

# Louis Sachar

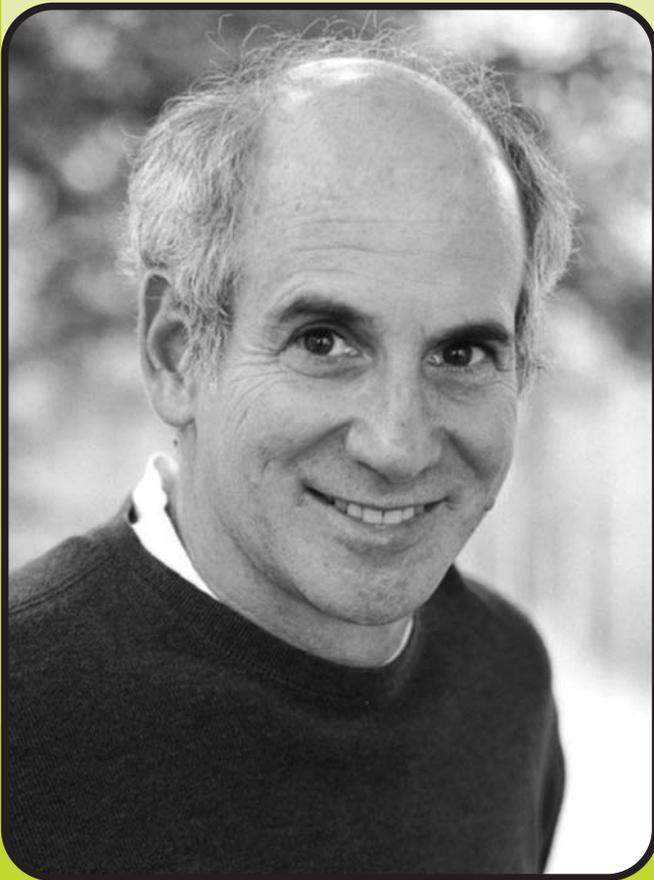


Photo © Perry Hagopian.

**"I**f I waited for inspiration, I'd still be waiting. I have to force myself to write—at least at first—and try to come up with ideas. The most important thing to me is my routine. I keep at it, day after day, taking small steps. After a while I become excited about what I'm writing, and then can't wait to get back to it." —*Louis Sachar*

Louis Sachar's book *Holes*, winner of the 1999 Newbery Medal, the National Book Award, and the *Boston Globe–Horn Book Award*, is also an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, an ALA Quick Pick, an ALA Notable Book, and was made into a major motion picture. *Small Steps*, the follow-up to *Holes* was released in January 2006.

# A Note from the Author

I'm sitting in my office, which is located over the garage of my house in Austin, Texas. My dogs, Lucky and Tippy, are here with me. They are the only people allowed in my office when I'm writing.

Lucky seems to understand that. He growls at my wife or my daughter if they try to enter. Maybe he senses me growling on the inside. I don't like being interrupted. Writing is a kind of self-hypnosis. Interruptions break the spell, and it's sometimes hard to get back.

I generally write for about two hours a day, the first thing every morning. After two hours, I find myself losing energy and concentration. It's best to quit while I'm still excited about the story. Then it will be easier to get started tomorrow.

I couldn't write for a longer period, even if I wanted. Tippy has learned my schedule. After two hours, she taps me with her paw, barks, howls, and otherwise lets me know it's time for her walk.

I never talk about a book until it is finished. It took me a year and a half to write *Holes*, and I never told anyone anything about it during all that time.

I do this for a variety of reasons, but mainly motivation. By not allowing myself to talk about it, the only way I can let it out, is to finish writing it.

I write five or six drafts of each book. I start with a small idea, and it grows as I write. My ideas come to me while I'm writing. The story changes greatly during the first few drafts. By the time a book is finished, it is impossible for me to say how I got the various ideas.

I was born March 20, 1954, in East Meadow, New York. My father worked on the 78th floor of the Empire

State Building. When I was nine, we moved to Tustin, California.

I went to college at the University of California, at Berkeley. During my last year there, I helped out at an elementary school—Hillside School. It was my experience there that led to my first book, *Sideways Stories from Wayside School*, which I wrote in 1976.

