

From Blood and Magic

Chapter 1

A fierce wind whipped through the dense rainforest of the Pacific Northwest. Though it was in the middle of the day, the ominous, gray clouds blocked the sun's rays, making the forest appear dark and unforgiving. Near-freezing rain came down in sheets, the wind blowing it sideways. The trees creaked and groaned as they swayed violently, their thin branches clacking together ominously. A crack of thunder reverberated through the sprawling forest. Then suddenly, in one small area of the forest, the rain became superheated and started evaporating. Gravity began acting strangely. The rain droplets started moving as though they were being sucked into an invisible whirlpool. Then, out of nowhere, an explosion blew the rain, trees, and dirt in all directions. Out of the explosion, a young man fell and hit the ground hard.

"Shit!" he cried out, the sleeve of his long-sleeved shirt was on fire. The rain was already falling on the area again, and with him slapping at the fire, it was quickly snuffed out. Harry Potter sighed. He hated it when that happened. He looked down at his watch. It was a watch unlike anything anyone had ever seen. Instead of numbers, the entire face was full of thirteen different measurement gauges. Still, it was a beautifully crafted watch made of a glimmering, silver metal that had just a tinge of red to its shine. A small red light was blinking. Harry pressed a button on the side and the blinking stopped. The light remained a steady red.

Within moments of his arrival, he was soaked to the bone. He blew away the water that was accumulating on his lips. "Just bloody great," he sighed. It didn't appear that the rain would stop any time soon. With nothing left to do, he started walking. Harry didn't know where he appeared or which way civilization was. The only thing he could do was push forward. By that point in his life, he had visited so many different variations of Earth and had explored each of them thoroughly, that he had a good grasp on what part of the planet he was on. He almost immediately knew that he was in the northwest of the US. The rain, the cold, the dense forests, the specific types of trees and plants ... there could be no doubt. He could even smell a hint of briny seawater which told him that an ocean was nearby. It wasn't long before he discovered a river and decided to follow the current knowing that it would lead him to the ocean. He would undoubtedly find a road if he walked the beach for a short while. Heading west, he walked along the river's edge, trying to avoid tripping over jagged rocks and fallen trees. Every rock was slicked with a thick coating of algae, making them slippery and dangerous to step on. The pouring rain didn't make it any safer. If that wasn't bad enough, Harry was forced to keep his head on a swivel. Bears and mountain lions prowled these forests after all.

The trek was slow, but after a few hours of grueling hiking, he broke through the tree line and saw the coast. Harry laughed softly to himself. The first day on a new Earth was always the worst. After a bit of exploring, he saw a sign that told him that he was in a place called La Push. From his past memories, he didn't recognize the name. It was growing darker, and Harry knew that he needed to find somewhere to stay. He eventually found a small store that supplied the beachgoers with food and drink. It was of little surprise to him to find it almost completely empty.

Only one, old-timey, red truck was parked in the parking lot. He could see someone silhouetted in the passenger seat. Looking through the advertisement-covered windows of the store, he could see a teenage boy with copper-colored skin checking out at the counter. When he began walking toward the exit while opening his umbrella, Harry made his decision. Anywhere was better here, Harry thought to himself. He crept low and hid behind the truck's tailgate. He heard the door open and waited for his opportunity. When he felt the truck shift from the weight of the boy getting in, Harry used his enhanced speed and grace to silently hop into the truck's bed. Lying flat, he waited to see if he had been caught.

"Did you really need to go to Charlie's on a day like this?" Harry heard the young man complain. He heard an older man chuckle.

"Sorry, but the game is on," he said to the younger boy. He groaned and started the truck. The old engine roared to life and sounded thunderous from where he was lying. They backed out of the parking lot and began slowly driving away. Harry, of course, didn't know where they were going. He only hoped to end up in a city or town. Thankfully, about ten minutes in, the rain began to slow until it was only a slight sprinkle. After another ten or so minutes, he started seeing the repeated flashes of light, meaning that wherever he was, there were plenty of places with their lights on. He could work with that. He waited until the lights stopped before throwing himself over the back of the tailgate as fast as possible. Harry hit the road hard and rolled into a ditch filled with water. He spat out the mouthful of dirty water and cursed. He looked up to see the red truck turning the corner, completely oblivious that he had hitched a ride. Standing up, he stretched his severely aching arm and waited. Within seconds, it no longer hurt. Stepping out of the dirty, ice-cold ditch water, he began walking back from where they had come. It was already dark when he came upon the places that had their lights on. There were only a few businesses in what had to be a small town, one of them being a diner. He walked up to it and looked in the trash cans that were placed outside. Finding what he was looking for, he reached in and snatched up the soaking-wet newspaper.

