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Jemisin, N. K. The Killing Moon

The desert city of Gujaareh is a place of peace, dedicated to the dream-goddess Hananja. Hananja's peace is kept and maintained by the priests of the Hetawa who heal the sick, give peace and safe passage to the dream-world to the old and dying, and Gather the souls of those judged corrupt. Gatherers gather the mystic dreamblood of those sleeping in Hanaja's city, and the Sharers use that dreamblood in their magical healing. Gatherer Ehiru is known as the most gifted Gatherer of his generation, strong and wise and full of faith. But his faith is shaken to the core when a Gathering gone wrong lands him in the middle of a corrupt conspiracy that has wormed through and undermined the entire structure of his society, his religion, and his government. Now he and his apprentice Nijiri must fight to do as their religion demands?the right thing, the peaceful thing?even though it may mean toppling their entire civilization.

A fascinating, non-Western-inspired, and richly detailed setting and culture; engaging, appealing, and realistic characters; and an entirely fresh take on magic and religion elevate this fantasy to the top of its genre. Highly recommended.

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