



Sterlington Stairlift Stories for Children

Sterlington and the Burglars

Curvy Flo, Sterlington, and Stan the man with the van had become good friends.

There was also a stairlift on a straight staircase not far away, in a great big house called "Little Oak". That stairlift didn't have a name. It had a number but the other stairlifts couldn't remember numbers, so they called it Little Oak after the house.

Stan the man with the van didn't look after Little Oak because it wasn't on his list, but Sterlington and Curvy Flo found out about it through the night-time vibrations that stairlifts used for talking to each other.

The old lady who lived in the Little Oak house got up one night because she couldn't remember whether or not she'd locked the front door.

She was only half awake and fumbled around a bit, but found the key in her pyjama jacket pocket as she was riding down the stairs on Little Oak.

But as she was getting off the seat she dropped the key onto the rail that Little Oak went up and down on. "Oh dear!" she said. "I am a clumsy old granny, what on earth am I going to do with me!"

She looked around on the stairs, bent down and looked under Little Oak, looked under the telephone table and by the coat rack, she even looked in her pyjama pocket in case it had bounced back in there! But she couldn't find it.

The old lady was a bit deaf, otherwise she might have heard the key when it landed on the rail with a very loud 'ding!'. But she didn't.

She was also still drowsy because she had just woken up and had just got out of bed. If she had been wide awake she might just have heard the key land on the rail with a very loud 'ding!'. But she didn't.

If she had put her hearing aid in her ear she might just have heard the key when it landed on the rail with a very loud 'ding!'. But she didn't.

So there she was, very late at night, without her key without her hearing aid, without knowing if the front door was locked properly, a bit deaf, and still very sleepy.

"Oh well", she mumbled to herself, "No use worrying about it now, the best thing is to go back to bed!".

She got onto Little Oak's very comfortable seat, which had lovely soft material, moved the switch to go up the stairs and waited for the motor to start. '

Click' went the switch, 'whirr' went the motor in its soft, friendly way, "crrruunnnccchhhh!!!" went the key, which jammed under poor old Little Oak the stairlift.

'Jerk' went the seat as it stopped. "What in the name of size ten knitting needles was that?" said the old lady, who was suddenly woken right up.

She might have been a bit deaf, she might have been rather old, she might have needed a stairlift to go up and down the stairs, she might have forgotten to put her hearing aid in her ear when she got out of bed, she might even have forgotten to lock the front door properly.

But she was still a sensible lady who knew it was best not to get upset if things went wrong, so she stayed sitting on Little Oak's very comfortable seat, which had lovely soft material, and thought what to do next.

After a while she got off and had a look to try to find out what had gone wrong. She remembered that one of her relations, little Godfrey, had bought her a torch for her birthday and she had put it in the cupboard in the hall.

So she went and got it, and tried it, and it worked. It worked because little Godfrey checked it all before he gave it to her and made sure it had the very best batteries so it would always shine for her when she needed it.

The old lady sat down on the floor and shone her bright torch, which little Godfrey had give her, and looked around, and up and down, and on top, and underneath, and all the places around Little Oak that she could possible see from where she sat. But she couldn't see what was wrong.

She stood up and got onto Little Oak's very comfortable seat, which had lovely soft material, and tried again to go up the stairs.

But Little Oak wouldn't move up. So she tried to go down the little bit that Little Oak the stairlift had moved before the crunch.

Yes! it moved backwards just a little bit. She tried up and she tried down but it was the same each time, it went up just a little bit, down just a little bit, but wouldn't go any further.

So she got off, switched off the electricity that Little Oak used and had another look underneath. That was when she saw it!

The key was jammed between the rail and the bit underneath Little Oak that moves it along the rail.

She knew it was too hard for her to get out and decided to leave it until the next morning and phone for help.

Without the stairlift to take her upstairs she couldn't sleep in her own bed, so she got a great big blanket from the cupboard in the hall where she also kept the torch that little Godfrey gave her, then she went into the front room, snuggled up on the big settee and went fast asleep.

Sterlington and Curvy Flo had heard the "crrruunnnccchhhh!!".

It sent a special vibration that went all along the rail under Little Oak, through the air, through the window on the landing, through the air in the street, past the trees and lamp posts and telegraph poles, through the windows of the other houses, through the air in the houses, along the rails of the other stairlifts, until every stairlift for miles around could feel it.

