

Part 3 – Filling in the holes.

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 odour 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 organisation 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 signalled with his arms.

The people at Stanley's house sheered, 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 neutralises odour-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 as 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 favour, 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 absentmindedly plugging 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.