



Three PARENT TRAP movies are part of the LVCA's August, 2014 dvd donations to the Hugh Stoupe Memorial Library of the Heritage United Methodist Church of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Below are Kino Ken's reviews of those three films.

I. THE PARENT TRAP United States 1961 color 129 minutes
Walt Disney Productions Producer: George Golitzen

14 of a possible 20 points

*** 1/2 of a possible *****

Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance

(j) designates juvenile performer

Points:

- 1 Direction: David Swift
- 2 Editing: Philip W. Anderson
- 1 Cinematography: Lucien Ballard
- 2 Lighting
 - Special Visual Effects: Ub Iwerks*, Bob Broughton
- 1 Screenplay: David Swift, based on the novel
DAS DOPPELTE LOTTCHEN by Erich Kastner
- 1 Music: Paul Smith Orchestrations: Franklyn Marks
Songs: "Let's Get Together", "The Parent Trap" and
"For Now, For Always" by Richard and Robert Sherman
- 2 Art Direction: Carroll Clark, Robert Clatworthy
Set Decoration: Hal Gausman, Emile Kuri
Costume Design: Bill Thomas
Make-up: Pat McNally
Animation (opening credits): T. Hee, Bill Justice, Xavier Atencio
- 1 Sound: Robert Cook (Supervisor), Dean Thomas

1 Cast: Hayley Mills* (j) (Susan Evers / Sharon McKendrick),
Maureen O'Hara (Maggie McKendrick, mom),
Brian Keith* (Mitch Evers, dad), Susan Henning (j) (Hayley's double),
Charles Ruggles (Charles McKendrick, maternal grandfather),
Una Merkel (Verbena, Mitch's housekeeper / cook),
Leo G. Carroll* (Rev. Dr. Mosby), Joanna Barnes* (Vicky Robinson),
Cathleen Nesbit (Louise McKendrick, maternal grandmother),
Ruth McDevitt (Miss Inch, camp supervisor), Crahan Denton
(Hecky, Mitch's handyman), Linda Watkins
(Edna Robinson, Vicky's mother), Nancy Kulp
(Miss Grunecker, Miss Inch's assistant), Frank De Vol
(Mr. Eaglewood, Boy's Camp supervisor), Kay Cole (j)
(Betsy, Sharon's Camp Inch roommate), John Mills
(Mitch Evers' Golf Caddy), Irene Tedrow
(Mrs. Lockness, housekeeper for the McKendricks),
Lynette Winter (j) (Ursula, Camp Inch roommate)

2 Creativity

14 total points

In 1962, the Walt Disney Studio released its first film adaptation of German author Erich Kastner's *DAS DOPPELTE LOTTCHEN*, a novel originally published by Atrium Verlag A.G. of Zurich, Switzerland in 1950, though copyrighted in 1949 and 1951 by Atrium Press Ltd., as well as by the author himself in 1950. *DAS DOPPELTE LOTTCHEN* concerned the schemes of two twin girls, Lisa Palfy from Vienna, Austria and Lottie Horn from Munich, Germany, separated while still toddlers, to wrangle their way back into being a single unified family. It seemed each divorced parent had separately decided to send his or her custodial child to the same Swiss summer camp. Thanks, mom and dad. When these two nine-year-olds discover they were born the same day in Linz and look identical except for hairstyles, Lottie and Lisa confront a previously hidden truth. They descend from the same mother and father. Yet each has only met half her parents. Something must be done about that. What if Lisa goes to Munich wearing

Lottie's clothes and Lottie visits Vienna dressed in Lisa's? By comparing notes about hometowns, parental habits, rooms, friends, and preferences, each just might fool an unfamiliar guardian who hadn't encountered her for seven years.

Why had the adults split anyway? Perhaps Lottie and Lisa could clear up that mystery also. Maybe the girls could even reconnect estranged progenitors. Adventure, anyone?

Complications ensue when the masquerading Lottie in Vienna finds the unfamiliar woman sitting next to her at a performance her father is conducting seems to be as keen on watching him as she herself. Who is this mysterious female? Why can't she take her eyes off papa?

