

Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator

SIDE 4 – Astronaut Shuckworth, Ground Control

ASTRONAUT SHUCKWORTH (*cheerily*). Attention all passengers... this is your captain speaking! In exactly one hour, we will linkup with the Ye Olde Royal Space Hotel, your happy home for the next ten years. (*Aside to the audience.*) Wait a minute, did I say ten years? Err... ten years. And, if you look straight ahead, you can catch your first glimpse of this magnificent spaceship. There it is, folks! Quite a sight, isn't it? Wait a minute, that isn't our Space Hotel. Hello, Ye Olde Ground Control! There's something crazy going on up here. There's a thing orbiting ahead of us and it's not like any spaceship I've ever seen, that's for sure!

GROUND CONTROL. Yes, Shuckworth. Ground Control here. What are you seeing? Describe it at once!

SHUCKWORTH. That's a strange name, Mr. Control.

GROUND CONTROL. Never mind that, what is out there?

SHUCKWORTH. It's... it's... it's all made of glass and it's kind of square and it's got people inside it! They're all floating about like fish in a tank!

GROUND CONTROL. What kind of fish?

SHUCKWORTH. What kind of fish? I don't know... mackerel?

GROUND CONTROL. Mackerel? Is that a salt water or fresh water fish?

SHUCKWORTH. I don't know. Fresh? Wait.... No, it's a salt water fish. Yeah, salt water.

GROUND CONTROL. How many astronauts on board?

SHUCKWORTH. Well, they can't possibly be astronauts.

GROUND CONTROL. What makes you say that?

SHUCKWORTH. Because there's a funny little guy with a pointed beard wearing a black top hat and a plum-colored velvet tailcoat and bottle-green trousers...

GROUND CONTROL. Don't be a fool, Shuckworth! Pull yourself together, man! This is serious! Don't goof around. Have you been hitting the apple sauce?

SHUCKWORTH. Err.... No. But, speaking of apple sauce. There's also a little boy about ten years old.

GROUND CONTROL *(shouting)*. That can't be a boy, you clown! That has to be an astronaut in disguise! Pull yourself together. It's a tiny astronaut dressed up as a little boy!

SHUCKWORTH. And, there's a really old man there too, he may be 120 years old, no maybe 150.

GROUND CONTROL *(shouting)*. You've gone mad, Shuckworth! You're fired! Clear out your desk and vacate the premises *(Shuckworth is puzzled, he can't leave the capsule)*.

SHUCKWORTH. But you guys have all the scientific detection instruments. Who are they?

GROUND CONTROL. Who are they? Who are they? *(Puzzled himself)*. How in the world should I know that? You're the one who is up there. Geez. Are they heading for our Space Hotel?

SHUCKWORTH. That's exactly where they are heading. I can see the Space Hotel now about a mile ahead.

GROUND CONTROL. Wait a minute... *(yelling)* They're going to capture it from us! It's ours! Not theirs! This is a desperate situation!