

ALL CHARACTERS PORTRAYED WITHIN THIS STORY ARE 18 YEARS OLD OR ABOVE.

Summary: Weary from battle and wishing a respite from the losses of war, Harry absconds from Wizarding Britain, leaving everything he knew behind. Armed with the Hallows, Harry travels the Magical World, learning secrets long forgotten and breaking the boundaries of magic itself. However, it's when he stumbles upon an abandoned temple that his life truly begins to change, drawing the eyes of beings long thought to have faded into history and myth...

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Chapter 4: The Power of Voodoo (Who do? You do!)

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~Four Months Later~

To say Harry had been surprised when Aphrodite broke the news of her pregnancy to him would be an understatement. At first, he had laughed it off, his mind still too foggy from yet another round of lustful indulgence to truly grasp the seriousness in the goddess's voice. Yet when she did not join in his laughter, when her eyes—usually warm with mischief—and instead held something steady, realisation gripped him like a vice.

At first, there was confusion. He had rambled off a few questions, none of which he could remember now, before Aphrodite confirmed once again that she was indeed pregnant with his child.

Confusion came first. He'd rambled questions he couldn't now remember, except that they'd sounded ridiculous even to his own ears. Aphrodite simply repeated the truth: she was pregnant with his child.

Then confusion gave way to hurt. Was this what he was to her? A tool? A means to an end? A breeding bull she could use without asking whether he wanted to be a father? (Of course he did—but that was beside the point.)

Aphrodite had silenced him with a kiss. Not heated or hungry, not the intoxicating intimacy he'd come to expect, but something gentler. Grounding. A kiss that steadied him. And with it came words she whispered directly into his mind:

You think too little of yourself, my darling.

You are mine. Now and until the end of time itself.

Our child is my promise of that.

Hurt melted into acceptance, and with acceptance came a joy so sharp it nearly overwhelmed him.

He was going to be a father.

A father.

Even now, the idea made Harry's head spin a strange mix of nervous excitement.

It's been four months since Aphrodite told him the news. Four months since the night his life changed for good. Four months until a goddess intertwined her life with his in ways Harry had never thought possible.

They spent most of their time travelling. Sometimes they travelled by mundane means, and sometimes by the fluid, effortless magic of a goddess who saw distance as a suggestion rather than a rule.

Aphrodite showed him the wonders of the ancient world, the hidden corners of the old Greece that still lingered beneath the mortal's eyes. She stood with him atop the original Mount Olympus, taught him how to breathe in the essence of the long-moved ancient city that still lingered within the foundations of the mountain itself. He stayed there with her for nearly a week, splitting his time between drinking in the overwhelming history of the Pantheon through the divine energy that permeated the air and lapping up that same energy from the goddess's very flesh beneath the night sky.

Harry, in turn, gave the goddess her first taste of his world. He brought her to the magical markets of France, danced with her during the festival of Lá Bealtaine in Dublin, and even

chanced a trip back to Godric's Hallow in disguise to introduce her to his parents. The latter had been an emotional moment for the both of them. Harry had only ever stood before their grave with one other—on that night when he first knelt before their headstone and wept with Hermione's arms around him. To bring Aphrodite there, one of his most sacred places in a country he all but swore to never return to, spoke volumes to how much he cared for the goddess, something Aphrodite was acutely aware of if the way she had knelt with him and spoken so reverently to James and Lily Potter that night was anything to go by.

Through their travels, they discovered much about one another. Harry discovered who Aphrodite was behind the goddess. The woman behind the shroud of divinity. He was one of the very few to see the quiet melancholy that lingered beneath her beauty, the dry humour she revealed only when the world wasn't watching, the fierce tenderness she showed in the still moments when the universe forgot to demand something of her. The myths fell away one by one, leaving only the woman who took possession of his heart in ways he never thought possible. She was so much more than the legends—so much more than what history *made* her to be. She was love. The type that swayed in the air between the quiet moments of a life shared between two everyday people. She was the love that a mother enveloped a son with on nights when the world seemed too big. She was the love in the moments when pain and heartbreak threatened to bring humanity to its knees. The love of a stranger buying the poor man a meal just because. The love of a soldier laying down his life for his brother in everything but blood. The love of a world where nothing was certain, except for her.

