***Holes***

***Chapter 42***

***Summary and Analysis:***

***Summary:***

Zero and Stanley make a large hole for water with the shovel. Stanley realizes that he is happier than he has ever been before. He realizes he is happy he got arrested because now he has a friend and likes himself as well. Stanley thinks about secretly returning to camp and digging up the treasure that may be in the hole where he found the lipstick container.

***Detailed Summary(35-42):***

[Zero](https://www.gradesaver.com/holes/study-guide/character-list#zero) is still alive, but Stanley realizes quickly that his friend is in bad shape. Zero refuses to go back to Camp Green Lake. He offers Stanley some "Sploosh" to drink - a dubious jarred concoction that Stanley notices tastes like peaches. Zero has been living off this jarred fruit, but there are no more jars.

Stanley shows Zero the mountain that looks like a thumb, and the boys set off across the desert again with God's Thumb as their destination. The going is tough, especially since Zero's health is failing and the boys have no water. They distract themselves with spelling games and speculating about what they'll find at the top of the mountain.

As they climb up toward the base of the thumb-like rock formation, the boys notice that there is more greenery and more bugs - sure signs of water nearby. Zero collapses, and Stanley carries him toward God's Thumb, eventually collapsing as well into a muddy ditch. Stanley joyfully gulps down the muddy water, and hands Zero half of a wild raw onion he finds growing nearby.

Zero confesses that he stole the shoes that Stanley was accused of stealing, and he is the reason why Stanley was sent to Camp Green Lake in the first place. Stanley, disbelieving, sings Zero his family's lullaby as the exhausted, weakened boy drifts off to sleep.

Stanley and Zero dig a deeper hole for water, and they discuss Zero's life. Zero explains how he stole Clyde Livingston's shoes from a charity auction at the homeless shelter Zero sometimes went to when he was homeless.

Stanley feels a deep sense of calm and happiness as he looks up at the stars that night, glad that the whole sequence of events happened to bring him and Zero together, and to allow them to survive. A crazy idea comes to him: what if he and Zero went back to Camp Green Lake and dug for buried treasure in the hole where Stanley originally found Kissin' Kate's lipstick tube?

***Detailed Analysis(35-42):***

The discovery of the onion field near God's Thumb prompts the narrator to recount a brief flashback in Chapter 40. This chapter reaches back to before [Sam](https://www.gradesaver.com/holes/study-guide/character-list#sam)'s death, and describes an everyday scene in Green Lake: a grateful townswoman thanks Sam for the onion remedies which helped cure her daughter. Although this anecdote does nothing to further the plot in itself, it serves as a testament to Sam's kind and honest character, and also reminds the reader that the past and the present are inextricably linked.

By including this flashback, Sachar makes it clear to us that the Yelnats owe their lives to this onion field - it is the same one which saved Stanley's great-grandfather when he was robbed. It also emphasizes the magical healing qualities of the onions, an important symbol in the novel.

The flashback is also important in that it is one of the reader's last images of Sam. Sachar chooses to leave us not with the sad and horrible scene of Sam's death, but with a scene that encapsulates the onion-picker's best qualities: his integrity, his friendliness, and his community spirit. It is a very different picture than our last image of Kate, or of [Trout Walker](https://www.gradesaver.com/holes/study-guide/character-list#trout-walker), whom we leave in the barren desert, her heart broken and his ambition thwarted. Sam is such an unambiguously morally good character in *Holes*that it makes sense for Sachar to pay him - and the nicer inhabitants of Green Lake - tribute in this way.

There is the possibility of significant dramatic irony at the end of Chapter 39, if a reader has been paying close attention. It is fascinating that Sachar does not accompany arguably the most important event in the novel, one which alters the course of history and breaks a generations-old curse, with more fanfare. There is none of the lightning of Chapter 29, dramatically symbolizing Stanley's epiphany regarding God's Thumb. Sachar does not explicitly state - or even hint - that the curse is lifted. It is up to the savvy reader to recall the words of [Madame Zeroni](https://www.gradesaver.com/holes/study-guide/character-list#madame-zeroni), and put two and two together: Stanley has now carried Zero up the mountain, and sung him the lullaby. If readers do not realize it at this point, they will have to wait until much later in the novel, because the time that the two boys spend on God's Thumb is a limbo period for them and for the action of the book.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Zero](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zero-hector-zeroni) grows strong enough to help dig the water hole. He makes it about six feet deep and puts rocks on the bottom to make the water cleaner, and then declares that it's the last hole he'll ever dig. [Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) knows they need to return to Camp Green Lake at some point. There's nothing but desert for miles. Zero wonders out loud if there's a hole in the top of the thumb and that's where the water is coming from, noting that water doesn't run uphill. Stanley realizes that the onion smell doesn't bother him anymore and he can't really taste them anymore either.

***Analysis Part 1:***

The realization that he's acclimated to the onion smell suggests again, as it did with Barf Bag's cot, that Stanley is capable of adapting to all manner of situations, not all of them positive. When Zero suggests the water must be in the thumb or running uphill, it draws a parallel between this stream and the Latvian stream of Madame Zeroni. This in turn implies that this stream, like that one, has magical powers.

***Summary Part 2:***

Two nights later, [Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) happily stares at the stars. He thinks that he has no real reason to be happy and wonders if he's going to die. He realizes he's never been truly happy, but now he likes who he is. He watches [Zero](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zero-hector-zeroni)'s breath blow a flower petal around and thinks that Zero had only been at Camp Green Lake a month or so more than Stanley. He thinks that even though Zero is right that neither of them would be here if he'd kept the shoes, Stanley is glad that Zero abandoned the shoes and they fell on him. He remembers how he thought that destiny struck him and thinks that it must've been true.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Stanley's happiness and satisfaction at the way things have worked out shows that he too will get to experience some of the satisfaction of the way that destiny works within the plot, even without knowing all the exact pieces. This suggests that, at its heart, the idea of destiny allows people to make more sense of their world and feel more secure in the way things progress in their lives.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) wonders if he and [Zero](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zero-hector-zeroni) could possibly sneak past the camp and follow the road back to civilization. He reasons that nobody at Camp Green Lake is looking for them at this point. He dreams about living as a fugitive and getting a new identity, and he realizes it's crazy but also thinks that it'd be easier if he and Zero could find [Kissin' Kate Barlow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/miss-katherine-kissin-kate-barlow)'s treasure to fund their adventure. He wakes Zero up and asks if he wants to dig one more hole.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Given the way that Stanley's journey has mirrored Elya's thus far (and especially since he's now uncharacteristically happy), it suggests that it's actually part of Stanley and Zero's destiny to dig up Kate Barlow's treasure. It also implies that by doing so, they'll somehow atone for Sam's murder.