***Holes***

***Chapter 3***

***Summary And Analysis:***

***Summary(Chapters 1-3):***

***Chapter 1***

Camp Green Lake is described. It is no longer a lake because over a hundred years ago the lake dried up and the people who lived around it moved away. Now the lake is a dry and barren land where the temperature is usually about ninety- five degrees. The only place where there is shade is between two trees where there is a hammock. The hammock belongs to the Warden so the campers cannot lie in it. Rattlesnakes and scorpions hide in the shade under rocks and in holes that the campers of Camp Green Lake dig. Rattlesnakes and scorpions are horrible but nothing is as dangerous as the yellow-spotted lizard, whose bite is always fatal.

***Chapter 2***

Boys who have committed crimes are sent to Camp Green Lake. The boys are supposed to dig holes at the camp in the hopes that they will build character and abide by the law. Stanley Yelnats, the protagonist, thinks that Camp Green Lake will be like a summer camp. He has never been to summer camp because his family is poor, so when he is tried for a crime and the judge tells him he can either go to the camp or to jail, he chooses Camp Green Lake.

***Chapter 3***

Stanley rides to Camp Green Lake on a bus with the bus driver and a guard with a gun. He carries a backpack with a toothbrush, toothpaste, and a box of stationery that he plans to use to write to his mother. Stanley pretends that he is going to a camp like the ones rich children go to. Stanley hopes that he will make friends at Camp Green Lake. He is overweight and at home kids and teachers say mean things about his weight. His math teacher, Mrs. Bell, once taught ratios by comparing Stanley to a boy who weighed one third as much as he did. Stanley had been arrested on the day of the ratio lesson for a crime he did not commit. Stanley and his family always seem to be at the wrong place at the wrong time and they blame their bad luck on Stanley's no-good-dirty-rotten- pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather. This great-great-grandfather had stolen a pig from a Gypsy who only had one leg. The Gypsy put a curse on the great- great-grandfather and his descendants. Although they do not believe in curses, Stanley's family has very bad luck. Stanley remembers a song that his father often sings to him about a wolf and a bird who wish life was easier. Stanley's father is an inventor and although his is smart and works very hard he never has any luck. Because he never has any luck his inventions never work. Stanley's father and grandfather and great grandfather are all named Stanley Yelnats. Because of this, the protagonist Stanley is Stanley Yelnats IV. Stanley's first name is his last name spelled backwards. All Stanley Yelnatses have retained hope even when faced with very bad luck. The first Stanley Yelnats, the protagonist's great grandfather, made a fortune on the stock market. The family's bad luck struck him when he moved from New York to California and was robbed by Kissin' Kate Barlow. If Stanley's great grandfather had not been robbed then Stanley might be living in a mansion in California instead of in a Texas apartment that smelles of burning rubber and foot odor caused by Stanley's father's attempts to invent a way to recycle old sneakers. Stanley thinks it is cool that his great-grandfather was robbed by an outlaw. Kate Barlow did not actually kiss Stanley's great-grandfather because she did not kill him; she only kissed the men she killed. Stanley arrives at Camp Green Lake but he can't see any greenery.

***Analysis(Chapters 1-3):***

The first three chapters set the scene of Camp Green Lake as a menacing place. Even before Stanley arrives at the camp it is clear that life will be hard for him there. The threats at Camp Green Lake are twofold; they come from humans and nature. Humans such as the Warden and the guard on the bus who has a gun are a clear symbol of harsh authority. The natural environment around Green Lake, the unrelenting sun, the dry air, and the many poisonous animals, are also fierce and dangerous.

Just as Stanley's father continually hopes for an invention and is continually disappointed by his failures, so Stanley's hopes for friends and fun at Camp Green Lake are sure to be disappointed. This cycle of hope and disappointment runs in Stanley's family as part of the family curse handed down from Stanley's great-great-grandfather. If Stanley did not commit a crime, it seems that he is suffering for the actions of his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great- grandfather. The short description provided of this great-great-grandfather leads the reader to assume that he really was a crook who has caused generations of his family to suffer unjustly.

In three short chapters, the narrator presents information about many different places and times in history. The narration jumps from a description of Camp Green Lake to Stanley's trial, to Stanley's home life and family history. Full information is not available about any of these topics. We now know that Stanley has been wrongly convicted of a crime, but the crime itself is unknown. This technique is indicative of the pattern of the novel. Small pieces of Stanley's history and the history of Camp Green Lake and its residents are revealed, slowly creating a unified chain of events that can be inferred, but not proven, until the end of the novel. Enough clues are given, however, for the reader to gradually make more and more educated guesses about what will happen next. In this way, the book is like a detective story. Just as a detective must study every clue, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, we must take note of every detail presented in this book. The yellow-spotted lizards mentioned in chapter one, Stanley's trial, Kate Barlow, Stanley's great-great-grandfather, Stanley's great-grandfather and Stanley's father, are all characters and events that relate to one another no matter how unimportant their description may seem in the first few chapters.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) is the only passenger, aside from the [driver](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters) and the [guard](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters), on the bus to Camp Green Lake. He sits handcuffed to his armrest, sweating in the heat. Stanley and his parents had tried to pretend that he was actually going to camp like rich kids, and Stanley remembers pretending as a kid that his stuffed animals were going to Camp Fun and Games. He hopes he'll make friends and swim in the lake when he arrives. Stanley doesn't have friends at home, as he's overweight and the object of merciless bullying at the hands of teachers and kids alike.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Stanley's reverie sets up camp as a marker of economic success, while his family's attempts to pretend that Camp Green Lake is a real camp indicate that they desperately do want to do better economically. Note that Stanley is already the victim of cruelty and unkindness; this suggests that he may be coming to camp already unwilling to stand up for himself.

***Summary Part 2:***

The narrator explains that [Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) is innocent; he was convicted because of his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather. Supposedly, Stanley's grandfather stole a pig from a "Gypsy" and she cursed all of Stanley's descendants. The family, of course, doesn't actually believe this, but things do seem to go wrong a lot. [Stanley's father](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-s-father) is an inventor, though none of his inventions have been successful.

***Analysis Part 2:***

This explanation introduces the possibility that Stanley is the victim of bullying (and his dad is an unsuccessful inventor) not because of any fault of their own, but because of something well outside their control. Similarly, this also suggests that Stanley's family is paying for his great-great-grandfather's transgression, illustrating one way that justice is served.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Stanley's mother](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-s-mother) often points out that not every Stanley Yelnats has been a failure—[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) is the fourth Stanley Yelnats—and this is technically true, as [the first Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/the-first-stanley-yelnats) made a fortune in the stock market. However, the bandit [Kissin' Kate Barlow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/miss-katherine-kissin-kate-barlow) robbed him as he tried to move to California. Stanley thinks this is kind of cool. His reverie is interrupted when the bus arrives at Camp Green Lake.

***Analysis Part 3:***

The fate of the first Stanley Yelnats suggests that the possible curse on the family doesn't necessarily mean that no family members can ever experience success—their successes just aren't things they get to keep. This is another way that Stanley's family becomes disadvantaged economically.