excellent service, young man. Lunch is waiting for us, right on the button. Come now. Wheel that cart in here. We will eat lunch in our room today.

GAVIN

But sir, I was taking this food up to the seventh floor.

WINONA

It doesn't matter what floor we eat on, Gavin. In our mobile Otis room we can eat on any floor we want.

GAVIN

(wheels cart into elevator.)

Sure. Whatever.

(GAVIN unloads food trays and silverware onto table. WINONA lifts a lid of tray.)

FOUR WILSONS

Spaghetti!

WALTER

(hands GAVIN tip)

Thank you very much, young man. Keep up the excellent work.

GAVIN

(smiling at tip)

Sure. Thanks, Mr. Wilson.

(GAVIN steps out pushing cart. Elevator door shuts. Elevator hums. WALTER starts dishing out spaghetti. Door opens, and MR. BROWN, a businessman dressed in a brown suit and holding a brown briefcase, enters from right. He looks at WILSONS and nods. After pressing a button, MR. BROWN faces doorway.)

WALTER

(snapping suspenders. To MR. BROWN)
Greetings, sir. Kind of you to drop in. Guests are always
welcome in our Otis home.

WINONA

People don't need to walk up and down stairs to visit us.
Otis rises and lowers to visit them.

(MR. BROWN remains silent as door
slides shut.)

WHITNEY

I wonder where we're going to now.

WINSLOW

It feels like we're going down.

MR. BROWN

(turns towards WILSONS)
You folks living in here?

WALTER

Just moved in. We're lucky to have grabbed this room early.
Every time we stop, people are standing outside the door,
waiting to take it.

MR. BROWN

No kidding? So what's it like staying in here?

WHITNEY

It has its ups...

WINSLOW

And downs.

WINONA

We noticed that you pressed the lunch button as we did.
Please have a seat and join us.

MR. BROWN

Don't mind if I do. At least until we reach the lobby.

WALTER

Winslow, scoot over. Give our guest some room.

MR. BROWN

(nods and sits on trunk)

Good to be with you. The names's Bob Brown. Gets a bit lonely on the road. Most often I sit alone, eat alone, and walk the streets alone. I guess that's the way the world works. Funny thing, though. On my job I talk to dozens of people each day. I pass thousands more on the sidewalk. Yet I still spend much of my time alone. No kidding. It seems the more people there are around, the harder they are to meet.

(WINSLOW slurps noodles into mouth.)

WINONA

Winslow, don't slurp.

WINSLOW

(wiping mouth with hand)

So what do you do, Mr. Brown?

MR. BROWN

I'm a fad salesman, son. I deal in kids' fads. I travel around the country putting the latest gizmo, gadget, and doodad on store shelves.

WINSLOW

You mean like smelly stickers and smelly pens?

WHITNEY

Super balls, super bubbles, super putty, and super squirt guns?

MR. BROWN

I've loaded all those fads on shelves, kids. Trouble is, fads come and go. Once I get the stores filled with one item, I gotta start traveling again to fill them with another. One month Pet Rocks will be a hot item, the next children will only buy virtual pets.

WALTER

That means you're often away from your family.

WINONA

How sad.

MR. BROWN

No kidding. I miss my wife and daughter an awful lot. Someday I hope to think up a fad idea myself that will be such a hit I'll never need to leave home again. But for now I must stay on the road. That's the way the world works.

(WINSLOW slurps more noodles)

WINONA

Winslow!

(Elevator door opens. Bell rings.)

WALTER

Well, we're here.

MR. BROWN

(stands)

And I must be off.

WINONA

Where are you going, Mr. Brown?

MR. BROWN

(walks out door.)

I'm off to sell the latest fad to the toy stores in this city, kids. Number-two pencil suckers. Kids can suck on one end while taking tests with the other. Thanks for the chat.

WALTER

Only the best for this family.

WINONA

Stop in anytime. Guests are always welcome in Otis.

Mr. BROWN

Yes, maybe I will. Those evenings alone do get lonely. But that's the way the world works.

(Door shuts. Lights fade.)

SCENE THREE:

Lights up. Elevator has revolved to exterior view (Set Side A). Door opens in lobby. Bell rings. WALTER sits at table, reading newspaper. WINONA sits at table, sketching in her sketch pad. WINSLOW and WHITNEY lie on the trunks, reading paperback books. Stage far right, CATHY stands at small flower stand. GAVIN, head bowed, enters right and stands outside elevator. He is holding a bouquet of daffodils.

FOUR WILSONS

(to GAVIN)

Gavin!

WALTER

You look down in the dumps, young man. What's up? Come on in. Come on in.

GAVIN

(Steps into elevator. Looking glum, he hands flowers to WINONA.)

These are for you, Mrs. Wilson. I sure hope you like flowers.

WINONA

(Smells bouquet.)

They're beautiful, Gavin. But wouldn't you rather give them to a girl you admire?

GAVIN

(pulls collar)

That's the problem, Mrs. Wilson. These flowers came from a girl I admire.

WHITNEY

(pointing outward)

You mean the girl in the flower stall across the lobby?

