



Small Steps (Holes Book 2)

By Louis Sachar

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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 believe 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.

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Small Steps (Holes Book 2) By Louis Sachar Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #59072 in eBooks
- Published on: 2006-02-28
- Released on: 2006-02-28
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

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*

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From [Booklist](#)

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*

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Review

"Sachar's touch is as deft as ever and the book is a page-turner." —*Detroit Free-Press*

"Louis Sachar is magic to the toughest circle of critics: librarians, children's booksellers, teachers—and, most of all, kids." —*USA Today*

"Mr. Sachar's gentle but surefire approach nails down challenging issues such as racism, teen romance and drugs."—*Dallas Morning News*

"Part of what makes *Small Steps* so believable and appealing is that its characters do have insecurities, and they aren't ashamed to let them show." —*BookPage*

“Sachar is a master storyteller who creates memorable characters.” –*School Library Journal*

“Cleverly wrought...heartwarming, witty and suspenseful.” –*Time Out New York Kids*

“Sachar has a talent for creating realistic relationships between unlikely friends. Although that's a staple device of children's literature, it often works by drawing on clichés. Sachar's characters, though, are never stereotypes, but always vividly alive.”–*Los Angeles Times*

“His prose is clear and relaxed, and funny in a low-key, observant way.”–*New York Times*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Lindberg:

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Maria Hernandez:

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Timothy Kahle:

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