

A Mother's Love

by Lilypudding

GINNY Weasley is not getting along with her mother. She's tired of her mother interfering on everything she says. Meanwhile, Molly Weasley is fed up with her daughter's attitude. When Molly is accidentally hit by a spell that makes her forget who she is, everything changes. Instead of Molly being the mother, Ginny is forced to watch over and teach Molly. Can their relationship survive? Will this event make their relationship stronger, or will it just make things turn to bad or worse? Written in response to Mugglenet Fanfiction's Molly Weasley one-shot challenge.

One-Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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"Mum, why do you have to be so curious in what I'm doing?" a thin teenaged girl with striking, thick red hair roared across the beat-up wooden table. Ginny Weasley took a deep breath as tears blurred her brown eyes. She couldn't believe her mother was so ignorant! *All I came down here to do was to ask if there was any mail!* she thought angrily. *Why does she have to be so meddling?*

"Don't use that tone with me, young lady!" Molly Weasley yelled back in an equally loud voice, turning to her daughter as she directed her wand to the pot of potatoes simmering on the stove. "I have a right to be as curious as I want!"

"But, Mum," Ginny complained, "it's my life. Not yours. I'm sixteen, so can't I have a little independence?"

"Young lady, I am your mother!" Molly roared back. "Now I don't know where this attitude is coming from all of a sudden, but I suggest you drop it now. Bill and Fleur are coming tomorrow with Fleur's parents. I want you to make a good impression on them."

"I don't care what Phlegm and her snotty parents think of me," Ginny retorted, saying the first thing that had come to mind.

"Excuse me!" Molly said, aghast. "You haven't even met them! Ginevra, please make an effort to seem slightly welcoming, at least, to Fleur's parents. Please drop this attitude immediately. Why are you being so moody?" *What's the matter with my Ginny?* Molly wondered, biting her lip, as she often did these days. Her only daughter had come home from her fifth year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry changed beyond recognition. Molly knew the last year at Hogwarts had been very hard, as the terrible Dark wizard Voldemort had led a fierce war against all the good in the world, but the changes in Ginny's demeanor were much too drastic to be caused by the Wizarding War. Molly had a feeling it had to do with Harry Potter, her other son Ron's best friend and the boy she suspected Ginny had liked since she had first laid eyes on him six years ago, but she couldn't get close enough to her daughter to figure it out, without Ginny lashing out at her.

Meanwhile, in the hallway of the Weasley's wobbly house, affectionately called the Burrow, Ginny's twin older brothers, Fred and George, hunched over by the weathered

kitchen door, listening intently to the argument. "I think Ginny needs a little cheering up," Fred said quietly. "She's really at it with Mum again. Doesn't she know to head her off early? It's like she's forgotten what Mum's yelling is like."

"No, Mum's not really yelling," George retorted. "She's actually being somewhat quiet for once. I think she knows something is wrong with Ginny."

"Everyone knows there's something wrong with Ginny. It's got something to do with Harry. He dumped her at Dumbledore's funeral; did you know?" Fred said.

"Duh. Who doesn't? I don't know who has a bigger problem, Ginny or Harry," George responded.

"I think Mum has the biggest problem," said Fred. "She's too meddling."

George said in an almost philosophical way, "No, Mum causes the problems because she's too meddling. If Ginny would just open up and talk to her, there'd be no problems. But Ginny doesn't feel comfortable talking to her."

"So..." Fred said slowly, the usual grin rearranging itself on his face, "to fix Ginny's problems, first we have to fix Mum."

"And to change Mum, I think I know what to do," George said, with an identical mischievous grin.

In the kitchen, meanwhile, the argument had increased to a dramatic level. Molly and Ginny stood facing each other at the other side of the table, both yelling so the entire neighborhood could hear.

"WILL YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE?" yelled Ginny furiously. The look on her face was unreadable - passive yet secretive.

"STOP TELLING ME WHAT TO DO!" Molly screamed back with an equal harshness. Though she tried to conceal it, tears were forming in her eyes, blurring the soft expression she usually had in her warm brown eyes.