(CATHY enters right and stands far stage right with flower vases at feet. WILSONS look out and wave.)

GAVIN

(turns away)

Yes, sure. That's her.

WINSLOW

She smiles and waves to us whenever Otis is parked down here.

GAVIN

(pulls on collar)

Sure. Cathy's her name. And I've bought so many flowers from her in the past week that my apartment is beginning to look as if I died or something.

WALTER

(snaps newspaper)

Young man, I believe you have something that's commonly called a crush.

WINONA

So you like Cathy, but you are too shy to speak to her. Is that why you keep buying flowers from her.

GAVIN

(nods)

A girl like Cathy would never want to go on a date with someone like me, that's for sure. I'm just a bellhop.

(MORE)

GAVIN (CONT'D)

I don't make much money. I'm saving up to go to college next year, but then I'll be even poorer.

WINONA

But you're an excellent bellhop, Gavin.

WALTER

The best!

GAVIN

(combs fingers through hair)

Sure. It's hopeless. I'll never get up enough nerve to talk to Cathy. That's for sure.

WINONA

You just need some confidence, Gavin.

WALTER

Indeed, young man. You seem like a person with big plans.

GAVIN

Sure, sir. Sure I do. I have lots of goals. Lots of dreams. Sure. A list of plans.

(WILSONS look out of elevator and wave again to CATHY)

WHITNEY

Cathy sure is pretty, Gavin.

WINSLOW

Fantabulous!

WINONA

(admiring flowers)

And she sells such lovely flowers

WALTER

The best!

(Still looking down, GAVIN steps from elevator.)

WALTER

We'll discuss this more in the morning, young man. Could we have breakfast delivered at seven?

GAVIN

(shrugging)

Sure.

(GAVIN exits left. Elevator door shuts. Lights fade.)

SCENE FOUR:

Lights up. Elevator has revolved to interior view (Set Side B). Pillows and blankets are spread out on the two trunks. The WILSONS sit around the table playing Pick-Up-Sticks. More flower vases are set around room. Door opens. Bell rings. MRS. GOLDENGATE, an elderly woman, dressed in white warm-ups, stands in entrance. She carries OUI-OUI, a white poodle. WINSLOW raises a red stick off the Pick-Up Stick pile.

WINSLOW

A red one!

(WILSONS cheer)

OUI-OUI

(recorded dog yapping)

Yap! Yap! Yap!

MRS. GOLDENGATE

(Steps into elevator. Presses L button. Door shuts. Whispers to dog)

My, my Oui-Oui, I heard there's a shortage of hotel rooms in this city, but I had no idea the problem was this bad.

(WINSLOW lifts a blue stick.)

WINSLOW

A blue one!

(WILSONS cheer)

WALTER

(turns toward MRS. GOLDENGATE.)

Greetings, madam. Welcome to Otis, our humble vacation home.

MRS. GOLDENGATE

My, my. You're on vacation? Are you comfortable in here?

WHITNEY

It has its ups...

WINSLOW

And downs.

WALTER

We are the Wilson family. I'm Walter.

WINONA
(raising hand)

Winona.

WINSLOW
(pointing to WHITNEY)
That's my sister, Whitney.

WHITNEY
(pointing to WINSLOW)
And that my brother. Winslow with the smelly socks.

MRS. GOLDENGATE
We are pleased to meet you. I'm Abigail Goldengate.
(pats OUI-OUI)
And this little fella is Oui-Oui.

OUI-OUI
Yap! Yap! Yap!

WINSLOW
Goldengate? Didn't they name a bridge in this city after you?

MRS. GOLDENGATE
They named the bridge after my late husband, Gordon Goldengate. Since he departed this world, Oui-Oui and I have been living on the top floor of this hotel.

WINONA
Then please join us, Abigail.

WALTER
Winslow is clobbering us all in Pick-Up Sticks. I think he'll make an excellent brain surgeon someday.

WHITNEY
Or a pickpocket.

OUI-OUI
Yap! Yap! Yap!

MRS. GOLDENGATE
I wish I had time. But I must rush off. Rush! Rush! Rush!
If I don't fit in time to keep fit at the hotel's fitness center I have a fit.

OUI-OUI
Yap! Yap! Yap!

WALTER
Then why doesn't the pooch stay we us while you exercise.

WINONA

We'd be happy to look after Oui-Oui.

WINSLOW

Oui!

WHITNEY

Oui!

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

MRS. GOLDENGATE

Oh, if it would work out during my workout that would save me so much time.

(puts dog on table and checks watch)

Look at the time now. I wish I had time to chat, but there's no time. Rush! Rush! Rush!

(The door opens. Bell rings. MRS. GOLDENGATE exits. Door shuts. Lights dim. Elevator hums. WILSONS resume game of Pick-Up Sticks. Lights up. Door opens. Bell rings. MRS. GOLDENGATE, now dressed in a white dress stands in the entrance. Steps into elevator and presses L button.)

WINSLOW

(raising yellow stick)

A yellow one!

WALTER

Yes, with those nimble fingers that boy could crack the hotel safe in no time.

