***Holes***

***Chapter 4***

***Summary And Analysis:***

***Summary(Chapters 1-4):***

Camp Green Lake is described and it's anything but what its name suggests. There's no water, no green, and it's filled with rattlesnakes, scorpions, and the dreaded, deadly, yellow-spotted lizards. Stanley Yelnats, whose name is spelled the same forwards as it is backwards, arrives by bus to this camp for boys who've committed a crime, only he is truly innocent. Unfortunately, his family is just too poor to defend him. Stanley's family is used to the bad luck which follows them, due to the curse his "no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather" caused. Stanley, however, tries to have a good attitude and pretend that this will be like a summer camp for rich kids.

Stanley's father is an inventor looking for ways to recycle old tennis shoes and Stanley comforts himself by remembering the song his father used to sing to him, "If only, if only...." The Yelnats family has never been lucky. When Stanley's great-grandfather made a fortune on the stock market and decided to come west, his fortune was stolen from him by the famous outlaw Kissing Kate Barlow.

Stanley is greeted at the camp by Mr. Sir, one of the two camp guardians. Mr. Sir is a scary guy with a rattlesnake tattoo and a mouth full of sunflower seeds. Mr. Sir outlines the rules of the camp to Stanley, explaining that he will have two sets of clothes - one to be worn while working and another set to be worn while resting. The "resting" set becomes his working clothes while the others are being washed. Stanley is to get up at 4:30 every morning and then work each day digging one hole that is five feet wide and five feet deep, the exact length of his shovel. Since the camp is in the middle of the desert with nothing around, there is no possibility for escape and there is no desire to run away because a person could die wandering the desert with no food or water. Mr. Sir also warns Stanley that he's going to be thirsty for the next eighteen months.

***Analysis(Chapters 1-3):***

The first section of the book describes the setting of Camp Green Lake, which is the complete opposite of the name. The name of the camp is important since it shows that not everything is as it seems to be. We know for a fact that Stanley is innocent even though he is being punished. Other examples of opposite meanings will show up in several places throughout the book.

The plot is based on ideas about Bad vs. Good, and Justice vs. Injustice. Camp Green Lake exists for "bad boys," on the theory that if "you take a bad boy and make him dig a hole every day in the hot sun, it will turn him into a good boy." However, what happens when a good, innocent boy like Stanley has to pay for a crime he didn't commit?

Other ideas about crime and punishment are shown simply by Stanley, who is from a poor family and couldn't fight the charges made against him. Since "punishment" is doled out by those who are in power, the use and abuse of power is also an issue. Note that the Warden's cabin is between the only two trees and between the trees is a hammock that is forbidden to the boys. "The Warden owns the shade."

The yellow-spotted lizard is highlighted as the biggest danger at the camp, even greater than lying in the Warden's hammock. "If you get bitten by a yellow-spotted lizard...there's nothing anyone can do to you anymore," foreshadows upcoming events.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

As [Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) steps off the bus, the [driver](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters) tells him to be careful. Stanley thanks the driver for the ride, feeling parched and sweaty. The [guard](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters) leads Stanley to a small building. Inside, a man wearing a cowboy hat and sunglasses sits at a desk, eating sunflower seeds and drinking soda. When the guard comments on the seeds, the man explains they help him quit smoking. The man gives the guard sodas and sends him away. Finally, the man turns to Stanley and introduces himself as [Mr. Sir](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/mr-sir). He tells Stanley that he's not in the Girl Scouts anymore.

***Analysis Part 1:***

When Stanley thanks the driver, it shows that Stanley is, at heart, a kind person who understands the power of acknowledging everyone for the work they do. This casts Stanley as a direct foil to the Warden, who thus far appears to be someone who thinks only of herself. Mr. Sir's actions show that he's more in line with the Warden, as he seems to care little for Stanley.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) changes into an orange jumpsuit and orange tee shirt, and is also given an orange cap and an empty canteen. [Mr. Sir](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/mr-sir) explains that Stanley will be expected to dig a hole every single day that's five feet deep and five feet across, beginning at 4:30am. Mr. Sir says that this is to escape the heat of the day, and he tells Stanley to report anything "interesting" to him or another counselor. With this, Mr. Sir leads Stanley outside. He asks if Stanley sees any fences or guard towers (there are none). He then explains that they don't need them—Camp Green Lake has the only water for miles around. Noticing Stanley eyeing his gun, Mr. Sir assures him he won't shoot him: the gun is for the yellow-spotted lizards and Stanley doesn't warrant wasting a bullet.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The set up of Camp Green Lake positions manual labor as being in direct opposition to education or other types of reform. This suggests that at camp, one's ability to perform this manual labor is all they'll be valued for. Mr. Sir's assurance that the gun is for the lizards again makes it very clear that Mr. Sir doesn't value the lives of the campers, as he basically says that it's not even worth attempting to keep them at camp with violence. This shows that selfishness and cruelty reign at Camp Green Lake.