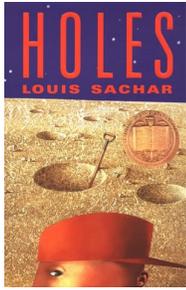


Books by the Stack



Holes by Louis Sachar

Stanley Yelnats, a boy who has bad luck due to a curse placed on his great- great-grandfather, is sent to Camp Green Lake, a juvenile detention camp, for a crime he did not commit. Stanley and the other boys at the camp are forced to dig large holes in the dirt every day. Stanley eventually realizes that they are digging these holes because the Warden is searching for something. As Stanley continues to dig holes and meet the other boys at the camp, the narrator intertwines three separate stories to reveal why Stanley's family has a curse and what the Warden is looking for.

Why you'll like it: Award winner. Inventive. Darkly Humorous. Suspenseful. Witty.

About the Author: Louis Sachar is the author of humorous and poignant stories for children and young adults. He published his first book, *Sideways Stories from Wayside School*, in 1978 and won the Newbery Medal in 1999 for his witty and suspenseful novel *Holes*. Sachar writes about topics familiar to children and young adults such as friendship, family relationships, overcoming obstacles, building character, and the consequences of choices. His protagonists are usually misfits — characters labeled *nerd*, *bully*, or *klutz* by classmates — who overcome their fears and anxieties while discovering their strengths through comical and realistic experiences and interactions with peers and adults.

Questions for Discussion

1. In what ways is the saying "You can't judge a book by its cover" a good one for this story? For example, what do you expect Camp Green Lake to be like based on its name? What is it really like?
2. What do you think the title *Holes* means? What might be another reason other than the holes the boys dig in the lake? What hole (or holes) is in Stanley's life when he first arrives at Camp Green Lake? Are the holes still there when he leaves?
3. Stanley's father, an inventor, says, "I learn from failure." What do you think this means? In what ways have you learned from failure?
4. Why do the boys call Mr. Pendanski "Mom"? How does this name fit his personality? In what ways is it not a good name for him?
5. What do the boys' nicknames tell about each of their personalities? Do you think a name changes the way others see a person and the way the person sees him- or herself?
6. Why do you think Stanley lies to his parents in his letters home? Would you do the same?
7. Stanley and his family half-jokingly blame their misfortunes on Stanley's "no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great grandfather." Do you believe in fate — that people are lucky or unlucky — or do you believe, as Mr. Pendanski tells the boys, that we are all responsible for our selves and our destinies?
8. As Stanley becomes stronger and his skin becomes tougher from digging the holes, how is he changing inside? What are the causes of those changes?

9. Why do you think Stanley gives X-Ray the lipstick tube? What would you have done if you were in Stanley's place?
10. Why do you think Stanley lies and says he stole Mr. Sir's sunflower seeds? If you were in Stanley's position, what would you have done?

(Questions issued by Scholastic.com)



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