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

(Door shuts. Elevator hums)

WALTER

(to MRS. GOLDENGATE)

Welcome back, Madam! Now do you have time to join us in a game?

MRS. GOLDENGATE

Oh, I wish I had time. To keep in tip-top shape, I ran up the stairs to the top floor. In my penthouse I got dressed to top off this evening with dinner at a top restaurant.

WINONA

Well, don't worry about Oui-Oui. We're enjoying dog-sitting.

Oui! WINSLOW

Oui! WHITNEY

Yap! Yap! Yap! OUI-OUI

(Door opens. Bell rings.)

MRS. GOLDENGATE
(exiting)
Thank you! Thank you! Rush! Rush! Rush!

(Door shuts. Elevator hums.)

WALTER
(shaking head)
Watching her is like watching a video on fast forward.

WINONA
I have a feeling she'll be visiting Otis again shortly.

WINSLOW
(lifts black stick off pile)
A black one!

(WILSONS cheer. Lights dim. Elevator hums. Seconds later, lights up. Door opens. MRS. GOLDENGATE enters. Sits on trunk exhausted.)

Yap! Yap! Yap! OUI-OUI

WINSLOW
(lifting orange stick off pile)
An orange one!

(WILSONS cheer)

WALTER
(to MRS. GOLDENGATE)
Greetings again, madam. Do you now have time to join our game?

MRS. GOLDENGATE

No, I must rush off again. I'm going to a nightspot I spotted where one goes to be spotted. Then I must get up early for a book-club meeting and a garden-club meeting, followed by a golf-club club meeting at the country club. Rush! Rush! Rush!

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

(Door shuts. Elevator hums.)

MRS. GOLDENGATE

My this is a peaceful place. To tell you the truth, I've been so busy rushing around I can't remember much of anything I've done this evening. It's all one big blur. My, this is a peaceful place.

WALTER

Well, madam. Why not stop for a while and rest.

WINONA

Yes, dear. Rushing around is not good for your health.

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

MRS. GOLDENGATE

Yes, you're right. Since reaching the top, I blow my top if I'm not on top, so to stay on top, I go at top speed to stay on top.

(MRS. GOLDENGATE's head drops in slumber. WINSLOW lifts green stick off pile. WALTER raises finger to lips.)

WINSLOW

(whispers)

A green one!

(Door opens. Bell rings.)

WINONA

(gently shakes MRS. GOLDENGATE.)

Oh, dear. Mrs. Goldengate is sleeping like a top.

WALTER

Winslow, Whitney, help our guest to her room. It's time for the Wilsons to hit the hay. We have a big day tomorrow.

WINSLOW

(whispers)

Oui

WHITNEY
(whispers)

Oui

(WHITNEY, carrying OUI-OUI, helps WINSLOW
escort MRS. GOLDENGATE from elevator.)

WALTER
(standing to inspect buttons)
Let's see...all these button. Which one works the lights?

(WHITNEY and WINSLOW return and
pull back blankets on trunks.)

WALTER
(stands on chair and reaches
up to elevator light)
How many Wilsons does it take to unscrew a light bulb?

WINONA
Four.

WHITNEY
One to do the work.

WINSLOW
And three to watch him.

WALTER
(turning bulb)
Lights out, Wilsons.
(Scene turns black.)
Good night, family.

WINONA
Sweet dreams, everyone.

FOUR WILSONS
Sleep tight.

(End of Act)

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE:

Lights up. Elevator revolved to exterior view (Set Side A). ELDERLY MAN and WOMAN enter right, holding suitcases and stand before elevator. Door opens, revealing WILSONS sitting around table. Bell rings. More flowers bouquets in vases stand around room.

WALTER

(To COUPLE)

Top of the morning, folks!

(Couple exchange looks and exit right. JOE, the hotel night watchman, enters sleepily left. Steps into elevator. Presses button and stands facing outward with eyes closed.)

FOUR WILSONS

Morning!

JOE

(eyes still closed)

That's good.

WALTER

Visitors are always welcome in our Otis room.

JOE

That's good.

WINONA

You must work at this wonderful hotel.

JOE

(opens eyes and turns)

Yes, I do. I'm Joe, the night security. And somehow I missed your arrival. Just who are you people?

WALTER

We're the Wilsons, Joe. Please to meet you. I'm Walter.

WINONA

Winona.

WINSLOW

And that's my sister, Whitney.

WHITNEY

And that's my brother, Winslow, who snored all last night.

JOE

And you folks are staying in here?

WINONA

For our entire vacation.

WALTER

(snaps suspenders)

Only the best. Only the best will do for the Wilsons.

WINSLOW

It has its ups...

WHITNEY

And downs.

WINONA

Care to join us for breakfast, Joe? We're just about to order some room service.

JOE

Um. I don't think so, folks. It's been one long night. But thanks anyway.

(Door shuts. Elevator hums. Door opens. Bell rings.)

JOE

(stepping out)

You folks have a good day. Catch you this evening.

(JOE exits right. GAVIN enters left pushing food cart, loaded with breakfast plates. He holds a bouquet of roses.)

