

Substitute Sitters

Olga Sanderson





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SUBSTITUTE SITTERS

By Olga Sanderson

CAST

DELIA and DORA: Widow sisters.

CHARLIE and CLEM BUMPSTEAD: Delia and Dora's bachelor neighbors.

DEBBIE: Delia and Dora's niece.

JOE HUBBS: Policeman.

Place

DELIA and DORA's home.

DELIA: It sure will be nice to have Debbie and her baby with us over the Xmas holidays.

DORA: I should say so. I imagine she will be here soon.

DELIA: Oh, my goodness. Do you suppose we could run down to the drug store for our medication before she gets here? The store will be closing early as it is Xmas Eve.

DEBBIE: (*rushes in*) Hello Aunties, I'm here! Say, can you take care of the baby while I go back to the airport to pick up our luggage? They said it was on the wrong plane but would be there within the hour.

DELIA: Oh, hello Debbie.

DORA: Why, Debbie, you're here! Hello and sure we would be happy to take care of him. Go ahead and get your luggage. Give him here. (*DEBBIE hands the baby to her*)

DORA: We will take good care of him. Run along now.

DEBBIE: Thanks, aunties. (*she exits*)

DORA: Delia, do you realize we were supposed to pick up our medication before she came. Now what are we going to do? We can't take the baby with us.

DELIA: Oh, my goodness. What are we going to do? There isn't anyone we could call on to take charge over here for a little while.

DORA: No one but Charlie and Clem. I wonder, do you suppose they could do it?

DELIA: I don't know. I suppose we could ask them. Let's call them on the phone. *(she picks up the phone and dials)* Hello, Charlie. Dora and I have a favor to ask you. Could you come right over? *(pause)* You will. Thank you so much. *(hangs the phone up)* They're coming right over.

(Enter CHARLIE and CLEM)

CHARLIE: We're here. What can we do for you?

DORA: You have been around babies before, haven't you?

CLEM: Sure, lots of them. Like baby pigs, baby cows, baby horses.

CHARLIE: And baby kittens and puppies.

DELIA: That's not exactly what we had in mind but...

DORA: It's just that we have to run down to the drug store to get our medication before it closes and our niece just dropped off her baby for us to take care of while she runs back to the airport to pickup their luggage.

DELIA: And we don't want to take the baby out because it's sleeping. Do you suppose you could take care of it for a few minutes while we are gone? All you have to do is hold it in your arms while you are sitting down.

CHARLIE: Oh, that we can do. Clem can help me out. Right, Clem?

CLEM: Sure thing. Give it to Charlie, he's has more experience than me.

(CHARLIE awkwardly takes baby)

DELIA: That's good, Charlie. It's sleeping so nice for you and you won't have any trouble. Dora and I will leave so we can get back in a very short time. *(they exit and the men sit down)*

CLEM: I wonder what it is. Girl or boy.

CHARLIE: You can't tell until they get older. Don't you know anything?

CLEM: That's right. With some animals it takes a long time. Of course, maybe if it has a big nose, it could be a boy. Boys always have a bigger nose. *(they both gaze intently at the baby)*

CHARLIE: No, it doesn't have a big nose. Can't be a boy.

CLEM: Look at the ears. Maybe if they're small it could be a girl. *(they both gaze intently at the baby)*

CHARLIE: Yes, the ears are small. Must be a girl. Say, Clem, you know when babies wake up, they like to nurse on their mothers. Supposing it wakes up. What do we then?

CLEM: Well, little pigs and kittens and puppies like to run around.

CHARLIE: That's right, we could put it on the floor and if *it* runs around it might forget about nursing.

CLEM: Or maybe we could tell it *stories*, you know like the three bears.

CHARLIE: Does that story have Goldilocks in it? Shucks, I don't remember *it*.

CLEM: I don't *either*. Maybe we could tell it about cowboys and Indians. You know like bang, bang stuff.

CHARLIE: But *if* it's a girl, she won't be interested in that stuff.

CLEM: Supposing it asks to go to the bathroom. What will we do then?

CHARLIE: I don't know. Let's just pretend we're hard of hearing and don't understand what it wants.

(door opens and DEBBIE rushes in)

DEBBIE: What are you doing with my baby and where are my aunts? *(she grabs the baby from CHARLIE)* Aunts, where are you?

CHARLIE: Oh, oh, they went down to...

DEBBIE: Aunt Dora, Aunt Delia! What did you two do with them? I see, you two were planning to kidnap my baby. You two old coots! Tell me, what did you do with my aunts?

CLEM: We didn't do anything with them. We're neighbors.

