

Characters and Themes

Holes – by Louis Sachar

Introduction: pages 1-10

Setting, Stanley, Family history, Innocence, curse

Epilogue: Chapter 50 (229-233) Tells what happened to all the characters about a year and a half later.

Setting: Camp Green Lake, (a dry, flay wasteland, a desert-like dried up old lakebed, very hot in the summer,) Texas. Two oak trees on one side by Warden's cabin. Takes place in the present time, summer season.

Characters: (Current Day)

Stanley: Poor, overweight, hurt by insensitive teacher, innocent of crime he is being punished for, beat up by smaller bully at school, nicknamed Caveman, Caucasian, doesn't fight back, hopeful, is Stanley Yelnats IV.

Mrs. Bell: Math teacher at school who embarrassed Stanley about his weight.

Stanley Yelnats III: Stanley's father, an inventor, works on an invention for foot odor, no luck, but hopeful.

Mr. Sir: The guard, cowboy hat, sunglasses, quit smoking, eats sunflower seeds, has rattlesnake tattoo, is mean.

Mr. Pedanski: The counselor, almost bald, beard, sunburned, nicknamed "Mom", kind to boys, tries to help, afraid of Warden, (later we find out he wasn't that caring, he suggests shooting Stanley (?)).

BarfBag: The boy who slept in the bed before Stanley, had been bitten by a rattlesnake on purpose.

Rex: Nicknamed X-Ray, has glasses, is small, has the "shorter" shovel, says he doesn't see very well, black, (X-Ray is Pig-Latin for Rex.)

Alan: Nicknamed Squid, is white, cries at night but denies it, is sorry for what he did to get to Camp Green Lake.

Jos^{3/4}: Nicknamed Magnet, Hispanic, is a thief and is good at it, steals the sunflower seeds.

Theodore: Nicknamed Armpit, black.

Ricky: Nicknamed Zigzag, has a thin neck with wild blonde hair, won't lift up another boy's dirt (selfish, out for himself), Caucasian.

Zero: No real name (?) (Later we find his name is Hector Zeroni), everyone thinks there is nothing in his head, is the smallest, always the first done digging, says he likes to dig holes, doesn't smile much, can't read or write, (everyone says he is stupid), no family (?), black, will fight instead of talking, sticks up for Stanley, is really smart, works hard to figure things out, remembers mother.

Warden: Tall woman, freckles, long red fingernails, cowboy clothing, red hair, bossy, sarcastic, self-involved, just wants treasure, cowboy boots set with turquoise, (daughter of Trout Walker and Linda Miller, had to dig holes as a child.)

Twitch: New boy assigned to Group D; real name was Brian. He always fidgeted. He had stolen a car, and claimed he was very good at stealing cars.

Attorney General: Tall man in cowboy hat.

Ms. Morengo: Short Hispanic woman, Stanley's lawyer, she seemed taller, is also Stanley's Dad's patent attorney.

Clyde "Sweet Feet" Livingston: Baseball player, led the American League in stolen bases over 3 years, had 4 triples in one game, donated his shoes to the homeless shelter, bad foot odor (suffers from same foot fungus problem as "Trout" Walker).

Characters in the Past:

Elya Yelnats: The no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather, from Latvia, in love with Myra Menke, went to Madame Zeroni for advice, got stronger from carrying the pig up the mountain, gave the pig as a wedding present to Myra and Igor when she couldn't decide, went to America and forgot about his promise to Madame Zeroni, (but felt bad about forgetting,) married Sarah Miller and taught her the "If only" song, looked for Madame Zeroni's son in America, his barn kept getting struck by lightning, thought it was the curse.

Madame Zeroni: A one-legged Egyptian (black) gypsy woman, taught the "If only" song, gave advice to Elya Yelnats, knew of a secret mountain place where water runs uphill, put the curse on Elya's descendants, had a son who went to America.

Stanley Yelnats II: Stanley's great-grandfather, made a fortune in the stock market, was robbed by the Kissing Bandit, left stranded in the desert, he found "the thumb of God" and survived, was rescued by rattlesnake hunters, married his nurse, was delirious (?).