FOUR WILSONS

Gavin!

WALTER

Breakfast right on time, my boy. Wheel that cart right on in here.

GAVIN

(Pushes cart into elevator.
Hands WINONA flowers.)

Here, Mrs. Wilson.

WINONA

(taking flowers)

Oh, dear. Still have that problem, Gavin?

GAVIN

Sure do. And it's making me more miserable than ever. Cathy sure makes me nervous. Every time I see her I blush. Then knowing that I'm blushing I blush even more. It's hopeless. That's for sure.

(WILSONS look out of elevator
and wave to CATHY.)

WHITNEY

But Cathy must be impressed with all the flowers you're buying from her, Gavin.

WINSLOW

Although Otis is beginning to look like we're having a wedding in here.

WALTER

This situation reminds me of the time I first saw Winona. I was so tongue-tied it took me six months to work up enough nerve to talk to her.

WINONA

And that was only when we got locked in the school coat closet together by accident.

WALTER

Ah, that small place was wonderful.

WINONA

We liked it so much we talked for hours before calling for help.

WINSLOW

What you need Gavin is an opportunity away from work to speak with Cathy.

GAVIN

(pulling collar)

Ah...I'm not sure about that.

WHITNEY

We could have a party or something. We could have it right here in Otis.

GAVIN

Ah...I sure don't think so.

WINONA

Yes, a dinner party! This very evening. We'll invite Cathy and all our friends from the hotel.

GAVIN

Ah...I surely don't think that's a good idea.

WALTER

Splendid idea. Right after breakfast, I'll contact the hotel chef. I'll ask for the best meal for our party. Only the best will do!.

FOUR WILSONS

Hear! Hear!

(GAVIN steps from elevator.)

GAVIN

No, I really, really don't think this party will be a good thing.

WHITNEY

See you later, Gavin

WINSLOW

Bye! Bye!

WINONA

See you tonight at six o'clock, Gavin.

WALTER

And relax, my boy.

GAVIN

Sure.

(Elevator door slides shut.)

GAVIN

(to audience)

Now what room ordered that breakfast I just left the Wilsons? This job sure can be confusing.

(Lights fade.)

SCENE TWO:

Light up. Elevator revolved to interior view (Set Side B). Table in middle is set with linen tablecloth and silver plates. Door opens, bell rings, and NATACHA, a waitress, steps into the room.

NATACHA

(Italian accent. Clicks heels.)

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Natacha, and I will be your waitress this evening.

WALTER

Excellent, madam. Step right on in here.

NATACHA

(Steps forward. German accent.)

The hotel chef has prepared an excellent meal for you tonight.

WINSLOW

Hey, Natacha, just where are you from? What's with the different accents.

NATACHA

(America accent)

Actually, I'm an American. And, you see, I'm taking acting classes. So, you see, while I wait on tables at this hotel, I like to practice my accents. You see?

WALTER

Excellent! Only the best!

WINONA

Now it's time to collect our guest for the party.

WHITNEY

First stop floor fifteen.

WINSLOW

(pressing button)

Up Otis goes.

(Door shuts. Elevator hums. Door opens.
Bell rings. MR. BROWN stands there.)

WALTER

Greetings, good friend.

MR. BROWN

(steps inside)

Thank you so much for the invite. My how splendid everything looks.

(Hands twins baseball caps with
visors in front and back)

Here's a kid fad I tried to sell this week. Some kids, you know, wear caps with visors in front, some with visors pointing backward. I figured caps with visors pointing both ways would please everyone...But I still have suitcases full of them. No kidding.

(WINSLOW and WHITNEY put on hats.)

WHITNEY

Thanks, Mr. Brown. Next stop, top floor.

WINSLOW

(pressing button)

Fantabulous! Otis goes up some more.

(Door shuts. Elevator hums. Door opens.
Bell rings. MRS. GOLDENGATE stands there
holding OUI-OUI.)

MRS. GOLDENGATE

My, my, I'm grateful for this invitation. How refreshing it
is not having to rush some place for dinner. This evening my
dining place came right to me.

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

WALTER

Now we'll return to the ground floor to collect our guests of
honor.

WINONA

Press the lunch button, Winslow.

WINSLOW

(pressing button)

Down we go!

(Door shuts. Elevator hums. Door
opens. Bell rings! GAVIN enters
left, wearing street clothes.
CATHY enters right. She holds a
bouquet of daisies. GAVIN AND
CATHY look at each other shyly and
step into the elevator.)

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

GAVIN

Good afternoon, Wilsons. This sure looks cool.

CATHY

(Hands WINONA flowers and
looks at other bouquets.)

I brought these for you, Mrs. Wilson. But I guess you don't
really need them.

WINONA

(taking flowers)

How lovely. Our room can never have too many blooms.

WALTER

Splendid! Everyone has arrived. Please have a seat.

(Door slides shut. Elevator hums.
ALL sit on chairs and trunks.
NATACHA pours wine for adults.)

WALTER

Only the best! I propose a toast! Here's to a fine afternoon with our friends.