Ginny's eyes widened as she saw Fred and George sneak quietly in the kitchen. She pretended to listen to her mother's high-pitched ramblings while she focused on her two older brothers, cautiously tiptoeing on the squeaky wooden board floor with an almost catlike grace until they were directly behind Molly. All Ginny could see was Fred's vividly colored red hair and freckled face, creased with laugh lines around the mouth, protruding on top of his mother's plump and short frame.

"*Teenamorphamus!*" Fred said in a determined voice, his wand pointed at his mother's back. A jagged purple beam of light flew out and hit Molly on the back.

"MUM!" Ginny shouted out in a voice laced with concern as she saw Molly's eyes widen as the full impact of the spell hit her. Her eyes seemed to be outlined with a purple ring, and for a second her face contorted into a terrible expression. Her entire body seemed to tighten. Then, everything about her relaxed, and she stood with a blank expression on her curvy, gentle face.

"Mum, Mum!" Ginny yelled. She found herself right next to her mother, and began shaking Molly violently. "Are you OK? Can you hear me? Mum, speak to me!"

Molly shook her head and seemed to come out of a reverie. "Who are you?" she asked curiously, in a disoriented voice.

"Mum?" asked Fred, still frozen in the spot where he had cast the spell from, a look of horror on his face. "Mum?" he repeated in a louder voice when the confusion on his mother's face deepened.

"Why are you calling me Mum?" Molly asked in an even more confused voice.

Ginny glanced at Fred and George. "What did you do to her?" she asked urgently.

Fred threw George a deep look. "Well, er, well... er," he said, flailing under Ginny's ferocious gaze.

"Fred and I invented a new spell," George said quickly. "Theoretically, it's supposed to make adults become teenagers again. We were looking for a tester because obviously we couldn't test it on ourselves. We heard you and Mum arguing, so we thought if we turned her into a teenager again, she'd be more understanding. I guess the spell didn't work right."

"Excuse me?" Ginny said in a voice of numb disbelief. "You tried an experimental spell on your own mother? Are you mad?"

"Wait! What's going on?" Molly asked. "Who are you? And why are you calling me your mother? I'm not your mum."

"What?" Ginny asked, close to tears. "Mum, please, stop joking! It's not funny!"

"What is going on? I really don't get it," Molly said. "First of all, who are you?"

Ginny took a deep breath, throwing a deep look of disgust to her elder brothers. "I'm Ginny," she said in the gentle voice one might reserve in talking to a three year old with, "and these are my brothers, Fred and George. We... er... er, mistook you for someone we knew. We thought you were our mother... yeah, that's it."

"Ok, cool," said Molly in an incredibly relaxed voice. "I'm Molly. Are you two twins?" she asked Fred and George.

George gave Ginny a desperate look. He'd been asked that question too many times to count, but to be asked if he was a twin by his own mother was just plain bizarre.

"Send an owl to Dad," Ginny whispered to George in an urgent voice. "Tell him something's really wrong with Mum. George, I don't think she remembers who we are."

Arthur Weasley walked up the path to the Burrow, grumbling despite the balmy summer weather as he reread the letter George had sent him for the tenth time. It was hard to really understand what his jokester son was saying, and he wasn't sure if George was telling the truth or not. All he knew was that he had Apparated home from work as soon as he read the letter. It wasn't beyond his twin sons to send a big practical joke letter, and he wanted to punish his sons on his own terms before Molly found out.

"All right, boys, what's wrong with Mum?" he asked in a jaunty voice as he let himself into the kitchen. As soon as he had ducked under the doorway into the dark room, he immediately realized something was wrong. Where was Molly? She never left the kitchen as this hour. He looked around the dim room again to make sure his eyes weren't fooling him, but his wife was only conspicuous by her absence.

"Dad, Dad, I'm so glad you're home!" Fred said, rushing into the kitchen and giving his father a huge hug. Arthur's eyes narrowed. Since when did Fred mention how glad he was to see his parents?

"Where's Mum?" Arthur asked, trying to keep the anxiety out of his voice.