Over in Munich, Lisa proves to be a cooking disaster, astonishing her mom with unusual ineptitude. A few weeks away at summer camp and she forgets everything practiced at home? How odd.

Through letter exchanges secretly handled by mailings to and from post offices, mischievous sisters keep each other informed until pushy Irene Gerlach's marriage proposal to Mr. Palfy drives sensitive Lottie, role-playing tomboy Lisa, first to feverish anxiety and then to bed.

Meanwhile, a photo of twin girls taken on summer holiday in Switzerland has found its way to the offices of Mrs. Horn's employer. Mr. Bernau shows them to Lisalottie, asking her to prepare a caption so the *Munich Illustrated* magazine could divert attention from a temporary lack of arresting news photographs. Cute is always popular. These two girls featured in a mailing from cameraman Joseph Appeldauer of Bohrlaken, Switzerland would charm readers. Lisalottie can't tear her own eyes away from these smiling lookalike campers.

So the twins had met in Switzerland, posed for a joint photograph, then neglected to mention it to guardians. What else might the imps have concocted together? And which one was currently living with Lisalottie? Lottie's grades and cooking skills had certainly nosedived recently. Could it be because restless, inattentive Lisa was operating in her place?

When Lisalottie goes home that day and remarks how speedily Lottie has learned to cook without using the qualifier "again", her other daughter answers agreeably without thinking. Oops. Cat's out of the bag.

Neither confessional Lisa nor her mom can comprehend why Lottie's letters have stopped arriving. There is only one speedy way to find out: call her father in Vienna.

Mr. Palfy, stunned into at least momentarily deserting Miss Gerlach while his daughter lies abed stricken and feverish, receives an unexpected dialup from a concerned mother. Yes, it would be agreeable and understandable for Lisalottie to come and visit the ill twin. But how did she know something had happened in Vienna?

The composer is then informed about the twin switch, belatedly grasping it is Lottie, not Lisa, who has been living in Austria undetected for a number of weeks. No wonder his child had suddenly become adept piano player, tidy housekeeper, bookkeeping paragon, conscientious schoolgirl. It was her subdued twin that, unannounced, executed that makeover. The one he had not seen in more than seven autumns.

To tell more would be to ruin the story for newcomers. Watch the film and see if the girls obtain fulfillment of their most cherished wish.

For the Disney original film version, English moppet Hayley Mills was cast as both twins. Thanks to special photographic effects created by technical wizard Ub Iwerks she was able to share the screen with herself in scenes demanding closeups. The girls speak English, meet in the United States, exchange places only after they have battled each other like wildcats, eventually reverse home destinations. Californian Susan Evers travels to Boston; New Englander Sharon McKendrick journeys to California. Result: odd mixups of accents and lifestyles.

For Susan is a tomboy guitar player who bites her nails constantly, apparently a trait injected by actress Hayley Mills from her own habits, and Sharon a refined counterpart who plays classical piano when she isn't attending recitals and stage plays.

Such rites of passage as ear piercing are given prominence in this teen-oriented version of an original story with considerably younger

protagonists. According to its contradictory screenplay, the twins are eleven-year-olds, yet they swing crazily back and forth between nine-year-old scrappers and thirteen-year-old romantics.

Each has a single parent residing in elegant affluence, albeit mom in Boston seems to reside with moneyed forebears, as opposed to the modest digs Lottelise and her daughter inhabit in the book.

Unlike the 1950 black-and-white German original film adaptation directed by Josef von Baky of MUNCHAUSEN fame and starring real twins Jutta and Isa Gunther, the Disney version takes great liberties with text, converts papa from composer to rancher, incorporates a sadistic camping expedition into the mountains and substitutes telephone calls for letters. Simple updating hardly would justify this. It also jettisons the novel's stated cause of family breakup --- musician father's demand for quiet to compose --- in favor of a suggestion that petty marital squabbling created irrevocable rupture. These Americanized duplicates fabricate an elaborate recreation of courtship completely absent from the novel, take prankish liberties with papa's fiancée that neither Lisa nor Lottie would have dared to even dream about, and are considerably slower to puzzle out their relationship than the natives of Linz, friendly siblings almost from the moment of first encounter.

