***Holes***

***Chapter 20***

***Summary And Analysis:***

***Summary:***

Mr. Sir takes Stanley to see the Warden. Mr. Sir explains that someone stole the sunflower seeds but that he doesn't think it was Stanley. The Warden asks Stanley to bring a makeup case over to her. In the case there is, among other things, a lipstick case and a bottle of red nail polish. The Warden explains that the nail polish has rattlesnake venom in it. The polish is harmless when dry but toxic while wet. The Warden then paints the nails on her hands and slaps Mr. Sir across the face. Her wet nail polish makes him write with pain. When Stanley expresses concern for Mr. Sir, the Warden tells him, "He's not going to die…Unfortunately for you."

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) thinks the shade of the oak trees feels wonderful, and he wonders if this is how condemned men feel on their way to the electric chair. Stanley is surprised to see holes all around the [Warden](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/the-warden)'s house as [Mr. Sir](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/mr-sir) knocks on the door. The Warden frostily invites Mr. Sir and Stanley into the air conditioning. She sits down and asks Stanley to tell her what happened. Stanley does, and Mr. Sir explains that he thinks that Stanley is covering up for another boy.

***Analysis Part 1:***

By setting this terrifying scene someplace that's physically more comfortable (with shade and air conditioning), the novel insists again that nothing at Camp Green Lake can be trusted to be good or just. There is, in short, nothing good about the camp.

***Summary Part 2:***

The [Warden](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/the-warden) points [Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) to a dressing room of sorts and asks him to fetch a small flowered case. He does as he's told and when the Warden opens it, he realizes it's a makeup case. She pulls out a bottle of dark red nail polish and explains that she has to make the color herself with rattlesnake venom. She begins painting her nails and says that it's only toxic when it's wet. When she's finished painting both hands, she approaches Stanley and touches his face. One nail brushes Stanley's injury and a sting of pain sends Stanley backwards.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The venomous nail polish shows that the Warden has been able to harness the natural world, though the fact that she's using this power to instill terror and inflict pain suggests again that she's not properly using the natural world. Her methods show, once again, that Camp Green Lake exists well outside the formal justice system, which is the only way these injustices can happen.

***Summary Part 3:***

The [Warden](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/the-warden) turns to [Mr. Sir](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/mr-sir). As he begins to explain again what he thinks happened, she strikes him across the face, leaving three red marks. After a moment, Mr. Sir screams and clutches his face. The Warden tells him that she doesn't care about his sunflower seeds; she preferred his smoking. Turning to [Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats), she sends him back to his hole. Stanley has to step over Mr. Sir on his way out. The Warden tells Stanley that, unfortunately for him, Mr. Sir won't die.

***Analysis Part 3:***

The Warden's parting words to Stanley tell the reader that she's well aware that Mr. Sir is going to punish Stanley for this—and, most tellingly, that she doesn't really care. This again illustrates how the camp creates an environment built on terror and cruelty where both are wholly unavoidable.