All
(raising glasses)

Hear! Hear!

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap!

WHITNEY
(pointing upward)

Great music.

(Rock music comes from ceiling.)

WINSLOW

Fantabulous!

CATHY

That's my favorite band.

WINONA

Something tells me you chose the music for this dinner, Gavin.

GAVIN

(pulls at collar.)

Well, sure. I wanted something...special.

CATHY

So Gavin, this is where you've been taking all the flowers you bought from my stall. I thought... I thought...

WINONA

I bet you thought Gavin was buying flowers for some girl. But every day he brought them to us to make our home brighter.

NATACHA

(snapping to attention.
English accent.)

This evening the chef has prepared a special meal, especially for this unique compact dining room. We'll begin with small salads made with little lettuce leaves, tiny tomatoes, mini-mushrooms, and shrimpy shrimp.

WALTER

(snapping suspenders)

Only the best! Double portions for me. Let's eat.

(Light blinks. Walls rattle.)

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

MRS. GOLDENGATE

My, my, I believe we're having an earthquake.

(Lights out. Seconds later, a
candle on table lights elevator.)

WALTER

Splendid! The shaker appears to be over.

WINONA

No one was hurt. Nothing was damaged.

WINSLOW

(pressing button)

But Otis isn't moving.

WHITNEY

We're not going up...or down.

CATHY

Otis must be stuck between floors.

GAVIN

That happened the last time we lost power in the hotel.

MR. BROWN

(lifts phone and holds to ear)

Phone's out as well.

WALTER

No matter. We're all in good company. Only the best!
Natacha, pour us some more vino.

NATACHA

(pouring wine. French accent)

Oui, oui, Mr. Wilson.

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

WINONA

This reminds me of one dark night during our previous
vacation.

MR. BROWN

Do tell us the story. This is the perfect time to hear one
of the Wilsons' adventures.

MRS. GOLDENGATE

Yes, Winona, tell us. I don't think we're going anywhere at
the moment.

WINONA

Walter's the story-teller in the family. Go ahead, Walter, tell them what happened in the cabin.

WALTER

(pulling suspenders)

It was getting late, you see. And we were looking for a place to spend the night. Just as the sun went down, we spotted twenty or so small wooden cabins scattered about a field. Each cabin was about the size of this room, ideal for our family.

WINONA

Walter and I entered one of the cabins while the twins went to find the owner. I was just about to light a match to see what was inside when Winslow came running in.

WALTER

He was screaming like a playground whistle. Go ahead, son, finish the story.

WINSLOW

You see, I had just read a sign at the edge of the field. It read: no trespassing; property of Hudson Firework Company.

WHITNEY

(laughing)

Those little cabins was a place where they made fireworks. That vacation almost turned into a real blast.

(MR. BROWN. MRS. GOLDENGATE, GAVIN,
and CATHY exchange looks.)

MRS. GOLDENGATE

My, my.

MR. BROWN

A blast is right. Boom!

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

WINONA

(to GAVIN)

So, Gavin, you mentioned that you were working at this hotel to save money for college.

GAVIN

(pulls collar)

Sure, Mrs. Wilson.

WALTER

Well, young man, a college education is a fine thing.

CATHY

What do you plan to study, Gavin?

GAVIN

Education. I want to be a teacher. I want to teach young children.

MR. BROWN

Excellent profession, son. No kidding. Just think of the long summer vacations you can spend with your family.

MRS. GOLDENGATE

And what could be more valuable in our cities than a good teacher?

(CATHY smiles at GAVIN.)

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

(Knock from overhead.)

WALTER

(holds up hand for silence.)

That rapping came from the trap door overhead. Gavin did you include rap music in tonight's program? Ha. Haaa.

(knock repeats)

Joe

(from overhead)

Are you down there? Mr. Wilson? Mrs. Wilson? Are you okay?

WINONA

(looking up)

It's Joe, night security. Joe's up there.

WALTER

(looking up)

Joe, good fellow, come on down. We're in the middle of an excellent party. Only the best. There's always room for another guest.

JOE

The entire city has lost power, Mr. Wilson. I've come to take you out.

WINONA

That's very kind of you, Joe. But no need to go through the trouble. All is well down here.

MR. BROWN

No kidding. This beats being back in my lonely room.

MRS. GOLDENGATE

No power? How delightful. Now I couldn't rush out anywhere if I had to.

NATACHA

(Scottish accent)

And this is a lot better than waiting on ornery customers in the restaurant.

CATHY

Yes, this is fun.

GAVIN

Sure. No need for a rescue, Joe.

JOE

Suit yourself, folks. But the power won't be on for a least two hours.

WHITNEY

Great!

WINSLOW

That gives us time for a game of Pick-Up Sticks!

WALTER

Care to join us, Joe?

JOE

No thanks, Mr. Wilson. I need to find people who want to be rescued. So long, folks. Have a good evening.

(Lights fade.)

