SYMBOLS IN HOLES

Holes
- hopelessness
- the boys find treasure at the bottom of a hole
- digging holes in the hot sun everyday “builds character”
- Stanley digs a hole to reach fresh water
- the curse is broken
- holes are often a negative symbol in the book, as they represent hardship, adversity and grueling physical labor- "If you take a bad boy and make him dig a hole every day in the hot sun, it will turn him into a good boy."

A Mountain
- The opposite of a hole is a mountain- and mountains are linked with safety, success, and survival (God's Thumb shelters and feeds the boys when they run away from Camp Green Lake, and the mountain and river in Latvia have magic powers for Elya's pig and him).
- God’s Thumb: a beautiful escape, refuge
- magical powers
- hope and happiness
- a miracle or a gift from God

Nature and the Land
- landscape and natural features
- Camp Green Lake is described in great detail: it is "a dry, flat wasteland" and "a big dry lake." Here, the land is described as barren and desolate to create a strong sense of despair, which mirrors and symbolizes the despair of the boys and the Warden.
- Danger- not only from rattlesnakes and yellow-spotted lizards, but also from running out of water or dying of heat stroke. Whatever happens in Camp Green Lake or in the surrounding desert, it is a struggle for survival - nothing is easy, and everything is uncertain.
- Sadness, emptiness, hopeless
- punishment
- God’s punishment on the town of Green Lake for Sam and Mary Lou's death and taking everything from the innocent Kate Barlow
Onions

- positive symbol representing happiness
- health and healing
- survival- The onions save lives during Sam’s time, as well as save Stanley and Zero on God’s Thumb. Also, the only reason they are not bitten by the yellow-spotted lizards in the hole where they are digging for treasure is because there is onion juice coursing through their bloodstreams.

Layers

- **Onion Layers**- As the story moves on, we and the character’s learn more “layers” of the story, about each character’s life and backstory before Camp Green Lake. This is symbolic of the part in Chapter 41 when Stanley is eating the onion, one layer at a time. At the same time as he’s eating, we hear Zero talk about his mother and how and why he took the shoes.
- **Dirt Layers**- As the dirt is hit with the shovel, more and more layers are revealed down to the bottom of the hole. This represents the layers of people that lived there before them, past-present-future, the good times and the bad, etc.

Yellow-Spotted Lizards

- danger, fear and death
- the characters never realize that onion-tinged blood allows Stanley and Zero survive in the lizard-infested hole. It seems like a miracle to them.
- Kissin’ Kate Barlow- in her death, she is finally released from the torture inflicted on her by Trout and Linda Walker, and she welcomes the bite because she has nothing left to live for. When she is bitten, she "smiles," and she "dies laughing," knowing that her enemies will never find the treasure she has buried.
- the lizards don't hold any power over those who are beyond the law and don't care about the world anymore, because they instill fear, and someone who doesn't care about life does not fear death.

Water

- hope and reward, and physical necessity
- Green Lake used to be a lake, of course, until it dried up after Sam's brutal murder. A supernatural explanation is hinted at in the text, which asks us the question, "Whom did God punish?" The answer seems to be that God punished the inhabitants of Green Lake for allowing Sam to die, and punished in particular Trout Walker, who was responsible for Sam's death, owned most of the lake, and had the most to lose.
Redemption: it begins to rain at Camp Green Lake again for the first time in over a hundred years. Whatever curse was placed on the area after Sam’s death has been lifted, just as the curse on the Yelnats family is lifted as well.

Appreciation- The boys are grateful when the water truck approaches, which represents a moment of freedom compared to the barren heat.

Other Symbols in Holes:

- Nicknames
- Curse/Bad Luck
- Shovel
- Friendship
- Cruelty
- Fate/Destiny
- HISTORY tied to PRESENT DAY: Past (Subplots) and Present Day flashbacks and flashforwards
- Racism
- Individuality vs Following a Group
- Responsibility and Consequences
- Social Class Distinction
- Diversity
- Problem Solving
- Bullying

SYMBOLIC CHARACTERS:
THE WARDEN:

- power
- a Walker descendant
- rattlesnake fingers
- boss lady in charge at Camp Green Lake
- dark red nail polish
- long red fingernails
- makeup bag with flowers on it
- hidden cameras to spy
- venom
- Rattlesnake
- cabin/shade/hammock
- two faced (2 headed rattlesnake)
- pitchfork
- cold hearted, mean, dangerous
- her “Signature” Moves/Actions/Sayings

ZERO:

- homeless
- worthless
- Shoes
- a Zeroni descendant
- quiet and mysterious
- Jaffy
- big smile
- wide, expanding eyes that can look through you
- Math/Operations/Numbers
- hard worker
- Madame Zeroni connection
- did what he had to, to survive
- kind hearted but wronged in life
- his “Signature” Moves/Actions/Sayings

STANLEY:

- his Shrug
- his “Signature” Moves/Actions/Saying
- physical transformation on the outside
- weak to strong (cub to a lion)
- unlucky and bad fortune
- a Yelnats’ descendant
• shoes
• palindrome (Stanley Yelnats)
• smart
• wrongfully convicted
• hero
• “Caveman”
• K.B.’s gold lipstick tube
• brave
• believes in destiny and fate
• reverses the curse without knowing
• best friend to Zero
• good heart, selfless, self-sacrificing
• good fortune, treasure, good luck
• suitcase

**KATHERINE BARLOW:**

• teacher/books/education
• schoolhouse
• jars of spiced peaches
• love
• sadness
• anger
• Heartbreak
• beauty

**SAM:**

• Mary Lou
• onions
• medicine man
• his “Signature” Moves/Actions/Saying (“I can fix that.”)
• boat
• secret onion field on top of God’s Thumb
• love
• broken heart
• good heart and full of hope

**KISSIN’ KATE BARLOW:**

• vengeance
• cold hearted, numb
- cabin and shade
- red lips (kiss)
- red lipstick
- gun
- violent outlaw/robbery
- wrong side of the law
- treasure
- death
- black boots
- yellow spotted lizard
- death brings her happiness in the end

**Madame Zeroni:**
- curse
- one leg
- crystal ball/fortune telling/seeing into the future
- a prophecy
- pig/mountain/stream/lullaby
- wide, expanding eyes that can look through you

**Mr. Sir:**
- his “Signature” Moves/Actions/Saying (“You’re not in the Girl Scouts anymore.”)
- water truck
- burlap sack of sunflower seeds
- victim
- gun (yellow spotted lizards)
- scratch across face
- tough and mean
- 2nd in-command at Camp Green Lake
- uses fear and intimidation to control the boys
- subservient to the Warden
- cruel- when he stands by with the Warden and Mr. Pendanski as Zero and Stanley face the lizards in the "last hole" - he does not seem to care if they live or die.

**Mr. Pendanski:**
- his “Signature” Moves/Actions/Saying
- “Mom”/camp counselor/like a therapist for boys of Tent D
- scrawny and awkward individual
• he claims to have respect for the campers and to have their best interests at heart
• appears more approachable and friendly at the beginning of the book than does Mr. Sir, and they almost have a good-cop, bad-cop routine going on
• just as mean as the Warden and Mr. Sir—revealed by his constant taunting of Zero and by his total lack of concern for the safety of Stanley and Zero when they are covered in deadly yellow-spotted lizards at the end