VIS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Final Essay – Final Draft

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New Title:The Truth Stanley Couldn't tell

FANBOYS and ISAWAWABUB

Stanley is a 14-year-old boy who is digging holes at Camp Green Lake. He was sent there because people believed he stole a pair of shoes, but the shoes actually fell on him by accident. No one trusted his story, so he could not prove his innocence. Since he had no evidence, the judge gave him two choices: jail or Camp Green Lake. Stanley chose the camp because he thought it would be a fun summer program, but he quickly learned the truth.

Camp Green Lake is not a real lake. It is a dry, dusty desert with extreme heat every day. The boys must dig one large hole daily. The adults say this helps them "build character," although the boys mostly feel exhausted and frustrated. Stanley tries to adjust to the difficult routine. He notices a quiet boy named Zero. Zero hardly talks, yet sometimes he tells Stanley how terrible the camp feels. Stanley agrees, but he hides his true feelings because he doesn't want more trouble.

One night, while everyone is asleep, Stanley sees Zero sneaking toward the storage shed. As he watches, Zero takes canned food and water. Stanley realizes Zero is trying to escape. He feels worried because the desert is dangerous, but he also wants Zero to have a chance to get away from the cruel camp. So he stays silent, although he feels nervous inside.The next morning, the camp discovers Zero is missing. The Warden gathers everyone and asks if anyone saw him leave. Stanley feels uneasy, for he knows the truth. He thinks about speaking up, but he doesn't want Zero to be punished even more. When he imagines Zero alone in the desert, fear grows inside him, yet he keeps his mouth closed.Later, the Warden checks the cameras. When she sees Zero escaping and Stanley watching. She becomes furious because he didn't report it. Stanley tries to explain, but no words come out. He stands there quietly as she announces his punishment: ten extra months of digging. Stanley feels shocked and powerless.

That afternoon, Zero is brought back to camp. He looks exhausted, dusty, and frightened. The guards take away everything he stole, and the Warden says he will be punished further. Stanley wishes he could defend him, but he knows he has no control. The other boys whisper about the escape, although no one asks Stanley directly. Stanley keeps remembering Zero's face when the guards dragged him in. Although Stanley did not cause Zero to run away, he still feels guilty for not helping him earlier. That night, Stanley lies awake wondering when he will see Zero again, but he gets no answers.

Afterward, Stanley digs alone every day. The sun feels hotter, the dirt feels heavier, and he feels more isolated. No one knows where Zero is now. Some boys think he is in the infirmary, or maybe the Warden moved him somewhere else. Stanley continues digging while thinking about his missing friend.

People say Camp Green Lake turns "bad boys" into "good boys," but Stanley realizes this is untrue. The camp doesn't help the boys improve. It only makes them tired, scared, and lonely. Stanley does not feel stronger or better. He only digs hole after hole. Although he wants to grow braver, he feels the camp breaking him down.

In the end, Stanley understands that Camp Green Lake doesn't teach real lessons. It only shows how unfair life can be. When he thinks about Zero, he feels regret because he wishes he had helped him escape safely. Now Stanley can only keep digging under the burning sun, and hope that one day he will finally leave Camp Green Lake behind.