***Holes***

***Chapter 34***

***Summary and Analysis:***

***Summary:***

Stanley walks towards the thumb mountain but is exhausted. He sees something in the dirt and finds that it is part of a boat named Mary Lou. There is a hole under the boat and Zero is in it.

***Detailed Summary(32,33,34):***

A new boy comes to Group D, sentenced to camp because he stole a car. The boy's name is Brian, but everyone calls him Twitch because he fidgets a lot. Stanley keeps thinking about Zero and the fact that he should be trying to help him. That day, the power of suggestion starts to work because Stanley feels his own fingers start to twitch when the truck comes for the water break. Stanley jumps into the truck and floors it, listening to Twitch tell him to "put it into gear!" Stanley drives the truck, the first time he's ever driven, and goes straight into a hole. Stanley gets out and takes off running with his empty canteen.

Stanley keeps walking across the desert in the hopes of finding Zero. Stanley is amazed at the number of holes that exist and actually has to jump over some holes harboring lots of yellow-spotted lizards. Stanley is very thirsty but keeps walking and sees ahead of him a rock that looks like a fist with a thumb sticking up. Stanley is encouraged by the "thumbs-up" sign. Walking on the dried-up lakebed, he comes to an upside down boat with the words "Mary Lou" painted on it. As he stands there beside it, an arm reaches up and drags him down.

***Detailed Analysis(32,33,34):***

The "thumbs-up" sign is a symbol of encouragement and helps Stanley keep going. The sign also ties into the historic story of Stanley's great-grandfather and the connection between past and present.

Stanley feels guilty about his selfishness and refusal to teach Zero without pay, but probably also because he likes Zero and understands something about him. No one else knows that Zero can't read or write, so Stanley knows him more about him than anyone else. Zero's situation emphasizes the importance of education as he's labeled as a "zero" because people think he can't do anything. Learning how to read and write is so important to Zero that he's willing to work digging holes an extra hour every day - an especially big effort since we find out he hates digging holes.

***Critical study(chapter 29-34)***

There is an unusual "change in the weather" at the always sunny, always hot Camp Green Lake (127). A storm starts brewing, and the resulting lightning lights up the edge of the lake basin, allowing Stanley to see that one of the distant mountains resembles a thumbs-up. He remembers that his great-grandfather found refuge on what he called "God's Thumb," and speculates that his great-grandfather may have been robbed by Kissin' Kate Barlow close to Camp Green Lake.

[Zero](https://www.gradesaver.com/holes/study-guide/character-list#zero) is still digging part of Stanley's hole each day, so that Stanley has the energy to teach him how to read. The other boys resent this, and taunt Stanley endlessly for treating Zero like his slave.

The tension between the boys in Group D escalates until there is a scuffle in which Zigzag physically accosts Stanley. [Mr. Pendanski](https://www.gradesaver.com/holes/study-guide/character-list#mr-pendanski) urges Stanley to fight back, but Zigzag is more adept at fighting.

Zero eventually intercedes on Stanley's behalf, almost choking Zigzag to unconsciousness. [The Warden](https://www.gradesaver.com/holes/study-guide/character-list#the-warden) is summoned. She and Mr. Pendanski mock Zero for not being able to read, and they say that Stanley must stop the reading lessons because it is making Zero more violent. Zero hits Mr. Pendanski across the face with a shovel and runs away into the desert.

Stanley is worried about Zero, who left without any water. The authority figures at the camp destroy all of Zero's records, noting that no one will come to look for Hector Zeroni - he is a friendless ward of the state.

Zero's spot in Group D is filled by a new campmate named Twitch, whose specialty is stealing cars. It is Stanley, though, who goes on a car-stealing spree soon after: he gets behind the wheel of [Mr. Sir](https://www.gradesaver.com/holes/study-guide/character-list#mr-sir)'s truck when Mr. Sir is filling the boys' canteens, and tries to drive away. Stanley doesn't get very far; the car winds up in a hole.

Stanley sets off across the desert, hoping to find Zero. As he walks, he realizes the danger he is in: he has no water, no idea where he's going, and there are yellow-spotted lizards everywhere. Just before he decides to turn back, Stanley finds an overturned boat in the middle of the wasteland. A hand reaches out from under the boat: it is Zero.

The opening of Part Two clearly indicates to the reader that the (already quite gritty) novel is going to take a turn for the darker. The pathetic fallacy of the brewing storm symbolizes the tension and conflict that will follow. The lightning in Chapter 29 has further symbolic resonance: it is like a metaphorical light bulb that goes off in Stanley's head, allowing him to connect the distant form of a thumb-shaped mountain with the ramblings of his insane great-grandfather.

The idea of miracles is developed somewhat at the opening of this section, with several religious references littering the text. When rain becomes a possibility, [X-Ray](https://www.gradesaver.com/holes/study-guide/character-list#x-ray) jokes that it will rain for "[f]orty days and forty nights," and the boys "better start building... an ark" like Noah did in the Bible (128). In the same chapter, Stanley remembers that in family myth, his great-grandfather married his great-grandmother because he thought she "was an angel," and alongside this, we have more references to "God's thumb" (129). This cryptic remark of Stanley's great-grandfather will prove to be a miraculous oasis in the desert, where Stanley and Zero will manage to avoid death by thirst, starvation, and exposure. It is interesting that Christian religion and folk-magic exist side-by-side in this novel, but they are both linked by the theme of the fantastic or supernatural.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

When the sun is overhead, [Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) figures he can only go for another hour before turning back. He can't see anything, but does notice a pool of water ahead. When he hurries towards it, he realizes it's a mirage. Stanley holds onto the sack from the sunflower seeds, just in case, and continues to walk towards the mountains. [God's Thumb](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/symbols/god-s-thumb) and the mountains look impossibly far away, though Stanley feels like the mountains are giving him the thumbs-up sign to encourage him on.

***Analysis Part 1:***

The mirage here represents the power of the natural world to alter humans' perceptions of it. Especially when combined with Stanley's sense that the mountains are urging him on, this suggests that nature itself, and possibly God, are leading him on a pre-prescribed journey towards something specific.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) notices a large object on the lake. He can't figure out what it is, so he decides to head to the right and investigate it. He decides that the object will be his halfway point, and then he'll turn back. When he finally reaches it, he discovers that it's an old boat, half buried in the dirt. The boat's name is Mary Lou. Stanley notices a tunnel leading under the boat, large enough for a big animal. He hears something inside and tries to shout to scare the critter back in. However, the animal says "hey" back and [Zero](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zero-hector-zeroni)'s hand pokes out.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The boat's name suggests that this boat is actually Sam's old boat. When Stanley discovers Zero hiding under it, it reads as though Sam himself is helping Zero along. This opens up the possibility that Stanley's journey doesn't just mirror that of Elya's; he may also be able to take actions that help atone for the atrocities committed in Green Lake, as well.