

THE ELEVATOR FAMILY

(A Stage Play)

BY

DOUGLAS EVANS

(based on his book THE ELEVATOR FAMILY)

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Cast of Characters:

WALTER WILSON, about 40, good-natured, big-bellied father.
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 ELDERLY 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, who lives in the
hotel penthouse with her 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
GROUP OF REPORTERS double roles

8 male/ 8 female roles

Staging Suggestions

Use a freestanding set, 9'X9', that can be rotated easily. A wide doorway, 7'x8' is cut in the middle. A door should slide open and shut from the center elevator style.

One side of the set (Side A) is painted as the outside of the elevator. When the door slides open, audience look in on the Wilson family and a dark backdrop. The reverse side (Side B) is painted as the interior of the elevator. A button panel and white telephone hang on one side of the doorway. An L with numbers 1-34 after it are painted above the door. Number 13 is absent. When the door slides open, the audience looks past the Wilsons into the hotel lobby or hallway and plain backdrop.

To indicate that elevator is moving while at either Side A or Side B, an *elevator hum* should be played.

Prop List:

Small table
Two clothes trunks
Two folding chairs
Maid 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 effect needed: Elevator hum, elevator music, dog yapping.

Act One

SCENE ONE:

Lights up. Set Side A. GAVIN, a teenaged bellhop, stands before closed elevator doors in hotel lobby. Two clothes trunks sit beside him. Elevator door opens. The four Wilsons, WALTER, WINONA, WINSLOW, and WHITNEY stand inside. They wave to GAVIN.

WALTER

(Stepping out of elevator,
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.

WINONA

(turns circle, admiring
elevator.)

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

(elevator music plays)

Music from the ceiling. How lovely.

WINSLOW

(points to the button panel)

Fantabulous! Check out all the buttons.

(WINSLOW presses button. Door slides shut. Elevator hums to indicate movement. Moments later door opens.)

WINSLOW

Fantabulous! Our room even moves!

WHITNEY

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

WALTER

A mobile room with all the extras. I say we take this fine room for our family vacation. 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 van we drove to Alaska last summer. Two thousand miles...one month together.

WHITNEY

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

GAVIN

(rakes his 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

(shrugging again)

I'm not sure, ma'am.

WINSLOW

(pointing to button panel)

Fantabulous! Look at this tag on this wall.

WHITNEY

(looking at panel)

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

FOUR WILSONS

(reading tag)

Otis!

(Elevator door shuts. Lights fade.)

SCENE TWO:

Lights up. Elevator hums. Elevator set has revolved. Set side B. Interior is visible with doors closed in rear. WILSONS stand motionless in the middle of room.

WINONA

First things first. We must put Otis in order.

WALTER

(rolling up shirtsleeves)

Come on, family. Help me with the trunks.

(WILSONS push two trunks against elevator sides for seats and beds. Door slides open and ELDERLY COUPLE stand in the entrance holding suitcases.)

WINONA

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

WALTER

(to ELDERLY COUPLE)

Greetings, fellow travelers.

WINONA

(to ELDERLY 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 exits left. WINSLOW exits elevator and returns holding small table. He sets it in center of elevator.)

WINSLOW

Fantabulous! I found this table at the end of the hallway.

WHITNEY

And I know what we need next.

(WHITNEY exits elevator.
Returns with two folding
chairs and sets them behind
table.)

I found these in a closet.

WINONA

My turn.

(WINONA exits elevator.
Returns pushing housekeeping
cart full of linen.)

I don't think the room attendants would mind if we made up
our own beds today.

(WINONA grabs sheets and blankets off
cart and places them on one trunk.)

WALTER

Splendid! Now for the finishing touch.

(He opens a trunk and removes
framed needlepoint sampler
stitched with the words HOME
SWEAT HOME.)

Home sweat home!

WHITNEY

Not that old thing again. Must you hang it wherever we stay.

WINSLOW

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

(WALTER hangs sampler on wall.)

WALTER

(admiring the sampler)

Only the best for our 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 off wall.
Speaks into phone)

WALTER (CONT'D)

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 hungry an emergency...certainly, madam.

(hangs up phone. To family)

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

WINSLOW

(inspects the button panel)

The bottom button is marked L. I bet 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 goes to our lunch.

(WILSONS sit around table, WINONA and WALTER in chairs, WHITNEY and WINSLOW on trunks. Door opens. 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

(shrugs and wheels the cart into the elevator.)

Sure. Whatever.

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

FOUR WILSONS

Spaghetti!

WALTER

(to GAVIN)

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

GAVIN

Sure, Mr. Wilson.