I attended Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco and graduated in 1980. I worked part-time as a lawyer for eight years as I continued to write children's books.

My wife's name is Carla. When I first met her, she was a counselor at an elementary school. She was the inspiration behind the counselor in *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*. We were married in 1985. Our

daughter, Sherre, was born in 1987. She was four years old when I started writing the Marvin Redpost series. That's why Marvin has a four-year-old sister.

In my spare time, I like to play bridge and tennis. I'm a much better bridge player than tennis player. The other evening,

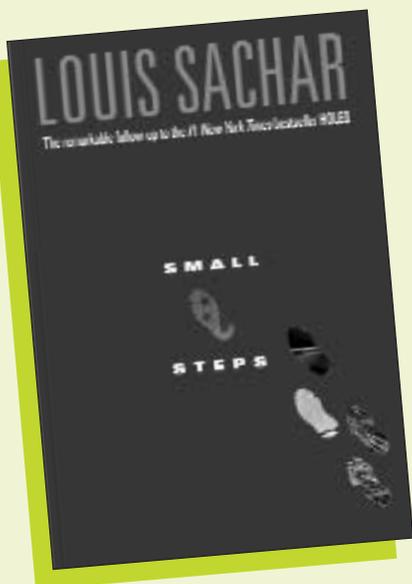
I played tennis with a teacher. She clobbered me. When I found out she was a fourth-grade teacher, I told her who I was. She was very impressed. She couldn't wait to tell her class she had killed Louis Sachar playing tennis!

One thing I always want to know about my favorite authors is who their favorite authors are, so I will end with that. My list includes Margaret Atwood, E. L. Doctorow, J. D. Salinger, Kurt Vonnegut, Kazuo Ishiguro, Flannery O'Connor, Rex Stout, Katherine Patterson, and E. B. White.

(Tippy is beginning to whine. Now she's tapping my leg. . . .)

**“I never talk about a book until it is finished. . . . I do this for a variety of reasons, but mainly motivation.”**

# Praise



## SMALL STEPS

★ “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.”

—*Booklist*, Starred

## THE BOY WHO LOST HIS FACE

“Readers will empathize with David’s troubles and cheer his triumph in this delightful, funny book.” —*Publishers Weekly*

## DOGS DON'T TELL JOKES

“Readers will laugh at Gary’s good jokes and groan at his clunkers while they cheer his transformation from goon to legitimate comedian.” —*Booklist*

## HOLES

★ “We haven’t seen a book with this much plot, so suspensefully and expertly deployed, in too long a time. . . . Louis Sachar has long been a great and deserved favorite among children, despite the benign neglect of critics. But *Holes* is witness to its own theme: what goes around, comes around. Eventually.” —*The Horn Book*, Starred

★ “A multitude of colorful characters coupled with the skillful braiding of ethnic folklore, American legend, and contemporary issues is a brilliant achievement. There is no question, kids will love *Holes*.”

—*School Library Journal*, Starred

## MARVIN REDPOST: WHY PICK ON ME?

“The hilarious portrayal of grade-school relationships has tremendous child appeal.” —*The Horn Book*

## MARVIN REDPOST: IS HE A GIRL?

“Sachar writes for beginning readers with a comic simplicity that is never banal. Here he gets a lot of fun out of the identity confusion, and kids will love the frankness about grade-school gender wars and social taboos.” —*Booklist*

## MARVIN REDPOST: ALONE IN HIS TEACHER'S HOUSE

“Sachar’s finely tuned sense of how children think and feel make this fourth book about Marvin and his comic misadventures entertaining.” —*The Horn Book*

## MARVIN REDPOST: A FLYING BIRTHDAY CAKE?

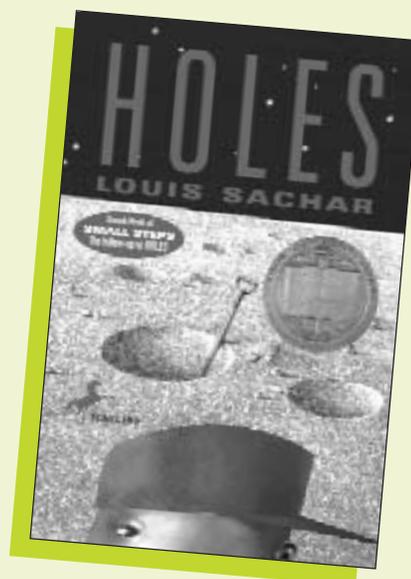
“Clipped sentences and short paragraphs are not only just right for new readers, they’re just right for the story—a smart, funny twist on the new-kid theme, reminding us that everyone feels alienated at one time or another.”