"Upstairs with Ginny," Fred replied. "Something happened, Dad, and she's really different. I should really warn you-"

Fred's voice trailed off as Molly, giggling and laughing, ran into the room with an apprehensive looking Ginny in tow. Arthur's jaw dropped wide open at his wife's appearance. Apparently, she had raided Ginny's closet, picking out the clothes given to his daughter by her Muggle-born friends, most of which Molly had forbidden her to wear. Arthur now understood why. The sight of his overweight wife in a V-neck tee-shirt, a mini-skirt that barely fit without ripping around Molly's veined thighs widened by having seven children, and leather boots slinking far past her knees almost caused him blindness.

At the sight of Arthur, Molly burst into giggles again. "Hello," she said in a sugary voice. "Who are you?" To Ginny, she said in a high-pitched, audible whisper, "He's cute."

"He's my dad," Ginny said in a small voice. She had failed to be shocked by anything her mother said anymore.

"Molly?" Arthur asked in a dumbstruck voice. "Molly?"

"How'd you know my name?" Molly asked with a wide smile on her face.

"We've been married for over twenty years," Arthur said quietly.

"No, no, we couldn't have," Molly retorted. "I've never been married."

"Boys," Arthur asked in a weary voice, looking at Fred and George in a dumbstruck way, "what happened?"

"It was an experimental spell that went wrong," Ginny said quietly for Arthur's clarification. "She doesn't remember us anymore."

Arthur sighed. "Ginny, take her up to your room, and have a good girl to girl talk with her. Try to... er, sort her out. I need a cup of tea."

"What?" Ginny asked, confused. "Aren't you going to try something to help her?"

"Ginny, I'm reasonably sure you can fix this problem your mother's having. It's not a huge deal," Arthur replied wearily.

"I thought you would solve this!" Ginny exclaimed in a shocked and hurt voice. "I thought you could solve anything!"

"Please, Ginny," Arthur said in an exhausted voice. "With Ron away with Harry, Fleur and Bill coming tomorrow, and Fred and George staying over, I have enough on my plate. Your mother thinks she's a single woman again. You're a single woman, too. You've got to talk to her like one. You take care of her while I research counterspells."

"Dad, I just turned sixteen. I can't do this," Ginny whined.

"You can. You're a young woman now, Ginny, and I know you can entertain your mother. I mean, hang out with Molly for an hour," Arthur retorted.

"Your father's right, you know," Molly said suddenly. "You're not a little girl. Ginny, you are a young lady. I'm sure you can stand talking to an older woman like me for a few minutes. Come on, let's go up and leave your handsome father to his work."

Arthur continued, "I don't think it's a great idea if she sleeps with me in our room tonight. I don't think she feels like sleeping next to a total stranger, and frankly, neither do I."

Ginny felt her eyes suddenly fill up with tears. *What's the matter with me?* she thought. *I never cry.* "Are you and Mum going to get divorced?" she asked, placing a hand on her face to steady her quivering chin.

"What gave you that impression?" asked Arthur in a too hearty voice. "No, I'm sure I'll find a counterjinx soon, and everything will be fine. But just for tonight, I think she should stay with you."

Ginny groaned inwardly as Molly winked at her father, apparently not realizing what the conversation was about. It was going to be a very long night.

"So, what's your family like?" Molly asked, gazing at Ginny thoughtfully, hours later. Ginny wasn't sure what time it was. Darkness had long blanketed her small, cluttered bedroom in shadow, and her father still hadn't come up to perform the counterjinx on Molly. Ginny really didn't care now; she had spent the last few hours pouring her heart out to this kind stranger with her mother's face.

"Well," Ginny said slowly, "I'm the youngest and the only girl. Then there's Ron, who's a year older. He's away, with his friend, Harry. You know, the Harry Potter who defeated Voldemort when he was a baby."

"Wow, your brother is friends with Harry Potter? Really! That's awesome," gushed Molly. After a slight pause, she asked, "How is Harry, by the way. Is he nice?"

