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

***Chapter 40***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary in brief:***

In Chapter 40, “In Which There Is a Disagreement about Boots,” Sister Ignatia arrives at Xan’s workshop, where the madwoman is doing chores while wearing the Seven League Boots. Sister Ignatia lies to the madwoman and tells her to give her the boots so that she can carry both of them to safety, but the madwoman can see the past. She knows that it was Ignatia who left all of those witches and sorcerers behind the last time the volcano erupted and she broke her promise to carry them all to safety. The madwoman keeps the boots on and uses them to run away from the Sister.

***Analysis (37-40):***

There is a likely possibility that Fyrian will die in this upcoming volcanic eruption just as his mother died in the eruption that took place 500 years ago. The timing of Fyrian’s growth spurt seems to match the timing of the volcanic eruption. As readers know, Fyrian’s mother died in a volcanic eruption when Zosimos rode her to both of their deaths in an act of sacrifice to save the surrounding villages. Now Xan is close to her death, just as Zosimos was, and Fyrian is growing quite large, just as his mother had. Although there is no direct evidence for this in the novel thus far, it is quite possible that the only way to stop the volcanic eruption is for the same sacrifice to be made by Fyrian and Xan as Zosimos and the Simply Enormous dragon made so many years ago. It may very well be a cycle of sacrifice that keeps the volcano dormant and safe to live near.

Ethyne is proving to be the strongest protagonist in the story because she is the only character who tries to change things through education and communication, which shows that Ethyne is trying to break free from the book’s theme about the perils of avoiding truthful conversations. She believes in knowledge above all things. She knows she was able to save herself from a life of servitude in the Sisterhood because she paid attention and used her knowledge to save herself. Now she wants to use her knowledge to educate the repressed townspeople who do not know any better. Ethyne is very different from her husband. Antain sees murder as the best response to get what he wants, but Ethyne sees awareness as being much more powerful. She has waited until the best possible moment to free the people of the Protectorate through showing them what is really going on that they do not know about. In this respect, Ethyne lifts the fog from both the city and people’s minds. She brings clarity and hope to a huge amount of people, which is what makes her so effective in bringing about change. This change makes the Elder much more nervous than Antain’s private journey into the woods to kill a Witch they do not believe exists.

It is very odd when Sister Ignatia grows angry about the fact that the townspeople tell a story wherein she is a tiger, so it leads readers to think that she has a true and upsetting connection to a tiger from her past. Readers learn that it is Sister Ignatia who spreads the terrifying stories of the Witch in the forest (329). She does this to keep all of the people afraid to ask questions and thankful to be alive. She is not bothered by these stories because they are all started under her creative control. However, she gets very upset about being compared to a tiger. This hints at the fact that the Sister does, in fact, have a real connection to a tiger. Someone knows the truth about Sister Ignatia. Someone in town knows who she is and how she has the traits of a tiger. This is secret information that Sister Ignatia thinks no one knows about. However, someone knows, which means that someone in the Protectorate knows the truth about her. This threat frightens her greatly.

***Summary Part 1:***

[Sister Ignatia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/sister-ignatia-the-sorrow-eater) sweetly tells the [madwoman](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/the-madwoman-adara) to take off her boots. The madwoman leans against the stone that reads “don’t forget, I mean it” and misses her [paper birds](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/paper-birds). She likes the boots, however, and feels as though they’re perking her up. Both the madwoman and Sister Ignatia gather the bits of magic floating around and Sister Ignatia goes pale when a plume of smoke erupts from a crater. She says that they have to leave or they’ll die in the explosion, and offers to take the madwoman back to the safety of the Tower if she hands over the boots. The madwoman calls Sister Ignatia “Tiger’s Heart” and says that she’s lying. The stone shows her images of Sister Ignatia betraying other magicians and leaving them to die in the smoke.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Because the madwoman is able to use her magic to understand Sister Ignatia’s past, she’s better able to understand that Sister Ignatia isn’t someone she should trust. Now that she knows Sister Ignatia’s other name, she also has more power over her—especially since Sister Ignatia seems very disturbed that the madwoman is able to come up with this name. The early stages of the volcano’s eruption add another layer of urgency to the events in the woods, and suggest that the end of censorship will come when the volcano finally erupts.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Sister Ignatia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/sister-ignatia-the-sorrow-eater) asks how the [madwoman](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/the-madwoman-adara) knows that name, but the madwoman says that everyone knows it. It’s a lie, however; Sister Ignatia doesn’t have a heart. Sister Ignatia paces and says that she started every story in the Protectorate—and her fictional [Witch](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/the-witch) never ate a tiger’s heart. The madwoman says that right now the Sisters are talking about the tiger walking, and that her daughter isn’t supposed to be alive either—and yet, she is. The boots will take her to her daughter. Sister Ignatia conjures knives and throws them at the madwoman. The madwoman races away in the boots as another plume erupts. Sister Ignatia races after her.

***Analysis Part 2:***

By taking responsibility for all the stories in the Protectorate, Sister Ignatia shows that she’s the one who has the most to gain from the Protectorate’s censorship. However, Sister Ignatia has become complacent in her power and isn’t used to having to defend herself like this, which shows that even having power like she’s enjoyed has its limits. She’s not prepared to stand up to foes who know the truth and are hopeful.