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

***Chapter 34***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary in brief:***

Chapter 34, “In Which Luna Meets a Woman in the Wood,” Luna continues on her journey, followed by the paper birds. She attempts another stream-of-consciousness drawing to lead her to Xan, but she creates a drawing of a swallow in a man’s hand instead.

Ethyne, Antain’s wife, is visited by the Grand Elder to discuss her son’s impending sacrifice. The Grand Elder is accompanied by two of Ethyne’s former Sisters of the Star, and she convinces them to turn against the Grand Elder Gherland and reveal the truth of where Sister Ignatia is and what is going on. Ethyne learns from the Sisters that Sister Ignatia is in the forest to kill Antain and she loses her temper toward the Grand Elder, calling him a monster for killing his own nephew. Ethyne has her friends lead her to the other Sisters of the Star.

Sister Ignatia meets Luna in the forest and smells her old boots on her skin. Luna denies this, which angers Sister Ignatia and causes the birds to spring into action, defending Luna, who flees.

***Summary Part 1:***

The [paper birds](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/paper-birds) watch [Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna), and Luna nervously greets them. The [crow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/the-crow), beside himself, flies around. Luna understands that the birds know her and are somehow connected to the maps and the woman in Luna’s dreams. Luna asks the birds what they want, but they say nothing. Luna sits down with a sketchbook, reasoning that if she can draw a correct map when she’s dreaming, she can find [Xan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/xan) too. She focuses on Xan’s face and angrily sees that she drew a bird in a man’s hand, not Xan. The crow caws, “tiger,” but a woman ([Sister Ignatia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/sister-ignatia-the-sorrow-eater)) steps out of the trees. Luna doesn’t know why she’s so afraid.

***Analysis Part 1:***

The crow’s ability to correctly identify Sister Ignatia as the tiger that Fyrian and the madwoman have spoken of suggests again that deep inside Luna, she does know what’s going on. Her apparent instinct that Sister Ignatia is bad news speaks to how good and kind Luna is, since Sister Ignatia is the exact opposite and is possibly so scary exactly because of Luna’s goodness.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Gherland](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/grand-elder-gherland) is horrified when [Ethyne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/ethyne) seems unafraid of his imposing glare and greets the Sisters with him like friends. She offers him tea made with mint from her garden and brushes off his suggestion to grow something useful. Gherland notices that her house is clever and pretty, a combination he hates. The tea is unfortunately delicious. As Ethyne kisses her baby, she says that she and [Antain](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/antain) grow a lot of things and give much of it away. Gherland announces that the Day of Sacrifice is coming, and Ethyne asks why he’s here—[Sister Ignatia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/sister-ignatia-the-sorrow-eater) usually terrorizes the parents of the sacrificial children. Ethyne is curious to know why Sister Ignatia is out of town, which infuriates Gherland—he hates when people ask questions. He thinks that Ethyne might go mad.

***Analysis Part 2:***

For Gherland, Ethyne’s happiness and “useless” garden means that she’s hopeful and therefore difficult to intimidate—which means that he has less power over her. Again, this draws a clear connection between having happiness and hope, and being able to shut down censorship and power trips. Because Ethyne believes in Antain and in his journey, she’s able to calm her fears of losing her baby. Further, when Gherland says he hates being asked questions, it shows too that he understands that a questioning society isn’t one that’s easy to control.

***Summary Part 3:***

Peevishly, [Gherland](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/grand-elder-gherland) says that [Sister Ignatia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/sister-ignatia-the-sorrow-eater) is out on her own business. [Ethyne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/ethyne) approaches the soldiers, who blush as she approaches. She asks if the tiger prowls and silences Gherland when he tries to stop her questioning. The soldier hesitates and then says that the tiger is gone and everyone can sleep. Ethyne says that Sister Ignatia must be in the forest to kill [Antain](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/antain) and turns on Gherland, who blinks in the horribly bright sunlight. He crumbles as Ethyne accuses him of sending Antain to die. Ethyne ignores him and asks the soldiers for help. The soldier named [Mae](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters) takes Ethyne’s arm, and the other follows behind. To nobody, Gherland says that there are rules.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Gherland isn’t used to being called out on his power trips, which makes this a wildly uncomfortable experience for him. Ethyne’s ability to muster help from the Sisters shows that it is indeed possible to create family for oneself anywhere, as long as there’s shared care and positive regard. Now, the Sisters can show Ethyne that they care by helping her work for a society that works for all of them and doesn’t force people to live in fear and sorrow.

***Summary Part 4:***

As [Sister Ignatia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/sister-ignatia-the-sorrow-eater) and [Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna) look at each other, the [paper birds](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/paper-birds) and the [crow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/the-crow) don’t move. Sister Ignatia seems to look old and then young. She asks Luna if she made the paper birds and then her vision bores into Luna’s head, hurting Luna. Sister Ignatia declares that it’s not Luna’s magic and asks if the pain is sorrowful, but Luna says it’s just annoying. Again, Sister Ignatia asks if the birds were a gift, and Luna says that nothing is the result of her magic—she doesn’t have any. Sister Ignatia laughs meanly, which makes Luna vow to hate her. She says that Luna is magical, but someone has tried to hide it from her. She recognizes the “spellwork.”

***Analysis Part 4:***

As far as Luna is concerned, Sister Ignatia is talking nonsense when she says that Luna has magic—because of Xan’s censorship, Luna doesn’t have the skills or the knowledge base to suspect that Sister Ignatia is telling the truth. However, Luna’s instincts still prove correct and beneficial here as she decides to hate Sister Ignatia. With this, the novel continues to pit hope, which Luna clearly has, against the sorrow of Sister Ignatia.

***Summary Part 5:***

The [paper birds](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/paper-birds) roost next to [Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna) and seem suddenly sharper and more dangerous. [Sister Ignatia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/sister-ignatia-the-sorrow-eater) steps back as the rocks under Luna’s feet shudder. Sister Ignatia warns that the birds attack and says that their maker is wicked, broken, and mad. Luna has no idea why this makes her so angry, and growls that she and Sister Ignatia won’t be friends. Sister Ignatia says that she’s just here to collect something and tries to call her boots. Luna remembers a dream in which Fyrian brought boots back. Now, they’re in her trunk. Angrily, Sister Ignatia brings the tower to the ground and Luna falls.

***Analysis Part 5:***

In this situation, the paper birds function as a mother’s love made physical—they’re here to keep Sister Ignatia from getting too close to Luna and hurting her. As Luna begins to piece together her dream about the boots with the boots that Sister Ignatia is looking for, Luna starts to open her mind to the possibility that the things she thought were nonsense or untrue could actually be real.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Sister Ignatia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/sister-ignatia-the-sorrow-eater) approaches [Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna), magically brings Luna to her feet, and says that Luna has touched her boots. She demands that Luna tell her where they are, but Luna gasps for her to go away. Sister Ignatia laughs until the [paper birds](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/paper-birds) rise, make the air shake, and then attack Sister Ignatia. Luna runs.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Importantly, Luna has to essentially ask for help before the paper birds step in. This suggests that even though Luna’s mother is looking out for her, Luna has to allow her to help; she can’t just receive it without doing anything.