Mothers in Law

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

Some say that if you want to know what your wife will be like in 20 years time, meet your mother in law. But for me, I have two mothers in law. Which one would she be like?

When I met Marlo she never talked about her father. She only said that her parents had separated and that her father lived in another state. She simply said that he had remarried and that her mother Yvonne was alone and needed her. So, I met Yvonne quite early, when things had clearly gone beyond just dating, but before we moved in together.

Yvonne did need Marlo, and it was only a matter of time before she needed me too. Even before Marlo and I were married she asked me to call her “Ma” – she insisted on it. I was happy to be that familiar, but it now seems that she just wanted to claim me as another child of hers who owed her attention.

It was like Yvonne needed a man but did not want to live with a man again. She was reasonably attractive and could have gone looking, but she did not seem interested. It was like my presence was someone fulfilling a need she had, and she wanted me to be around as often as possible

If Marlo was to be the woman I was now proposing marriage to, perhaps this should have concerned me. Marlo was inclined to say “never leave me” but possessiveness can be nice. It seemed to say that she would never leave me, which is what I wanted. It did not seem the same as her mother’s neediness, or so I thought.

But I guess I am old fashioned – before I proposed marriage to Marlo I felt that I needed to meet her father – not to get his permission but more to announce my intentions. I told her that was what I wanted, and while she was reluctant, she finally agreed.

“My father is no longer my father,” she said. “I still call him Dad but that can be a bit awkward at times. You see, for the last six years he has been living as a woman.”

I was as surprised as I guess anyone would have been, but I responded casually – “Oh, you mean he is transsexual … like … a transwoman. I mean “she”. Has she had the … you know … surgery?”

“Everything,” said Marlo, with what looked to me like an expression of disgust. “She was even engaged to be married to a man, but that is all off, as I heard it.”

“When was the last time you saw her?” I asked.

“We stay in touch by email, but it has been a while,” she said. “By email it is just like I am chatting with Dad – the same Dad I have always had. I love my father, but it is like the woman she has become is the bitch responsible for taking him away from Mom and me. Even on the phone he sounds like her, not him. He is gone, and we needed him, an its her fault.”

It did sound slightly weird to hear her talking about her father as two people, but in a way it was entirely understandable.

Her name was now Virginia and while she lived out of state, it was not too far for us to drive there if we stayed overnight. I told Marlo that I wanted to meet this person and asked her to go with me. With some reservations she agreed.

She had already told her father by email all about me. It was like she said – she was close with “him” but could not face “her”. I wanted to, and now you can add to that, a growing curiosity.

It took us most of the day to drive to her town and up to her little suburban cottage. That suited Marlo. She had booked a hotel and her idea was that we meet and have one drink and then leave. She had arranged things so I decided that I would take her lead on this.

I don’t know what I was expecting when the door opened. Not a truck driver in a wig and not a glamorous drag queen, but the woman who stood there beaming at us was a total surprise. I suppose that you could say that all the things that attracted me to Marlo were there on a very pretty face, but somehow with hard edges that took it to sheer beauty. The effect on me was strange.

Marlo was standing ahead of me so the first thing that Virginia did was throw her arms around her daughter and hug her, her eyes wet with tears. It was clear in all she said and did in that moment that she loved her daughter to bits, and Marlo knew that too. She started to cry. We were ushered inside and I just left them to it, while I looked around at the tidy and warm-looking living room decked out in a truly feminine style.

Finally she turned to me, after drying her eyes with a tissue. She hugged me too. In heels she was only a little shorter than I was, but her hug was broad and strong, and her perfume was rich and spicy.

“I am not sure what to call you,” I said.

“Call me Virginia,” she smiled. “That’s my name. Actually call me Ginny as my friends do.” Her eyes sparkled in a way that was clearly inviting – not just welcoming but something else as well.

She offered us a drink, and when Marlo suggested tea she rejected that decisively, producing a bottle of champagne from the fridge and three glasses.

“Can I ask you to pop the cork?” she said to me. “Strangely I seem to have lost the ability to do things that are usually left to men since I stopped being one. It is probably a subconscious thing. I have got better at other things. I have made boeuf bourguignon for dinner. You are staying for dinner aren’t you.”

