

Every Little Crook and Nanny

By Pat Cook

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Lillie Scones is a sweet retired nanny who runs a boarding house with one resident and “a cat the size of the Louisiana Purchase.” Her two friends, Jocelyn and Carmella, help to pass the time by listening to music and gossiping. Then Stuart, an old charge of hers, rents a room. Lillie is tickled to have him around again, not knowing he is planning on robbing the bank on the corner.

Stuart’s mind may not be totally on the bank job, however, when he meets Betty who, unfortunately is engaged to Teddy. However, when Stuart finds out that Betty is about to graduate from an academy on the very night they plan to rob the bank, the perfect alibi presents itself – why not go to the graduation, be seen there, sneak out and rob the bank.

Perfect, thinks Little Pat, Stuart’s wise-cracking sidekick. Unfortunately for the two would-be crooks, the graduation is at a police academy!

Throw in a chief of police, a suspicious fiancé, and a half-pint brat with “an Al Capone do-it-yourself tool kit” who can and will get into anything, and nobody knows what will happen next. In the spirit of Frank Capra, this tale of a bank heist and three retired nannies has all the classic comedy twists and surprises fit for any audiences.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 5 w, 1 boy.)

LILLIE SCONES: Sweet retired nanny, in her 60's.

JOCELYN MINNOW: Slightly dim nanny friend of Lillie.

CARMELLA DUNDEE: A working nanny, a bit jaded.

STU BENCHLEY: Small-time crook, in his mid-30s.

PAT TURGESSION: Stu's wise-cracking assistant.

TEDDY HITCHELL: Young smarmy man with a secret.

BETTY COLLINS: Teddy's fiancé, very bright woman.

GERALD SIMS: 10-year-old con-artist brat.

CHIEF DAN COLLINS: Betty's police chief father.

MRS. SIMS: Gerald's long suffering mother.

Time: 1990s.

Place: Lillie's house.

SETTING

Lillie's house is a cozy setting chock full of knickknacks and old memories from all of Lillie's years when she served as a nanny.

The floor plan consists of three doors. The first, or front, door is located USC and leads to the outside. The second door, situated DSR, leads to the kitchen, and the third, situated DSL, leads to Lillie's bedroom. There is also a staircase, leading to the upstairs bedrooms, located just SR of the front door.

The furniture is a motley collection of comfortable, overstuffed, lacy and floral chairs and tables. The sofa, located almost DSC, is the centerpiece of the room. Next to it is a matching chair and coffee table. A desk, which holds an old radio and telephone, rests near the kitchen door. The rest of the room has an abundance of accoutrements. There is a warm, inviting feeling about it and one can almost smell the aroma of hot coffee and daffodils.

PROPS

Coffee cups	Knitting basket
Tray with pitcher / glasses	Sugar bowl / spoon
Large blue book	Magazines
Briefcases (2 identical)	Blueprints
Men's handkerchief	Rope
Allergy pill	Tool kit
Scrabble game	Score pad and pen
Deck of cards	Wads of money
"Congratulations" banner	Large bag
Cake	Men's suit
Dangling earrings	Newspaper
Assorted wrapped gifts	

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: Classical MUSIC is playing on the radio. CARMELLA and JOCELYN are sitting on the couch and listening while they sip their coffee. They enjoy the gentle music refrains for a moment.)

CARMELLA: Lovely, isn't it?

JOCELYN: Lovely, yes.

CARMELLA: Violins coming together like that and all.

JOCELYN: Lovely.

CARMELLA: Never had much of an ear myself.

JOCELYN: No.

CARMELLA: Couldn't play a note on any instrument known to mankind.

JOCELYN: Same here. Dad tried, though.

CARMELLA: Oh?

JOCELYN: Bought me an accordion.

CARMELLA: Didn't he like you?

JOCELYN: That's what I thought at the time, what with him bringing that thing home without asking me so much as if I'd even like the thing much less want to drag it around to all the family functions, which he made me do for years afterward.

