

Lily's Treasure Box

by lyn_f

Arthur Weasley delivers a mysterious wooden box to Harry. Whose box is it, and what treasures are contained therein?

One-shot

Chapter 1 of 1

Arthur Weasley delivers a mysterious wooden box to Harry. Whose box is it, and what treasures are contained therein?

I don't own them. It's all JK Rowling's. I'm just borrowing them for the moment.

Six months had passed since Harry Potter defeated Voldemort. He was sitting at the dining room table in the Burrow, enjoying a cup of tea, while he read *Quidditch Through the Ages*. Molly Weasley was in the kitchen, preparing food for lunch. When she glanced at the mantle with the Weasley family clock, she noticed that the hand labelled "Arthur" had moved from *Work* to *In Transit*.

"Oh, right...Arthur did mention he was coming home for lunch today, dear," she said. "He said he has something for you and thought today would be a good day to deliver it."

Harry looked up from his book. "Do you know what it is?" he asked.

"I haven't any idea, but I'm sure we're about to find out," Molly replied as Arthur's hand jumped from *In Transit* to *At Home*.

A moment later, Arthur burst through the door, greeting his wife with a kiss. "Hello, Molly." He smiled. Noticing Harry at the table, Arthur squeezed his shoulder in greeting. "Harry."

"Hi, Arthur."

"Harry," Arthur sat down next to him, "I have something for you. Kingsley asked me to pass this along to you."

"Kingsley?" Harry asked. "Did it come from the Aurors, by chance?"

Arthur nodded. "Harry, I know you never liked your Muggle relatives, but what I have was recovered from their house."

Harry frowned, then shrugged his shoulders. "If it's anything that belonged to the Dursleys, I don't want it."

"Harry," Arthur said, "you know they've been in hiding for the past year. This was recovered from Number Four, Privet Drive. That house was ransacked, and not much was recovered, but this ..." Arthur placed a simple carved wooden box on the table. "This was found in one of the rooms. It has a clear magical signature. No one was able to open it, so we don't know what's in it."

Harry looked at the box. "It has a magical signature?" he asked, puzzled. "But Aunt Petunia is definitely not a witch."

Arthur nodded. "No, Harry, of course not. However, we think this box may have belonged to her sister, Lily. Naturally, upon her death, Petunia was considered as next-of-kin, so Petunia inherited whatever she owned."

Harry's brow furrowed. "If no one was able to open it, what makes you think I can?"

"You're her son," Arthur replied. "Kingsley and I are guessing that a simple unlocking charm, like Alohomora, will probably open it. Why don't you give it a go?"

Harry frowned at the box. "If it really belonged to my mum, it would seem ... well, disrespectful, like I'm invading her personal space or something." He picked up the box and examined it. "Does this type of box have a name?"

"Yes, dear," Molly said, wiping her hands. Harry looked up at her. He wasn't aware that Molly had been paying attention to their conversation at all. "Many witches have such a box. It's a treasure box. They keep their most treasured items in it."

Arthur nodded. "Would you like for Molly and me to leave you alone to open this box?"

"Well," he began, "you and Molly are like parents to me. This box may have belonged to my mum, but for the past seven years, both of you have been there for me and have welcomed me into your family as if I were your son. If it's all right with you, I would like for you to be with me when I try to open it."

Molly came over and hugged Harry tightly. When she released him, she pulled out a handkerchief and dabbed at her eyes. "Harry, dear, you are truly like a son to us."

"Harry, it would be an honour," Arthur said, squeezing his shoulder.

Harry nodded. He pulled out his wand and pointed it at the box. *Alohomora*.

With a click, the box unlocked. All three of them stared at it. "It was really that simple?" Harry asked.

"Since that really is a treasure box...yes, Harry," Molly said. "Your mother's sister could not have opened it. But you..." And at this point, Molly wiped her handkerchief over her eyes again. "Your mother died so you could live. You are dearer to her than the items in that box."

Harry nodded, a lump in his throat. He swallowed hard, then forced himself to take a deep breath. He flicked open the lid of the box and gazed at the contents. His eyes widened as he noticed a few pieces of parchment, some pictures, and a ring. He pulled out a piece of parchment first and read it.



He handed the parchment to Molly. "That is definitely her handwriting," Molly said as she passed it to Arthur.

Next, Harry pulled out the ring. It was the most beautiful thing he'd ever seen. A slim gold band with a small circlet of emeralds. He noticed the colour of the emeralds matched the colour of his eyes. Molly gasped as she noticed the ring. She held out her hand. "May I, Harry?" she asked.

Harry passed the ring to Molly. She examined it and said, "It's beautiful. I don't remember ever seeing your mother wearing this, though." She gave the ring to Arthur, who studied it carefully before he nodded in agreement.

