

Chapters 29—34
Standards Focus: Setting as Character

Remember the types of conflicts discussed in the last Standards Focus activity? As you recall, one type of conflict is *man vs. nature*. In the next two sections of the novel, nature – in the form of the desert – is a life-threatening conflict for Stanley.

In Chapter 32, Stanley ventures out into the desert to find Zero. Obviously, Stanley is not prepared for this since almost as soon as he starts walking, he begins planning how he'll return to camp. By the end of Chapter 34, the power of the setting has a tight grip on Stanley.

The setting becomes so strong it becomes another character in the story. Look at the first several paragraphs in Chapter 34.

1. How does the mirage taunt Stanley? _____

Now look at what Stanley sees on the horizon. He sees the mountains in the distance and the rock formation that looks like a big thumb.

2. How does Stanley feel about the thumb? Why do you think he feels this way?

3. Find support from Chapter 34 that supports your answer for question 2. _____

4. Once Stanley considers the rock formation, its name changes. What does he call the rock? _____

Name _____ Period _____

5. How does the role of the rock in the story change once it has been given a proper name? _____

6. If it were a character, what qualities would the desert have? Why do you think that? _____

7. What qualities would Big Thumb have? Why do you think that? _____

8. As you read the next set of chapters, pay attention to the role of the Big Thumb. Do you think it will be a friend or foe? How? _____
