

CHRISTMAS on an Elevator

By Myron Carter

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CHRISTMAS ON AN ELEVATOR

-2-

STORY OF THE PLAY

An assorted group of people are more than a little tense when the elevator they're on gets stuck just as the mall is closing on Christmas Eve. But their forced confinement makes them think more seriously about the "mindless celebration" that they've been rushing through, often with some resentment. The more they discuss the real meaning of the season, the more their hearts change. As they are rescued, they realize that although they may never see each other again, they will remember this Christmas forever.

CHRISTMAS ON AN ELEVATOR

-3-

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(8 adults, 1 child)

MAN: Wants to get home to his family.

LADY: Mother of the child.

CHILD: 8-year old girl.

YOUNG MAN: Small part, can double as VOICE.

SHORT LADY: A talkative passenger.

OLD LADY: A wise passenger.

WOMAN: The most anxious and irritable.

PERSON: Overloaded with packages.

VOICE: Unseen rescuer.

CHRISTMAS ON AN ELEVATOR

-4-

Setting

An elevator in a multi-level shopping center on Christmas Eve. The cast can simply act like they are confined in a small space or an "elevator" can be constructed with three 8-foot walls. One side wall should curve around DS as if the button panel were behind it.

Props

Umbrella, purse, and shopping bags for Lady, purse with file inside for Short Lady; bulky packages for Person; watch and purse for Woman; handkerchief in purse or pocket for Old Lady.

CHRISTMAS ON AN ELEVATOR

-5-

CHRISTMAS ON AN ELEVATOR

(AT RISE: The MAN is pushing a button, getting ready to close the elevator door. The LADY is rushing to get to the elevator, pulling her CHILD with her and carrying several shopping bags, a purse, and umbrella.)

LADY: Hold that door.

MAN: *(Mimes holding back the door.)* I've got it.

LADY: Didn't think I was going to make it.

MAN: Lot of people trying to get home early today.

LADY: I guess that's what you have to expect on Christmas Eve.

MAN: Ground floor?

LADY: Yes, please. *(The MAN pushes a button and THEY stand quietly, appearing to look up at the floor indicator LIGHT above the door. We hear a soft BELL as if the elevator has stopped. and the doors have opened. A YOUNG MAN and a SHORT LADY get on.)*

MAN: Ground floor? *(The next two lines are spoken on top of each other.)*

YOUNG MAN: No, I've got to -

SHORT LADY: Yeah, I want to get off in the lobby.

YOUNG MAN: Push number four please.

(Again ALL appear to watch the floor indicator light. After a moment we hear a soft bell and the YOUNG MAN says, "My floor," and gets off. AN OLD LADY and a WOMAN get on. The MAN does not hit any more buttons because he assumes everybody is going to the lobby. The door closes and after a moment we hear the soft bell again. The elevator has stopped at number two.)

WOMAN: Second floor? We're never going to get home at this rate. I wish there was a way we could just skip some of these floors.

CHRISTMAS ON AN ELEVATOR

-6-

(A PERSON with numerous packages gets on, crowding everybody in. EVERYBODY gives a little groan. The elevator takes off again, but it stops between the first and second floors.)

MAN: (Expecting to get off.) Wonder why the door doesn't open.

LADY: Try pushing that button. (The MAN tries.)

MAN: Hmmm. Doesn't work.

CHILD: Mama, the light isn't working.

LADY: Yes it is.

CHILD: Not that one.

LADY: Which light?

CHILD: See up there over the door.

MAN: You're right. It isn't working.

PERSON: Maybe the power went off.

SHORT LADY: Yeah, the music stopped.

WOMAN: If the power went off, why are the lights still working?

PERSON: Maybe they're on a different circuit.

WOMAN: Different circuit? How would you know?

MAN: It's possible.

WOMAN: I was speaking to this young lady (or man.).

MAN: Sorry. (Mumbling.) Try being nice to some people and they treat you like dirt.

SHORT LADY: Try pushing that button.

MAN: This one?

SHORT LADY: Yeah. (MAN does.)

MAN: Nothing.

WOMAN: Wouldn't you know it? What good is an emergency button if it doesn't work?

SHORT LADY: Try the white button.

MAN: (Trying.) Still nothing.

WOMAN: This is just great.

SHORT LADY: What do you think happened?

MAN: I don't know.

SHORT LADY: Well, whatever it is I need to get home.

WOMAN: And I don't? I've got over twenty people due at my house in an hour. I don't need this to happen now.

End of Freeview

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