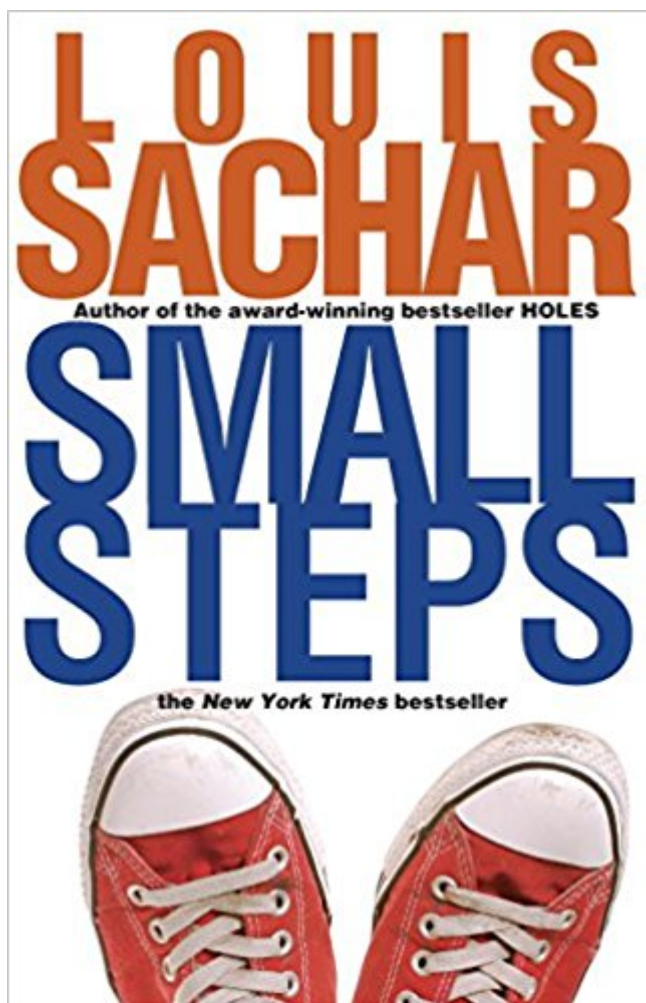


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Small Steps (Readers Circle)



Synopsis

SMALL STEPS is a contemporary young adult novel from Louis Sachar, the New York Times bestselling author of the Newbery Award-winning smash hit phenomenon book and movie/DVD sensation *Holes*, and *The Cardturner*. Two years after being released from Camp Green Lake, Armpit is home in Austin, Texas, trying to turn his life around. But it's hard when you have a record and everyone expects the worst from you. The only person who believes in Armpit is Ginny, his ten-year-old disabled neighbor. Together, they are learning to take small steps. Armpit seems to be on the right path until X-Ray, a buddy from Camp Green Lake, comes up with a get-rich-quick scheme. X-Ray's plan leads to a chance encounter with teen pop sensation Kaira DeLeon, the Beyoncé of her time, and suddenly Armpit's life spins out of control. Only one thing is certain: he'll never be the same again. Combining his signature wit with a unique blend of adventure and deeply felt characters, Sachar explores issues of race, the nature of celebrity, the invisible connections that shape a person's life, and what it takes to stay the course. Doing the right thing is never a wrong choice—but always a small step in right direction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 5-8—This sequel to *Holes* (Farrar, 1998) focuses on Armpit, an African-American former resident of Tent D at Camp Green Lake. It's two years after his release, and the 16-year-old is still digging holes, although now getting paid for it, working for a landscaper in his hometown of

