

# Socratic Seminar #2

## Questions

If you were assigned to Camp Green Lake as your new “boot camp,” what do you think the other kids would nickname you?

Is it ever morally okay to disobey the authority, and if so, under what circumstances?

Should Stanley have left Zero alone and worried about himself?

Was it wrong for Stanley to steal Mr. Sir’s truck?

Zero hits Mr. Pendanski in the face with a shovel and then runs away from the camp, showing a complete disrespect for authority. Why should Stanley put himself in the same position as Zero when Zero was acting very badly? Was this okay for Stanley to do?

Is it ever okay to do something that’s really bad so that something good can happen as a result?

The judge doesn’t believe Stanley’s story about where he got Clyde Livingston’s shoes. As a result Stanley gets bused off to Camp Green Lake, where he endures humiliation, abuse, and harsh physical labor--all because he told the truth. Should Stanley have told a lie about where the shoes came from? If lying will help you get out of trouble, is it okay to lie?

Is Stanley a stronger character than Zero, or a weaker character?

Yes, Stanley does break the curse by carrying Madame Zeroni’s great-great grandson up the hill, but who really saves whom?

Should seventh graders read books that have such violence in them, such as when Zero swings the shovel up against Mr. Pendanski’s face or when Trout Walker kills Sam the Onion Man?

Why doesn’t Stanley keep the gold lipstick tube for himself instead of giving it to X-ray? After all, Stanley found it fair and square. Do you think Stanley should have kept it, or was it a wise move socially for him to give it up?

Related question to why Stanley doesn’t keep the lipstick tube for himself: Do you ever give in to peer pressure to be accepted by others you feel are stronger or more popular than you? Do you resist this type of peer pressure? Is there any evidence

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from the text that would suggest Stanley made the right social move here?

What, if anything, might Louis Sachar be trying to say about life when he has onions--something that makes your breath stink, something that most people wouldn't think of as a main diet meal--when he has these onions save the two main characters' lives?

The theme of a story is the main message the author is trying to say about life. Using specific references to the text, what do you think is the theme of the book?

How does the poem tell the plot of the book? What does the "If only, if only..." refer to, and what does the woodpecker in the tree and wolf below symbolize?

If you had to think of yourself as one of the animals in the poem, which one would you be? The woodpecker, the wolf, or neither? Do you ever have a sense of regret that things aren't easier for you and find yourself saying, "If only..."

Have you ever tried to teach somebody something? What's hard about it? What's rewarding about it? How do you think Stanley felt about teaching Zero to read? How does Stanley's efforts to teach Zero to read pay off for both of them in the end?

Stanley has to go through some pretty rough things at Camp Green Lake. Citing evidence from the text, would you say his experience, even though it was terrible, was worth it? Is there any symbolism to the image of "holes"?

How does Stanley change from the beginning of the book to the end? Use the metaphor of a "before and after" snapshot to describe him.

How important is fate in determining our lives? Is it true that our fate is what is going to happen to us no matter what we do? Or can we change our fate by our choices?

Should the state be allowed to punish young people by sending them off to a detention center, boot camp, or wilderness camp for breaking the law? Do these types of punishments actually help the kids who go through them? Do you think Louis Sachar is making any kind of statement about these programs?