"October 12, 2004," Harry read. "Forks, Washington."

The constant back and forth through the timeline always threw him for a loop. He would spend years living in the 1890s only to jump to the 1980s. Unfortunately, he had no control over where or when he would appear when jumping into a new reality. The only constant was that it would be somewhere on Earth ... or on rare occasions, an Earth equivalent. He tossed the paper back into the can and opened the diner door. He wasn't there for the food. The jump always twisted his stomach into knots, ruining his appetite for the day. Harry stuck his head in, trying not to breathe in the smell of various foods. "Excuse me?" he called out. The middle-aged woman at the counter looked over at him. Harry smiled kindly at her. He always found that his smile could relieve a lot of tension. She immediately smiled back. "Is there a hotel in town?" he asked. She nodded.

"Forks Motel," she answered. "Straight that way ... Turn left at the light. It's only a couple of blocks down the street," she told him.

“Thank you,” Harry responded and closed the door, hearing the bell ring as he did. Before leaving, he took off his watch and turned it over. He removed the back panel revealing a small, expanded space within. There wasn’t much room, so he had to be very choosy when it came to what he should store. He had his wands, which at that point were pretty much useless. He almost never needed them. He had a few vials of potion stored away, and a large wad of cash. He pulled out the wand and began going through it.

Harry tried to keep a little bit of cash from every point in time. He found that cash was almost always identical throughout the multiverse. Stuffing the small stack of Euros and pounds back in, Harry flipped through the US dollars. He didn’t have much that was usable, only a few hundred from the 1990s. The rest was too old or dated from the future. Still, it was enough for now. Stuffing the rest into the back of his watch, he reattached the back plate and put it back on his wrist. With that done, he made his way to the motel.

Once there, he paid fifty-three dollars for the night and quickly entered his room. As soon as the door closed, he stripped his wet and dirty clothes off and jumped into a steaming hot shower. After spending about half an hour letting the hot water warm his freezing body, he finally got out and toweled off. He did the best he could to wash the only set of clothing that he had in the sink before letting them dry over the shower curtain rod. With that done, he crawled into the bed and fell asleep almost instantly.

When he woke up ten hours later, it was still very early. The sun hadn’t even risen yet. He went into the bathroom and used the free toothbrush to brush his teeth. His clothes were still slightly damp so he set them on the heater vent. It was still too early to do much of anything, and since he didn’t want to walk around town with his dick flopping about, he turned on the tv for the next few hours. When the morning news came on, he was very pleased to find that it wouldn’t be raining that day. That made things much easier. As the sun began to rise, Harry grabbed his clothes and found them to be adequately dried. They weren’t one hundred percent dried, but good enough. Now clothed, he checked his watch. The light was obviously still red and would likely remain so for at least the next few years. He then checked one of the gauges. It needed at least a good twelve hours in any new world before it could give him an accurate reading. Harry’s eyes widened a bit. The ambient magic of this Earth was relatively strong. It was nothing compared to his original world, but it was the strongest that he’d seen in a long time. This changed things for him. With a newfound enthusiasm, he left his room and began exploring the small town on foot.

One of the worst things about constantly switching realities was that he always had to start over. That meant, no clothes, no house, no car, and very little money. Harry had gotten used to doing without and sometimes even cutting corners. Thankfully, he was stronger and more durable than a normal person. If Harry had to guess, he was roughly three to four times as strong as the strongest human could ever hope to be, which gave him a great advantage when it came to physical labor. He would have no trouble finding a job. His first step, however, was finding a place to stay. He didn’t need much, just a roof over his head. Any abandoned house would do

until he could afford something that hadn't been condemned. Having done this so many times, Harry knew all the tricks to get those things done quickly and easily. All he had to do was ask a few people if they knew of any old houses that were being sold. He told them that he was thinking about buying a place in the area. The small-town folks were nice and quick to help. After talking to a few different people, he had several leads in the area. As it turned out, there were quite a few old houses that had no one living in them. Some were in neighborhoods, which immediately ruled them out. Others were further down the backroads. One, however, was deeper in the woods, accessible only by a dirt road. That was the one that Harry went to scope out first.

As they said, it was far off the beaten path and hidden amongst the trees and overgrown bush. He turned the handle and found it locked. Taking a step back, he gave it the once over. It was rundown to be sure, but it wasn't completely dilapidated. The once-white paint was stained with browns and greens as mildew grew on the siding. The overhang covering the small front porch was drooping on the left. The corner right above the left column was thoroughly rotted, and he was sure the overhang would come down sometime soon. The windows on the front were boarded up, some of them being covered in spray-painted graffiti. Harry walked around back. All the windows were boarded, and when he checked the backdoor, he too found it locked. Giving it a hard kick, it flew open with a loud bang. Harry walked in and examined the place. 'It could have been worse,' he thought to himself. There was very little furniture, and everything was covered in a layer of dust. The house smelled musty from a lack of ventilation. He checked every room and found much the same. He chose the cleanest room which just happened to have the nicest bed. He slapped the mattress and coughed when dust flew into the air. He'd have to take it outside and beat the dust out.