Harry pulled another piece of parchment from the box. "It belonged to her mum," he said. Immediately, he thought of Ginny. He knew Ginny was the woman with whom he wanted to spend the rest of his life with. He figured the ring must have been a family heirloom, passed down through the ages. He decided at once that when the moment had come to propose to Ginny, he would present her with this ring. He smiled at that thought.

Arthur returned the ring to Harry, who put it back in the box. Now, he pulled out several other items: a pair of baby shoes, a lock of hair, presumably from Harry's first haircut, and pictures. He picked up the shoes and examined them. "Was I really that small?" he whispered. He passed the shoes along to Molly.

"Such darling shoes!" Molly cooed. "I guess you were about a year old when you wore them."

Again, Harry felt his throat tighten. "That means my mum didn't have a chance to see me wear them all that often," he said. "I was only fifteen months old when Voldemort killed them."

Both Arthur and Molly nodded. As he'd suspected, the next piece of parchment read:



He fingered the lock of hair and marvelled at how soft it was. He passed both the parchment and the hair to Molly.

Then he looked at the pictures. The first brought tears to Harry's eyes. It was a photo of his parents and himself. He turned over the picture and noticed it was taken when he was eight months old. He looked at his baby self and noticed how wide his smile was. He noticed how happy his father looked, and the love-filled gaze his mother was giving him, which caused baby Harry's smile to grow wider as he waved his pudgy arms and hands at her. He handed the picture to Molly, who exclaimed over how cute he was as a baby. Arthur just smiled softly at the photo.

The next picture showed his father and the Marauders. He marvelled at how young Remus and Sirius looked in the photo. He turned it over and read the inscription *Easter Hols, April 1975*. So they were fourteen or fifteen in that photo. When he saw Peter Pettigrew hiding behind James, he growled at the photo and felt a surge of hatred toward the boy. "You sodding rat," Harry hissed through gritted teeth. "How could you have ever thought of betraying my parents and Sirius? They were your friends!"

Arthur took the picture from Harry and said gently, "Harry, I'm sure they never would have suspected that one of their closest mates would ever think of betraying them the way Pettigrew did."

Harry looked at Arthur with a pained expression. "Arthur, Ron and Hermione are my best mates. I would die first before even thinking of betraying them!"

Molly smiled at Harry. "You have always been a loyal friend, Harry. Just like your parents were loyal friends. You truly are a credit to them."

Harry sighed. He had to get a grip on himself. But when he looked at the next photo, tears pricked at the corners of his eyes again. His ~~num~~ ^{mum} was approximately six months old in this picture, and she in turn was held by her mother, Harry's grandmother. Another photo depicted his mother and his Aunt Petunia. Lily appeared to be no more than three years old in that picture. He handed both pictures to Arthur.

"Oh!" Arthur cried in surprise. "No one is moving in these pictures!"

Harry nodded. "Remember, my mum was a Muggle-born witch. These are Muggle pictures," he said. "I never saw moving pictures until I came to Hogwarts."

Arthur examined the photos. "Fascinating," he commented.

The last item Harry pulled from the box was something wrapped in parchment. He removed the cover to find another two photographs in there. One was a Muggle-type picture, the other a wizarding one.

The Muggle photo had Lily and ... *was that a young Snape?* ... and they were posing in front of the Hogwarts Express. He noticed that Snape was already wearing his school robes. Harry turned over the photo and read the inscription: *Lily and Severus, age 11, at Platform 9 ¾ before boarding the Hogwarts Express, 1/9/71*.

In the second photo, Lily was wearing a hat and scarf in Gryffindor colours. She was smiling sweetly at the camera. Harry couldn't help but smile back, and it looked as if Photo-Lily's smile grew broader and sweeter in response. He admired the angle the photo was taken. When he turned over the photo, the inscription was written in a small, spiky scrawl that he recognised straight away. He shook his head...it was the same script that was all over the sixth-year Potions book Professor Slughorn had given him. Once again, he wondered why he hadn't recognised that handwriting earlier ... "Lily Evans, near the Lake, December 1973," Severus Snape had written on the back of the picture. Harry passed the photos on to Molly.

"Oh, Harry," she said. "You did say that your mum and Severus were friends before they ever went to Hogwarts. They were adorable children."

Harry shrugged. "I suppose," he said. "Although I didn't get the impression Snape had a particularly happy childhood."

Molly sniffled and dabbed her handkerchief at her eyes. "Poor Severus," she murmured. "He truly played his part well. Too well. Even those who may have seen him as an ally were convinced of his betrayal." She sniffled again. "He was not an easy man to get to know, much less like, but he had his own way about him. He was always such a loner. I feel so very sad at the way we've treated him."

Arthur drew Molly into his arms and comforted her as she sobbed silently into his shoulder.

Harry stared at the photos a moment longer before he placed everything back in the box and closed it with a snap. He stood up and gave Molly and Arthur a quick hug. "Thank you both for being there for me. Ron and Ginny are very lucky indeed to have you."