On the plus side, Hayley Mills is considerably more ebullient and dramatically compelling than the German girls in Von Baky's version, one of whom is notably inexpressive. As played by Brian Keith, the paterfamilias in Disney's production is winningly klutzy and extroverted. This represents a major improvement over the colorless egotist of Kastner's book. Maureen O'Hara's feisty Maggie McKendrick lacks Lisalottie's tenderness, but makes a formidable foil for ensnaring gold digger Vicky, portrayed by Joanna Barnes with frosty aggressiveness.

A civil remarriage ceremony is featured in Kastner's text. The Disney film version envisions an elaborate formal affair complete with what appears to be Episcopalian minister and matching flower girls. Those alterations allow for a terrific character performance by Leo G. Carroll as entertainingly tolerant onlooker Rev. Dr. Mosby, clearly a partisan admirer

of Maggie's, even though engaged by rival Vicky or her parents. In this Americanized version handyman Hecky provides a comic relief alternative to the book's more sober Dr. Strobel and painter Gabel. Background academic characters have disappeared, their spots ceded to Vicky's hypocritical mother and pompously ludicrous Mr. Eaglewood, director of a boys' camp never even mentioned by Kastner. Slovenly whiner Rosa, Arnold Palfy's housekeeper-cum-nanny, is pitched out by Disney in favor of Verbena, a featherbrained motormouth, acted with annoying exaggeration by Una Merkel. Neither character is apt to win a popularity contest prize.

Comparing screenplay to text, the former is wittier, the written tale a better reflector of child psychology. Reactions of the twins' peers to their appearance and character are represented best in Von Baky's German film, which also retains the novel's moving account of the girl's first night together when Lisa ultimately takes pity on her sensitive sibling, quietly calming Lotte by stroking the girl's hair repeatedly. That scene has no equivalent in the Disney film.

Possibly the finest camerawork of any adaptation of Kastner's tale can be found in a British version from 1953, lensed by Freddy Francis under the direction of Emeric Pressburger. Like its German predecessor *DAS DOPPELLE LOTCHEN* (*LOTTE TIMES TWO*) from 1950, the black-and-white comedy from England also hinged on performances by a twin set. Even more imposingly, Pressburger's film utilized a music score incorporating compositions by Brahms and Weber. Paul Smith's musical creations for Disney's 1961 release are not in the same league, though at least two Sherman Brothers songs --- the title tune and "Let's Get Together" --- are just as catchy as a German folk tune accompanying girl trekkers on their lakeshore outing in the Von Baky film.

Which screenplay is superior? Kastner's text served as bedrock for a Japanese version of 1951 titled *HIBARI NO KOMORIUTA* (*HIBARI'S LULLABY*), directed by Koji Shima of *WARNING FROM SPACE* fame. Emeric Pressburger crafted his own adaptation, presumably a distinguished one. Then there are at least three versions which have appeared in India so far: one in Tamil from 1965, a second in Telugu, and

a Hindi production that emerged in 1968. Kino Ken will comment on the 1998 remake's screenplay later in this review set, refraining from further comment on storylines he hasn't been able to audit.

With outstanding lighting and cheerfully rich coloration, 1961's *THE PARENT TRAP* is probably the most alluring for contemporary young viewers. Mills makes a credible twin, though she doesn't achieve as much contrast between Sharon and Susan as Lindsay Lohan manages in the dual role for Disney's 1998 remake. However, preadolescent twins adept in poker bluffing and fencing acrobatics, unswervingly determined to enforce maximum humiliation on competition loser, are a far cry from the spontaneous shared confusion and strong, but fleeting, initial resentment of apparent identity theft found in Kastner's prose. Where the author quickly remolds twins as allies, David Swift retains aggressive oppositional stances, milking sibling rivalry as if it were essential viewer nourishment. Nancy Meyers and Charles Shyer follow Swift's lead in the remake of 1998.

Production design is adequately imposing in the 1961 original. Overbearingly elegant sets and décor mar 1998's attempt at fashionable chicness. Associating one twin with British royalty and a retro 1960s Beatles' album parody dates and cheapens the remake.