I looked at Marlo. It seemed as if the exchange of tear-filled hugs had softened her attitude a little. We did indeed stay for dinner, but we later declined to take up the offer of staying in the spare room, checking into the hotel nearby quite late.

If I was at all nervous about this meeting that had gone even before my first sip of that champagne and it was certainly over by the time a bottle of red had been drunk. I was told some secrets about Marlo arising out of tales in her childhood which were told with real style and humor. Marlo seemed to laugh more in that short time than I had ever her laugh with her mother.

Ginny said to me – “Why don’t you come and help me with the dishes and we can have our own chat?” She led me into the kitchen and got to work. As a casual aside she said – “I only ask for one things from you and that is that you love my daughter. You do, don’t you?”

Of course I said yes, but even as I did I wondered what was happening in my head, or was it happening further down? My heart perhaps? My belly? My balls? What was a I feeling for this woman – my second mother-in-law? All I knew was that it was strong.

I told myself that it was only a sexual thing. It is like some guys are fully heterosexual but have a fantasy about railing a woman who used to be a man, maybe even one who still was one. I mean, these guys would marry a real woman, and have kids and a home, but still have these kinds of fantasies. It meant nothing – like nothing more that jacking off to a centrefold. It made it easier for me to kiss Ginny goodbye and make love to Marlo back at our hotel.

The second time that I saw Ginny was at our wedding. I remember how spectacular she looked. She had her hair up and was wearing something bright. She made Yvonne look dowdy despite her best efforts, and the scowl she wore most of the day did not help. She had only agreed to having Ginny there because Ginny was paying for most of it, and on the condition that they never meet except during the photographs where they stood well apart.

When Ginny walked Marlo down the aisle all the groomsmen whispered - “who is that?” I didn’t want to say – “That’s Marlo’s father,” so I just said - “I will explain later”. I did not want a conversation during the vows. Weddings require a groom’s full attention which somehow helped me with all of those thoughts of desire returning to me.

It was just that Ginny was like every man’s fantasy woman concentrated into a single bundle. She had a spectacular face enhanced but not masked with makeup, she had great hair and a knock-out figure, but she carried herself in a special way. She seemed confident in a way that only somebody who has made hard choices and will never back away from them, can be. She also had an air of wisdom and of power that is not obvious on other woman, even if they possess them.

I took me to marry Marlo before I fully understood that I was obsessed with Ginny. It is something that has caused me problems ever since.

Her being in another state should have helped. I should have left her alone, but I took up my own email friendship with her, and I called her almost as often as Marlo, who was doing that quite often following our visit before the wedding. I even followed her on Instagram and I kept some images of her on my computer – her out with friends wearing short skirts and low cut tops. I even had one shot of her in a bikini, with those perfect breasts and that camel toe on display. It as like I was deliberately trying to drive myself crazy.

I happened to mention her name when I was with Yvonne. That was a big mistake.

“That bitch is not even female,” she spat. “I was married to that bastard, now dickless and with an open wound he calls a vagina. He abandoned me. He abandoned Marlo.”

She had abandonment issues, all right. I should have left it, but I felt that it was necessary to point out that he was a woman, and a woman attractive to some men.

“Oh, you are one of those,” she snarled. “If you are not getting what you need from Marlo you should come to me. I will show you what a real woman can do to please a man.”

I was shocked, to put it mildly. I mean, Yvonne was attractive in her own way, but not while she was angry. Her idea of a sexy look was to adopt the look of being docile and helpless. It was the complete opposite of Ginny, and yet it carried its own fascination, probably because I think I had come to understand that Yvonne wanted me to fuck her.

But I love Marlo. We have a child on the way now and we are talking about how big a family we want together. I can have a family with her. We can live a normal life.

I never want it said that I am one of those men who would put sexual pleasure above his wife and his family, but desires can be hard to wrestle with. I have to say that it does not get any easier over time, what with those doleful begging looks I am getting from Yvonne and the images of Ginny that I look at on my laptop every night.

This is the problem with two mothers-in-law.

The End

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