Aphrodite, in turn, learned who he was behind his titles. The Boy Who Lived, the Chosen One, the Man Who Won, the Master of Death—all meaningless compared to who Harry Potter truly was. Even his status as Hecate's chosen meant little in the wake of what made Harry Potter the man he was. It was his heart, the one that beat for the whole world. Harry Potter was the type of man to lay down everything, even if it meant saving only one person. Laws of both men and gods meant little to such a man, for what power lay within either compared to that of a child's

tears? Of a mother's grief? Of a brother's wails? Harry was not a man to stand for such pain and anguish. Even when it wasn't his fight, he stood resolute, his love and fury one and the same as he fought to protect those who could not protect themselves.

It was that very same resolve that Aphrodite knew would be pivotal to keep their child safe.

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Four months.

Four months, and now the world they had carved out for themselves was beginning to shift again.

It began with a whisper—not of words, but of breath. A soft disturbance that tingled at the edges of her essence whenever another god's attention slid across her.

It was a familiar sensation. Every Olympian knew the cold, static pressure of Zeus's gaze. The King of the Gods kept watch the way storms keep to the sky. Constant, brooding, and inescapable. Only the fellow children of Kronos were granted even a sliver of privacy, and even that was a generosity rarely offered.

Others watched her as well. Ares, of course, was among them. His presence always carried the metallic tang of blood, buzzing at her senses like a persistent fly she longed to swat. It was easy enough to block him out; he was no Zeus, and Aphrodite had long since learned how to blind her former lover.

The rest drifted in and out. Athena, from time to time, touched her awareness like the soft brush of owl feathers. Artemis as well. Her presence scented with pine needles and petrichor as she spared her a brief glance before moving on. None lingered. None intruded. It was an old, silent accord among the goddesses; even when they bristled against each other, they still observed the ritual of checking in, a courtesy etched into the bedrock of millennia.

But this new sensation was something else. Unfamiliar, not because it was new, but because it had been centuries since the last she felt it sweep across her mind.

This gaze smelled of incense curling from an altar flame, echoed with the metallic ring of a knife against a whetstone, and warmed her senses like a single torch flickering in a dark corridor. Three times she felt it sweep over her. Three times its owner slipped beyond recognition—until now.

“You’ve grown bold, Hecate,” Aphrodite murmured.

The wiccan goddess’s essence coiled around her in reply, a peel of silent, mocking laughter brushing her divine ears.

Hecate was mocking her.

Anger broiled in the love goddess’s chest, rising hot and sharp. Without thinking, her hand drifted to the gentle swell of her stomach, cradling it with a tenderness born of instinct. Four months—far longer than any god would ever need—and already the first signs of her pregnancy were beginning to show.

It had been a last-second choice, a quiet but resolute tug within her soul, to bear this child naturally. Divine children were usually born in an instant, summoned from wombs that owed nothing to mortal biology. Gods had no use for gestation, for dividing cells, for the slow and sacred architecture of life.

But when Aphrodite first felt the spark of their child take root, something in her shifted. A yearning, deep and ancient, stirred through her essence. She wanted to carry this child as a mortal would—to feel each day of their becoming, to cradle the steady blossoming of love growing within her.

It was the first time she had ever chosen to do so, and the thought alone sharpened her protectiveness to something fierce and unyielding.

Hecate knew of her involvement with Harry. It was a simple fact. If a halfwit such as Ares could discover her secret, then it would be a foolhardy thought to think the goddess of magic would not notice another deity encroaching upon her champion.

The question was: What was Hecate planning to do about it?

Aphrodite held no fear for the goddess of magic. Powerful she was, yes, but Aphrodite was a daughter of a primordial. Power more ancient and volatile than Olympus itself roared beneath the gold of her ichor. Yet, where her power was limitless, Harry was still a mortal.

