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

***Chapter 48***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary in brief:***

In Chapter 48, “In Which a Final Story Is Told,” the narrative reverts to the first-person narration of a woman telling her child a story. The narrator describes Luna as a good Witch. She relates that everything comes from the Bog and everything returns to the Bog and that the Bog is one and everything.

***Analysis (45-48):***

The tale of Sister Ignatia’s terrible background might create some sympathy towards her, but it is not enough to forgive her for what she has done to the Protectorate. Her cold, hard pearl of a heart has been locked away for her own protection. Much like Xan, Sister Ignatia is unwilling to come to terms with her sad emotions. Instead, both women choose to lock their sad feelings away. This leads sister Ignatia to become less of a human and she views humans as being there for her own personal advantage. What sets Xan apart from Sister Ignatia is where the two women get their magic. Xan collects her magic from the natural forces of starlight and moonlight. She also represses her sad memories, but the source of her magic makes a big difference in the way that she never allows herself to lose touch with her own kind heart. Sister Ignatia, on the other hand, gathers her magic from a dark place. She depends on sorrow to gain strength. This is a bad investment for the Sister because she finds herself growing very weak from a magic resource that can be depleted while Xan’s magic resource is never-ending Mother Nature.

The narrative creates catharsis when the sweet and immature Fyrian does not sacrifice himself in the volcano. This catharsis is compounded when Luna is able to control all of the magic inside her much better than Xan could the last time the volcano erupted. In Chapters 37-40, there was some concern that Fyrian and Xan would sacrifice themselves in order to stop the upcoming volcanic eruption just as Zosimos and the Simply Enormous Dragon did so many years ago. The difference between the previous eruption and this one is that Luna is much more prepared with her magic than Xan was when the volcano erupted last time. There is never any direct evidence that Zosimos locked away Xan’s magic, but there are hints. To begin, the fact that Xan has lapses in her memory similar to the lapses Luna experiences after her magic is locked away indicates that Zosimos did not trust Xan’s control over her magic. This may also be why Xan was unable to save people from the last eruption and why Zosimos was forced to do it himself. This time, Fyrian and Xan do not have to stop the eruption themselves because Luna is capable of saving most of the people herself. This also allows Xan to survive long enough to know that the Protectorate is no longer a sorrowful place and that magic helps them get rid of the cloud that used to hang over the city.

The end of Barnhill’s novel argues that good conquers evil and that villains will suffer while kind people will be rewarded. Antain and Ethyne are good people at heart who have suffered through the sorrowful Protectorate their entire lives. They fight hard to remain hopeful and loving in a city as oppressive as the Protectorate. Their kindness prevails, leaving them with their son and two new roommates: Luna and the madwoman. The madwoman has suffered even more than the average person in the Protectorate. She has been forced to spend a large part of her life in a tiny cell all while being ignored and starved for affection. Her constant efforts to find Luna are rewarded, and readers leave her much less crazy and much more affectionate with her long-lost daughter. This is a nice change for Luna, who would surely be suffering the loss of Xan if she did not have the comforts of her biological mother.

The narrative places great emphasis on the rewards of the moral characters, but Gherland’s refusal to apologize shows the reader that he feels no guilt or remorse for his actions as the Grand Elder. Gherland feels that he has nothing to apologize for. He believes that life was much better when the Protectorate was ruled by Sister Ignatia and her sorrow-inducing ways. The beginning of the novel notes that Gherland “Liked being special” (3), so it makes sense that he has no interest in joining a Protectorate where he no longer considered special. But the new Council of Elders wants to give him a chance. They are willing to forgive him because they recognize that even the all-powerful Gherland was manipulated by Sister Ignatia. Nevertheless, Gherland prefers rotting in his jail cell over living in the liberated Protectorate among the people he thinks he is better than.

The madwoman finally joins the Protectorate as a regular citizen and a mother of the friendly neighborhood Witch, but she is not fully released back into the city until Luna honors her mother by finding out her name. Now the madwoman can be referred to as Adara rather than as the label given to her by the Sisters and their tortuous ways. It is important that Adara re-establishes herself with her original name because it helps differentiate between the years she was assumed to be crazy and the years she will now live as a regular citizen. Furthermore, by calling her Adara, the Protectorate can move even farther away from the oppressive force Sister Ignatia put on the city. The less the people remember about the sorrowful years the better they feel. However, this type of moving on should come with a warning from earlier chapters related to the dangers of forgetting. The only way for the Protectorate to prevent another period of nasty control is by maintaining their knowledge and by always remembering what happened when they allowed themselves to be consumed by sadness.

Although readers know that Xan will die at the end of the book, it does not change the fact that her death brings about much sorrow, which is then remedied when Glerk escorts her back into the Bog of life. This book refers to the Bog as creating all life. First, it created Glerk and now it continues to create life such as all of the Zirin the Protectorate harvests each day. Glerk takes Xan into the Bog because that is where her life began. He knows the Bog well because he is a part of the Bog and he wants to take his best friend somewhere where the two of them can have more time together. Up until this section, the Bog only created life. It brought forth life on the planet and provided a means for creatures to survive. When Glerk takes Xan to the Bog, however, this transforms the meaning of the Bog from life giving to life receiving and it almost seems as though the Bog will be Xan’s afterlife. Readers do not learn of any other person entering the Bog after their deaths. That does not mean that it does not happen, but the only person readers know of who enters the Bog is Xan. This may hint that Glerk is giving Xan a special and unique honor for her 500 years of service and kindness on the planet. Readers know that Glerk comes from the Bog, so it is not surprising when he leaves the note for Luna that he will return again someday. Readers can only hope that Luna will live as long as Xan, have as close of a friendship with Glerk, and one day return to the Bog with him also.

***Summary Part 1:***

The [**parent**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/characters/the-parent) says that of course there’s a witch in the woods—she visited yesterday. This witch turned magic as a baby, when another ancient witch filled her with magic. Eventually, the old witch’s magic flowed into the new witch, which is what happens when a witch claims someone to protect. This, the parent says, is how the [**Witch**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-girl-who-drank-the-moon/symbols/the-witch) claimed the Protectorate. They belong to each other, and the Witch’s magic blesses them, the Bog, and the volcano. This is why the Protectorate’s children are happy and healthy. Long ago, the Witch received a poem from the Beast. It was possibly the poem that made the world. The Witch keeps it in a locket. One day, the Witch will fade and only the stories will remain. She might become the Beast or the Bog or a poem, but it’s all the same.

***Analysis Part 1:***

In this story, the parent shows just how much things have changed in the Protectorate since the Witch (presumably Luna) claimed the Protectorate as her own. Now that Luna is in charge of things and spreads blessings, love, and hope, people are happy, healthy, and once again connected to the natural world. While it’s unclear how exactly Luna “claimed” the Protectorate, the parent nevertheless casts it as a positive thing. With this, it shows that those in the Protectorate have reclaimed the power to tell their own stories, which helps them foster positive emotions and hope for the future.