SCENE THREE:

Next morning. Elevator revolved to exterior view (Set Side A). Door closed. A do not disturb sign, with the words DO NOT crossed out, hangs on the door. MAN KIDNAPPER AND WOMAN KIDNAPPER dressed in black and wearing sunglasses enter right. They wheel a large trunk between them. Elevator door opens. Bell rings. WALTER is reading the newspaper. WINONA is sketching. Winslow and WHITNEY lie on the trunks reading paperbacks.)

WALTER

(snapping newspaper)

Top of the morning to you two. Come on in.

WOMAN KIDNAPPER
(to WALTER)

Right, Pops.

MAN KIDNAPPER
(to WOMAN KIDNAPPER)

Man! This hotel is filled with weirdos, man. Why'd you pick this place? Man-oh-man!

WOMAN KIDNAPPER
It's listed as one of the classiest hotels in the city.

MAN KIDNAPPER
(pushing trunk into elevator)
Man-oh-man!

WINONA
(to MAN and WOMAN KIDNAPPERS)
We had a big party last night. But don't mind the sign. Guests are always welcome in our Otis home.

WINSLOW
It's our final day here.

WHITNEY
We want to spend the entire day sitting quietly right in our moveable room.

WOMAN KIDNAPPER
You people really living in here?

MAN KIDNAPPER
Man! Ain't it a little too cozy.

WINSLOW
It has it's ups.

WHITNEY
And downs.

(Door shuts. Elevator hums. Door opens. Bell rings. MAN and WOMAN KIDNAPPERS step out pushing trunk.)

WOMAN KIDNAPPER
(to MAN KIDNAPPER)
This is it. Sixteenth floor.

MAN KIDNAPPER
(to WOMAN KIDNAPPER)
To the right, man. Man, what weirdos, man.

(WOMAN KIDNAPPER and MAN KIDNAPPER exit right with trunk.)

WINSLOW
(to family)
Two people and only one trunk.

WHITNEY
Very mysterious.

WALTER
(snaps newspaper)
Mysterious indeed. Look at the morning headlines.

(WINONA, WHITNEY, and WINSLOW lean toward WALTER, who holds up newspaper.)

WINONA
(reading)
Girl missing

WHITNEY
(reading)
Today San Francisco police reported the disappearance of Lizzy Chronicle.

WINSLOW
(reading)
Ten-year old daughter of billionaire Frank Chronicle, publisher of this newspaper.

(WILSONS lean toward door and look out. GAVIN, grinning, appears in doorway. Whistling, he enters elevator. He fixes bow tie and combs hair in mirror. Door shuts. Elevator hums.)

WALTER
You look chipper this morning, young man.

WINONA
And you haven't brought us any flowers.

GAVIN
I feel on top of the world, Mr. Wilson, Mrs. Wilson. I feel lighter than air.

WINSLOW
I think that's because Otis is moving downward.

WALTER
By the way, Gavin, did you notice that couple that just left Otis?

GAVIN

Sure did. Those people called ahead and ordered breakfast. I just delivered it.

WINONA

Was there anything mysterious about them?

GAVIN

Come to think of it, sure. The man and woman ordered two cheese omelets and a hamburger. That's sure odd, isn't it?

WHITNEY

Very mysterious.

(Door opens. Bell rings. GAVIN leaves elevator. Exits right. CATHY enters left.)

CATHY

(to WILSONS)

Guess what? Gavin stopped by my flower stall this morning. And guess what? Instead of buying flowers, he talked to me. And guess what? He asked me out to a movie on Friday.

WINONA

Good for Gavin.

WALTER

That's our boy! By the way, young lady, did you just notice a couple dressed in black check into the hotel.

CATHY

Why yes. They had one large trunk between them. And here's something odd. I saw them stop at the gift counter next to my stall. And guess what? They bought three toothbrushes.

WHITNEY

Even more mysterious.

(CATHY exits elevator. Exits right. MR. BROWN enters left, carrying briefcase.)

WALTER

Greetings, Robert.

WINONA

Come on in, Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN

(steps into elevator)

Thanks. I had a great time at the party last night, folks. No kidding.

(Door shuts. Elevator hums.)

WALTER

Mr. Brown, we have a mystery. Did you read today's headlines in the Chronicle about Lizzy Chronicle who's missing?

MR. BROWN

No kidding. I just heard on the radio that she's been kidnapped, and the kidnapers are demanding a ten million dollar ransom.

WINONA

Well, two people just visited Otis and got off on the sixteenth floor.

WALTER

And they only had one trunk and ordered three breakfasts.

WINSLOW

And they were very rude.

WHITNEY

It's a mystery.

MR. BROWN

No kidding. Sounds like they have a third person in the room...You don't suppose?...

FOUR WILSONS

(nodding)

Right!

MR. BROWN

But what can you folks do? You just can't go knocking on that their door and ask if they have Lizzy Chronicle with them.

(Door opens. Bell rings. GAVIN enters right with food cart.)

WALTER

Gavin, good man. Is that our lunch already?

GAVIN

No. Mr. Wilsons. This is for the man and woman on the sixteenth floor. They just ordered more food.

WINONA

And what are you bringing them this time?

GAVIN

Two plates of pancakes and a hamburger.