As for the acting, Lindsay Lohan was even more creatively accomplished a juvenile actress than Mills. She didn't need cultural clutter to establish character credibility.

The original *PARENT TRAP* movie is suitable and recommended for preteen girls. Adults and teen siblings should also find it enjoyable entertainment.

Highly educational bonuses of the two-movie collection dvd which includes it are the nineteen minute *CAUGHT IN THE ACT: THE MAKING OF THE PARENT TRAP*, a "Seeing Double" special effects featurette lasting fifteen minutes, the challenging six minute *LOST TREASURES: "WHO'S THE TWIN?"* quiz, and a twenty-two and one-half minute overview of Hayley Mills' career titled "Disney Legend: Hayley Mills. Additional special features are a "Let's Get Together" music video of two minutes duration, a fifteen minute featurette about songwriters Richard and Robert Sherman, a six

minute 1961 Disney Studio Album acquainting children with the overall output of Disney Studios that year, an intriguing mini-documentary running seven and one-half minutes with less than sterling sound recording in which director David Swift interviews animator Ward Kimball, and six minutes of trailers and tv spots.

II. THE PARENT TRAP II

United States 1986 color 81 minutes live action telefilm comedy
produced for the Disney Channel Walt Disney Company Producers:
Joan Barnett and Steven North

9 of a possible 20 points

** of a possible *****

Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance

(j) designates a juvenile performer

Points:

1 Direction: Ronald Maxwell

1 Editing: Corky Ehlers

1 Cinematography: Peter Stein 2nd Unit D.P.: Kenneth Peters

0 Lighting

1 Written by: Stuart Kreiger, suggested by characters from the book
DAS DOPPELTE LOTTCHEN (LOTTE AND LISA) by Erich Kastner

0 Music: Charles Fox Lyrics: Hal David

1 Art Director: Dan Leigh

Costume Designer: Susan Gammier

Make-Up: Marie Ange Ripka (Key), Toni Trimble

1 Sound: Robert J. Anderson, Jr. and Rick Waddell

1 Acting

2 Creativity

9 total points

Cast: Hayley Mills (Sharon Ferris / Susan Carey),
Tom Skerritt (Bill Grand, Mary's dad),

Carrie Kei Heim (j) (Nikki Ferris, Sharon's daughter),
Bridgette Andersen (j) (Mary Grand, Bill's daughter),
Alex Harvey (Brian Carey),
Gloria Cromwell (Florence, Bill's housekeeper),
Judith Tanneh (j) (Jessica Dintruff, snobbish scholar),
Janice Tesh (Irene),
Duchess Tomasello (Mrs. Blaaey, teacher),
Daniel Brun (Steve),
Antonio Fabrizio (Bruce),
Ted Science (Kris),
Margaret Woodall (Florist),
Leonard Altobell (Walter Elias),
Dorothy Keller (Lillian Elias),
Terri Keever (Crystal)

THE PARENT TRAP II is a far-fetched telefilm sequel to the profitable theatrical release THE PARENT TRAP of 1961. Its plot revolves around efforts of Sharon Ferris's daughter Nikki to avoid family relocation to New York City. Understandably, she doesn't wish to leave her Florida friends. Less so, she fears riding subway trains in the Big Apple due to news reports of muggings. Unless tween girl transit riders were identified as victims, and that was not the case in this movie, it doesn't seem likely an eleven-year-old female would feel particularly endangered.

Mom, having cut loose from her husband, perceives greater financial reward if she lands a job in Broadway City. Her rush to get there is tempered by expensive apartment rental fees. Even with a hefty salary boost, can she afford them?

Daughter Nikki, enrolled in summer school, struggles with attitude problems. The girl detests reading as much as moving north. She finds TREASURE ISLAND a bore, as does new classmate Mary Anderson. Both would rather listen to pop rock and stuff themselves with pizza. Ignoring the fact that Stevenson's novel is a lodestone attracting even reluctant readers, screenwriter Stuart Krieger treats it as simply another required

reading burden absent charm and interest. Preteen viewers want to move on to really cool stuff, like the latest hit song or tv show, right? Taking a cue from David Swift's pop culture references in 1961's original Disney film of *THE PARENT TRAP*, two moppets whose plots constitute this follow-up's storyline compare favorites, reaching the conclusion their tastes and aversions are similar. Friendship follows quickly, based in part on shared antipathy towards both books and a studious classmate. This diligent scholar is depicted as an aggravating snob, stereotyping which relieves two loafers of any obligation to emulate her. Studying is strictly for nerds, not for social butterflies like Nikki and Mary.