Ginny was glad it was dark in the room; she felt the blood drain out of her face as in her mind, she heard Harry's voice again. Was he nice? Ginny wasn't sure. He was nice enough to be the most considerate man she had ever met, the man of her dreams, and nice enough to think of her despite the perilous situation he was in, but since when was dumping a girl perfectly capable of defending herself for her protection considered nice? "He's OK," Ginny said nonchalantly. "I don't really know him that well," she said, the quiver in her voice betraying her lie.

"What about the guys I met downstairs, the twins?" Molly asked. "Are they your only other brothers?"

"Oh, Fred and George!" Ginny exclaimed. "They're a handful, but they don't live with us anymore. They have a joke shop in Diagon Alley and live there," Ginny said. After seeing Molly's nod of approval, she continued, "And then there's Percy, who's older than them. Percy's sort of fallen out of the rest of the family; he lives in London by himself. I haven't seen him in ages."

"That often happens in families," Molly said in a would-be-casual voice. Ginny felt there was something Molly was trying to hide that she had revealed by her comment, but didn't want to press. She had a feeling Molly had inadvertently opened up a topic she had no desire to discuss, and Ginny was only to get more information out of her mother by being more subtle. "So, those are your only other brothers?" Molly asked quickly, trying to cover up her slip.

"No," Ginny sighed. "I have two more brothers besides them. There's Charlie, who works training dragons in Romania, and Bill, who works at Gringotts bank in Diagon Alley. He's living here at the moment, but he went on holiday to France with his fiancé, Fleur. They're actually coming back tomorrow, and they're bringing back Fleur's parents, who live in France. The wedding is in a couple of weeks."

"That's neat," Molly said. "And then you have your father, right?"

Ginny nodded.

"What about your mother?" Molly pressed. "Where's she?"

Ginny felt hot panic rise deep inside her. She had a feeling Molly wouldn't be too impressed to know that she was her mother. To tell her mother the truth would arise in Molly more confusion than Ginny was sure she could handle. Instead, Ginny groped for a viable lie. "She left us," Ginny said, shortly. "Ages ago."

"Poor you," Molly said sympathetically. "That must have been so hard on you and your poor father."

"Actually, I don't remember it," Ginny said, moving fluidly with the fib. "I was just a baby at the time."

"All the worse of her," Molly said shortly.

There was an uncomfortable silence. Ginny knew she couldn't keep up the act much longer, but she didn't know how to change the subject. Fortunately, Molly did so for her.

"You know, I've always wanted to have kids and a family," Molly said, breaking the awkward pause.

"Why have you never gotten married?" Ginny asked, her voice trembling. Maybe this could lead to clues that could reverse her mother to her original state.

"I don't know," Molly shrugged. "I guess I never found the right guy and never wanted to settle down. I had a rock band for the longest time, you know."

"Really?" Ginny asked, suddenly curious.

"Yeah, I was the lead singer. We'd go to all sorts of dingy bars and places, half of them run by Muggles. It was a dangerous life. I couldn't bring kids into it even if I had a husband or boyfriend. It would have been cruel to bring kids into such a terrible life. Still, even though I quit the band, my life's not what you call stable," Molly said. "Now, I bartend at pubs filled with men who are disgraces to wizard kind. It pays enough to cover the rent, but the men get into a lot of fights. I'm always worried about what will happen if I get hurt or something. Who's gonna take me to the hospital and look after me?"

"Don't you have a family?" Ginny asked. "Parents, sisters, brothers or something?"

"Nah," Molly said. "I had these huge fights with my parents when I was a teenager. They were mostly about stupid things, like how meddling my parents were. They got so bad I finally moved out when I was seventeen. I got involved with the wrong crowd, the band people, and lost contact with all of my friends from Hogwarts. My parents forced the rest of the family to refuse to speak to me, and my brothers died in the Wizarding War against Voldemort a while back. I didn't even get to say good-bye to them."

"That's so sad," Ginny said. She couldn't believe the life her mother would have lived had she not had a family. "But don't you ever want to calm down and live to love?"

"I guess," Molly said slowly. "But who could I love?"

Ginny found herself trying to conceal the tears flowing from her eyes. *Why can't you love me?* she thought hysterically. *Why can't I be your baby again?* "Me," she finally said in a choked voice.