(GAVIN steps out pushing cart. Elevator door slides shut. Elevator hums. WALTER starts dishing out spaghetti. Door opens to show ELDERLY COUPLE standing there. They exchange looks and door shuts. Elevator hum resumes. 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 turns toward the doorway.)

WALTER

(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 the 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 ground floor.

WALTER

Winslow, scoot over. Give our guest some room.

MR. BROWN

(nods and sits on the trunk
next to WINSLOW with his
briefcase on lap.)

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

(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 fad in stores.

WINSLOW

You mean like Pet rocks and virtual pets?

WHITNEY

Beanie dolls and Mexican jumping beans?

MR. BROWN

I've loaded all those fads on shelves, kids. Also super balls, super bubbles, super putty, and super squirt guns.

Fads come and go. Trouble is, once I get the stores filled with one item, I gotta start traveling again to fill them with another. One month smelly stickers are a hot item, the next month kids will only buy smelly pens.

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.

(Elevator door opens.)

WINSLOW

Well, we're here.

WHITNEY

Do you hav to go, Mr. Brown?

MR. BROWN

(stands and 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.

(WILSONS wave)

WALTER

Only the best for this family. Only the best will do.

WINONA

Stop in anytime. Guests are always welcome in Otis.

(Doors shut. Lights fade.)

SCENE THREE:

Lights up. Elevator had revolved to exterior view. Side A. Door opens in lobby. 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. GAVIN, head bowed, enters right and stand outside elevator. He is holding a bouquet of daffodils.

FOUR WILSONS

(to GAVIN)

Gavin!

WALTER

You look down in the dumps, young man. Come on in. Come on in.

GAVIN

(Steps into the elevator.
Looking dejected, he hands the
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 his 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?

(WILSONS look out elevator and wave.)

WINSLOW

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

GAVIN

(pulls 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)

Sure. A girl like Cathy wouldn't want to go on a date with someone like me, that's for sure. I'm just a bellhop, so 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.

(With downward gaze, GAVIN stands and steps out of elevator.)

WALTER

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

GAVIN

(shrugs)

Sure.

(Gavin exits right. Elevator door shuts. Lights fade.)

SCENE FOUR:

Lights up. Elevator has revolved to interior view. Side B. The pillows and blankets are spread out on the two trunks. WILSONS sit around table playing Pick-Up-Sticks. Elevator door opens. MRS. GOLDENGATE, an elderly society woman, dressed in white warm-ups, stands in entrance. She carries OUI-OUI, a white poodle.

OUI-OUI

(recorded dog yapping)

Yap! Yap! Yap!

MRS. GOLDENGATE

(Steps into elevator and 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 blue stick off pile)

WINSLOW

A blue one!

(Wilsons cheer)

WALTER

(to 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
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, I've 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 your pooch stay with us while you exercise, madam?

WINONA

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

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

MRS. GOLDENGATE

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

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

WINSLOW

(lifting red stick off pile)

A red one!

WALTER

(to MRS. GOLDENGATE)

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

(Door shuts. Elevator hums.)

MRS. GOLDENGATE

Oh, I wish I had time. As part of my fitness routine, I ran up the stairs, all thirty-four floors, to my penthouse and got dressed for dinner.

WINONA

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

(Door opens.)

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 and sits on trunk exhausted.)

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

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 hot 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!

(Doors shut. 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.

(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.)

WALTER

Time for bed, Wilsons. We have a big day tomorrow. Winslow, Whitney, help our guest to her room.

(WHITNEY, with 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 II

SCENE ONE:

Lights up. Elevator revolved to exterior view. Side A. ELDERLY COUPLE enter right, holding suitcases. Stand before elevator. Door opens, revealing WILSONS sitting around table. More flowers bouquets in vases fill room.

WALTER

(To ELDERLY COUPLE)

Top of the morning, folks!

(ELDERLY COUPLE exchange looks and exit right. JOE, 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 watchman here. 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.)

JOE

(stepping out)

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

(JOE exits right. GAVIN enters left pushing food cart, loaded with breakfast plates. Holds rose bouquet.)

FOUR WILSONS

Gavin!

WALTER

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

GAVIN

(Pushes cart into elevator.
Hands WINONA the flowers.)

Here, Mrs. Wilson.

WINONA

(taking flowers)

Oh, dear. Still have that problem, Gavin?

GAVIN

Sure do. And it's making me more miserable that 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 out of 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 I can't even remember what room ordered that breakfast I just left the Wilsons. This job sure can be confusing.

(Lights fade.)

SCENE TWO:

That evening. Lights up. Elevator revolved to interior view. Side B. FOUR WILSONS stand around room. Table is set with linen tablecloth, silver-covered plates, glasses, wine bottle, and candles. Door opens behind them and NATACHA, a waitress, enters elevator.

