

Please spend Monday and Tuesday reading chapter 48 – 50. Take note of any words you are unsure of and look this up.

48

They slowly walked back to camp. The tall man was the Texas Attorney General, the chief law enforcement officer for the state. Stanley's lawyer was named Ms. Morengo. Stanley held the suitcase. He was so tired he couldn't think straight. He felt as if he was walking in a dream, not quite able to comprehend what was going on around him. They stopped in front of the camp office. Mr. Sir went inside to get Stanley's belongings. The Attorney General told Mr. Pendanski to get the boys something to drink and eat. The Warden seemed as dazed as Stanley. "You can't even read," she said to Zero. Zero said nothing. Ms. Morengo put a hand on Stanley's shoulder and told him to hang in there. He would be seeing his parents soon. She was shorter than Stanley, but somehow gave the appearance of being tall. Mr. Pendanski returned with two cartons of orange juice and two bagels. Stanley drank the juice but didn't feel like eating anything. "Wait!" the Warden exclaimed. "I didn't say they stole the suitcase. It's his suitcase, obviously, but he put my things from my cabin inside it." "That isn't what you said earlier," said Ms. Morengo. "What's in the suitcase?" the Warden asked Stanley. "Tell us what's in it, then we'll open it and see!" Stanley didn't know what to do. "Stanley, as your lawyer, I advise you not to open your suitcase," said Ms. Morengo. "He has to open it!" said the Warden. "I have the right to check the personal property of any of the detainees. How do I know there aren't drugs or weapons in there? He stole a car, too! I've got witnesses!" She was nearly hysterical. "He is no longer under your jurisdiction," said Stanley's lawyer. "He has not been officially released," said the Warden. "Open the suitcase, Stanley!" "Do not open it," said Stanley's lawyer. Stanley did nothing. Mr. Sir returned from the office with Stanley's backpack and clothes.

The Attorney General handed Ms. Morengo a sheet of paper. "You're free to go," he said to Stanley. "I know you're anxious to get out of here, so you can just keep the orange suit as a souvenir. Or burn it, whatever you want. Good luck, Stanley." He reached out his hand to shake, but Ms. Morengo hurried Stanley away. "C'mon, Stanley," she said. "We have a lot to talk about." Stanley stopped and turned to look at Zero. He couldn't just leave him here. Zero gave him thumbs-up. "I can't leave Hector," Stanley said. "I suggest we go," said his lawyer with a sense of urgency in her voice. "I'll be okay," said Zero. His eyes shifted toward Mr. Pendanski on one side of him, then to the Warden and Mr. Sir on the other. "There's nothing I can do for your friend," said Ms. Morengo. "You are released pursuant to an order from the judge." "They'll kill him," said Stanley. "Your friend is not in danger," said the Attorney General. "There's going to be an investigation into everything that's happened here. For the present, I am taking charge of the camp." "C'mon, Stanley," said his lawyer. "Your parents are waiting." Stanley stayed where he was. His lawyer sighed. "May I have a look at Hector's file?" she asked. "Certainly," said the Attorney General. "Ms. Walker, go get Hector's file." She looked at him blankly. "Well?" The Warden turned to Mr. Pendanski.

"Bring me Hector Zeroni's file." He stared at her. "Get it!" she ordered. Mr. Pendanski went into the office. He returned a few minutes later and announced the file was apparently misplaced. The Attorney General was outraged. "What kind of camp are you running here, Ms. Walker?" The Warden said nothing. She stared at the suitcase. The Attorney General assured Stanley's lawyer that he would get the records. "Excuse me, while I call my office." He turned back to the Warden. "I assume the phone works." He walked into the camp office, slamming the door behind him. A little while later he reappeared and told the Warden he wanted to talk to her. She cursed, then went inside. Stanley gave Zero thumbs-up. "Caveman? Is that you?" He turned to see Armpit and Squid coming out of the Wreck Room. Squid shouted back into the Wreck Room, "Caveman and Zero are out here!" Soon all the boys from Group D had gathered around him and Zero. "Good to see you, man," Armpit said, shaking his hand. "We thought you were buzzard food." "Stanley is being released today," said Mr. Pendanski.

