***The Girl Who Drank the Moon***

***Chapter 28***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary in brief:***

In Chapter 28, “In Which Several People Go into the Woods,” Antain leaves on his journey to kill the Witch the day after his son, Luken, is born. The madwoman watches him depart, but she does not want him to go alone because the Witch will be coming after him. She uses magic to convert her bars to paper and her paper birds carry her from the cell safely down to the road below.

Analysis (25-28)

Although Luna is struggling with her personal viewpoint of who she is in her family unit and where she stands in the world, she cannot handle the severe pain caused by the understanding that Xan is lying to her about her health. This causes Luna to distance herself from her family as a form of protecting herself. However, despite the fact that Luna knows she is changing her relationship with her family as a means of protection, she is not yet fully aware of what she thinks she needs protection from. She mentions only that she loves them but has questions, which they do not answer (169). It is the not knowing that makes Luna the most afraid. She feels mature enough to know everything. She wants to learn everything, yet she also knows that Glerk and Xan keep information from her. Luna’s form of protection in the form of distance and lies is done out of anger more than fear. This crisis is also brought on by a combination of Luna’s maturity into puberty, her magic leakage, and her self-comparisons to Fyrian’s experience with the loss of his mother. Her perception of the world is changing and Luna is not sure how to handle it. Unfortunately, none of the people in her social circle are helping her through her confusion. This makes Luna take risks that she would not normally take. She wanders farther into the forest. She wonders about the unexplored land off in the distance that leads to the Protectorate. Luna is desperate for answers and is willing to risk her safety in order to find them. It is no surprise, then, that this scene is where Luna draws direct connections to her birth mother, known as the madwoman in the Tower. Luna draws maps to her mother just as her mother draws maps to her. The two women are deeply connected, and, it seems, they are connected by strong magic.

Luna’s magic is fighting against the spell in an effort to help her become complete again. She is willful and is trying to break into something deep inside of her. Her magic is a part of her. It wants to help her succeed and feel fulfilled. It is a part of her personality and a section of her soul, so it makes sense that it would act out aggressively in order to help Luna during a time when she feels so very frustrated with her family and with a world that does not recognize her as an adult.

Luna’s desire for answers is also her desire to get to know herself, which requires looking inside her soul. This searching leads to her magic breaking through and contributes to her risky trip to the castle ruins. Here, her magic continues to fight Xan’s spell. Luna is determined to find her own answers because no one will talk to her, and her determination leads her to a room filled with spells.

The more Xan remembers about her past the more she realizes just how dishonorable she has been in regards to Zosimos and his efforts. When sacrificing himself for the good of the surrounding villages, Zosimos asks them to make sure the people are thankful for his sacrifice (73). In other words, he wants Xan to tell the people about his honorable actions. But Xan never tells the villagers about Zosimos’ bravery. She never clears his name nor does she share information that witches should not be feared. Xan’s exploration into her past proves to her that she is not as kindhearted as she once thought. This is deeply troublesome to Xan because she places a large part of her identity on being a good Witch that helps people. Now Xan comes to realize that she has never tried to help anyone in the sorrowful Protectorate nor has she ever helped Zosimos be remembered as the brave and noble person he truly was. Xan has not fulfilled her duties to the man who sacrificed himself for her safety, and this makes it difficult for Xan to accept her upcoming death.

Although Xan has not fulfilled her promises to Zosimos or the other wizards and witches, she will have the chance to battle the Sorrow Eater later in the book and defeat the evil that sits over the Protectorate. Luna comes across the hope for Xan and her magic to defeat Sister Ignatia. “We only hope that when she meets the Sorrow Eater again, our girl is older, stronger, and more sure of herself” a book in the castle states. “We only hope that, after our sacrifice, she will know what to do” (223). But Xan has no idea what to do, and, unfortunately for everyone involved on the “good” side, Xan is now too weak to fight anyone. She is not prepared, as the past wizards once hoped. Xan is not ready and she is not strong. Luna, on the other hand, is very strong but has no control. Together, these two witches may be able to fight off Sister Ignatia and her demand for people’s sorrow.

***Summary Part 1:***

[Xan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/xan) sits by the fireplace. There’s something odd in the air and underground, and she’s in horrible pain. She thinks that her life is made of paper—[paper birds](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/paper-birds), paper maps, paper thoughts. She remembers [Zosimos](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/zosimos) writing everything he knew onto paper and thinks that the scholars recorded her life and wouldn’t have cried if she died. Xan laments that [Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna) is the same as she once was, but she can’t explain this to her. Nothing about this situation, from what happened to Xan to the Protectorates’ sacrifice of babies, is fair. Because Luna isn’t back yet, Xan decides to leave a note. She knows that she can’t be late to this baby and can’t be seen—transformations are more and more difficult now. She gathers her things and then turns herself into a swallow that’s as light as paper.

