***Holes***

***Chapter 40***

***Summary and Analysis:***

***Summary:***

Stanley digs up another onion and the narration shifts back to one hundred and ten years ago when Sam was selling onions. A woman thanks Sam for an onion remedy that saved her daughter's life. The narration shifts again to Stanley and Zero who spend two days eating onions and drinking dirty water from pools of mud. Stanley heads back down the mountain to find the shovel and jars he left behind. He is stunned at the distance that he covered while carrying Zero.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) wonders if there are more onions around. He pulls up one of the white flowers, including the roots. The narration jumps back to the past; [Sam](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/sam) is selling onions on the streets of Green Lake. [Mrs. Tennyson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters), a very proper woman, runs after Sam in her nightgown. She stops him and explains that her daughters will be okay, thanks to Sam's onion tonic. She derisively says that [Doc Hawthorn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters) was useless, as he wanted to use leeches.

***Analysis Part 1:***

The juxtaposition of Stanley discovering onions with Mrs. Tennyson's insistence that onions cured her daughter reinforces that onions are life-saving within the world of the novel. Onions contain chemicals that help the gut remain healthy, which is likely how and why they're able to help Zero and Mrs. Tennyson's daughter.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Hattie Parker](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters) and other townsfolk gather, and Hattie asks [Mrs. Tennyson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters) if her husband is aware of the way she's dressed. Mrs. Tennyson curtly explains that she and her husband have been up all night with their daughter, who ate bad meat—Hattie Parker's husband is the butcher. Hattie's face flushes. She excuses herself and Mrs. Tennyson buys onions from [Sam](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/sam). When she insists he keep the change, Sam asks her to buy onions for Mary Lou with it.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Hattie's derision falls right in line with her assertion that God would punish Katherine and Sam; her sense of right and wrong is focused entirely on manmade systems and moralities at the expense of the actual humans negatively impacted by that focus.

***Summary Part 3:***

Back in the present, [Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) and [Zero](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zero-hector-zeroni) take the next two days to recover. They eat onions and drink the dirty water. Since Zero seems to be feeling marginally better, Stanley decides to go look for the shovel. He feels strong as he heads down the mountain. After a while, he looks back and doesn't think he could've carried Zero so far, so he reasons he must've missed the shovel. Regardless, he keeps going just in case. Finally, Stanley sits down and decides that if he's so tired after walking down, he never would've been able to carry Zero up. However, Stanley finds the shovel and the sack of jars right next to each other.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Stanley's surprise at his own apparent strength suggests that he is, to some degree, unaware of the power of kindness and of caring about someone—his belief that Zero was worthy of care, coupled with the help from the natural world, is what enabled Stanley to carry Zero up the hill in the first place. This shows that even though the reader may make some of these connections, Stanley likely won't make all of them.