

Do you know how to kill a god?

The temple was quiet, except for the shifting and grumbling of the mountain above her. She crept forward, slipping between the clutter of relics and statues. Ahead, her target knelt in prayer.

Do you know to kill a god? The sword's voice was urgent in her mind.

"I'm here to save her," she whispered. "I'm not planning on killing anyone."

Torchlight danced across her curved blade as she readied her strike. She paused, it seemed wrong to attack a man in prayer, even if he worshipped false gods. He'd been a valiant warrior once, full of bravado and duty. He deserved better.

That is no longer the man you once knew, her sword warned. Deceivers walk his flesh.

Hesitate and they will destroy you.

As if on queue, the warrior stiffened.

"Oh crap—"

She leapt to the side as the warrior spun in a blur of movement. Chips of stone flew through the air as his spear sunk into the pillar behind her.

Well, he was no longer unaware, but at least he was unarmed.

"What do they call you? *Pantheon?*" Her voice dripped with contempt as she readied her guard. "I won't let you have her!"

Pantheon's only response was to grunt as he charged her, shield braced.

She lashed out, fully expecting to cleave Pantheon in two, but her blade bounced off his shield. Vibrations traveled up her arm, jarring her bones and numbing her fingers. She barely managed to hold onto her sword.

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“Shut up,” she shouted, backpedalling away from Pantheon. “I don’t need your power to save her.”

Pantheon, unperturbed by her outburst, leapt forward, smashing the rim of his shield against her face.

She reeled, stumbling against the damaged pillar, using the buried spear to steady herself. She was going to lose. Her vision swam as Pantheon drew closer.

Move she screamed at her unresponsive body.

Pantheon yanked his spear from the stone and took aim.

She would fall and her light would be snuffed out. She couldn’t let that happen.

Silver orbs of pale fire materialized around her as she called upon the power of her blade, intercepting Pantheon’s spear centimeters from her throat. Energy roared inside her as she swung her sword, silvery fire arcing towards Pantheon.

He grunted as the fire struck, stepping backwards. She leapt forward, giving him no time to recover as she struck blow after blow.

Her confidence grew with each strike. She could defeat Pantheon. She would defeat Pantheon and rescue her light.

Laughter echoed deep within Pantheon’s helmet. He planted his feet, and dropped low, causing her strike to go wide. As she struggled to regain her center, he struck with a flurry of blows.

Desperately, she summoned pale orbs to defend her, but this time he struck them down, shattering her defenses.

In one smooth motion Pantheon drew back his arm and hurled his spear.

Pain racked her body as his weapon sank into her shoulder. She stifled a scream and sank to her knees, clutching at the weapon’s shaft. Blood flowed between her fingers.

Pantheon wasted no time as he ripped the spear from her flesh, this time drawing cries of pain from her.

She was helpless as Pantheon readied his final blow.

Golden light flashed and a figure swathed in armor stood before Pantheon, intercepting his strike.

Her light.

“Leona,” she gasped raggedly.

Memories flashed before her eyes, as Leona’s familiar figure sheltered her. She remembered the day Leona, the girl the Solari had chosen, had come to the Ra-Horak.

Competition.

She had watched, envious, as Leona had excelled within the order. Everytime Leona’s light grew brighter, her’s grew dimmer. Hatred for the sun’s blessed child quickly blossomed within her. The night was her only solace, the only time when Leona’s light would not overshadow her.

As Diana turned to the night, the others turned on her. They had come for her when the sun was still high in the sky. She was strong, but not strong enough. They overwhelmed had her with numbers, obscuring the light.

And then, they had scattered, dashing away as the light returned. Before her stood both her savior and her tormentor.

Leona.

But the anger that bubbled up in her chest it began to squirm and transform in a confusing way.

Appreciation?

Leona’s eyes showed concern and outrage as she inspected Diana’s injuries.

Adoration?

Her fingertips brushed kindly against Diana's arm and time seemed to slow.

Of course.

Love.

"It's the sun's duty to cast down the moon," Leona said, tearing Diana from her memories.

Pantheon merely shrugged and stepped back.

Leona turned and Diana's heart sank. Her worst fear had already come to pass.

The Aspect of the Sun gazed out of Leona's once kind eyes. The will drained from Diana's body as Leona turned her sword against her.

Her light was gone. What use was there fighting when her world had gone dark?

Vengeance, the sword echoed.

A familiar hatred bubbled in her chest, restoring strength to her limbs.

Diana would make sure that the Sun could never take another.

Not yet. The sword warned. *You are not strong enough, yet.*

Even as her anger urged her forward, the sword's warning restrained her.

As the Sun drew back to strike, Diana let out a snarl and reached out to the moon and pulled.

The Sun and War collided, floundering as their limbs entangled.

Amidst the confusion, Diana fled. The sun's rays burning at her heels.

Outside the Lunari temple Diana could feel the Solari warriors gathering. She would not resist when they came for her.... Not yet.

She finished buckling the last piece of delicate silvery armor in place. A fiery brand burned across her forehead, and she closed her eyes letting the power flow through her.

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“No,” Diana said, opening her eyes. “But i’m ready to find out.”