"Way to go," said Magnet, hitting him on the shoulder. "And you didn't even have to step on a rattlesnake," said Squid. Even Zigzag shook Stanley's hand. "Sorry about . . . you know." "It's cool," said Stanley. "We had to lift the truck clear out of the hole," Zigzag told him. "It took everybody in C, D, and E. We just picked it right up." "It was really cool," said Twitch. X-Ray was the only one who didn't come over. Stanley saw him hang back behind the others a moment, then return to the Wreck Room. "Guess what?" said Magnet, glancing at Mr. Pendanski. "Mom says we don't have to dig any more holes." "That's great," Stanley said. "Will you do me a favor?" asked Squid. "I guess," Stanley agreed, somewhat hesitantly. "I want you to—" He turned to Ms. Morengo. "Hey, lady, you have a pen and paper I can borrow?" She gave it to him, and Squid wrote down a phone number which he gave to Stanley. "Call my mom for me, okay? Tell her . . . Tell her I said I was sorry. Tell her Alan said he was sorry." Stanley promised he would. "Now you be careful out in the real world," said Armpit. "Not everybody is as nice as us." Stanley smiled. The boys departed when the Warden came out of the office. The Attorney General was right behind her. "My office is having some difficulty locating Hector Zeroni's records," the Attorney General said. "So you have no claim of authority over him?" asked Ms. Morengo. "I didn't say that. He's in the computer. We just can't access his records. It's like they've fallen through a hole in cyberspace." "A hole in cyberspace," Ms. Morengo repeated. "How interesting. When is his release date?" "I don't know." "How long has he been here?" "Like I said, we can't—" "So what are you planning to do with him? Keep him confined indefinitely, without justification, while you go crawling through black holes in cyberspace?" The Attorney General stared at her. "He was obviously incarcerated for a reason." "Oh? And what reason was that?" The Attorney General said nothing. Stanley's lawyer took hold of Zero's hand. "C'mon, Hector, you're coming with us."

There never used to be yellow-spotted lizards in the town of Green Lake. They didn't come to the area until after the lake dried up. But the townsfolk had heard about the "red-eyed monsters" living in the desert hills. One afternoon, Sam, the onion man, and his donkey, Mary Lou, were returning to his boat, which was anchored just a little off shore. It was late in November and the peach trees had lost most of their leaves. "Sam!" someone called. He turned around to see three men running after him, waving their hats. He waited. "Afternoon, Walter. Bo, Jesse," he greeted them, as they walked up, catching their breath, "Glad we caught you," said Bo. "We're going rattlesnake hunting in the morning." "We want to get some of your lizard juice," said Walter. "I ain't a-scared of no rattlesnake," said Jesse. "But I don't want to come across one of those red-eyed monsters. I seen one once, and that was enough. I knew about the red eyes, of course. I hadn't heard about the big black teeth." "It's the white tongues that get me," said Bo. Sam gave each man two bottles of pure onion juice. He told them to drink one bottle before going to bed that night, then a half bottle in the morning, and then a half bottle around lunchtime. "You sure this stuff works?" asked Walter. "I tell you what," said Sam. "If it doesn't, you can come back next week and I'll give you your money back." Walter looked around unsure, as Bo and Jesse laughed. Then Sam laughed, too. Even Mary Lou let out a rare hee-haw. "Just remember," Sam told the men before they left. "It's very important you drink a bottle tonight. You got to get it into your bloodstream. The lizards don't like onion blood."

Stanley and Zero sat in the backseat of Ms. Morengo's BMW. The suitcase lay between them. It was locked, and they decided they'd let Stanley's father try to open it in his workshop. "You don't know what's in it, do you?" she asked. "No," said Stanley. "I didn't think so." The air-conditioning was on, but they drove with the windows open as well, because, "No offense, but you boys really smell bad." Ms. Morengo explained that she was a patent attorney. "I'm helping your father with the new product he's invented. He happened to mention your situation, so I did a little investigating. Clyde Livingston's sneakers were stolen sometime before 3:15. I found a young man, Derrick Dunne, who said that at 3:20 you were in the bathroom fishing your notebook out of the toilet. Two girls remembered seeing you come out of the boys' restroom carrying a wet notebook."

Stanley felt his ears redden. Even after everything he'd been through, the memory still caused him to feel shame. "So you couldn't have stolen them," said Ms. Morengo. "He didn't. I did," said Zero. "You did what?" asked Ms. Morengo. "I stole the sneakers." The lawyer actually turned around while driving and looked at him. "I didn't hear that," she said. "And I advise you to make sure I don't hear it again." "What did my father invent?" Stanley asked. "Did he find a way to recycle sneakers?" "No, he's still working on that," explained Ms. Morengo. "But he invented a product that eliminates foot odor. Here, I've got a sample in my briefcase. I wish I had more. You two could bathe in it." She opened her briefcase with

one hand and passed a small bottle back to Stanley. It had a fresh and somewhat spicy smell. He handed it to Zero. "What's it called?" Stanley asked. "We haven't come up with a name yet," said Ms. Morengo. "It smells familiar," said Zero. "Peaches, right?" asked Ms. Morengo. "That's what everyone says." A short while later both boys fell asleep. Behind them the sky had turned dark, and for the first time in over a hundred years, a drop of rain fell into the empty lake.