CARMELLA: Parents are like that.

JOCELYN: They are, yes.

CARMELLA: What did you do with it finally?

JOCELYN: I found out just how to get the best use of it.

CARMELLA: You learned to play it after all and took lessons and participated in recitals and learned the scales and all the popular songs of the time and made your folks proud?

JOCELYN: No, I made it into a lamp.

CARMELLA: Lovely.

(LILLIE enters through the kitchen door and calls back to her cat.)

LILLIE: Now, you eat that and see how you like it. Go on and eat it and see how you like it. Go on. Eat it. See how you like it.

JOCELYN: Doesn't Kitty like it?

LILLIE: She won't eat it. *(SHE shuts the door. Before she gets it completely closed something very big starts pushing from the other side. She pushes back.)* No, you go eat your food. *(There is a slight push-pull contest for a moment between her and the cat.)* No, no, you just try it and I'll be back later.

JOCELYN: *(Eyes grow wide.)* Oh my!

CARMELLA: I think Kitty has eaten enough.

LILLIE: *(Pushing on the door.)* Now, you just stop it and eat your food. Go on, now. *(SHE finally gets the door closed and latched. She turns to the OTHERS and takes a deep breath.)* She's really grown in the last few months, hasn't she?

CARMELLA: *(Nodding.)* I'd say so.

JOCELYN: *(Nodding.)* Yes.

LILLIE: Yes, she has. *(Moves to her chair, sits and picks up her knitting from the basket beside the chair.)*

JOCELYN: *(After a slight pause.)* I know I've said this before but ... are you sure it's a cat?

CARMELLA: It's awfully large.

JOCELYN: For a cat.

CARMELLA: Of course, for a cat. For a yak it would be about the right size.

LILLIE: She's just a sweet, growing little girl.

CARMELLA: Yes, but when's she going to start being sweet and stop growing?

JOCELYN: Oh, and did you ever find the rest of my shoe?

LILLIE: No, I believe she ate the whole thing.

JOCELYN: I never knew a cat to eat shoes.

CARMELLA: Count your blessings you weren't in them.

LILLIE: Well, she was born out in the wild somewhere, that's what I think. When I got her at the pound that's what they told me.

JOCELYN: That's always so sad.

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CARMELLA: Especially when they have to ... have to ... you know.

JOCELYN: Yes. *(To LILLIE.)* Was that the case? You had to take her or they'd put her down?

LILLIE: Well, I think so. They said something about it was either her or them.

JOCELYN: *(To CARMELLA.)* Lillie's too good-hearted, that's what the problem is.

CARMELLA: She is.

LILLIE: I'm right here, you can speak to me in first person. And I don't believe there's any such thing as being too good-hearted. That's why I was such a good nanny.

JOCELYN: You were. We ALL were.

CARMELLA: And ARE. I'm still at it, you know. *(Rises, crosses to the radio and turns it off.)*

JOCELYN: That's right, you still have to punch the old time clock.

CARMELLA: I'd rather punch little Gerald.

LILLIE: Is he still giving you problems?

CARMELLA: Yes. He's a boy and at that terrible age. You know, alive!

LILLIE: What are you going to do?

CARMELLA: I don't know. Say. Maybe he'd like a cat.

(TEDDY enters down the stairs.)

TEDDY: Good afternoon, everyone.

LILLIE: Good afternoon, Mr. Hitchell. Lovely day, isn't it?

TEDDY: Yes, it is.

CARMELLA & JOCELYN: Lovely.

TEDDY: *(Kidding.)* I hope I didn't interrupt any of your insidious schemes, ladies. *(Leans in to JOCELYN, who giggles.)*

LILLIE: Now, you behave, young man.

TEDDY: Nothing cooking? I thought I heard you all planning to rob the bank on the corner. *(Waves a finger at CARMELLA.)* Come clean, Carmella. Haven't I seen your picture in the post office?

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