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

***Chapter 38***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary in brief:***

In Chapter 38, “In Which the Fog Begins to Lift,” Ethyne walks through the Protectorate with a Sister of the Stars, Mae. She remembers her time in the Tower and she recalls why she left. Ethyne paid close attention to her studies in the Tower and realized that no one ever mentioned a Witch, which is odd seeing as how that’s all anyone ever talks about outside of the Tower. Ethyne quit the Sisters of the Star as soon as she figured out that the Witch has been Sister Ignatia in the Protectorate all along. Now that Sister Ignatia is gone, the fog over the town has lifted and the townspeople enjoy their first sunny day in a very long time. Ethyne goes to the Tower and tells the other Sisters the truth. She invites anyone who believes her to come with her. The rest of the Sisters are left locked in the Tower. Ethyne ensures all of the doors in the Tower are opened to the public and that the prisoners are released back to society. All at once, everyone in the Protectorate sees everything about Sister Ignatia and the Elders and the Day of Sacrifice clearly. They begin to know that their children were taken to other families and are happy. They begin to hope and to feel happiness until they notice that the mountain is on fire like the last time the volcano erupted.

***Summary Part 1:***

[Ethyne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/ethyne) and [Mae](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters) walk toward the Tower. It’s unusually sunny. Ethyne remembers her mother’s stories about the [Witch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/the-witch) and that her mother lost a boy long ago. Because of Ethyne’s constant questions, Ethyne’s mother spoke about the Witch constantly. She died when the stories got too heavy, when Ethyne was 16. Then, the Sisters offered Ethyne a place in their novitiate. In the Tower, Ethyne noticed that nobody mentioned the Witch and that [Sister Ignatia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/sister-ignatia-the-sorrow-eater) never aged. At night, something stalked the halls, and when a Sister’s grandfather died, Sister Ignatia hungrily watched her cry. Ethyne realized that she, like everyone else in the Protectorate, carried the burden of the Witch. She learned that stories are power and began to suspect that the Witch wasn’t in the forest—she was in the Tower.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Throughout her life, Ethyne has seen firsthand the power that stories can give a person and the damage that they can cause to others. Discovering that the Sisters aren’t concerned about the Witch helps Ethyne understand that even if the other Sisters aren’t aware that the Witch doesn’t exist, they’re still complicit in helping make the Witch real for the rest of the Protectorate. By choosing to leave the Sisters, Ethyne then chooses to stand up for what she suspects is correct. In this way, Ethyne can show others her way of thinking and introduce them to the truth—something that, within the world of the novel, brings happiness and enlightenment.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Wyn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters), [Antain](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/antain)’s youngest brother, greets [Ethyne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/ethyne) at the Tower door. Ethyne gives him a piece of paper as she hugs him and asks him if he’ll help her. Wyn hugs Ethyne hard—she’s the kindest person he knows. When Ethyne addresses Wyn by name and asks to see her Sisters, Wyn vows to help her. Ethyne and [Mae](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters) walk in as the Sisters begin to chant. As Ethyne starts to tell a story, Wyn stands outside with a chain, a padlock, and a key. Ethyne says that the [Witch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/the-witch) isn’t in the woods—she formed the Sisterhood and invented the story of the Witch to make everyone sad. Now that Ethyne is no longer sad, she can see clearly. Nine Sisters follow her out and Wyn locks the door behind those that stay. Then, Wyn and Ethyne unlock the other doors, including the library.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Notice that Ethyne specifically draws a connection between throwing off her sorrow and understanding that there is no evil Witch in the woods. With this, Ethyne shows that people cannot properly learn when they’re constantly sad and grieving. Instead, people need to be able to have the space to grieve when they do lose people, and in this way, they can develop the same sense of hope that Ethyne now has (which she has because she believes in Antain’s mission to save their son). In particular, unlocking the library is a symbolic act of spreading truth throughout the Protectorate.

***Summary Part 3:***

Protectorate mothers who lost babies begin to experience visions. They see their babies held by other mothers and know it’s impossible, but the visions continue. They see their babies talking, walking, getting married, and having babies of their own. The mothers call the names of their children and know the dreams are real. They wonder if their babies are alive, and it makes them hopeful. The sky gets brighter and brighter.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Notice that the mothers who lost children fixate on the possibility that their children are alive, rather than the fact that they’re gone. This again makes the case that families can take many forms and that if someone else raises one’s child, it doesn’t mean the bond between birth parent and child is broken.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Elder Raspin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters) insists that everything is [Gherland](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/grand-elder-gherland)’s fault. They watch a crowd protesting outside the Tower and Raspin says that [Ethyne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/ethyne)—Gherland’s relative—is “rousing the rabble.” Gherland sputters that Ethyne will mourn as she should once they sacrifice her baby, but the other Elders grumble that there’s too much sun and that the Sisters are shirking their duties. Raspin says it’s [Antain](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/antain)’s fault and they should’ve dealt with him long ago. Gherland insists that all of this is temporary and that Antain will die. He says that it’s as sure as the ground they stand on, which begins to rumble. The Elders open the window and see that the volcano is burning.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Though Elder Raspin reads as a thoroughly ridiculous character, he’s also not wrong—Antain and Ethyne’s hope is to blame for the changes gripping the Protectorate. This makes it clear that though Gherland may be the Grand Elder, his grasp on power is extremely tenuous. Because he has a kind side deep down, and spared Antain, he may now have to pay for that familial love by losing his power and his prestige.