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In this chapter from **The Catcher in the Rye**, the narrator, Holden Caulfield, experiences a moment of relief upon returning home, as the usual elevator attendant, Pete, is absent. Instead, he encounters a new, somewhat naïve elevator attendant. Holden cleverly convinces him to take him upstairs under the guise of being the Dicksteins' nephew, demonstrating his adeptness at manipulation. Once he exits the elevator, he feels excitement and determination, aware of the need to avoid his parents before reconnecting with his younger sister, Phoebe.

As he makes his way stealthily through the dark foyer—a space filled with an unfamiliar but distinctly homely smell—he recalls the quietness of their home, where the maid's partial deafness allows him some leeway to move unnoticed. He notes the peculiarities of his family, asserting that his mother has incredibly acute hearing, contrasting with his father's seemingly heavy slumber.

Upon reaching D.B.'s room, where Phoebe is supposed to be, he finds it empty. He recalls that she often sleeps there when her brother is away, relishing the larger space. When he finally turns on the desk lamp, he admires Phoebe's sleeping form, noting the innocence of children contrasted with adults. His mood lifts as he observes her tidy belongings and is reminded of his mother's good taste in clothing.

He finds Phoebe's school notebooks, which showcase her youthful creativity—an amalgamation of schoolwork and personal thoughts, which he finds amusing and endearing. Eventually, he wakes her gently, and they share heartfelt conversation. Phoebe's can-do spirit is evident when she excitedly announces her role in a school play, titled "A Christmas Pageant for Americans," where she plays Benedict Arnold. Her enthusiasm is contagious, and Holden feels a sense of peace, temporarily forgetting the chaos of his own life.

The chapter highlights the strong bond between Holden and Phoebe, revealing Holden's protective instincts, as well as his desire to escape from the troubles of adulthood, represented by his wish to retreat to a ranch in Colorado. Their exchange underscores a mix of carefree childhood innocence and Holden's deep-seated struggles, creating a poignant portrait of familial love and the pressures of growing up.