It occurs to the film's protagonist that should the single dad of her fellow chatterbox hook up with Nikki's divorced mom, two best friends forever could graduate to sisterhood, thus ending spoiled only child status for both and giving each a permanent playmate and sympathetic audience. Mary is easily sold on the advantages of such a union.

From that point on, school is merely an excuse for antagonizing teacher and teacher pet, a setting for comic relief antics. What really matters is getting Sharon Ferris and Bill Grant inextricably connected. After a series of creative fiascos fails to achieve that goal, Nikki decides to obtain an adult ally, otherwise known in dramaturgy as the "deus ex machina". Since the girls can't resolve their problems independently, Nikki's Aunt Susan conveniently leaves California at her niece's frantic summons. Opportunity to replay meddling matchmaker proves irresistible.

At first, cruising around town pretending to be her sister has humorous appeal. Then complications make contradictory evasions impossible to avoid, particularly for someone not gifted with spontaneous problem-solving skills. Susan lurches comically from one frantic coverup to another, sometimes victim of her own whoppers, at other times hapless pawn in Mary and Nikki's independent schemes. Sharon's neighbor, Bill Grand, is equally embarrassed and confused by ill-timed social encounters engineered initially by the preadolescent duo and later by damage control manager Susan. Several backfiring incidents are quite humorous and imaginatively handled, such as separate calls to respective parents for

emergency assistance, resulting in ambulance and fire truck responses, and alternating appearances of Susan and Sharon at differing times and outfits in the same location.

Sharon overhears a conversation Nikki's conducting by phone and learns Susan is in town. Without even extending the courtesy of visiting her. Worse, it seems Mrs. Carey is behaving like a single woman scouting for a pickup. Her twin, shocked and a bit angry, calls upon reinforcement of her own, airplane pilot Mr. Carey. She will launch a comical counterattack against that trio of connivers trying to replace a peaceful unattached life with marital misunderstandings. Exactly the kind of situations she has been trying to forget. Well, Madam Meddler better prepare for payback, because Sharon intends providing her a jealousy-generating skit hitting close to home.

Screen the remainder of this film to discover whose schemes ultimately triumph.

What *THE PARENT TRAP II* needed to do was recapture the original's charm. It too often fails. Tom Skerritt makes a pallid substitute for Brian Keith, nor does he display much paternal authority or protectiveness. An adult Hayley Mills times two can no longer be exonerated from accusations of stupidity and insensitivity, since her characters long ago shed youthful naivete. At this stage of adult life, the twins are fully responsible for their actions and judgments. So behavior resembling that of devious schoolgirls is neither credible nor endearing.

Mr. Grand's housekeeper Florence is impossibly dense as embodied obnoxiously by overacting Gloria Cromwell. Duchess Tomasello's schoolteacher conveys shallow cartoon despotism. A still greater disappointment is Brigitte Andersen's Mary Grand, a major disappointment lacking substance and depth. To witness what nuances of performance that youngster is capable of projecting, watch *SAVANNAH SMILES*. Carrie Kei Heim tries far too hard to be cute rather than playfully manipulative, losing viewer sympathy and interest. Even Alex Harvey's Brian Carey lacks substance, completely unmoved by his wife's apparent infidelity in their

joint restaurant scene. The unintended jealousy that setup would naturally generate in both spouses is left unexplored by Krieger's teleplay.

Superficial music by Charles Fox does very little to bring atmosphere to assumed identities meeting and ricocheting. Felicitously memorable melodies could have been employed profitably in lieu of bland musical underpinnings producers incautiously accepted.

Lighting, no better defined than characters, is at best merely passable. Shading is minimal, contrast lacking.

