

Perhaps in another life, the day and the night need not be kept apart. Perhaps in another life, the sun and the moon could be sisters instead of enemies.

The field sang its battle song and you waded into the chorus, eyes flashing, sword dancing. You broke your enemies on the cliffs of your shield and pushed into the crush of iron. Ancient words played on your lips, rising and falling with the rhythm of old prayers, given life by your violent worship.

They came on in their silver and black, throwing themselves on your sword. But you did not fear death, and you dressed yourself in their battle-sweat. They would not withstand you, for you were Leona, the Radiant Dawn, and the golden light of the sun burned behind you. Before your glorious and terrible power, your foes fell burning, cut down, trampled.

Your death would not come from these acolytes. You were here with destiny at hand; that your foes carried their wicked blades with courage and skill meant little to a woman with prophecy at her back.

The sun will strike down the moon, or the moon will bring down the sun.

Her descent was like nightfall, her arrival like winter.

A chill came over your heart, not from the fright of battle, not from the fear of death. You remember, even as you played your blade through her people. You remember the tender nights and the sunless days, the long walks and the long talks through the glowing twilight.

You remember, even as you stand before her, sword in hand. Blessed be the people of Targon, faithful and heretic both; they knew better than to interfere. They formed a circle around you and her.

“Leona.”

“Diana.”

She came on, sword and silver hair flowing behind her. You took two steps and met her with the thunder of metal on metal. Before the echo had faded, she had come on again and you batted her away with a lazy arc of your sword. You remember this dance, in the training fields, where the clash of wood and wicker sang.

You felt the whistle of her moonsilver blade like an old memory and your heart swelled, if only for a moment. You countered, faster and more deadly than ever before, expecting and encountering air. Sparks skate off your gauntlet at the reply.

She faces you across the distance, pale eyes hard. You remember those eyes, before they were hardened with scorn, before they swirled like the clouds across the cold night. She smiles, a pale mockery of the woman in your memories.

“Look at us now,” you say. “How you’ve changed.”

“Look how you’ve stayed the same,” she replied, voice coarse.

“Do you still remember how we used to spar? In the temple courtyard?”

The steel eyes softened. “When the sun was low in the sky?”

“How we used to fight until the moon rose?”

"I still treasure every moment," she said, looking down at her blade. It rose with her eyes into a low ready at her feet. You remember why she used to do that; when she was too small to stand a regular guard with her chosen weapon. She had made the low guard her signature.

"Then you know how this must end," you say, taking your stance. How you've changed indeed. Her great blade sways easily in her hand as your great daybreak shield does on yours. "Our fights always ended the same way."

"No longer." You look up just long enough to notice the crescent rising behind her. It seems the moon also rises.

You dance with Diana with a ferocity and passion you had never known. You know her next move like you know yours and she hits your flawless defense like the ocean crashing against the shores. The sun darkens with the ferocity of the fight and you draw its energy into yourself.

She rushes for you, a pale cascade falling from her shoulders like moonlight itself was raining on her. At the height of her charge, the eclipse breaks and you throw her back. Now it was your turn; you march forward into the attack.

The winds of magic tug at your heels and you are carried forward by the surge of the sun's glory. Diana draws you in and meets you blow for blow.

The magic change again, turning bitter and cold, and you stumbled forward, eyes drawn to the moon. She strikes and again you bat her away, eyes never turning from the moon above her. It rises quickly, waxing with power.

But it was daytime, and the sun was at its zenith. This was your time, your moment. The day was your birthright. You storm forward, filled with faith and fury. You raise your sword to the heavens, calling for the greatest blast of sunfire to ever be seen.

The crescent strike catches you unaware and cold spreads through your body. In the clarity of battle, you acknowledge that Diana has indeed grown much stronger since you last saw her. She will attack with her sword next; you know this, and as you watch those steel-grey eyes close on you, you realize she knows you're expecting her.

But she comes on faster than you've ever seen her, carried by the light of the waxing moon. You meet her at the center of the field, at the intersection of your life, hers, and destiny.

Pain twists in your body but you don't know who was struck. The storm fades from Diana's face; there is no anger, no rage, no accusation in those lovely eyes that you remember reflecting the light of the moon during those long nights.

She falls away first, hand slipping from her sword. You fall next, your knees finally giving way. Cold takes your limbs and you turn to look at Diana, finally at peace. Above you, the sun and the moon hang in the sky together like sisters.

Perhaps in another life.