***Holes***

***Chapter 24***

***Summary and Analysis:***

***Summary:***

At Camp Green Lake, Mr. Sir yells at a boy who comments on his face, which is swollen from the Warden's rattlesnake venom. When Mr. Sir drives up to deliver water that day he doesn't give any to Stanley.

***Analysis (20-24):***

When Stanley is caught stealing the sunflower seeds, he thinks that he is again in the wrong place at the wrong time, but in fact, had he not been caught, he would never have realized that the gold tube he found while digging his hole is actually half of a lipstick container. This series of events explores the nature of luck, asking if was Stanley in the wrong place at the wrong time, or in the right place at the right time. If he had not been brought to the Warden's cabin for stealing Mr. Sir's sunflower seeds then he would not have seen the Warden's lipstick container and might never have realized that it looked the same as the gold tube he found. Because Stanley does have this realization, however, he obtains an important clue. He now has more information about what the Warden is looking for as she has the boys dig holes. Although Stanley's great-grandfather thought he was in the wrong place at the wrong time when he was robbed by Kate Barlow, it is ultimately because of this robbery that he meets his wife, Stanley's great-grandmother.

Holes questions the nature of fate. By finding Kate Barlow's lipstick tube, Stanley has found not only a piece of history, but a piece of his own history. He has effectively linked the present with two separate stories in the past, that of the outlaw Kate Barlow and that of his own great-grandfather, the first Stanley Yelnats. The introduction of Kate Barlow as a school teacher who makes spiced peaches seems surprising when the reader also knows that she was a dangerous outlaw. Her character is an example of a person's full story revealing more about them than their name might suggest. Although Stanley only guesses that the lipstick case he found may have belonged to Kate Barlow, the fact that the narrator informs the reader that Kate used to live near Green Lake allows the reader to assume that the case does belong to Kate. The facts of the mystery are slowly accumulating, and the reader has far more information than Stanley does.

The character of Trout Walker has many similarities to the character of the Warden. Both like to get their way and both have a lot of control over their surrounding area of Green Lake. In addition to realizing that the gold tube is a lipstick tube, Stanley's visit to the Warden provides Zero the opportunity to do Stanley a favor. This in turn forces Stanley to re-think his behavior towards Zero. When Stanley and Zero agree to help each other with reading and hole digging, they are not forming the kind of authoritarian system that X-Ray and the Warden use, but rather a system of mutual benefit, which has the possibility of leading to real friendship. Neither Zero nor Stanley fears the other, and so their actions and their friendship is honest and genuine. This agreement also gives Stanley and Zero the chance to get to know one another beyond the point of what their names, or the other boys, say about them. Stanley discovers that Zero is very smart even though he does not talk a lot.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The next morning, [Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) is wide awake as soon as he sees [Mr. Sir](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/mr-sir)'s face at breakfast. Half his face is the size of a melon, and there are three angry, dark purple lines running down it. Nobody in Stanley's tent says anything, but another boy asks what happened to Mr. Sir's face. Stanley hears a crash and turns around to see Mr. Sir holding the boy's head against the oatmeal pot, asking him if there's something amiss with his face. Mr. Sir lets the boy fall to the ground with a thud, and the boy agrees when Mr. Sir says he's handsome.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Mr. Sir's willingness to lash out at any boy, not just Stanley, shows that Mr. Sir's power makes him feel as though he doesn't even need to adhere to some form of justice. Not that this kind of abuse is ever acceptable, but it's telling that Mr. Sir appears to blame the entire inmate population for his fate, not just the person he probably blames for the incident.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) refuses to talk about [Mr. Sir](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/mr-sir)'s face the rest of the day. He looks forward to his break, which [Zero](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zero-hector-zeroni) said he could have whenever he's ready. When the water truck comes around the second time, Mr. Sir is driving. Stanley is extremely thirsty. Mr. Sir takes Stanley's canteen, but holds it to the side of the stream of water. Stanley watches the water evaporate but thanks Mr. Sir anyway.

***Analysis Part 2:***

By depriving Stanley of water, Mr. Sir turns the landscape into even more of an enemy. Along with the lack of guard towers or fences, this illustrates how the adults in charge at Camp Green Lake manipulate the natural world to help them achieve their own terrible goals.