

# Outings

## In Search of *Eloise*

"I am six...I am Eloise...I am a city child...I live at the Plaza" declares Kay Thompson's *Eloise*. My daughters identify with Eloise's imagination, independence, and occasional naughtiness. After years of visualizing Eloise scampering through the Plaza, we recently spent an afternoon there searching for her. This is what we found:

Eloise spends "an awful lot of time in the lobby", so we started our adventure by searching under the lobby table, and near the house phones where Eloise likes to "make several calls". That slip of a girl was nowhere in sight.

The hotel staff was extremely gracious during our search. The reception desk attendant told us: "Eloise was being mischievous, but she'll probably pass by in an hour." The bell captain thought, "she is probably taking a nap," and noted if he "hears water pouring down the mail drop outside the Luggage Room," she is on the fifth floor.

Amazingly, at the concierge desk we touched two pairs of Eloise's party shoes: one black patent leather, and another red. The concierge asked us to tell Eloise the shoes were waiting at the desk. A catering employee thought Eloise was doing homework. Another employee "saw Eloise playing a prank in the store", but the store assistant said, "It has been so cold," he hadn't seen her. Eloise wasn't in the package room or the men's room, either.

We rode the elevators and roamed several floors since Eloise is "apt to be on any floor at any time". A manager revealed he had had to reset all the elevator buttons that Eloise had broken. We couldn't access the top floor where Eloise lives, and just missed her near the fifth floor mail chute.

We next skibbled to the Palm Court for afternoon tea. Eloise has "lunch at the Palm Court if it is too rainy" and we hoped to spot her, although it was past lunchtime and sunny. Our banquette faced Hilary Knight's oil painting of Eloise in her trademark white shirt and black pleated skirt. According to the maitre' d, "Eloise likes to hide under the tables and steal scones." She is usually "bouncing all over the place," added our waiter. My older daughter then declared: "I love scones so much, I hope Eloise doesn't skibble by and steal mine, but I would give her half."

After tea, we scampered to the Terrace Room, where "those debutantes are prancing around". We peeked into the Grand Ballroom, the site of an "enormous



Zoe and Jessie with the concierge  
and Eloise's shoes

Photo: Melissa Stoffer



*Eloise, as she appears at The Plaza*

or Skipperdee the turtle, but an employee told us he sees Eloise's pigeons flying around her bathroom window. And we didn't visit every room that Eloise described, although we saw most. As Eloise admits, her "day is rawther full", and we finally had to go home.

Next time, we'll continue to search for the elusive Eloise by checking into the Plaza, because Oooooooooo, we "absolutely love The Plaza". Or perhaps we'll travel to Paris or Moscow, where Eloise later goes. As the girl herself precociously points out: "There's so much to do."

### Further Information:

**The Eloise Books** – *Eloise, Eloise in Paris, Eloise at Christmastime, Eloise in Moscow,* and *Eloise's Guide to Life, or How to Eat, Dress, Travel, Behave, and Stay Six Forever!* (by Kay Thompson, with drawings by Hilary Knight); and *Eloise Takes a Bawth*, by Thompson, Knight and editor Mart Crowley.

**The Young Plaza Ambassadors** — Try the "Eloise Tea and Social Skills Program" and the "Eloise Sleepover Weekend at the Plaza", which includes an Eloise tour and tea. (212) 546-5495 or [www.plazaypa.com](http://www.plazaypa.com)

**Afternoon Tea** — Monday-Saturday, 3:45-6pm, Sunday 4-6pm. Fifth Avenue at Central Park South, (212) 759-3000 or [www.Fairmont.com](http://www.Fairmont.com)

**Shopping for Eloise items** — The Plaza Gift Shop, (212) 546-5375; FAO Schwarz, 767 Fifth Avenue, (212) 644-9400; and E.A.T. Gifts, 1062 Madison Avenue, (212) 861-2544; also [www.Eloisewebsite.com](http://www.Eloisewebsite.com)

affair" and the "Venetian Masked Ball". We also skibbled into the Baroque Room. We didn't see broken mints in the Oak Room, but the coat check attendant told us we "should come back in the morning."

Although we tried to recreate Eloise's life, her motto is "getting bored is not allowed", so there were some things we didn't do. We didn't run down the hall and slomp our feet against the woodwork, skidder sticks along the walls, comb our hair with a fork, have temper tantrums and hide under the table, become nuisances in the lobby, skibble up and down the stairs, pour water down the mail chute, order room service, or do cartwheels. We also didn't flood the hotel as Eloise did in the *Bawth* book, although my younger daughter continually looked for leaks on the ceiling.

We never saw Weenie the dog,