WHITNEY

Very mysterious. I'll bet anything that hamburger is for Lizzy Chronicle.

GAVIN

(raking fingers through hair)

Lizzy Chronicle? You mean the girl who was kidnapped?

WINONA

We believe she's right here in this hotel. Poor thing.

WALTER

(pulling on suspenders)

It all adds up. The couple on the sixteenth floor must be the kidnapppers who kidnapped that kid. Young man, would you mind stalling that room service delivery a minute? I have a plan to find out if our suspicions are correct.

WINONA

Really, Walter.

WINSLOW

Tell us, Dad.

WHITNEY

What's the plan, man?

(MR. BROWN and GAVIN join WINONA and WALTER at table. WHITNEY and WINSLOW lean forward on trunks.)

WALTER

Here's what I was thinking.

(holds up a finger)

First, we compose a note.

(holds up second finger)

Second, we place the note under the hamburger.

(holds up third finger)

Next, Lizzy reads the note that tells her to slip the paper under the dish if she's there.

(holds up fourth finger)

Finally, if we receive her sign...

(points to white phone)

we call hotel security.

GAVIN

But what if Lizzy isn't in the room, and the man or woman reads the note?

MR. BROWN

You'd sure be in a tight spot.

WALTER

We are the Wilsons, and we've been in many tight spots before.

WINSLOW

And we always rise to the occasion.

WHITNEY

Home sweat home.

WINONA

(tears sheet from sketch book)

I'll write the note.

(begins writing)

Dear Lizzy. If you are in the room, turn this note over. Leave it under the hamburger plate. Help will come. From the Wilsons in the Otis Room.

(WINONA hands paper to GAVIN who places it under the hamburger.)

WALTER

Well, done. Now to the sixteenth floor.

MR. BROWN

(stepping from elevator)

I wish I could join you, but I have a job to do. That's the way the world works.

WINSLOW

(presses button)

Up we go.

(Door shuts. Elevator hums.)

WHITNEY

This is exciting.

WINSLOW

Reminds me of the time we caught those shoplifters.

WALTER

That was when we stayed in that small room in front of the store. Only the best!

WINONA

I loved the giant windows that room had. They looked out onto the street.

(Door opens. Bell rings.)

GAVIN

Well, we're here.

WALTER

Good luck, young man.

GAVIN
(pulling collar)

This is it.

WINONA

You're our hero, dear.

GAVIN

Here goes.

WINSLOW

Go for it, Gavin.

WHITNEY

Cathy would be impressed.

GAVIN

One, two, three...

FOUR WILSONS
(pushing GAVIN)

Four!

(GAVIN stumbles from elevator, pushing cart. Exits right. WILSONS lean out to watch him. Moments later, GAVIN returns without cart.)

WALTER

How did it go, young man?

GAVIN
(shrugs and enters elevator)

That's how it was at breakfast. I wheeled the cart up to the couple's door. The door opens a bit and an arm reaches out to grab the cart. No one says a word. And I never see anything inside the room. This morning the cart was waiting in the hall a half hour later.

WALTER

Splendid! That gives us time for a game of Pick-Up Sticks before the action begins. Winslow, hit a button. Any button. Whitney, dump the sticks.

(WINSLOW pushes button. Door shuts. Lights fade. Elevator hums. Lights up. WILSONS and GAVIN sit around table playing Pick-Up Sticks.)

WINSLOW
(holding up brown stick)

A brown one!

(ALL cheer. Lights dim. Elevator hums. Moments later lights up. Door opens. Bell rings.)

WALTER
Well, it's time everyone. We're back on floor sixteen. Gavin go retrieve the food cart.

GAVIN
(shrugs and stands)
Sure, sir.

(GAVIN exits elevator right. WILSONS lean out and peer right. GAVIN returns pushing food cart. Enters elevator.)

GAVIN
Here it is. The cart was waiting in the hall just as before.

WALTER
(wiggling fingers)
The moment of truth. Let's see what's under the hamburger plate. Since I'm the oldest, I'll do the honors.

WINONA
Ladies before gentlemen. I'll lift it.

WHITNEY AND WINSLOW
Children first!

WALTER
All right! All right! Together.

(WILSONS lift plate.)

WALTER
Excellent! The papers there.

WINONA
And a message is written on it.

WINSLOW
(lifts paper and reads)
Yes, I'm here. And I'm bored. There are no video games to play, the TV gets only twenty-seven channels, and I'm sick of eating hamburgers. Booooooring!

WHITNEY

(takes paper and continues reading)
Get me out of here! Lizzy.

WALTER

(lifts white phone)
Hello? Front desk? This is Walter Wilson in the Otis room.
Connect me with hotel security!

(Lights fade)

SCENE FOUR:

Elevator in exterior view (Set Side A). Lights up. Elevator door opens. Bell rings. JOE stands in elevator entrance holding the MAN and WOMAN KIDNAPERS, who are handcuffed. LIZZY CHRONICLE stands besides them. The WILSONS stand in the rear.

WOMAN KIDNAPPER

(to WALTER)
We won't forget this, Pops.