Hecate would never harm her champion, of course. She practically *worshipped* the man.

Aphrodite could feel the love Hecate held for the wizarding hero hang heavy in her domains. No harm would come to Harry at the hands of the wiccan goddess, but that did not mean Hecate would not try to take back what she thought was hers.

The thought scared and enraged Aphrodite more than she cared to admit. Harry was *hers*.

Hecate may have claimed him first, but it was Aphrodite whom he worshipped now.

It was not Hecate's thighs that her love pushed him face between each night.

It was not Hecate's moans that filled the breaths between them.

It was not Hecate's *name* that Harry whispered as he released inside of her.

Aphrodite had made him hers, just as she was his. Not even Hecate could boast that, though the goddess of crossroads had never been one to surrender gracefully. Her lingering presence was proof enough of that.

In centuries past, Aphrodite would have risen to Hecate's sharp-toothed laughter with righteous fury, letting her wrath ripple across continents and rattle the bones of mountains. But centuries ago, she had not had Harry. Nor had she carried a child shaped by their love.

Hecate was merely one of the many threats that shadowed their path now.

Ares had already made his wrath known. Harry had dispatched the war god's summoned slave with surprising ease, but Ares was not prone to retreat. Now that he had glimpsed Harry's potential, he would adapt. Plot. Sharpen his vengeance like a blade meant for her throat—or worse, for her child's.

*Chaos above...*even thinking the words sent a tremor through her—hers and Harry's child.

Never before had a babe been born from the union of a god and a wizard. Demigods possessed magic, yes, but the Divine and Wizarding worlds had never truly intertwined. Zeus's laws and

the watchful politics of other pantheons, entangled in mortal magic, had made certain of that.

Too many dangers. Too many unknowns.

A wizarding child with divine ichor would be powerful—perhaps powerful enough to threaten gods themselves. But a child born to one of the most formidable wizards alive and an Olympian goddess?

Such a being could topple Olympus.

Zeus would never allow such a threat to draw its first breath. Nor would many of the other gods, should they learn the truth. Ares, she could delay for a time, mislead, distract. But Zeus? Zeus was king for a reason. His power was absolute, the kind that had crushed Titans and left even primordial gods wary of defiance. Even she wasn't arrogant enough to imagine she could defy him openly. Poseidon and Hades were little better; the three sons of Kronos were capable of destruction that only their balance with each other kept in check.

It was only a matter of time before they discovered the truth. In truth, it was miraculous they hadn't already. Zeus's gaze was relentless, omnipresent. She could not hide from him forever. Which meant she had only one path left.

Zeus and Ares would see Harry and their unborn child destroyed without hesitation... but there was always the lesser evil.

Hecate.

Aphrodite seethed in silence. It seemed she wouldn't be able to avoid the other goddess after all—not if she wished to protect what was hers.

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She had been preparing for months, teaching Harry everything he needed to know about the old laws, the divine politics, the unspoken etiquette that could save his life when dealing with gods older than the sky itself. When she finally deemed him ready—ready enough, at least—she chose a destination that would mask their movements and give them space to plan.

Aphrodite usually adored New Orleans. The music, the food, the unashamed revelry—it all fed something warm in her. Yet the city also wore a darker perfume: crime lingering in the French Quarter’s alleyways, tourists stumbling through excess, the sour mix of spilt liquor and old piss clinging to Bourbon Street so strongly that even Dionysus might wrinkle his nose.

Still, she couldn’t complain too loudly. New York wasn’t exactly fragrant either.

And New Orleans, despite all its flaws, shimmered with a wild, untamed magic she loved—one that felt almost alive beneath her feet. It was the perfect place for people who needed to disappear into a sea of masks and music. A city where mortals moved with abandon, where magic thrummed through the streets in bright, tangled currents, and where even a goddess could vanish for a while beneath the chaos of celebration. A crossroads city. A place where fate bent easily, where old powers still whispered beneath the gas lamps.

A fitting place for the goddess of crossroads herself to hide.

