

Aunt Jennie Takes Over



Jessica Matthews



An "Adult TV" Novel



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Aunt Jennie Takes Over

By Jessica Matthews

Maybe it was all a mistake to come alone and unprepared. Lyn sat at the side of the Arrivals Hall waiting and waiting for a flight that had been delayed. Bad weather over the Atlantic, the information board said, so he sat patiently.

“Is this all a mistake?” The thought ran and ran again. “Should I have waited for Mother at home?”

He rejected the thought. It would be so much easier to meet in a public place. So much had changed in the two and a half years that she’d been working in Europe but she was coming back, admittedly for only a few weeks, but she was finally coming back and there was no way that a meeting could be avoided.

Lyn pulled out the mirror from the grey leather purse on the table as much for something to do. Nerves were jangling and hands needed to be occupied to keep calm.

Lipstick was reapplied and hair checked. It was loose and so much longer that it had been when Mother went away. It was so much blonder too. Third finger left hand and new rings were almost burning the skin, with the big diamond unmistakably classy and expensive.

Maybe a walk across the concourse would calm the nerves? The reflection in the huge mirror showed that the grey fitted business dress and black heels were entirely suitable for the occasion.

Then the flight arrival was announced. It was too late to run away. Lyn walked to the arrival gate and waited. He saw her dragging a wheelie case and looking tired from the journey. Lyn waved but there was no recognition and no response. She stood looking around and lost as Lyn approached.

“Hello Mother,” he said. “I guessed you’d never recognise me.”

“Lyn, is that really you?” Mother asked with eyes wide in surprise and disbelief as she looked him up and down.

“Yes it’s me, Mummy.” Lyn leaned in to kiss her on each cheek. “Your little boy has changed.”

“Was this all Jennie’s doing?” Mother said sharply. “I’ll kill her.”

“Don’t blame Jennie,” Lyn replied. “She helped me discover who I really am.”

“And who are you?”

“I’m a married woman, with a husband you’ll love as much as I do.” Lyn held up his left hand to show

the wedding set he wore there. “We have a great business and a lovely home.”

“You didn’t tell me, or warn me...” Mother seemed calmer now that the initial shock was over.

“I could hardly tell you by email,” Lyn laughed. “And my holiday pictures in a bikini wouldn’t have been appropriate.”

“Are they real?” Mother pointed to his chest.

“Not yet,” Lyn said. “We’re having too much fun and Michael doesn’t want me to take a few weeks out for recovery time.”

“It’s a lot to get used to,” Mother said.

“I’m used to it and I’m sure you’ll adjust.” Lyn took Mother’s arm and steered to her towards the car park.

It was always tough for Lyn once his parents split. His father moved and moved again so many times that wherever he was, he’d managed to dump all responsibility and all contact with his son. Lyn tried desperately to keep in contact but when his father’s cell phone went out of service, he had no idea where he might be.

“Doesn’t he have a mother and father too?” Lyn asked his mother. “Maybe they know where he is.”

“I never met them,” Mother said. “I don’t know anything about them.”

“It’s so unfair. Other boys have their dads around.”

“I know but you still have the same cell phone and mine hasn’t changed. I’m sure he could call if he was able.”

“Maybe he doesn’t want to know.” Lyn felt a tear about to trickle down his cheek.

“He will one day.” Mother tried to comfort him but they both knew it wasn’t true.

Lyn was doubly sad that day. He knew that his mother was being seconded to a research team at a University in Germany and that he wouldn’t be seeing her for a while; maybe months, but it could be as much as a couple of years.

He didn’t want to show that he was unhappy though. He was old enough to understand that it was a great opportunity for her and he was proud of her achievements. As a researcher in genetics, she was ahead of many in her field.

“Why do I have to go and stay with Aunt Genevieve?” he asked. “Can’t I come with you?”

“I’ve explained all I can,” Mother said. “I’m going to be based in Germany but I’ll have to spend time in some other countries in Europe. You’d never know where you were.”

“I’d be with you.”

“Of course, but you’d not be able to keep up with your schoolwork. Imagine if you had a couple of months in Germany then a few weeks in France, then Italy and Greece, and then back to Germany.”

“I’d learn languages,” Lyn said. That would be good.”

“Of course, but you wouldn’t learn much more than a basic understanding of the language. Meanwhile, all your other subjects would be neglected.”

“I guess...’ Lyn said, “But Aunt Genevieve... Do I really have to go there. I’ve never met her and she lives on the other side of the country.”

“She’s the only relative we have,” Mother said. “She’s my younger sister; I call her my sister, but really she’s my half-sister. We had the same father. We used to be close before your father...”

“I know, you told me that he decided you needed to leave it all behind.”

