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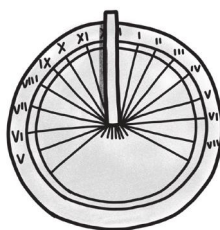
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DAY ALPHA



ATHENA'S TEMPLE, GUARDING SHIELD

Fine. OK, so the whole writing-a-diary plan will only work if I'm completely honest and, reading back my tablet from this morning, I maybe, perhaps, omitted certain facts.

The truth is I'm reeling from something my fellow guardians told me yesterday. They told me that they voted me **"the guardian most**



likely to lose it and punch a god in the face”!

This is not good news.

In other words, they think I've got anger issues. **Charming, right?**

The other guardians in Athena's temple don't like me. When I first started, I tried to hang out with them all but I find big groups hard to deal with. You have to have the same opinions as everyone else and pretend to be everyone's best friend, even though actually everyone is really plotting against each other. Early on, I dared to mention that I found Athena a little ... scary ... and they all acted like I'd said the most shocking thing **EVER**. Having one good friend is so much better than being in a group like that!

I've learnt to keep my opinions to myself. I try hard every single day to make sure no one knows exactly what I think of the petty gods, my empty-headed fellow guardians and the

ridiculous rules we all have to live by. It's not easy, as I'm with the guardians day and night. We don't really leave the temple that much, even when we're not officially working.

Apparently, the other guardians believe I am **"tightly wound"** - whatever that means. They think that one day, I'm going to go full monster on them and we'll all get punished. Ha! That's nonsense. They're probably just jealous of my poker face and voluptuous hair. The guardians have been listening to Cassandra too much; she works as an **ORACLE** in the temples around here. I really don't know why anyone still asks for her predictions about their future - she's a big old liar. She once told me that I would be famous throughout history for my terrible hair! As if! We all know it's totally glorious. She did also predict that Arachne would be one of the most famous





weavers of all time – which I could totally see – so maybe Cassandra doesn't lie all the time!

But, back to my so-called “anger issues”. I'm sorry to say the guardians are probably **RIGHT**. But I have good reasons to be angry: I don't like what I see the gods doing to humans (or, for that matter, beasts, other gods and anyone or anything else that displeases them). It makes me **ANGRY**. They just give out punishments when they feel like it and **IT IS NOT FAIR**.

This is serious stuff. In my world, a mistaken look can get you ripped to shreds (**RIP Actaeon**)! Can you see why I might be a teensy bit worried about my anger? If I can't control it, then I could land myself in real trouble. When I heard about what Artemis did to poor Actaeon, I really wanted to find Artemis and - well, that's the problem. What would I have done to the goddess of hunting if I'd found her? Had a stern word? Frowned? What can us humans do about any of it?

Absolutely nothing.

Zero.

ZILCH.

Do you know what it's like to feel completely and utterly powerless? To have someone in charge who lacks any kind of empathy or compassion?

What would **YOU** do about it?

YUP, that's right.



Also nothing.

Because we are human and they are gods.

I can't help my feelings, though. When things are unfair, it bothers me. And if I start feeling cross, my scalp tingles, my hair stands on end and I feel a hissing surging through my entire body. Sure, I've learnt to push those feelings deep down in my belly, but will they stay hidden forever? Finding out what my fellow guardians think of me maybe shows I'm not doing such a good job of masking my feelings as I thought.

But this is where Arachne's excellent gift comes into it. She's the only person worth anything around here, and she knows how I truly feel. She thinks that if I have an outlet for processing my feelings I might not be in danger of, well, **EXPLODING**.

And what is the outlet for processing my feelings?

Something that helps get those feelings out in a non-violent way?

It is...

Wait for it...

It ... is... Drum roll please...

WRITING!

Simple as that – writing.

Writing a diary about how I'm feeling will help get those feelings out! It's like a superpower. Instead of punching a god in the face, I can write down everything I want to say here, like:

YOU ARE A JEALOUS AND PETTY INDIVIDUAL AND DESERVE TO BE PUNCHED IN THE FACE.*

Or...

MAY ZEUS PELT YOU WITH THUNDERBOLTS AND POSEIDON PROD YOU WITH HIS TRIDENT FOR THE REST OF ALL TIME.

Or I can just scribble out a primal scream:

*I seem to have got a bit obsessed with punching in the face. Sorry about that. Don't punch people in the face, my boily-bottomed reader, whatever they have done.





And, miraculously, some of the anger leaves me. Everyone should try this - it's a lifesaver! Quite literally. For me, writing this diary could help save me from a fate worse than death.

I'm so lucky to have a friend like Arachne. She understands me. She's really chilled - and super creative. She deals with life by focusing on her weaving and embroidery. She should really be working for Athena, who is not only the goddess of war and wisdom but also handicrafts! (Way to multitask. Who expected those skill sets to go together?) I've been encouraging Arachne to show Athena her work, but she's really self-conscious about it. That's nonsense. I'd be proud to have her skills. I have **NO TALENT** for that kind of creativity. We've tried to teach each other our skills, and Arachne is doing quite well with learning her letters, but my ability to sew remains at zero.



But I want to do more for Arachne after her kind gift to me. I'll be thinking what I can do for her in return.



PARADOS





Stop interrupting! We have met our heroine, and what do we know about her so far?

She's twelve.

HAIR!

Something about gods?

She has a best friend called Arthur or something.

She can be a bit grumpy.

Very good. So we've had the opening scene, and we've learnt some things that may be crucial to the story. Let's see what happens next.

That's all? I'm missing an oil scraping for this.

Well, as the chraus, we also got to comment on what's going on, so pay ATTENTION.

Ooooh! Fun! I liked all the face punching.

Shush!

I think Athena sounds haughty.

I predict that Hades is going to be bad news. Boo! Hiss!

YES! BOO TO HADES!

This isn't a pantomime! Can you just be quiet now?

And what about Medusa's anger? I bet that's important.

You'll get my anger soon if you don't quieten down.

shhhhhh!

what's a pantomime?

Sorry.