It was quite by happenstance that they arrived just as the city’s Mardi Gras celebration reached its roaring crescendo. Jazz music spilt from every corner, trumpets wailing, drums snapping, saxophones weaving through the night like serpents made of sound. The air was thick with the scent of frying batter, caramelised sugar, hot spices, and liquor sweet enough to sting. Mortals shouted and laughed, their joy swelling through the streets in a tide of unrestrained revelry.

They weren’t here for celebration, not truly, but Aphrodite still found herself amused beyond measure. Harry gaped at everything—the tumbling beads, the rhythmic chaos, the drunken dancers swaying like reeds in a storm. Her giggles bubbled up irresistibly, nearly becoming full laughter when they passed beneath a wrought-iron balcony where three young mortal women were baring their breasts to anyone willing to toss up a string of cheap plastic beads.

The way Harry’s entire face flushed was utterly endearing.

She leaned close, brushing her lips against the shell of his ear. “See something you like?” she teased.

Harry muttered something unintelligible and focused very intently on a street vendor's sign. She allowed herself a soft laugh, then took his hand, guiding him through the press of bodies and swirling colours.

But beneath the revelry, she felt the tug. A small pull of divinity threading through the air, soft as candle smoke yet direct, intentional.

A summons.

Aphrodite followed it with absolute certainty. Hecate knew she was here. And the goddess was revealing her location on purpose. If Hecate had wanted to stay hidden, Aphrodite could have searched the entire world and still missed the faintest trace of her. This gentle, beckoning thread of essence was no mistake.

Come find me, it whispered.

She followed.

They passed deeper into the Quarter, weaving through a maze of revellers draped in feathers and sequins and glittering masks. Beads clattered beneath their feet like tiny bones. A float rolled by, ablaze with violet lights and dancers wearing costumes of crescent moons and silver stars. The crowd cheered as a man dressed as the Horned God leapt across the float's platform, scattering sparks of green fire that were almost actual magic.

Harry nudged her. "Is that normal?"

"During Mardi Gras?" she laughed. "That's considered tame, my love."

But even as she spoke, she felt Hecate's pull deepen, narrowing the path before them like an invisible corridor. The lights grew dimmer, the music softened, and the revelry fell behind them until it became a distant echo carried on the breeze.

They stepped off the main boulevard into a quieter street—one draped in shadows and lit only by swaying lanterns that flickered an unnatural purple.

"Keep close," she murmured. "We're crossing a threshold."

But even as she said it, something in Harry's posture changed—shoulders drawing taut, head tilting as though listening to a sound too faint for mortal ears. His eyes unfocused for a heartbeat, pupils dilating as if the darkness itself were whispering secrets to him. He paused, his stance unsteady as he furrowed his brow in confusion.

"This feels...familiar," he murmured. "Do you hear that?"

The goddess frowned. Her hearing far surpassed what any mortal could hope to possess, and yet even straining her ears, she heard nothing but the quiet wind and far-off cheers of celebration.

"Hear what?"

Harry opened his mouth to speak, yet before he could, a shape appeared from the darkness. A small shadow that slipped slowly into the light.

A cat.

Yet it was no normal cat. She did not even need to see the swirling gold of its eyes to know this. Aphrodite could feel the creeping sludge of Tartarus clinging to the small feline's body. Before she could study it further, however, it quickly slipped deeper down the alley. Harry turned sharply, gaze locked on the direction it had gone.

"She wants us to follow," he said.

Aphrodite blinked. "You felt that?"

He nodded.

Aphrodite felt only the faintest ripple of divinity, no stronger than before. Nothing close to what Harry was describing. A chill slid down her spine—not of fear, but of realisation.

Hecate wasn't reaching for her.

She was reaching for *him*.

"Show me," she whispered.

And so he did.

Harry led the way, following a thread of sensation Aphrodite couldn't perceive—moving with the certainty of someone walking toward a familiar hearthfire instead of deeper into a stranger's magic. They passed beneath hanging moss and through pockets of mist that curled around their ankles like curious spirits. Each step carried a resonance, a thrum in the air that only Harry seemed to hear, his breath shortening as though the call grew louder.