NATACHA

(in Italian accent.)

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 a button)

Up Otis goes.

(Door shuts. Elevator hums. Door opens and MR. BROWN is standing 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. MRS. GOLDENGATE stands there with 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. 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 the 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.
People 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!

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 blink. Elevator walls rattle.)

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

MRS. GOLDENGATE

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

(Lights out. Moments later, a candle on table lights up 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 headed, 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, CATHY, and NATACHA 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 comes 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, the night watchman. 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. Side A. Door closed. A DO NOT DISTURB sign 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. WALTER reads the newspaper. WINONA sketches. WINSLOW and WHITNEY lie trunks reading books.)

WALTER

(snapping his 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. Why'd you pick this place, man?

WOMAN KIDNAPPER

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

MAN TWO

(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. 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 the door and look out. GAVIN, grinning, appears in doorway. Whistling, he enters elevator. Combs hair in mirror.)

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

And Otis isn't even going 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 shuts. Elevator hums. Door opens. 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 peculiar. I watch them stop at the gift counter next to my stall. And guess what? They bought three tooth brushes.

WHITNEY

Even more mysterious.

(CATHY leaves 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.

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.

WINSLOW

And they only had one trunk and ordered three breakfasts.

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 couple's door and ask if they have Lizzy Chronicle with them.

WALTER

(pulling suspenders)

No, we need a plan. How else can we find out if Lizzy is on the sixteenth floor?

(Lights fade.)

SCENE FOUR:

Interior elevator view. Side B.
Lights up. Elevator door opens. GAVIN
enters, pushing food cart. WILSONS sit
around table.

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 steaks and a hamburger.

WHITNEY

More mystery. I'll bet anything that hamburger is for Lizzy
Chronicle.

GAVIN

(raking fingers through hair)

Lizzy Chronicle? You sure don't mean the girl who was
kidnapped this morning.

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 kidnapers who kidnapped that kid. Young man, would you
mind stalling that room service delivery a minute? I now
have a plan to find out if our suspicions are correct.

WINONA

Really, Walter.

WINSLOW

Tell us, Dad.

WHITNEY

What's the deal?

WALTER

Here's what I was thinking.

(holds up one 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? You'd sure be in a tight spot.

WALTER

Young man, 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 paper 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

WINSLOW

(presses button)

Up we go.

(Door shuts. Elevator hums. Door opens.)

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 door and look right. Moments later, GAVIN enters right without cart. Steps into elevator.)

GAVIN
(shrugs)
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. Light up.)

WILSONS and GAVIN sit around table
playing Pick-Up Sticks.)

WINSLOW

(holding up yellow stick)

A yellow one!

(ALL cheer. Lights dim. Moments later
lights up. Door opens.)

WALTER

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

GAVIN

(shrugs and stands)

Sure, sir.

(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.

(Door shuts)

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 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. Please connect me with hotel security!

(Lights fade)

SCENE FIVE:

Elevator in exterior view. Side A.
 Lights up. Elevator door opens. JOE
 stands in elevator entrance holding the
 MAN and WOMAN KIDNAPERS, who are
 handcuffed. LIZZY CHRONICLE stands
 besides them. WILSONS stand in 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!

JOE

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

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

LIZZY

(steps forward)

What took everyone so long to rescue me? That was sooooo
 boring. Nothing to do. No cell phone. No TV. No video
 games. No DVD's. And if I see one more hamburger, I'll
 barf.

(steps from elevator)

LIZZY

Booooooring!

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

WALTER

(holds 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. 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 runs hand over hair.)

GAVIN

Cathy! Hi!

(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.

(MR. BROWN enters right, holding 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 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?

WINONA

We never know where we're going until we get there.

WINSLOW

Maybe we can stay in one of those fantabulous little cabins I saw at the end of the Golden Gate Bridge. People drive by and hand money to the people living inside.

WHITNEY

But I hope we can stay in one of those tiny cabins I've seen perched on tall towers high upon mountaintops. Their walls are glass and they must offer spectacular views of the forests surrounding them.

WALTER

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

ALL

Hear! Hear!

WALTER

Ready family! Forward we go!

(GAVIN exits right pushing trunks.
HOTEL MANAGER and JOE enter left.)

JOE

Come again, soon, Wilsons.

HOTEL MANAGER

The Otis Room will always be available to you.

MR. BROWN

So long, Elevator Family.

CATHY

(waving)

Bye! Bye!

MRS. GOLDENGATE

(waving)

Ta-taaa! Say au revoir Oui-Oui.

OUI-OUI

Yap! Yap! Yap!

(Marching in single file, WALTER,
WINONA, WINSLOW, and WHITNEY exit
right. Elevator door shuts. Lights
fade. End of Play)