Kate Barlow: (Katherine Barlow) the Kissing Bandit, a school teacher, robbed Stanley's great-grandfather and left him stranded in the desert, made the best spiced peach preserves in town, had a secret recipe, it was called "food for the angels", pretty, was courted by Charles "Trout" Walker, didn't like Trout Walker, told him "No", was rescued against her will from the boat crash on Green Lake, she loved Sam the "onion man", became the "Kissing Bandit" for 20 years, returned to town and lived in a cabin at the edge of the lake by two oak trees, was crazy, wouldn't tell Trout and his wife where she hid the fortune, had turquoise-studded black boots, died from a red-eyed, lizard bite, last words were "start digging".

Myra Menke: An empty-headed beautiful 14 year old girl, couldn't decide between Elya Yelnats and Igor.

Igor Barkov: A pig farmer who wanted to marry Myra Menke, 57 years old, gave a fat pig as dowry, got to marry Myra.

Charles "Trout" Walker: Was in love with Kate Barlow, went to school to be near her, was stupid and loud, his feet smelled like dead fish, had same foot fungus as Clyde "Sweet Feet" Livingston, was disrespectful, seemed to be proud of his stupidity, was rich, had a new motor boat, couldn't believe Kate Barlow told him "no", he was used to getting whatever he wanted, tried to scare Kate Barlow out of loving Sam the "Onion man", burned the school's books, died in a boat crash on Green Lake (?) (Didn't really die), married one of Kate's old students, Linda Miller, a mean freckle-faced redhead, came back to get Kate's fortune, father of Warden Walker.

Sam, the Onion Man: Had a donkey named Mary Lou who was 50 years old, strong, had an old boat, a black man, made pastes, lotions, syrups, and ointments out of onions, fixed things for Kate Barlow in exchange for her spiced peaches, wasn't educated, but learned quickly by listening to Kate, had a secret onion field where water runs uphill, died in a boat crash on Green Lake.

Mary Lou: Sam's donkey, 50 years old, ate nothing but onions, shot dead, (also the name of Sam's boat).

Sheriff: A drunk, wants to kiss Kate Barlow, is prejudiced against Negroes, wants to hang Sam, talks about God punishing Kate, but is the first one she kills and kisses.

THEMES:

It's not my fault, I just was in the wrong place at the wrong time:

Pg. 8, 25, 64, 78, 85

Family heritage, customs, story of the family curse

Pg. 7-10, 22-23, 24, 28-31, 32-33, 34-35, 36, 38-39, 92-93, 101-103, 107-115, 120-123, 128-129, 177-179, 229

Luck, destiny and fate determine what happens

Pg. 7-9, 25, 53, 57, 187, 233

Remain hopeful even though things are bad

Pg. 7, 9, 28, 54, 59, 87, 131, 143, 153, 159, 161-172

Do a job well, get things done well

Pg. 34, 40, 116-117, 131, 185

Help others or just look out for yourself

Pg. 44, 50, 53, 61, 62, 74, 82, 83, 87, 95, 96-99, 117, 141, 146, 165, 170

Connections and Irony

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Overweight: Great-great-grandfather & great-great-grandson; both became stronger after hard work

Foot Odor: Clyde Livingston, Trout Walker, father's invention

Uneducated but not stupid: Zero (Hector Zeroni), Madame Zeroni, and Sam the onion man

Red hair, freckles, mean: Warden (Ms. Walker), and Linda Miller Walker, wife of Trout Walker (Mother and daughter)

Won't fight: Great-great-grandfather & great-great-grandson

Water runs uphill: Latvia and Texas, secret places only Zeroni family and Yelnat family members find.

Rattlesnake hunters: Rescue great-grandfather, ask for lizard potion from Sam the onion man

Food for angels: Spiced peaches made by Kate Barlow, what great -grandfather said kept him alive, Sploosh

Mary Lou: Donkey owned by Sam the onion man, boat name owned by Sam the onion man, boat which sheltered Zero and Stanley

Turquoise studded black boots: Owned by Kissing Kate Barlow, worn by Warden Walker (Warden's mother probably stole them)

Red Eyes: Lizards, "Monster"

Two oak trees by cabin: Cabin lived in by Kissing Kate Barlow when she returned to town, and cabin lived in by Warden

Secret onion field: Owned by Sam the onion man, discovered by Stanley and Zero, probably also discovered by Stanley's great-great-grandfather

Lizard juice: (Onion juice), made a fortune in the stock market, robbed by the Kissing Bandit, left stranded in the desert, he found "the thumb of God" and survived, married his nurse, was delirious, kept "red-eyed monsters" away from rattlesnake hunters, kept Zero and Stanley safe from red-eyed lizard bites.

Miller: last name of Elya Yelnat's wife and Trout Walker's wife...?