Dear Diary,

As usual the day started the same as every other day, with the early morning rising (4:30am) and the horrendous canned breakfast. Hesitantly, we climbed into Mr Sir’s pick-up trunk and headed out onto the lake, for yet another day of ‘digging to build character’. The only thing I think I am building, is callouses on my hands. In the dark, we were driven to our spot to start digging. Not a hint of a breeze was in the air and sweat began to run down my back before I had even started.

Quickly, I began to hit the dry, hard earth with my shovel. I promised myself, that today I wouldn’t be last. I would push through the pain and finish before Armpit. Slowly, as the sun began to rise over the horizon, the temperature began to soar and sweat ran freely down my aching back.

In the distance, I could hear the rubble of the water trunk. My canteen was a quarter full so quickly I drank it down and took my place in the queue, like every other day. However, the events which happened afterwards were not like every other day.

After the trunk pulled away, Magnet climbed out of his hole holding a sack of sunflower seeds- Mr Sir’s sunflower seeds. He had stolen it from the truck. The bag began to be passed between the holes; with each boy taking a handful of the salty seeds. Suddenly, the sack was flying through the air and landed into my hole with its contents spilling everywhere. I wasn’t sure what to do so I began to sweep them back into the bag along with the dirt.

Without warning, the truck appeared in the distance and I heard Zigzag shouting. I was in the wrong place at the wrong time again! What else is new? Quickly, I began to sweep the dirt over the sack as I could hear Mr Sir talking to the other boys. Before too long, Mr Sir appeared over my hole, as I moved to hide the sunflower seed bag.

“It looks like you have found something,” he exclaimed as he peered into my hole. “Best dig it out.” Then I knew I had no choice but to take the blame- again. I lied to Mr Sir and said I had taken it. I was bundled into the truck to see the Warden. At least, it was cooler in the trunk.

This is where the events of this day, took an even more peculiar turn. As I entered the air-conditioned cabin, Mr Sir explained in exaggerated detail to her my crimes. However, to my surprised she asked me to go into her room and fetch her small flowered case. She then proceeded to paint her nail with a dark red polish. Whilst painting her nails, she began to explain how she got the nail colour. I couldn’t believe my ears, when she told me her secret ingredient- rattlesnake venon. She explained that it was harmless when it dried. She then moved towards me. I wasn’t sure what to do. Gently, she ran a wet nail down my cheek. Immediately the sting made me flinch and the pain throbbed on my cheek.

But, my pain was nothing compared to that of Mr Sir. The warden walked towards him, lashed out at him, leaving 3 deep nail marks down his face. He screamed, and clutched his face with both hands. He let himself fall over, rolling onto the floor.

Under her breath she muttered, ‘I don’t especially care for your sunflower seeds.’

In shock, she dismissed me and I walked back to my hole. Not really believing what I had witnessed. So this day may have started the same as every usual day but it certainly wasn’t a usual day.