They reached a small courtyard paved with cracked stones. The carnival noise had faded entirely, replaced by a heavy, waiting silence.

Harry's gaze slid to the left, toward a narrow storefront tucked between an abandoned bar and a fortune-teller's shack. Its windows pulsed faintly with green and violet light. Wards hummed across the frame with a magic older than Olympus, older than wands and wizardkind alike.

Above the crooked door hung a wooden sign:

La Magie des Trois

Harry inhaled sharply, eyes widening ever so slightly.

"That voice...it's her," he murmured.

Aphrodite nodded. She could feel it too. Stretching her awareness outward like a net, she could feel the tangible taste of magic in the air. It felt cold. Calculating. Just like the goddess herself, but there was something else as well, something that Harry could seemingly feel and yet she could not.

Before she could question it further, the air thickened.

The door to the shop didn't simply open—it unravelled, its edges dissolving into swirling shadow that bled into the courtyard like spilt ink. Lanterns flickered. The mist at their ankles rose, curling upward in serpent-like plumes.

Hecate emerged from the darkness as though sculpted from it—tall, wickedly beautiful, and radiating the kind of sensual danger that made even immortals wary. Her hair was black as a moonless sky, cascading in glossy waves down her back.

Her body was draped in a dress woven from night itself—black silk clinging to dangerous curves, slit high enough to reveal long, obsidian-smooth legs. A faint glow of spellwork coiled around her fingers like living smoke as her eyes burned a molten gold that shifted like embers behind a veil of kohl.

Yet it was not Aphrodite those eyes were glued to.

“Welcome, my champion,” the goddess breathed, her voice thick like honey, far different from how Aphrodite had ever heard the goddess speak to anyone.

Before Aphrodite could react, Hecate crossed the space with a slow, predatory grace—circling Harry, her fingers drifting just shy of touching his jaw as though savouring the restraint.

“Look at you,” she murmured. “You’ve grown so strong. You’ve surpassed limits that even I did not think possible. How very well I have chosen.”

Harry blinked and took a step back. “Chosen? I’m not your—”

“*Oh* but you are!” Hecate breathed. “You’ve been mine since the moment you drew breath, dear heart. You were destined to be mine—destined for *greatness*.”

Aphrodite had heard enough. She stepped forward, pushing a bit of her own power forward like a protective shield between the daughter of Perses and her lover.

“Enough, Hecate.”

The goddess of magic turned, slow and deliberate, her golden eyes slicing into Aphrodite like the edge of a ritual blade. The warmth vanished from her face, replaced by cool amusement.

“Oh,” Hecate said softly. “The love goddess speaks.”

Her gaze flicked downward—toward the small swell beneath Aphrodite’s clothing. Her smile faded into something colder.

“So it’s true.”

Aphrodite lifted her chin, silently daring the goddess to try anything. For the briefest heartbeat, raw emotion passed over Hecate’s face—jealousy, sharp and poisonous, before she smoothed it away.

“Congratulations,” she said lightly, but the word landed like a curse. *“Truly.”*

Harry stepped between them instinctively, one hand brushing Aphrodite's waist. Hecate's eyes followed the motion, narrowing.

“You protect her,” she said. “Admirable... and foolish. You have no idea the storm she's brought upon you.”

“Then help me understand it,” he replied. “For our child's sake.”

Aphrodite stiffened. “Harry—”

But Hecate's smile returned—slow, sultry, triumphant.

She reached out and let a single fingertip trace the back of Harry's hand, an action so intimate it made Aphrodite's divine pulse flare with anger.

“As you wish,” Hecate said, voice velvet-dark.

She stepped back at last, gesturing toward the open doorway where the swirling shadows had reformed into an entrance of pulsing light.

“Come inside, Harry,” she murmured. “And Aphrodite... try not to break anything.”

Aphrodite held back the urge to snarl at witch mother. She could feel her form flicker, swirling into a taloned serpent for the blink of an eye before subsiding back.

The tension crackled between the two goddesses like lightning trapped beneath glass.

Who would crack first?

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