Using props effectively, Dan Leigh's art direction reflects story milieu to an acceptable extent, but does not encourage eyes to linger on scenic elements.

More utilitarian than fascinating, edits by Corky Ehlers assure visual matchings of successive scenes, the most basic of cutting requirements. There is some bumpiness in transitions, however, leading to absence of any underlying rhythm and zero forward drive.

Heavy reliance on standard compositions offset enjoyably diverse shooting angles. More inventive framings would have enhanced scenes of slapstick comedy and might also have smoothed over a few abrupt segues.

With predictable story arc, vapidly underdeveloped principal characters, stodgy editing, indifferent sound and overabundance of textual clichés, THE PARENT TRAP II is a modest, tolerably amusing extension of predicaments capitalized on to superior effect by its 1961 predecessor. Suitable for family viewing, it is reasonably diverting for audiences not especially picky about how they spend their spare time.

For information about this dvd set bonus materials, please see concluding paragraphs in the lead review above.

III. THE PARENT TRAP remake

United States / United Kingdom / Canada 1998 color 128 minutes
live action feature comedy Walt Disney Pictures Producers:
Charles Shyer, Bruce Block, Julie Crane

15 of a possible 20 points

**** of a possible *****

Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance
(j) designates juvenile performer

Points:

- 1 Direction: Nancy Meyers, Bruce Block (U.K. 2nd Unit Director),
John Le Blanc (U.S. 2nd Unit Director, Napa),
Charles Shyer (U.S. 2nd Unit Director, California outside Napa)
 - 2 Editing: Stephen Rotter, Adam Bernardi
 - 1 Cinematography: Dean Cundey
 - 2 Lighting: Tommy Finch (U.K.), Rafael Sanchez (2nd Unit),
Michael Orefice
 - 2 Screenplay: David Swift, Nancy Meyers, Charles Shyer, based on the
book DAS DOPPELTE LOTTCHEN (LISA AND LOTTIE) by
Erich Kastner
 - 1 Music: Alan Silvestri*
Choreographers: Jeanfer Jean-Charles, Keith Young
 - 2 Production Designer: Dean Tavoularis*
Art Direction: Alex Tavoularis*
 - 1 Sound: Patrick Drummond (Sound Supervisor),
Dennis Drummond (Supervising Sound Editor),
Sean Rush, Ken Weston (U.K.), sound mixers
 - 2 Acting
 - 1 Creativity
- 15 total points

Cast: Dennis Quaid* (Nick Parker, father of the twins),
Natasha Richardson (Elizabeth James, mother of the twins),
Lindsay Lohan (j)* (Hallie Parker / Annie James),
Erin Mackey (j) (Lindsay Lohan's double),
Lisa Ann Walter (Chessy, a cook),
Elaine Hendrix (Meredith Blake, a gold digger),
Simon Kunz (Martin, a butler),
Ronnie Stevens* (Grandfather Charles James),
Polly Holliday (Marva Culp, Sr.), Maggie Wheeler (Marva Culp, Jr.),

Joanna Barnes (Aunt Vicki), Hallie Meyers-Shyer (Lindsay), Maggie Emma Thomas (j) (Zoe), Courtney Woods (j) (Nicole), Michael Lohan (j) (Lost Boy at Camp), Lisa Iverson (j) (Bugler), Marissa Leigh (j) (Fencing Girl), Heather Wayrock (j) (Fencing Girl), Ali Lohan (j) (Child at Airport), Dakota Lohan (j) (Baby at Airport), others

Geared to an older audience of teen girls, Disney's 1998 remake of *THE PARENT TRAP* benefits by superior screenplay and a sharper twin contrast effected by creative acting from newcomer Lindsay Lohan. In this version of the Lottie and Lisa story, American girl Hallie Parker has an English twin, Annie James. Where they were born is left unspecified, finessing the question of potential necessary naturalization for one of them if they are to ultimately live together. Kastner's original novel identifies birthplace of the twins as Graz, Austria and the summer camp where they meet as located in Switzerland. In this film, Hallie and Annie find each other at Camp Walden in Maine, United States. Why a single British mother would forego all holiday camps of Britain in favor of jetting her daughter to an estranged husband's home country thousands of miles away is a complete bafflement.