Harry concentrated and thrust his hand forward. Only a pathetically small jet of fire flew from the palm of his hand. Thankfully it was enough to light the wood within. That was good enough for now. Harry's body naturally produced a small amount of magic, but using it up could be dangerous. Under normal circumstances, his body absorbed the ambient magic from the planet. The last Earth that he was on barely had any, which meant that he was forced to live without it, for the most part. He was very happy to see that there was an abundance on this Earth. Unfortunately, his body needed a few days to adequately absorb enough to make it safe to use again. That meant, for the time being, he had to use the bare minimum. Harry couldn't wait to start Apparating again. As much as he hated being cut off from his magic on some of his past worlds, there was a benefit from having to go without. The magic that was trapped within him began doing strange things to his body. He quickly grew stronger and faster. His body was like a steel anvil, able to take punishment that would surely kill a normal man, and when he did get injured, his body healed itself miraculously fast. Extreme heat and cold didn't affect him nearly as much as they used to, and his stamina was a sight to behold. So all in all, having to go without his magic for so long was a blessing in disguise. Even so, Harry was joyous that he would actually get to start using his magic again. Hopefully, this was a world that he could stay in for a very long time.

After his original world was corrupted, he began traveling. He was trying to find a world with an abundance of ambient magic. Every planet had magic, though some had more than others. Harry's original was swimming with magic, which gave rise to witches and wizards. The Earth that he was now on had more than any other he had found so far. It was very promising, but he had to wait and see.

This house was good enough for now, he thought. As soon as he found a way to start earning some cash, he'd get something better. Now that he had a place to stay, he needed to pick up a few things. He went to the local thrift shop and bought a few sets of clothes, an old pair of hiking boots, a jacket, an ugly blanket and bedsheets, and a pillow. He also bought a backpack to carry things around in. By the time lunch had rolled around, he was beginning to get hungry. He hadn't eaten in a while. He went to the diner and ordered a rather large lunch and quickly scarfed it down. While drinking a cup of tea that didn't taste very good, he sat there thinking of ways to earn a bit of cash. When the waitress brought him his check, Harry smiled sweetly at her. He could see her cheeks heat up. "You wouldn't happen to know anyone that's hiring?" he asked her. She shook her head.

"You can check the billboard over there," she said, pointing to the corkboard on the wall with various pieces of paper pinned to it. Harry nodded and thanked her. He paid for his food and downed his tea. Walking over there, he looked through them all. There wasn't much. It seemed that this small town wasn't exactly flush with cash. There was only someone looking for help cutting firewood. Harry snatched the paper from the board and left the diner.

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"A hundred bucks to cut and stack all of this," the man said, pointing to the pile of sixteen-inch logs. Harry knew that there must have been close to a cord of firewood that needed to be cut. One hundred wasn't very much for so much hard work ... at least for a normal person.

"Deal," Harry said, taking off his jacket. The man nodded.

"You'll get paid whenever you're finished. Axes are in the shed," he said before going back inside his house. Harry opened the door to the shed and brought out a few axes that appeared to be freshly sharpened.

This wasn't the first time Harry had chopped firewood. With his speed and strength, cutting this wood was nothing. He put the first log on the stump and swung the ax. The log easily split in two. Quickly adding another, he split that one in two. He repeated until he had a large pile of halves. He then split those and stacked them on the small pile of existing firewood. After only an hour, he was almost completely done and wasn't even breathing heavily. When the man came out to offer Harry some water, he nearly spilled it all over himself from the shock of seeing the wood stacked neatly on the side of the shed.

“Sweet Jesus, son! You must have been born with an ax,” he praised him. “That would’ve taken me all day!” he said in shock.

“I must have been a lumberjack in a past life,” Harry joked, stacking wood in his arms to carry over to the pile. The man just shook his head and laughed.

“You finish up. I’ll go get your money,” he told him, going back inside. Not long after, Harry was walking down Highway 101 which was called Forks Avenue within the city limits. He was a hundred dollars richer, which was nice, but he would need more.

‘A car is what I need,’ he thought. Being able to run three times as fast as an Olympic sprinter was nice and all, but in a place like this, he’d be perpetually wet. He’d also like to explore areas further away. At the moment, however, he didn’t have even close to enough cash for a car. That was just another goal to be added to the list.