***Analysis Part 1:***

In Xan’s thoughts, paper represents both knowledge and callousness. She sees that the scholars had no emotional investment in her, possibly aside from Zosimos, and saw her only as a way to further their knowledge. Importantly, these papers that she’s thinking about are likely the ones that are currently talking to Luna, which indicates that just because knowledge was recorded under questionable circumstances doesn’t mean that the knowledge itself is bad. Luna is better able to understand herself and her grandmother after reading Zosimos’s writing.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Antain](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/antain) waits to leave until [Ethyne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/ethyne) gives birth. Their son is born around lunchtime and they name him [Luken](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters). The next day, with weeks until the Day of Sacrifice, Antain steps into the woods. The [madwoman](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/the-madwoman-adara) watches him go, unaware of why she needs to wait for him but aware that she should. She blows Antain a kiss for luck. As she watches him go, she whispers that he can’t go alone because of the danger in the wood, and the danger that will follow him. She remembers the stories of the [Witch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/the-witch) from her childhood. In those stories, the Witch had the heart of a tiger and lived in the woods. The madwoman now knows that the Witch lives in the Tower. The madwoman turns the window bars and stones into paper and then [paper birds](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/paper-birds) carry her into the sky.

***Analysis Part 2:***

At this point, it becomes clear that the Witch in the stories is neither of the actual witches in the  novel—instead, she’s entirely fictional but contains elements from both Sister Ignatia and Xan’s lives. This shows again how it’s possible to use several different sources to create a single narrative of questionable truth. The untrue narrative has thus far been more powerful than either version of the truth, but as everyone begins to move into the woods, it’s possible that more will learn the truth and begin to take down the inaccuracies of the narrative.

***Summary Part 3:***

The Sisters discover the [madwoman](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/the-madwoman-adara)’s escape an hour after dawn. They keep it a secret and [Sister Ignatia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/sister-ignatia-the-sorrow-eater) tries and fails to cancel a meeting with [Gherland](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/grand-elder-gherland) that day. She offers him tea and cookies while she fumes silently. Gherland wearily says that [Antain](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/antain) left. Sister Ignatia reasons that Antain’s departure and the madwoman’s escape can’t be connected, even though the madwoman has been unfortunately happy recently. To make things worse, there’s less sadness in the town now that Antain has started stirring up hope. Sister Ignatia reassures Gherland and reminds him that there’s a witch in the woods.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Reminding Gherland that there’s a witch in the woods allows Sister Ignatia to reinforce the influence of the story of the Witch: because the fictional Witch creates such fear and sorrow, Sister Ignatia and Gherland are able to maintain their power. However, the fact that Sister Ignatia is struggling because of the madwoman’s happiness and Antain’s hope suggests that their reign of censorship may be coming to an end, especially since Antain’s quest is really one for knowledge.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna) holds a note from [Xan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/xan) and angrily tears it up before reading all of it. The [crow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/the-crow) caws at her to not do anything stupid, but Luna informs the crow that she’s going after Xan. The crow says it’s a bad idea, but Luna insists that she has a map and needs to help Xan. Unnoticed by Luna, the note begins to reassemble itself. Luna packs a sack and just before she leaves, a small scrap of the note scuttles into her pocket. The crow agrees to come, though it suggests that she tell [Glerk](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/glerk) and [Fyrian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/fyrian). Luna ignores it.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Luna’s choice to go into the forest after Xan shows that even more pressing than her growing magical awareness is taking care of her family and those she loves. Especially since Luna is going in actively after Xan, her adoptive parent, the novel again makes the case that adoptive families can be just as close and loving as blood families.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Glerk](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/glerk) surveys the mess in the house as [Fyrian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/fyrian) sobs. Glerk insists that he’s worried about [Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna), not [Xan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/xan), but this is a lie. He sits down and reads Xan’s note to Luna. It reads that Xan is traveling quickly across the forest (which means that Xan transformed, a dangerous proposition given her health). Xan admits that she kept things from Luna and says that Luna is more than she knows. As Fyrian flutters about, Glerk examines the paper and sees that Luna’s magic put it back together. He knows that her magic is starting early. The note continues that Xan rescued Luna as a baby and fed her moonlight, which means that Luna will live a long life while the people she loves die.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Keep in mind that Luna didn’t read all of the note before tearing it up—and for that matter, it’s unclear how much of the note she’d be able to read, since she can still barely wrap her head around magic. This means that even now that Xan is trying to communicate openly with Luna, it’s almost impossible for her to do so. Now, Xan has to face the unintended consequences of forcing Luna to forget—namely, that Luna is hurt and angry that Xan kept things from her and left with only a note.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Xan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/xan) tells [Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna) the reason for this—magic—but the word is missing from the note. Xan writes that it’s the word that Luna can’t remember, but she promises to explain everything if she can. [Glerk](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/glerk) sighs and folds the letter. In comparison to his life, Xan’s is still impossibly short. [Fyrian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/fyrian) flies at Glerk with concern and Glerk decides that while Fyrian is sweet, he’s unnaturally young and it’s past time to grow up. He decides it’s time to leave the swamp. Glerk assures Fyrian that they won’t get lost and that an explanation will ease people’s fears about Fyrian’s size. Glerk and Fyrian follow Luna’s footprints into the wood. Glerk realizes that Luna’s magic is growing as they walk.

***Analysis Part 6:***

As Glerk comes to terms with his own long life, he understands that getting involved with Xan and their chosen family means caring more about individual beings in the world than he might have otherwise. In this sense, while Glerk’s family may technically be the world since he’s the Beast and the Bog, for now he recognizes that he’s a part of this small family and needs to do his part to help everyone grow up safely and properly.