"Ouch!" said Sterlington.

"Double ouch!" said Curvy Flo.

"I'll bet that hurt!" they said together.

They didn't know it was a key or how it happened but to a stairlift a crunch as loud as that was like hearing a baby cry and they knew something was very wrong.

Whilst the old lady was fast asleep on the big settee in the front room two men were walking very quietly along the road looking for things to steal.

They knew some of the people in the road lived alone and sometimes some of the people went away to stay with friends and left their house with nobody at home.

So the two men, who were called burglars, walked along the road, hid in shadows, and tried the front doors and back doors of the houses to see if they opened.

When they got to Little Oak, the old lady's house, they tried the front door very, very quietly and very, very carefully, and, you know what? That old lady had forgotten to lock the door and it opened.

It opened very quietly, without a creak or a squeak, or a knock, or a bang or any other kind of sound.

Little Godfrey had an oil can which his dad gave him for a present, and when he visited the old lady's house little Godfrey went around oiling hinges and locks and catches and latches and hatches and pulleys and other things that he thought needed some oil. He was a very kind chap and wanted things to work properly.

Little Godfrey even tried to oil Little Oak's rail one day, but the old lady said it didn't need any oil, and the oil would drip onto her lovely red stair carpet and make it look all patchy.

But she let him oil the hinges and the lock and the latch and the catch on the front door, so when the two men tried the door, it opened without a sound.

They didn't know the old lady was asleep on the big settee in the front room.

The old lady didn't know there were two men called burglars in her house, because she was fast asleep and she didn't have her hearing aid in her ear, and she was very tired because of all the bending around looking for the key with the bright light from the torch that little Godfrey gave her on her birthday.

The burglars went up the stairs very slowly and brushed past the rail that Little Oak went up and down on. They didn't think anybody knew they were there!

But those two silly burglars didn't know about stairlift vibrations!

As their trousers brushed past the rail, all the way from the bottom of the stairs, all the way to the top, one after the other, one leg at a time, the tiny vibrations went all along the rail under Little Oak, through the air, through the window on the landing, through the air in the street, past the trees and lamp posts and telegraph poles, through the windows of the other houses, through the air in the houses, along the rails of the other stairlifts, until every stairlift for miles around could feel it.

"Something wrong there!" said Sterlington to Curvy Flo in his special stairlift voice.

"That was leg vibration we felt from Little Oak's rail, but the old lady who lives there can't walk up the stairs, so it can't be her. Sound like Little Oak needs some help".

"Quite right!" said Curvy Flo. "First there was that dreadful 'crrruunnnccchhhh!', then Little Oak was going up and down just a little bit at a time, which was very, very unusual, now there seems to be someone walking up the stairs!

Definitely something wrong there, what can we do about it?"

"Buzz all the others!" said Sterlington, tell them what we heard.

So Curvy Flo and Sterlington sent vibrations in special stairlift language to all the other stairlifts in the town and asked for help.

"I'll wake up Stan the man with the van", said Mini at the telephone exchange. "I've got a special vibration that makes his bleeper go off if someone's stairlift breaks down.

"But Little Oak isn't on his list" said Curvy Flo.

"It doesn't matter" said Mini. "I'll give him the number for a new job and with any luck he'll go there and see what's wrong".

"OK" said Curvy Flo, "try it, we may be lucky!".

Buffalo Brook was the name of a big, strong, stairlift that carried a wheelchair up and down the stairs for a man who lived near the railway station. "I'll check my remote controller" said Buffalo. "Sometimes I can play tricks with it".

A few minute later Buffalo Brook sent a message to the other stairlifts and said he could make the burglar alarm go off at the house two doors away from Little Oak.

"Shall I give it a try?" he asked them.

The replies came all at the same time. One hundred and fifty seven stairlifts sent their special vibrations and it almost shook Buffalo Brook right off his rail.

"DO IT!!!" they said.

So he did. The alarm went "ding a ding a ding a ding ...!" and echoed through the quiet road. Lights started to appear as people were woken up and looked out of their windows.

