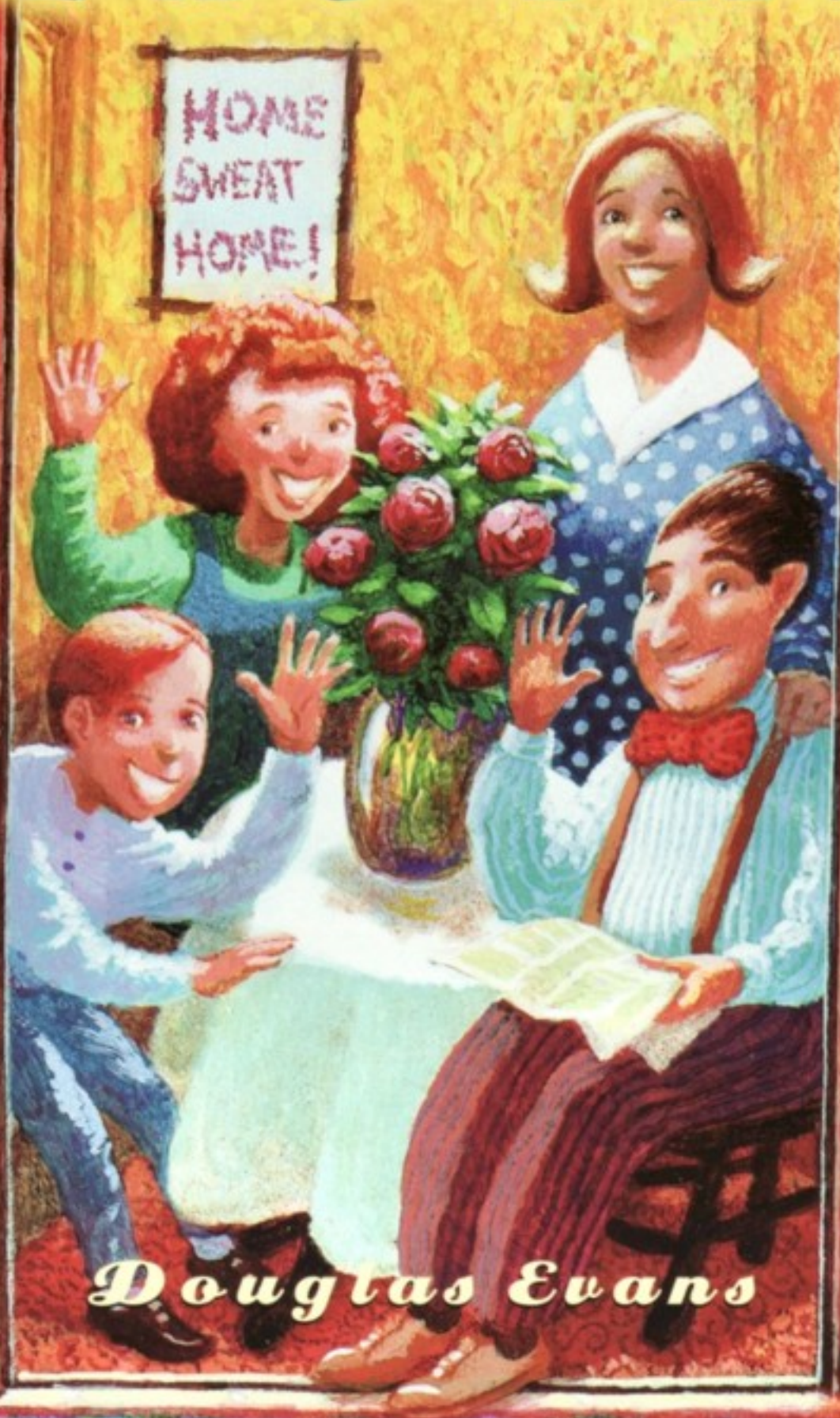


• THE •



ELEVATOR FAMILY



Douglas Evans



The doors slid open. The four Wilsons stepped into the little room. They dropped their suitcases and backpacks on the floor.

“Splendid! A gem of a place,” said Walter Wilson. “The kind woman at the front desk said the hotel is full, but here’s this first-rate room. And it appears to be vacant.” He pulled out his suspenders with his thumbs

and snapped them on his broad chest. "Only the best for this family. Nothing less will do."

Winona Wilson, Walter's wife, turned a complete circle. "A full-length mirror, a telephone, wall-to-wall carpeting. And listen." Soft marimba music floated down from the ceiling. "How lovely!"

"And look at all those buttons!" said Winslow Wilson, age ten. He pressed one button marked Close, and the doors slid shut. "Fantabulous!"

The little room vibrated slightly. A high-pitched hum came from overhead. "We're moving," said Winslow's twin sister, Whitney. "We're gliding upward. I wonder where we're going."

Walter crossed his fingers over his sizable belly. "A mobile room with all these extras," he said. "I say we take this fine room for our vacation. I say we move right in."

"Hear! Hear!" said the others.

The doors slid open. In the hallway stood

an elderly couple holding suitcases. They remained still and mute while the four Wilsons waved to them.

“Greetings, fellow travelers,” Walter called out.

“I’m so sorry,” said Winona. “We just decided to take this room.”

“But I think the room next door is vacant,” said Winslow.

“It was on the first floor, but it might have moved by now,” said Whitney.

The doors shut and the room started to drop. It opened again in the hotel’s vast marble lobby. In the doorway stood a teenage boy wearing a wrinkled red jacket and a white shirt buttoned too tightly around his neck. Behind him stood two trunks.

“Splendid, young man,” said Walter. “I wondered where you went. Wheel those trunks right in here. We’ll take this room for three nights if it’s available.”

The teenager pushed the trunks forward.

For the Wilson family, only the best will do! So when they arrive at the San Francisco Hotel and discover that there are no regular rooms available, they decide to stay in the place that suits them best of all: a room that has its ups and its downs—a room called Otis. The Wilsons check in to the hotel elevator!

For three whole days, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson and their ten-year-old twins, Winslow and Whitney, ride to all the floors, happily greeting startled guests who happen to drop in. There's a weary traveling salesman; a British rock group with a funny name; a lovesick bellhop; a society lady and her pampered poodle; and a slew of other surprising visitors. These "fantabulous" guests make the Wilsons' stay unforgettable, but it's the zany but compassionate Wilsons who'll be remembered long after they check out of Otis.

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