Molly looked at her. It was hard to tell by the flickering light of the single candle gasping to light up the whole room, but Ginny could tell she had tears in her eyes. She moved from the edge of Ginny's bed where she had been perched the entire time and quickly was sitting next to the red-haired teenager on the floor. Her arms quickly enveloped Ginny into a tight hug.

Suddenly, a quick rapping knock came at the door. Molly quickly moved her arms away from Ginny. "Open up," came Arthur's heavy and weary voice. "I've got a guy from St. Mungo's coming in five minutes to pick your mother up, Ginny."

"What?" gasped Ginny in horror as she opened the door, only to see Arthur's drawn, haggard face.

Arthur explained in a tired voice, "I looked all through every single spellbook downstairs, sent urgent owls to everyone I knew, and even tried some incarnations I thought might work as a countercurse on Fred and George. Nothing worked."

"So, you sent an owl to someone from St. Mungo's Hospital?" Ginny asked, her hands shaking in fury.

"Yes," Arthur said briskly. "They're sending a small crew to get her and Apparate her back to the hospital."

"Why?" gasped Ginny. "For what?"

"Well, the man who owed me back said they'd put her in a ward for observation, interrogate Fred and George, and try to find a countercurse. If they couldn't find one, they told me they would put her in a special ward," Arthur replied.

"So, that's what you're going to do?" Ginny asked forcefully, barely even realizing she was yelling at her own father. "Throw your own wife in the gutter?"

"Ginny, please!" Arthur pleaded in a desperate voice. "I'm not throwing your mother in the gutter. I'm trying to get her help."

"Help her, how?" Ginny asked. "It's not like she's ill or anything. All Mum needs is a little... er... reminding."

Ginny felt a hand on her shoulder. She instinctively whirled around, sudden panic whirling through her for no reason. However, she quickly realized the calloused, weathered hand belonged to her mother.

"What are you and your father fighting about now?" Molly asked, in nearly a whisper. "Don't you think maybe there are better ways to solve problems than fighting?"

Ginny couldn't believe her mother, who solved everything with shouting, was standing there calmly telling her this. "How do you know?" Ginny retorted, trying and failing miserably to keep her voice steady and sincere. "Are you a mother?"

Molly looked as if Ginny had slashed her with a white-hot knife. A pang of guilt flashed through Ginny. "I'm sorry," she whispered quietly, but she knew it was too late for reconciliation. As Molly gave her an unreadable gaze, Ginny heard a knock at the door, echoing through the whole house.

"The men from St. Mungo's are here," Arthur said wearily. "I'll get it," he called, halfway down the stairs.

Ginny was left with her mother, who was determinately avoiding her gaze. "I'm really sorry for saying that, Mum," Ginny apologized once again in a dejected voice. Suddenly, she gasped and covered her mouth with her hand as she realized the word that had slipped out.

"What did you call me?" Molly asked, her voice trembling.

Ginny couldn't keep up the lie any longer. "You are my mother!" she gasped, trying to choke out words between the sobs that came out unchecked. "Fred and George cursed you and made you forget who you were. You've always been my mum, and you always will!" Without meaning to, Ginny had thrown her arms around her mother and was sobbing into her chest like she had done as a baby.

Ginny had thought she would never know anything in life as soothing as a mother's hug. As long as Molly enveloped her in warm arms, no harm could come to either one of them. Ginny would be happy to live her days under the illusion of the shelter of a mother's arms. Suddenly, a harsh, unfamiliar voice broke up the gentle hug.

"Are you the patient, Mrs. Weasley?" a tall man with bulbous muscles wearing robes embellished with the words "St. Mungo's Ambulance Corps" asked.

Molly nodded. "I have to go to the hospital, don't I?" she asked Ginny, slowly moving her arms away from her daughter. Ginny was too choked up with unwanted tears to do anything but nod.

"Don't worry about me, Ginny," Molly said gently as the man roughly seized her arms as to guide her away. "I'll be all right. Remember, I'll always love you."

"Me, too, Mum," Ginny croaked, fighting back streams of tears. "I love you, too. Goodbye."