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

***Chapter 32***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary in brief:***

In Chapter 32, “In Which Luna Finds a Paper Bird. Several of Them, Actually,” Luna awakens the next morning with minimal injuries because large, soft mushrooms broke her fall. She reads her map and continues on her journey despite the crow’s disapproval. Luna realizes that her injuries are healing themselves as she continues to travel.

Meanwhile, Xan is flying around lost in the forest. She has forgotten who she is, who she used to be, and where she is supposed to go. She flies over Glerk and Fyrian, who are traveling to find everyone in the forest. Xan cannot remember them either, so she hides from them. Then, with a sudden burst of memory, Xan remembers everything and quickly darts off after the baby who will be sacrificed in the woods soon.

Luna comes across an abandoned village in the forest. There, she sees the ruins of a small tower with many pictures of people who have the same birthmark as she does. There are also images of the story related to the volcanic eruption and Zosimos flying into the volcano with a dragon. The crow is very nervous and warns Luna that someone is coming toward them, but Luna is too interested in the pictures on the wall to move away. Suddenly, the madwoman’s paper birds appear in a large flock above Luna.

***Analysis(29-32):***

Luna’s two mothers are mirroring each other, with one drifting farther away from Luna and one coming closer to her, which makes for a strong literary dynamic. It is as if Luna is stuck in the middle while Xan and the madwoman switch places. Xan has always been a close presence in Luna’s life. However, Xan’s knowledge of her upcoming death causes her to drift away both physically and emotionally. Xan knows she will leave Luna soon and it is as if she is preparing Luna for life without her. Meanwhile, at the same speed but in opposite directions, Luna's birth-mother, the madwoman, comes closer to her daughter. This is a woman Luna does know of. She has lived her life without the madwoman’s guidance, and yet her birth-mother comes nearer to Luna as Xan begins to leave her. Xan starts to lose her memories while flying in the forest. She cannot remember the names of the people she calls family, which is yet another sign that there is a growing distance between herself and Luna. Just as Xan forgets her daughter’s name, the madwoman learns it. This is a well-choreographed “dance” created by Barnhill. Each woman is moving in the opposite direction. It is as if readers are being prepared to witness Luna cross over into a different mother’s care. As Luna loses Xan, she may very well gain a different mother, Luna’s biological mother.

Although the madwoman thought she wanted to escape in order to help Antain, she is unable to think about Antain because she is so close to seeing her daughter alive for the first time since the baby was taken from her so many years ago. This proves that her loyalty is with her daughter above all things. The madwoman may consider herself to be a crazy person, but she still loves her daughter with clarity and awareness. She has not lost her mind entirely. She chooses to go directly to the workshop on purpose. She chooses to see her daughter right away. Yes, she wants to help Antain, but the madwoman is most interested in reuniting with the daughter she lost along with her sanity.

The madwoman’s clarity when it comes to her love for her daughter indicates that she is not at all crazy. The Sisters and their abuse in the Tower changed the madwoman’s mind, but she is not crazy. This woman has forgotten who she was yet she is aware that her husband remarried. She watches the people of the city and she understands the social dynamics. She knows Sister Ignatia is not to be trusted and she wakes early for Antain’s sunrise departure. The madwoman is anything but mad. She is bored. She is abused. She is forgotten. She is unloved. She is obsessed with saving the daughter she knows is alive. The madwoman is a great many things but she has not lost her sanity. Rather, she is so in touch with reality that she cannot ignore the presence of her living daughter in the forest nearby. This demonstrates her life-long loyalty and her natural instinct to protect her daughter. The madwoman comments that her own mother, and presumably the unknown narrator in many of the book’s chapters, also lost a son to the Day of Sacrifice. The madwoman refuses to believe that she has lost her daughter; she knows her daughter is not dead and she is willing to fight for a reunion. The Sisters want the woman to think she is crazy because it helps them control her. The more clarity the woman finds with her magic the more hopeful she is. It is her strong hope for a reunion and an escape and a journey and an answer that makes the madwoman uncontrollable. This is when she breaks free of the Sisters and their emotional abuse. The madwoman’s hope proves that it can easily overcome any type of sorrow and control. Her hope is all-powerful.

***Summary Part 1:***

[Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna) wakes up well after sunrise. The [crow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/the-crow) caws its relief that she’s alive as Luna checks her injuries and realizes that she’s on a bloom of enormous mushrooms. Luna fetches her map and sees that there’s a spot marked “mushrooms.” The crow pleads with her to turn back, but Luna refuses. She walks on and feels herself healing. She doesn’t look back to see that where she steps, flowers bloom.

***Analysis Part 1:***

The blooming flowers are evidence of Luna’s growing magic, while not looking back shows that Luna no longer considers the possibility that her steps should grow flowers as she did when she was a child. She has, in effect, learned to ignore things, just like Xan.

***Summary Part 2:***

Meanwhile, [Xan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/xan), as a swallow, stumbles from tree to tree. She can’t remember what she’s supposed to be doing and if she’s always been a swallow. She thinks that she’s dying, but can’t remember her life. Xan hears a voice asking [Fyrian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/fyrian) to be quiet and a discussion of the possibility that someone told Fyrian untrue things about dragon physiology. Fyrian is shocked; he believes that nobody has ever lied to him. Xan recognizes the voices and knows the name “Xan” when the monster says it. Fyrian tells [Glerk](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/glerk) about the house he saw and Glerk explains that it’s probably a village, abandoned after the last eruption. Glerk says that Xan has been here without [Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna). Xan suddenly knows who she is and races toward the clearing to save the baby.

***Analysis Part 2:***

In this moment, the novel shows clearly that loving relationships between family, chosen and otherwise, help a person figure out who they are—Xan is able to remember that she’s a witch and has a baby to save when she remembers who Glerk and Fyrian are. Glerk’s discussion with Fyrian, meanwhile, suggests that Fyrian is finally getting the truth about his size and will possibly learn that Xan has been lying to him. Through this, Fyrian will be able to grow up and find his place in the family as an adult dragon.

***Summary Part 3:***

The [crow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/the-crow) is beside himself with worry as [Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna) picks her way through a river of embers. He won’t tell her what he sees and Luna tries to figure out how she made her map. The crow says that something is coming as Luna reaches an abandoned village and approaches the central building. The stones are engraved with dragons, people writing, and people with crescent moon birthmarks on their foreheads. There are other carvings of the mountain erupting and a dragon diving into it. Luna looks up as the crow flies into her arms, panicked, and thousands of [paper birds](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/paper-birds) descend. Luna understands that this is magic.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Once again, connecting Luna’s growing understanding of magic with the paper birds that came from her mother shows that discovering one’s identity, one’s past, and one’s future are all connected to figuring out who a person’s family is. As a symbol of hope, the paper birds also suggest that this will be a happier and more enlightening moment than the crow’s behavior might otherwise suggest.