“I wish I’d taken no notice of him,” Mother said. “You’ll like her but don’t expect her to be conventional. She never was and now that she seems to have money, I’d guess she’s less likely to care what people think.”

“What does she do?”

“I’m not sure; she was always artistic. She’s got so many interests and it seems that everything she touches turns to gold. I think she writes and edits books now but she used to be a makeup artist.”

“That sounds exotic enough.” Lyn said.

“She was always great to be with. It’s been a pity that we haven’t lived anywhere near her. I’m sure you’ll be happy there or I wouldn’t have asked her to look after you.”

“She could do your makeup.”

“I can do it myself, thank you,” Mother said. “She taught me all she knew but maybe she learned a lot afterwards too. She’ll probably get you involved in one of her schemes; she’s always up to something.”

“I’ll cope,” Lyn replied. “How does she have that name anyway? It sounds like it’s foreign.”

“Her mother was French Canadian,” Mother said. “She’s always been referred to as Jennie, so I guess she changed it.”

“But we don’t know her. I know you saw her when you were small, but she’s nothing more than a name to me.”

“I speak to her most weeks. We used to be very close until we went to different universities, then we drifted apart. I was the scientist; she was more artistic.”

“I wish we’d had more time. It would have been good to meet her earlier.”

“The arrangements are all made; I can’t change them now. I need you to be brave. I’ll call you every week and we have Skype as well.”

“I know, but it won’t be the same.”

“Nothing stays the same,” Mother replied with a sigh. “I thought your father would always be here, but things change.”

“I guess...” Lyn didn’t finish the thought.

“You’re nearly sixteen; nearly grown up. It won’t be so bad. You’ll make friends and be preparing for college soon.”

“I’ll be okay, Mom. Don’t worry about me.” Lyn tried to put a brave face on it but right then, he wasn’t feeling at all brave.

Lynton Bancroft shared his sixteenth birthday with his mother and a couple of family friends. They all knew that Lyn would be at the other side of the country and that the chance of being together again was probably small.

It was a subdued affair and Lyn was relieved when it was over. He had his mother to himself for a couple of days before they had to go their separate ways. Together they packed up their apartment, with things being distributed between goodwill shops, friends and neighbours.

“It feels liberating to get rid of so much stuff,” Mother said. “It’s like I’m finally breaking free from all the things your father and I shared. There are some good memories, but they’re better left alone.”

“I’m surprised by how little I want to take,” Lyn agreed. “I’ve my laptop, a change of clothes, and not much else.”

“You surprise me; why so little?”

“I’ve grown out of so many things,” Lyn said. “I don’t need them anymore. My music and photos are on the laptop and my mobile.”

“What about all your clothes?” Mother looked at him, and realised why so little. “You’ve had a growth spurt. Most of your things are too small now.”

“It was about time,” Lyn agreed. “I didn’t want to be five foot three inches tall forever. I’ve grown three inches in the past few months.”

“You haven’t filled out though.”

“No, I’m still the skinniest kid in the class,” Lyn said. “No whiskers yet either.”

“Your father tried to grow a beard once but couldn’t. You probably inherited that from him.”

“You’re super slim too,” Lyn said. “I seem to be following you.”

“And your hair’s grown about five inches in no time. Don’t you want to get it styled?”

“Not really, Mom; I like it long. I think it suits me. I know I’ll have to get it cut when I leave college and get a job, but for now it can grow.”

“I wish mine would grow like yours does.” Mother stroked his hair. “It’s so straight and smooth.”

“I’d like to be as blonde as you,” Lyn replied.

“Don’t be silly; you know this colour is out of a bottle.” Mother tossed her hair and laughed. “I hope the salons in Europe have the same colour.”

“I’m sure they will.” Lyn’s face crumpled and his eyes filled with tears. “I wish you didn’t have to go.”

“If I’m going to make my mark in this career, I have to do this,” she replied. “I hope you’ll be able to come out on the long vacations. I’m sure I’d be able to get a week or two free.”

“We’ll be fine.” Lyn forced a smile. “I’m sure I’ll get on with Aunt Genevieve, even though we’ve never met.”

“I think I only met her once or twice. She’s my mother’s sister and I can’t remember if she’s slightly older or younger. She’s always been a bit unconventional but she made a lot of money and retired to enjoy life.”

“I guess having me around is going to spoil that.”

“No, she’s really keen to have you there. Her last letter was really enthusiastic.”

“She wrote a letter?’ Lyn asked. “She didn’t use email or call?”

“Don’t worry; she’s always been a little eccentric. It probably pleased her to be able to write on real paper. I’ll show you.”

“That’s neat handwriting.” Lyn read the letter. “She’s sure brief though. Didn’t she want to know all about me?”