Austin, TX. He's trying to turn his life around, knowing that everyone expects the worst of him and that he must take small steps to keep moving forward. When X-Ray, his friend and fellow former detainee at the juvenile detention center, comes up with a get-rich-quick scheme involving scalping tickets to a concert by teenage pop star Kaira DeLeon, Armpit fronts X-Ray the money. He takes his best friend and neighbor, Ginny, a 10-year-old with cerebral palsy, to the concert and ends up meeting Kaira, getting romantically involved, and finally becoming a hero by saving her life when her stepfather tries to kill her and frame him. *Small Steps* has a completely different tone than *Holes*. It lacks the bizarre landscape, the magical realism, the tall-tale quality, and the heavy irony. Yet, there is still much humor, social commentary, and a great deal of poignancy. Armpit's relationship with Ginny, the first person to care for him, look up to him, and give his life meaning, is a compassionate one. Like *Holes*, *Small Steps* is a story of redemption, of the triumph of the human spirit, of self-sacrifice, and of doing the right thing. Sachar is a master storyteller who creates memorable characters. — Connie Tyrrell Burns, Mahoney Middle School, South Portland, ME Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Starred Review Gr. 5-8. In rougher days, Armpit, named for an ill-placed scorpion bite, bullied a new member of his work-camp team. That kid was Stanley Yelnats, whose travails in *Holes* earned Sachar a 1998 Newbery Medal and National Book Award. Though Armpit is now 17, the tone of his experiences remains squarely middle-grade, and like Stanley, he proves an appealing, hapless character buffeted by others' schemes and shouldering the burdens of personal history--in this case, the bruisingly real challenges facing an African American teenager with a criminal history. Armpit takes his counselor's suggestions seriously ("Just take small steps and keep moving forward"), but he nonetheless becomes entangled in returning character X-Ray's concert ticket-scalping enterprise, resulting in a serendipitous meeting with a bubble-gum pop star and an awkward role in a police investigation. This is both less experimental and less streamlined than *Holes*; Armpit's bond with a girl with cerebral palsy, for instance, often seems too clearly intended to reveal his soft heart. Even so, *Holes* fans will be thrilled by the tightening of the plot elements to a single, suspenseful point, and they will eagerly follow the sometimes stumbling, sometimes sprinting progress of Sachar's fallible yet heroic protagonist. To learn more about the author's decision to mine *Holes* for new inspiration, see the adjacent "Story behind the Story" feature. Jennifer Mattson Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

The novel *Small Steps* is the story of Armpit, who was just released from Camp Greek Lake, which is like a prison camp for boys. He is trying to make things right, but they just keep going wrong. This book is the sequel to *Holes*, but the main characters are different. This story was sometimes funny, sometimes sad, and always adventurous. I didn't have a favorite part, because it was interesting the whole way through! This book has many themes, since Armpit tells lies but also shows compassion by helping his friends. Overall the story is about a character trying to have integrity. I would recommend this book to middle schoolers and up, who like adventure and aren't afraid of action!

This is my 2nd book read on the Kindle, and wow, I really enjoyed it! I've been a fan of Louis Sachar since I discovered the *Wayside* series 7 years ago and read them to my students who loved them. I read *Holes* before I saw the movie, and it's one of the very few DVD's that I have. This book is definitely different than *Holes*, but different is a good thing. Although the primary characters are black, you wouldn't really know or care about race while reading this book. The writing style of Sachar keeps things neutral, while at the same time, gripping. I found this book much more direct, with much more heart (especially with the character Ginny), and it had a good ending to the book that leaves you smiling. Fans of Sachar should definitely read this book. It's a bit easier to follow if you have read *Holes*, but it's not a prerequisite.

Although I wish we could have seen more of the other characters from Camp Green Lake, I'm glad to have the chance to visit with a few. I was considering reading this with my students after finishing *Holes*, but I decided against it. Although it was an enjoyable read, there is less educational value for sure.

It's a really great story about love, loss, racism, equality, etc. I've read it a few times and it never fails to entertain. There's some minor typos here and there and a very small plot hole but otherwise the book is phenomenal. If you read *Holes*, read this.

A great follow up to the first book, *Holes*. My son and I enjoyed it.

my son read it in a few hours, staying up past his bed time to finish it, and said it made him cry. He is 12.

I was expecting it to be more like Holes, our a continuation of the Holes backstory, but this was a nice surprise too. The characters are genuine and endearing.

Great book!

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