***Holes***

***Chapter 22***

***Summary And Analysis:***

***Summary:***

Back in the tent, Stanley waits until the other boys have left before thanking Zero for digging his hole. When asked why he helped, Zero says that Stanley didn't steal the sunflower seeds. Stanley points out that Zero didn't steal them either to which Zero responds, "You didn't steal the sneakers." After this, Stanley offers to teach Zero to read and they work out a deal in which Zero will dig Stanley's hole for an hour every day so that Stanley won't be as tired when he teaches Zero. Stanley begins to teach Zero the alphabet and discovers that Zero is very good at math. Zero says he knows everyone thinks he is stupid but that really he just doesn't like answering questions. That night Stanley worried what X-Ray will say when Zero digs for Stanley. Then he thinks of the gold tube he found and realizes it is like something he has seen in the Warden's bathroom; it is half a lipstick container. He wonders if the initials KB could stand for Kate Barlow.

***Detailed summary(20-22):***

Mr. Sir takes Stanley to the Warden for stealing his sunflower seeds. The Warden asks Stanley to bring her the small make-up case from her dressing room. From the case, she takes a bottle of deep red nail polish and begins painting her nails, explaining that the nail polish has a secret ingredient of rattlesnake venom, which is poisonous when it's wet. When the Warden asks Mr. Sir if he thinks Caveman stole his seeds, he says that he thinks it was someone else and Stanley is just covering up. The Warden tells Mr. Sir that she doesn't care about his sunflower seeds and then she slaps Mr. Sir really hard with her wet fingernails, drawing blood, and allowing the poison to rush in. Mr. Sir screams and the Warden sends Stanley back to his hole, telling him that Mr. Sir won't die, "unfortunately for you."

Stanley compares himself to his great-grandfather who had been left in the desert by Kissing Kate Barlow, but had survived seventeen days and was rescued, insane, saying that he survived by finding refuge on "God's thumb." Stanley almost steps on a rattlesnake before returning to the holes where the other boys greet him. Stanley finds his hole has already been dug and assumes that the other boys have dug it for him, but it was only Zero who helped him. That night, Stanley asks Zero why he'd helped him and Zero admits it was because he knew that he didn't steal the seeds or the sneakers. Stanley thinks that Zero must be the one with X-Ray vision, but he offers to teach him to read as a thank-you. During their first session, Stanley realizes that Zero is very good at math since he figures out very quickly that you have to learn the shapes and sounds of 52 letters (a capital and small for all 26) and that he comes up with a system for how many letters to learn each day. Zero offers to dig a part of Stanley's hole every day, an hour of digging for an hour of Stanley's teaching. Zero tells Stanley that he's not stupid but doesn't like to answer questions.

Stanley realizes that the gold tube he found and gave to X-Ray is half a lipstick tube just like his mother and the warden have, and it dawns on him that the initials K.B. match the name Kate Barlow.

***Analysis(20-22):***

The character of the Warden is emphasized. The Warden is cruel and vindictive and she takes delight in harming others. The Warden's character and her position of authority tie in with the theme of justice and injustice in the book. Is it right that someone so mean is in charge of a camp where she has ultimate power and is supposed to be "reforming" these boys?

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) finishes his hole first and heads back to camp to mull over why [Zero](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zero-hector-zeroni) dug his hole for him. Later, [Armpit](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters), [Zigzag](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zigzag-ricky), [X-Ray](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/x-ray-rex), and [Squid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters) suggest that Zero just likes digging holes. Stanley waits in the tent for Zero to return from his shower. When Zero walks in, Stanley thanks him and asks why he did it. Zero notes that Stanley didn't steal the seeds or the sneakers. Stanley is confused, but calls after Zero. He offers to try to teach him to read and Zero smiles.

***Analysis Part 1:***

"The sneakers" presumably refers to Clyde Livingston's sneakers, which makes Zero appear as though he has far more information than Stanley gave him credit for—something that aligns him with the likes of Madame Zeroni and the novel's idea of fate and destiny.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) and [Zero](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zero-hector-zeroni) return to the tent and pull out Stanley's box of stationery. They begin with reciting the alphabet, which Zero memorizes quickly. Zero seems extremely proud. Then, Stanley prints a capital A and Zero copies it. Stanley explains the difference between capitals and lowercase letters and when to use each, which he knows Zero doesn't understand. Zero states that there are then actually 52 letters. Stanley is perplexed, especially when Zero can't explain how he did the math.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The fact that Zero is somehow a math whiz shows Stanley that he clearly didn't know Zero at all before this. In turn, this reinforces the dangers of turning someone into a one-dimensional figure rather than treating them as a living, breathing, feeling human. This in turn will begin to show Stanley that there's power to be had in kindness and in friendship.

***Summary part 3:***

[Zero](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zero-hector-zeroni) suggests that [Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) teach him ten letters per day, five capitals and five lowercase, and after five days he'll know them all. Stanley is perplexed again by how Zero did the math. Zero continues and says he'll dig part of Stanley's hole each day in exchange. Stanley agrees. He asks Zero how he figured out how many letters he'd need to do each day, but Zero again says it's just what it is. He says he's not stupid; he just doesn't like answering people's questions.

***Analysis Part 3:***

When Zero says he doesn't like answering questions, it suggests that he absolutely has more that he's hiding from both Stanley and the reader. The fact that he appears aware that this can make him look less smart brings up the possibility that Zero finds looking uneducated to be useful at times, though maddening at others.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) thinks about the deal later. He knows that [X-Ray](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/x-ray-rex) won't like it, but he reasons that he still needs a break from digging to teach [Zero](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zero-hector-zeroni). He thinks about the [Warden](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/the-warden)'s cabin and the mysterious gold tube. Suddenly, Stanley realizes it's half of a lipstick container and wonders if KB might be [Kate Barlow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/miss-katherine-kissin-kate-barlow).

***Analysis Part 4:***

Stanley's mental gymnastics here suggests that he's aware that his agreement with Zero isn't exactly fair, though he's trying to make it seem fair so that he can live with it.