Molly hugged Harry tightly. When they broke apart, Molly wiped the tears from Harry's face and tenderly brushed his hair back from his face. "I meant it when I said that you are like a son to us, Harry," she said. She gave him a watery smile. "Now, let's take our lunch, shall we?"

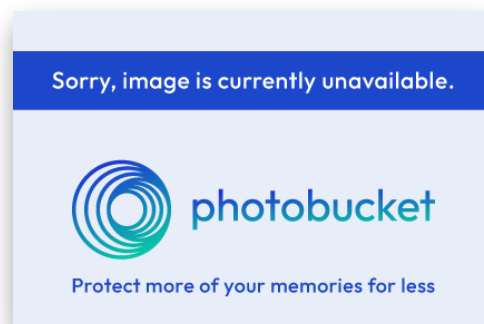
Later that evening, Harry was lying in his bed in the room he shared with Ron. He could not sleep because he had too many thoughts running around in his mind. Ron's excessively loud snoring did not help. Most of his thoughts centred on the enigmatic man who had been his Potions, and later, Defence Against the Dark Arts professor.

Once more, a wave of hot shame coursed through his body just as it had when he'd first learnt the truth of Snape's affiliations and the real reasons for his actions. Staring off into the darkness, Harry tasted the bitterness of belated remorse over the hatred he had felt for Snape at the back of his tongue. He knew now that without Snape's help, he would never have defeated Voldemort. How he wished things would have turned out differently between them! True, Snape had been a spy, deep under cover, and if he had shown anything but contempt for The-Boy-Who-Lived, the children of Death Eaters would have suspected something was amiss ... but still ...

Then Harry's thoughts drifted to his mother. She and Snape had known each other since they were around nine years old. She must have been his first friend. And in turn, Snape must have been her first friend from the wizarding world. He supposed his mum had an advantage over most other Muggle-born witches and wizards in that she had a way to explain all the uncontrolled magic she must have performed before going to Hogwarts. He sighed as he silently lamented that his mother and Snape were sorted into two different Houses, and two rival Houses at that. He wondered what would have happened if they'd been sorted into the same House. Perhaps they'd have stayed friends, perhaps even become lovers? Perhaps Snape would be his father. He shivered at that thought. From what he remembered of Snape's memories, his father and Sirius had acted like spoilt prats, being mean to Lily and Snape from the very beginning. Harry knew what it was like to be bullied, and he hated knowing that his own father had been such a tormenter. He snorted quietly as he realised that was one thing he and Snape had in common...they were both victims of schoolyard bullies.

His thoughts went back to the box Arthur delivered to him earlier that morning. All of a sudden, he felt an insurmountable urge to visit his mother's grave. Now. He knew he would not be able to sleep before he gave in to the impulse, so he got up quietly and Summoned his robes. He tip-toed out of the room, careful not to wake the snoring Ron, and padded down the stairs. He slipped out the door, then walked briskly toward the end of the garden and the Apparition point.

He Apparated directly to the graveyard, right behind the church in Godric's Hollow. Once there, he headed straight to his parents' graves. In the pale light of a Lumos spell, he read again the headstone he'd seen for the first time nearly a year ago:



He hunkered down in front of the headstone, kneeling on his parents' grave, and leaned his forehead against the cool stone.

"Mum," he whispered, "Arthur Weasley brought your treasure box to me today. He said the Aurors found it in Aunt Petunia's house, but no one was able to open it. Thank you for sharing those things with me. I can understand why all the things you put in the box were special to you." He swallowed around the lump in his throat and continued, "I guess that's Grandmother Evans' ring in the box. I hope you don't mind, I ... I have a girlfriend, and her name is Ginny. Arthur's daughter. I love her, and I want to marry her. I hope you don't mind that I give her Grandmother's ring.

"Professor Snape shared his memories of you with me, Mum. I had no idea you were close friends. I saw what he considered to be his worst memory. He called you a ... not nice name. I think he was really sorry, Mum. Maybe you were too hard on him, and maybe you should have forgiven him. I'll admit, though...he never gave me any reason to like him and every reason to hate him. I wish I knew he was really watching after me and protecting me all this time because of you.

"I'll keep your treasures safe, Mum. I promise."

A few minutes later, he stood up, Conjured a bouquet of yellow and red chrysanthemums, and placed it at the base of the headstone. After one last glance at the headstone and the quote below his parents' death dates, he walked away into the darkness and Apparated back to the Burrow.

A/N: Special thanks go to Demetrias76 for her encouragement, as well as to JunoMagic for her marvellous beta-reading. The concept of the Treasure Box, as well as the baby photos and other treasures contained therein is a nod to Coral Grace's wonderful story, *Armilla*. It was one of the first stories that pulled me into the world of Harry Potter FanFiction.