DEBBIE: (*still yelling and very upset*) Don't hand me that line. You two snake eyed old goats. They would not live next door to such old coots like you!

CHARLIE: Lady, take it easy. Your aunties ask us to take care of your baby. Isn't that right, Clem?

CLEM: That's right!

DEBBIE: A likely story. I'm calling the police. (*picks up phone*) Operator, give me the police department. Yes. Hello, please send the police to 1234 Green Street immediately. There are two kidnappers here. Hurry!

CHARLIE: Lady, we're...we're telling you the truth.

CLEM: Just wait. Your aunts will be back in a little while.

DEBBIE: Don't think I'm going to wait around *with* you two crooks. What did you do with my aunts? I don't believe a word you are saying. Just look at you with those sneaky eyes. Oh thank goodness, here comes the police.

JOE: (*enters*) You have a problem here? I'm Officer Joe Hubbs, what's going on here?

DEBBIE: (*very upset*) These two, they were planning on kidnapping my baby. Caught them just in time and they did something with my aunts. They're not here and I had just left my baby with them while I ran back to the airport.

JOE: Well, what have you two birds got to say? What did you do with the aunts?

CHARLIE: We're telling the truth. The aunts asked us to care for the baby while they went down to the drug store.

DEBBIE: Don't you believe a word they say. My aunts wouldn't do that.

JOE: You heard her. Now, one more time, where are her aunts?

CLEM: We're telling the truth, Officer.

JOE: It looks like I will have to take the two of them down and lock them up in the slammer. Maybe if they cool off for a while they will be willing to sing...

CHARLIE: Officer, we don't know how to sing. Isn't that right, Clem?

JOE: Never mind. You'll learn. Now will you come quietly or must I call for back up and handcuff you two?

CLEM: We'll come along. Come on Charlie. *(they leave)*

DEBBIE: Oh, my goodness, what have I gotten myself into? I'm so worried about my aunts.

(DELIA and DORA enter through the back door)

DORA: Debbie, you're back so soon. You look so upset. What has happened?

DELIA: Yes, Debbie, what is the matter? We had forgotten to pick up our medication at the store and as it was going to take just a little while, we asked our neighbors, Charlie and Clem to take care of the baby for a few minutes for us.

DORA: Where are they? Is the baby all right?

DEBBIE: What did you say? Your neighbors? Those two old...

DELIA: Why, yes, they are old but they are the kindest, most generous human beings and we would trust them with our lives. Why are you looking so funny?

DEBBIE: I just... I just had the police take them to jail.

DORA: You what?

DELIA: What did they do?

DEBBIE: They didn't do anything. I thought they were going to kidnap my baby and I called them such terrible names. Oh, aunties, I am so sorry. I did not believe them when they were telling the truth. I feel awful.

DELIA: You didn't know, Debbie. We will get this straightened out. Call the police, Dora. Just have them bring Clem and Charlie back.

(DORA goes to the phone)

DORA: Police department. Say, when your policeman brings in two men, Charlie and Clem Bumpstead, just return them where they were picked up. A terrible mistake was made. *(pause)* Thank you.

DEBBIE: Oh, aunties, how could I have been so mistrusting? I should have listened to them.

DELIA: It's not your fault. We are just as much to blame. Knowing the Bumpsteads, they will understand.

DEBBIE: But the terrible things I called them like snake eyes and old coots...or was it old goats. Oh, forgive me, aunties.

(Enter JOE HUBB with the BUMPSTEADS)

JOE: Well here they are. Everything OK here? I see we have the two missing aunts back safe and sound.

DEBBIE: Yes, Officer. I made an awful mistake and I apologize to you and them for jumping to the wrong conclusion. Thank you for bringing them back.

JOE: No trouble. They gave me no problems. Just happy this was a misunderstanding and everyone is happy here again. *(he exits)*

DELIA: Charlie and Clem, we're all sorry this happened. Debbie didn't know that you are our good neighbors.

DEBBIE: What can I do to make amends? Will you please forgive me for how I treated you?

CLEM: We understand. I know how mothers can be when protecting their young. One time I picked up a baby pig and the mother pig chased me right out of the barn.

CHARLIE: That's right, mothers are always protective of their young so just forget about it. We had a nice ride and got to see a lot of Xmas lights.

CLEM: Sure would have liked to see the inside of the jail though...

DORA: We knew you two would not hold it against Debbie.

CHARLIE: Of course not. Besides, it's Xmas Eve! How about Clem and me take you all out to dinner.

DELIA: Bless your hearts. Charlie and Clem, we would be honored to be your guests, right, girls?

DORA: Sounds good to me.

DEBBIE: Yes, and thank you so much. Let's go.

THE END