***Holes***

***Chapter 9***

***Summary And Analysis:***

***Summary:***

Stanley, exhausted after digging his first hole, returns to camp. He enters the recreation room, which is called the wreck room. Everything in the wreck room is broken. Stanley bumps into a large boy who tries to pick a fight with him. Stanley tries to avoid the fight and X-Ray and Armpit come to his rescue saying, "You don't want to mess with the Caveman." Stanley, Armpit, Squid, and X-Ray talk about the trouble of digging holes. Stanley has brought his box of paper to the wreck room because he wants to write a letter to his mother. When he explains to Squid that his mother will worry if he doesn't write to her, Squid scowls at him. Stanley notices that the entire room is wrecked because the boys themselves have broken the things in it. Stanley waits until Squid leaves before writing his letter. When Stanley does write to his mother he tells her he is having fun and swimming a lot. In the middle of writing his letter Stanley notices that Zero is staring at his letter. Zero asks Stanley, "Did the shoes have red X's on the back?" Stanley responds that they did and then hears Armpit and Squid calling Caveman to come to dinner. Stanley realizes that his nickname is Caveman.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) doesn't use soap in the shower; he's too tired. After putting on his clean set of clothes, he grabs his stationery and heads to the rec room. The sign on the door says "WRECK ROOM" and everything inside is broken. [X-Ray](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/x-ray-rex) and [Armpit](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters) play pool on a pitted pool table as Stanley heads towards them. He trips over someone's leg, and the kid turns out to be big and belligerent. X-Ray and Armpit step to Stanley's side and say that nobody should mess with the Caveman. They finally lead Stanley to a couch and tell him that Caveman is tough.

***Analysis Part 1:***

The Wreck Room is indicative of the boys' position at Camp Green Lake. They have so little power to stand up for themselves or make any of their own decisions, and the only place they have control over anything is in the Wreck Room. The fact that they destroy it makes it clear that cruelty and violence reign at camp, given that they choose to act destructively in the one place in which they have a choice.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Squid](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters) joins the boys and asks [Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) how his day was. Stanley parrots that the first hole is the hardest, but [X-Ray](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/x-ray-rex) says the second one is harder: Stanley will hurt before he's even begun. X-Ray says the fun is gone too; he thinks that every kid secretly wants to dig a hole to China, but the fun wears off fast. When Squid asks about Stanley's stationery, Stanley explains he's going to write to [Stanley’s mother](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-s-mother). Stanley looks around the room, in awe of the fact that the boys destroyed the one place at camp where they could enjoy themselves.

***Analysis Part 2:***

X-Ray's suggestion that every kid wants to dig to China makes it clear that the boys at Camp Green Lake are actually just boys, not adults—they're being robbed of their childhoods as they serve their sentences. When Stanley is in awe that the Wreck Room is destroyed, it sets him apart from the other boys and shows that, at this point, he's still a good, kind kid who doesn't yet struggle with anger.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Stanley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-yelnats) writes in his letter that he's making friends and learning to swim. He stops when he senses that someone is reading over his shoulder, so he turns to find [Zero](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/zero-hector-zeroni) behind him. Stanley explains he doesn't want [Stanley's mother](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/stanley-s-mother) to worry. Zero looks serious and possibly angry as he asks if "the shoes" had red X marks on the back. Stanley realizes he's talking about [Clyde Livingston](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters/clyde-livingston)'s shoes and wonders if Zero may have seen Livingston in a commercial for the brand. [Armpit](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters) calls Caveman for dinner, and Stanley realizes that he's Caveman. He reasons it's a better name than [Barf Bag](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/holes/characters).

***Analysis Part 3:***

When Stanley pretends that camp is fun for his mother's sake, it again shows how kind Stanley is: he wants to make his mother feel better about Stanley's fate, especially since she was unable to protect him from the justice system. Note too that Stanley assumes that Zero saw Clyde Livingston in a TV commercial; this suggests that Stanley isn't aware that anyone at Camp Green Lake may have lived in dire poverty, as he'll eventually learn that Zero did.