MAN KIDNAPPER

(to WOMAN KIDNAPPER)
Man, weirdos! Man, I knew your hotel idea was lame, man.
Man-oh-man! Too many weirdos

JOE

Let's go, you two. The police will be here shortly.

(JOE leads MAN and WOMAN KIDNAPPERS
from elevator. Exits right.)

LIZZY

(steps forward)
What took everyone so long to rescue me? That was sooooo boring. Nothing to do. Boring TV. Boring video games. Boring DVD's. And those hamburgers, booooooring.

(steps from elevator)

LIZZY

Booooooring!

(LIZZY exits right. REPORTERS enter right, shouting questions. WALTER steps out of elevator.)

WALTER
(holding up hands for silence)
Greetings, press! You're all welcome into our Otis home.

WINONA
There's always room for visitors.

(HOTEL MANAGER enters left)

HOTEL MANAGER
(shaking WALTER's hand)
Mr. Wilson, I'm the manager of the San Francisco Hotel. In appreciation for what your family has done today, I would like to offer you the use of our Presidential Suite for the remainder of your stay here.

WALTER
(steps back into elevator.)
Sorry, but this family prefers to stay in Otis our last night.

WINONA
(to HOTEL MANAGER)
That's sweet of you, but we'd be lost in a large suite.

WINSLOW
And it doesn't even move.

WHITNEY
How would we meet people stuck on one floor?

WALTER
Only the best! Only the best will do for the Wilsons.

(Lights dim. REPORTERS and HOTEL MANAGER exit. Door shuts. Moments later, lights up. Door opens. Bell rings. Set remains Side A. CATHY stands stage right. Tables and chairs are gone from elevator. GAVIN stands in elevator with two clothes trunks on end. WILSONS stand behind him. WHITNEY and WINSLOW wear MR. BROWN's caps. GAVIN exits elevator pushing trunks. Sees CATHY and stops.)

GAVIN
Cathy! Hi!

(GAVIN leaves trunks and walks over to talk with CATHY.)

WALTER

Well, it's been an excellent vacation, family. We've had adventure and met many fine people. Only the best! But now it's time to move on.

WINONA

It's sad leaving our new friends.

WHITNEY

Traveling has it's ups...

WINSLOW

And downs.

WALTER

Well, it's time to leave family.

WINONA

Traveling often means sa good-byes.

WHITNEY

Travelin's has it's ups...

WINSLOW

And downs.

(MR. BROWN enters right, with newspaper.)

MR. BROWN

Wilsons! I'm glad I caught you before you parted. No kidding. I wanted to say thanks and so long.

WALTER

A fond farewell, Robert.

MR. BROWN

(holding up newspaper)

Have you seen the morning paper, folks? Your picture is right on the front page. No kidding.

WALTER

(leaning forward)

Now that's what I call a great-looking family. Only the best!

WINONA

But your shirttail is hanging out, Walter.

WINSLOW

And Winslow is giving me bunny ears.

MR. BROWN

You know, when I saw this picture, it gave me an idea. No kidding. Why couldn't this family become the latest fad? We'll call you the Elevator Family. We can sell Elevator Family dolls and Elevator Family books. There will be Elevator Family lunch boxes, Elevator Family sweatshirts, and coming soon-- The Elevator Family Movie. This could be the idea I've been waiting for. If this fad catches on, I won't need to leave home anymore.

WALTER

Splendid. Our name's all yours and good luck with it.

(MRS. GOLDENGATE enters left,
holding OUI-OUI.)

MRS. GOLDENGATE

Oh, it's good to see you, Wilsons, before I must rush off.

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

WINONA

Where are you rushing to, Abigail?

WINSLOW

To a club?

WHITNEY

To a meeting?

MRS. GOLDENGATE

My, my, no. I'm going to visit my children in Montana. Being with your family has reminded me of the good times I've had with my own. I hope to stay there and not rush anywhere for a long while.

WALTER

Splendid. Now come along, Gavin. Time to leave this good place.

GAVIN

(to WILSONS)

I sure never knew flowers could be so interesting. That's for sure.

CATHY

(to WILSONS)

Where are you going next, Mr. Wilson, Mrs. Wilson?

WALTER

We never seem to know where we're going until we get there, Cathleen.

WINSLOW

Maybe we can stay in one of those fantabulous little cabins I saw at the end of the Golden Gate Bridge.

WHITNEY

Yes, people drive by and hand money to the people living inside.

WALTER

Well, wherever we end up next, you know it will be the best. Because nothing less than the best will do for the Wilsons.

FOUR WILSONS

Hear! Hear!

WALTER

Ready family! Forward we go!

(GAVIN exits right pushing dolly.
HOTEL MANAGER enters left.)

HOTEL MANAGER

Come again, soon, Wilsons. The Otis Room will always be available to you.

MR. BROWN

So long, Elevator Family.

CATHY

(waving)

Bye! Bye!

MRS. GOLDENGATE

(waving)

Ta-taaa!

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

In single file, WALTER, WINONA,
WINSLOW, and WHITNEY exit right.
Elevator doors shut. Lights out.
End of Play.