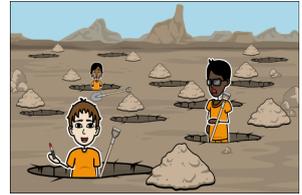


Book Review – *Holes* by Louis Sachar

The novel entitled *Holes* written by Louis Sachar tells the story of a 14-year-old boy called Stanley Yelnats who is from a poor family. He is the 4th Stanley Yelnats because all men in his family are called Stanley. And guess why - Stanley Yelnats is spelled the same forwards and backwards. The men in Stanley's family suffer from a terrible-curse. So they are beset by bad luck. Whenever something went wrong, his great-grandfather was accused of it... or his grandfather... or his father... and one day even Stanley the 4th himself.



Stanley is sent to Camp Green Lake because he has been accused of having stolen the shoes of Clyde Livingston, the famous baseball player although he did not actually commit the crime. He was at the wrong place at the wrong time. In truth, Zero had stolen the shoes, which he later confesses to Stanley. Camp Green Lake has no lake and it is a juvenile delinquency camp in Texas, USA. There are many bad boys who are made to dig holes every day to improve their character and who soon become Stanley's friends - Squid, Zero, Zigzag, X-Ray and Magnet. The names are all nicknames and everyone calls Stanley Caveman after he finished his first hole. The camp has a warden who is Mr. Sir and a counsellor, Mr. Pendanski. Oh yeah, and many yellow spotted highly dangerous lizards, too. When you get bitten by one, you die an immediate painful death. But there is another dark secret around the camp – and Stanley soon discovers what all the holes are about...

As many stories and time layers are intertwined in the novel, there is also a love story between Kate Barlow and Sam: They have different skin colors which is a real problem at the time in the U.S., but Kate does not care. Kate is the only teacher in town. Furthermore, she is beautiful and smart. Sam sells onions with his donkey Mary Lou. They meet when Kate comes to buy onions from Sam and make a deal: Sam agrees to fix the school's leaky roof in exchange for six jars of spiced peaches. But more importantly, Kate teaches Sam how to read and write – and Sam soon becomes her most talented student. The soon fall in love and whenever Sam is finished with repairing one thing, Kate soon finds another one to fix, because she loves having him around her. But the other men in the town soon get jealous: Trout Walker, her student, comes to Kate and destroys the schoolhouse – he wants to kiss her, but Kate punches him in the face and runs to Sam to stop him from getting hung. At the time, interracial relationships were regarded as a crime in the U.S. Although Kate asks the sheriff for help, the drunken sheriff refuses and Sam is shot by the town's men in his boat. After Sam's death, Kate will never be the same again: She turns into Kissin' Kate Barlow and burns down the sheriff. Then she kisses him with her bright red lipstick, like all the other people she is going to kill. She becomes one of the most feared bandits of her time and has hidden a huge treasure underground in Camp Green Lake.

But let us travel back to Elya Yelnats, Stanley's no good, dirty, rotten, pig-stealing great great grandfather and the terrible curse on Stanley's family: Elya Yelnats has fallen in love with Myra Menke who is the daughter of a wealthy landlord. Elya want to marry her, just like Igor Barkow, too. Igor offers his fattest pig for Myra. Elya tries to ask Mr. Menke for his daughter's hand, but unfortunately, Mr. Menke only wants to marry his daughter to the man who offers the biggest pig for her. Stanley's great-grandfather asks Madame Zeroni, an old fortune teller, for help. She gives him a pig which he has to carry up the mountain every day, let it drink from the stream and sing the *if only, if only*-song, every day. He has to do the same for Madame Zeroni on the last day – Myra's birthday. On Myra's birthday, both pigs – of Elya and Igor – have the same weight and size and Myra is allowed to choose: But Myra is too stupid to make a decision and Elya is angry and hurt. He runs off and forgets about his promise to Madame Zeroni. From that day onwards, the Yelnats family is beset by bad luck.

In the end, the different stories all run together and the curse is finally broken, but I won't spoiler the ending for you... So why should you read *Holes*? You like books in which you can feel both sadness and happiness?

Then this book is just right for you! It is full of grief and loss as well as adventure and happiness. One moment you feel sad, but soon after that, a huge smile will appear on your face. If you think that's all there is to it: no, no, no! I did not solve the mystery for you. Oh yes, and if you are so keen to find out, read "*HOLE*" and let yourself be convinced! I really liked this book because it was very interesting and whenever you were finished with a chapter, you could not wait to read the following one. Another reason why I really liked this book is that it tells a tragic love story: The love story between Kate Barlow and Sam was so wonderful and sad that I cried when Sam was shot because I could identify with Kate's feelings of emptiness, sadness, anger and revenge. That was my favorite part. Besides, I know from my own experience that nobody wants to read English or French books, because you won't understand anything anyway. But this book is so... easy to read - really. But in case you don't understand anything at all: at the bottom of the book you will find a list of unknown vocabulary of every page. So what are you waiting for? This is your chance to improve your English. Let's go!! Enjoy!!! Oh and by the way: there is also a great movie, too. 😊



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