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

***Chapter 37***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary in brief:***

In Chapter 37, “In Which the Witch Learns Something Shocking,” Xan, still a swallow, watches Antain as he sets camp for the night. Antain feels an odd sense of comfort in being around the bird and he begins to talk to it. Antain explains the ritual of the Day of Sacrifice and the belief of the citizens of the Protectorate in the Witch. Xan feels incredible guilt when she realizes that she never bothered to investigate the matter further, or to try and explain herself to those in the Protectorate.

***Summary Part 1:***

[Xan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/xan) tells herself that [Luna](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/luna) is safe at home until it feels true, and grudgingly accepts bugs from [Antain](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/antain). She thinks of dying and leaving Luna, and knows that if she were a woman now instead of a swallow, she’d sob. Antain looks at Xan with concern and admits that he’s never hurt anything before. Xan snuggles close to comfort him and Antain stops to build a fire and cook sausage. Xan can smell spices and love. Antain says that [Ethyne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/ethyne) made the sausage and Xan chirps to try to encourage him to keep speaking. She can sense a rattle in his chest, which she knows is the precursor to loss. He tells her that the Day of Sacrifice waits for no one, which confuses Xan. She pecks him.

***Analysis Part 1:***

When Xan continues to tell herself that Luna is safe at home, rather than out in the forest and creating scrying devices of her own, it shows how much Xan relies on altering her own sense of reality to make it through the world. By encouraging Antain to speak more about Ethyne and his love for her, Xan encourages Antain to do the exact opposite. By focusing on his love, which is true and unassailable, he can accept other truths and reevaluate the things that he believes aren’t true.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Antain](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/antain) talks about how beautiful [Ethyne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/ethyne) is and [Xan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/xan) looks into his heart. She sees that it’s not his scars that broke him; it’s the memory of a woman in rafters clutching a baby with a crescent moon birthmark. Antain says that there’s a witch in the woods who takes the Protectorate’s youngest baby every year. Xan is horrified that she didn’t see the connection before. Antain continues and says that his baby is slated for sacrifice, but it will surely kill Ethyne to lose their son. Xan wants to transform, comfort Antain, and tell him that the Star Children are happy—but that she made a mistake. Xan wonders how this started and then feels something predatory in her memory. Antain says that he’s not wicked, but because he loves his family, he will kill the [Witch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/the-witch).

***Analysis Part 2:***

Xan’s memory of something predatory likely refers to Sister Ignatia, which suggests that Sister Ignatia is truly the culprit and caused all of this sorrow. When she finally puts it together that the abandoned babies are sacrificed to the Witch and that Luna was one of them, Xan is forced to reckon with the consequences of not being curious and trying to figure out where the babies came from. In this sense, Xan is complicit in the sadness and the control that Sister Ignatia has over the Protectorate.