PART THREE FILLING IN THE HOLES

50

Stanley's mother insists that there never was a curse. She even doubts whether Stanley's great-great-grandfather really stole a pig. The reader might find it interesting, however, that Stanley's father invented his cure for foot odor the day after the great-great-grandson of Elya Yelnats carried the great-great-great-grandson of Madame Zeroni up the mountain.

The Attorney General closed Camp Green Lake. Ms. Walker, who was in desperate need of money, had to sell the land which had been in her family for generations. It was bought by a national organization dedicated to the well-being of young girls. In a few years, Camp Green Lake will become a Girl Scout camp.

This is pretty much the end of the story. The reader probably still has some questions, but unfortunately, from here on in, the answers tend to be long and tedious. While Mrs. Bell, Stanley's former math teacher, might want to know the percent change in Stanley's weight, the reader probably cares more about the change in Stanley's

character and self-confidence. But those changes are subtle and hard to measure. There is no simple answer. Even the contents of the suitcase turned out to be somewhat tedious. Stanley's father pried it open in his workshop, and at first everyone gasped at the sparkling jewels. Stanley thought he and Hector had become millionaires. But the jewels were of poor quality, worth no more than twenty thousand dollars. Underneath the jewels was a stack of papers that had once belonged to the first Stanley Yelnats. These consisted of stock certificates, deeds of trust, and promissory notes. They were hard to read and even more difficult to understand. Ms. Morengo's law firm spent more than two months going through all the papers. They turned out to be a lot more valuable than the jewels. After legal fees and taxes, Stanley and Zero each received less than a million dollars. But not a lot less. It was enough for Stanley to buy his family a new house, with a laboratory in the basement, and for Hector to hire a team of private investigators. But it would be boring to go through all the tedious details of all the changes in their lives. Instead, the reader will be presented with one last scene, which took place almost a year and a half after Stanley and Hector left Camp Green Lake. You will have to fill in the holes yourself.

There was a small party at the Yelnats house. Except for Stanley and Hector, everyone there was an adult. All kinds of snacks and drinks were set out on the counter, including caviar, champagne, and the fixings to make ice cream sundaes. The Super Bowl was on television,

but nobody was really watching. "It should be coming on at the next break," Ms. Morengo announced. A time-out was called in the football game, and a commercial came on the screen. Everyone stopped talking and watched. The commercial showed a baseball game. Amid a cloud of dust, Clyde Livingston slid into home plate as the catcher caught the ball and tried to tag him out. "Safe!" shouted the umpire as he signaled with his arms. The people at Stanley's house cheered, as if the run really counted. Clyde Livingston got up and dusted the dirt off his uniform. As he made his way back to the dugout, he spoke to the camera. "Hi, I'm Clyde Livingston, but everyone around here calls me 'Sweet Feet.'" "Way to go, Sweet Feet!" said another baseball player, slapping his hand. Besides being on the television screen, Clyde Livingston was also sitting on the couch next to Stanley. "But my feet weren't always sweet," the television Clyde Livingston said as he sat down on the dugout bench. "They used to smell so bad that nobody would sit near me in the dugout." "They really did stink," said the woman sitting on the couch on the other side of Clyde. She held her nose with one hand, and fanned the air with the other. Clyde shushed her.

"Then a teammate told me about Sploosh," said the television Clyde. He pulled a can of Sploosh out from under the dugout bench and held it up for everyone to see. "I just spray a little on each foot every morning, and now I really do have sweet feet. Plus, I like the tingle." "Sploosh," said a voice. "A treat for your feet. Made from all natural ingredients, it neutralizes odor-causing fungi and bacteria. Plus, you'll like the tingle." Everyone at the party clapped their hands. "He wasn't lying," said the woman who sat next to Clyde. "I couldn't even be in the same room with his socks." The other people at the party laughed. The woman continued. "I'm not joking. It was so bad—" "You've made your point," said Clyde, covering her mouth with his hand. He looked back at Stanley. "Will you do me a favor, Stanley?" Stanley raised and lowered his left shoulder. "I'm going to get more caviar," said Clyde. "Keep your hand over my wife's mouth." He patted Stanley on the shoulder as he rose from the couch. Stanley looked uncertainly at his hand, then at Clyde Livingston's wife. She winked at him. He felt himself blush, and turned away toward Hector, who was sitting on the floor in front of an overstuffed chair. A woman sitting in the chair behind Hector was absent-mindedly fluffing his hair with her fingers. She wasn't very old, but her skin had a weathered look to it, almost like leather. Her eyes seemed weary, as if she'd seen too many things in her life that she didn't want to see. And when she smiled, her mouth seemed too big for her face. Very softly, she half sang, half hummed a song that her grandmother used to sing to her when she was a little girl.

If only, if only, the moon speaks no reply;
Reflecting the sun and all that's gone by.
Be strong my weary wolf, turn around boldly.
Fly high, my baby bird, My angel, my only.