Throughout a generally wittier screenplay than the 1961 David Swift creation, a writing team composed of Charles Shyer and Nancy Meyers slant situations and dialogue toward teen viewers, with citation of a line from *TAXI DRIVER*, one skinny dipping scene, an implied homosexual character serving as assistant to realtor Meredith Blake, a hip-bumping dance, poker being played for cash pots, resort to a transatlantic British call box dialing (which, incidentally, would never work successfully for a child unaccustomed to it), wine tasting by a juvenile, an American blues song introducing a card game showdown, fencing gymnastics that would challenge Olympic hopefuls, a risqué squeeze scene spotlighting two principal comic relief characters, and a drunken initial encounter between gold digger Meredith Blake and the former Mrs. Parker.

Dennis Quaid offers a more sensitive, less awkward father than

Brian Keith's bumbler in the original. Why such a seemingly intelligent fellow should be dazzled by Meredith Blake, someone who shows no love for his daughter and unfailingly produces hostile responses from the girl, is left unexplained. It's obvious he must make a decision to either abandon Hallie or Miss Blake. Only a complete dolt could envision them living harmoniously together.

Since the bulk of its plot parallels Disney's 1961 film, further elaboration is unnecessary. Except to point out the famous double take Nick makes in the elevator, a borrowing from MY FAVORITE WIFE according to DISNEY WIKIPEDIA, is just as memorably funny when used here.

1998's THE PARENT TRAP benefits also from a bigger budget than the 1961 film obtained. Lavish interior settings indicate both sisters enjoy wealthy residences with hired help to accommodate whims. With one twin long resident in England, a British accent seems natural enough. The questionable Boston accent imposed on Hayley Mills can be dispensed with entirely by Lindsay Lohan.

Editing is crisp, dawdling only during risqué scenes cited earlier in this review. There are more protracted practical joke sequences than in the original, accompanied by intricately detailed decors and an abundance of colorful props. Making Elizabeth James fashion designer of wedding gowns allows for elaborate costuming and greater color coordination than the 1961 film managed.

Music by Alan Silvestri shows richly orchestrated colorings of greater density than 1961's smaller-scale effort. Using British as well as American settings allows natural admission for European counterpoint with its traditionally close harmonies and formal concert hall rhythms.

What positively sets this film apart from all other English-language versions of Kastner's classic tale is Lindsay Lohan's dual performance, a tour de force which, thanks to successive imagery rather than simultaneous framings, allows spectators to see different facial and gestural responses made by respective twins to a single stimulus speech or action. Each sibling has her own personality, not simply due to screenplay wordings and national accents, but also because of innate differences in perceptiveness,

intelligence and sociability. Sheyer's doubles are not just mirrors of one another, they are two distinct personalities, even if momentarily both fixate on a common goal. It makes better sense for their deception to unravel under suspicious gazes and sniffles of familiars, such as Martin, Sammy the dog, Grandfather, Nick, and Chessy, who know intimate mannerisms too well to be fooled by surfaces. Nick, for instance, keeps harping on his replacement daughter's novel repetitions of the word "dad". Only mom seems to notice nothing unusual in her daughter's behavior, suggesting her character spends far too much time at work and far too little in the company of authentic Annie.

Due to its orientation favoring sexually suggestive humor, the 1998 THE PARENT TRAP can only be recommended to and for viewers who have reached their teen years.

The Disney Special Double Trouble Edition reviewed in preceding paragraphs contains also the complete 1961 version of THE PARENT TRAP, a full-length audio commentary by director Nancy Meyers and writer Charles Shyer, an eighteen and one-half minute mini-documentary on "Updating a Classic", a three minute deleted scene which adds nothing titled "Meeting the Queen" with optional Director Commentary, an illuminating eight minute featurette about "How Hallie Became Annie", and a four minute "Accent on Fun" featurette.

Note to parents: Parental previewing and discretion are strongly urged. The deleted bonus scene includes a profanity. God's name is used in vain a number of times in the feature. Also be aware of sexual innuendoes and suggestive scenes sprinkled throughout the film. Decide about suitability for juvenile viewing accordingly.