“Funnily enough, she didn’t ask anything,” Mother said. “She agreed you could go without a moment’s hesitation.”

“I’m sure we’ll get along fine.” Lyn forced a smile. “You don’t have to worry about anything.”

“Let’s get all your clothes packed and I’ll get someone to deliver them to Jennie’s. They’ll probably get there before you do.”

The cab took them to the airport at the same time. Mother was flying to Germany while Lyn was going in the opposite direction to the West. They both cried a little and then the hubbub of the airport took over and they separated. A final wave, then they lost sight of each other.

Lyn dozed on the long flight across the country and after a wait, changed to a local airline for the last leg of his journey. As the flight progressed, he got more nervous about the unknown future he was facing. All he knew was that he would be met in the Arrivals Hall.

He got his bag and walked through, looking for someone to meet him. He'd never asked how to recognise Genevieve and he didn't know if she had a recent picture of him. He walked up and down the hall, then noticed a lady coming in with a certain resemblance to his mother.

He looked again and when she held up a clipboard with "Lyn Bancroft" in big letters, he knew he'd found her. He watched her for a moment. She was tall and slim, in tight jeans and a leather jacket, with long light brown hair hanging down below her shoulder blades.

"This can't be Mom's younger sister," he thought. "She looks like she's only a couple of years older than I am."

He hesitated; she looked harmless and friendly. Taking a deep breath he walked up to her.

"Hi, I'm Lyn," he said.

"You can't be," she replied.

“I was when I got on the plane,” Lyn replied. “You must be Aunt Genevieve.”

“But you’re a boy.”

“I always have been,” Lyn replied, a little bemused by this reception.

“Oh this will never do.” She looked shocked. “I thought Lyn was a girl’s name. I would never have agreed...”

“I’m Lynton,” he said. “That’s a boy’s name.”

“But I was expecting a girl called Lynne. That’s a girl’s name,” she said. “I was so excited. I’ve prepared the guest suite specially.”

“I’m sure it will be fine. I won’t be any trouble.”

“It won’t... it can’t...” she stuttered, then collected herself with a sigh. “You’re here now; we’d better make the best of it.”

“I’ll be no trouble.” Lyn was feeling guilty, though he didn’t understand why.

“I’m sorry. That wasn’t much of a welcome.” She squeezed his hand warmly. “Your mother talked so much about you, and I always assumed that you were a girl. She never sent any pictures.”

She led the way to the car park and Lyn followed somewhat disconsolate. What did she mean by this reception? Had she really misunderstood so much?

“You’ll have to use my guest suite; it’s what I planned when I thought you were a girl,” she said. “I had it done out specially with all sorts of things I thought you’d like.”

“I’m sure it will be really nice,” Lyn replied. “Do I call you Aunt or Auntie or...”

“Just call me Jennie,” she replied. “Auntie sounds so old and formal and I’m not sure that I want to be either.”

She parked in the drive of a large colonial style house and strode indoors, leaving Lyn to follow.

“Your suite is this way.” She waited for him to follow her up the stairs.

She waited for him to follow into a large bed room with its own walk-in wardrobe, bathroom and sitting area. There was a faint smell of fresh paint and everything looked new. It was tastefully furnished in pastels and soft colours.

“I thought you’d be a girl,” Jennie mumbled as Lyn took it all in.

“It’s beautiful.” He looked round. “It’s kind of you to have been so thoughtful.”

“So you don’t hate it?”

“I don’t hate it at all. I’m sure I’ll be really comfortable here. Have my clothes arrived yet?”

“No; should they have?”

“The package was collected a few days ago. It should be here by now.”

“Maybe it will arrive tomorrow?”

Lyn flopped onto the queen size bed and picked up the huge teddy bear waiting there. “He reminds me of one I had years ago.”

“I didn’t want you to be lonely so I got him for you,” Jennie said. “I suppose I’d better show you the rest of my preparations.”

“Please.” Lyn smiled, trying to make friends with his new guardian.

“In your bathroom, there are all kinds of shampoo and conditioners; I didn’t know your hair type, so there’s everything there. The vanity has a hairdryer and straightening iron too.”

“I usually let it dry and tie it back.” Lyn waved his long pony tail as if to show it off.

“Yes, I can see it would benefit from a little care.” Jennie ran her fingers through it. “Perhaps you’ll let me show you what to do?”

“That would be good,” Lyn replied.

“I’d better get this over with too,” Jennie sighed. “There’s some perfumes and makeup in the vanity drawers. I have far too much and most of it is brand new. I don’t suppose we’ll be able to do girly things together and I was so looking forward to that.”

“I’m overwhelmed that you’ve gone to so much trouble.”