The light in the Police station control room went on and the policeman listened to the message "burglar alarm at 'The Barn', Stanhope Lane", "burglar alarm at 'The Barn', Stanhope Lane, "burglar alarm at 'The Barn. Stanhope Lane' ... over and over.

He sent the message to a police car that was nearest to The Barn and off it went to see what was wrong.

The two burglars were in one of the old lady's bedrooms looking for necklaces and things to steal when the alarm at The Barn went off.

They didn't look out of the window in case somebody saw them. They didn't go downstairs in case somebody came into the house. They didn't go into any other rooms, just in case somebody appeared.

They didn't know what all the noise was about, but they didn't think anybody knew they were there, so they just kept quiet and stayed very still in the corner, by the side of a big wardrobe.

All the time the old lady was fast asleep on the big settee in the front room, without her hearing aid in her ear.

The police car stopped outside The Barn and two policemen had a look around. The people who lived there were away on holiday but the man next door had a key and let the policemen in.

The two policemen couldn't find anything wrong so they turned the burglar alarm off and locked the house up again.

They thought the alarm might have been set off by a cat or something and were just going to drive to the Police Station when Stan the man with the van arrived and stopped at Little Oak.

He saw the police car and thought the policemen were just having a look around as part of their job, so he went to the front door of Little Oak and had just realised it was open when the two policemen walked up to him.

"Could you tell us what you are doing here?" one of the policemen asked.

"I got a call to fix a broken stairlift" said Stan the man with the van.

"A bit strange at this time of the night!" said the policeman.

"That's what I thought" said Stan the man with the van. "But some people with stairlifts are awake all night and things can go wrong so I have bleeper to wake me up, then I can go and check".

"We had a burglar alarm go off just along the road a little while ago" said the policeman". "There's something not quite right here, so we'd better have a look around this house too. Wait in your van please!"

So Stan the man with the van went back to his van and waited very patiently.

One policeman went to the back of the house and the one went in through the front door.

The two burglars stayed very still.

They heard someone come in through the front door and they looked out of the back window to see if they could escape, but there was a policeman in the back garden, so they stayed in the bedroom and hid by the side of the wardrobe again.

They didn't know the policeman had seen one of them looking out of the window, and they didn't see him quietly walk round to the front of the house again and go inside to help his friend.

They didn't see Stan the man with the van watching the house from the front and they didn't know that altogether there were five people in the house.

They didn't know Little Oak the stairlift had sent signals, and they didn't know that one hundred and fifty seven other stairlifts knew something was going on in the town.

The two policemen discovered three other people in the house - the two burglars and the old lady who was still fast asleep on the big settee in the front room.

Oh yes, they also found a cat who had quietly padded in because someone left the front door open!

The policemen called for a van to take the burglars away to the Police Station and then they let Stan the man with the van into the house to look at the stairlift.

He quickly found what was wrong and managed to pull the key out with a special stairlift mending tool. He tidied up the rail and checked that Little Oak was alright then tested it by going up and down the stairs a few times.

Stan the man with the van was quite clever and somehow knew that stairlifts could all talk to each other. So when he finished his mending job he got a screwdriver with a plastic handle and gently tapped on the bottom of the rail "tap, tap-tap, tap-tap".

The vibrations from his tapping went all along the rail under Little Oak, through the air, through the window on the landing, through the air in the street, past the trees and lamp posts and telegraph poles, through the windows of the other houses, through the air in the houses, along the rails of the other stairlifts, until every stairlift for miles around could feel it - and they all knew everything was alright!

The two policemen didn't want to wake up the old lady but they found a note near the telephone with numbers of people to call if something was wrong.

So they called the old lady's daughter and she came round to look after the house until the next morning.

When the old lady woke up it was a lovely sunny day and as she rubbed her eyes she saw her daughter there with a nice cup of tea and a slice of buttered toast.

"What a lovely surprise she said, but what are you doing here?"

"You just enjoy your tea, mum" said her daughter. "Then I'll tell you all about it!".

When she had heard what had happened the old lady said "what a silly old twinkle I am, what on earth am I going to do about me!"

Just then there was knock on the front door.

The old lady went to open it, with her daughter close behind her. Standing on the doorstep with a great big smile on his face was little Godfrey.

He had his oil can in one hand and in the other hand was a brand new door key!

The End

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