—*The Horn Book*

## THERE'S A BOY IN THE GIRLS' BATHROOM

“A humorous and immensely appealing story.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*



# Booklist

## **THERE'S A BOY IN THE GIRLS' BATHROOM**

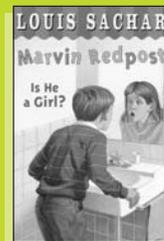
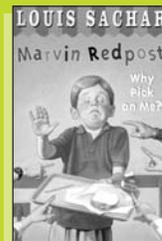
Ages 8–12 • Yearling  
PB: 978-0-394-80572-6 (0-394-80572-0)  
GLB: 978-0-394-98570-1 (0-394-98570-2)

## **DOGS DON'T TELL JOKES**

Ages 8–12 • Yearling  
PB: 978-0-679-83372-7 (0-679-83372-2)

## **THE BOY WHO LOST HIS FACE**

Ages 8–12 • Yearling  
PB: 978-0-679-88622-8 (0-679-88622-2)



## MARVIN REDPOST SERIES

MARVIN REDPOST #1: *KIDNAPPED AT BIRTH?*  
Illustrated by Neal Hughes  
Ages 4–8 • Random House  
HC: 978-0-679-91946-9 (0-679-91946-5)  
PB: 978-0-679-81946-2 (0-679-81946-0)

MARVIN REDPOST #2: *WHY PICK ON ME?*  
Illustrated by Barbara Sullivan  
Ages 4–8 • Random House  
PB: 978-0-679-81947-9 (0-679-81947-9)  
GLB: 978-0-679-91947-6 (0-679-91947-3)

MARVIN REDPOST #3: *IS HE A GIRL?*  
Illustrated by Barbara Sullivan  
Ages 4–8 • Random House  
PB: 978-0-679-81948-6 (0-679-81948-7)  
GLB: 978-0-679-91948-3 (0-679-91948-1)

MARVIN REDPOST #4:  
*ALONE IN HIS TEACHER'S HOUSE*  
Illustrated by Barbara Sullivan  
Ages 4–8 • Random House  
PB: 978-0-679-81949-3 (0-679-81949-5)  
GLB: 978-0-679-91949-0 (0-679-91949-X)

MARVIN REDPOST #5: *CLASS PRESIDENT*  
Illustrated by Amy Wummer  
Ages 4–8 • Random House  
PB: 978-0-679-88999-1 (0-679-88999-X)  
GLB: 978-0-679-98999-8 (0-679-98999-4)

MARVIN REDPOST #6: *A FLYING BIRTHDAY CAKE?*  
Illustrated by Amy Wummer  
Ages 4–8 • Random House  
PB: 978-0-679-89000-3 (0-679-89000-9)  
GLB: 978-0-679-99000-0 (0-679-99000-3)

MARVIN REDPOST #7:  
*SUPER FAST, OUT OF CONTROL*  
Illustrated by Amy Wummer  
Ages 4–8 • Random House  
PB: 978-0-679-89001-0 (0-679-89001-7)  
GLB: 978-0-679-99001-7 (0-679-99001-1)

GLB = Gibraltar Library Binding

## **HOLES**

Ages 8–12  
Yearling PB: 978-0-440-41480-3  
(0-440-41480-6)  
Laurel-Leaf PB: 978-0-440-22859-2  
(0-440-22859-X)  
Movie Tie-In PB: 978-0-440-41946-4  
(0-440-41946-8)

A Newbery Medal Winner

A National Book Award for Young People's Literature

A *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Award for Fiction

A Christopher Award for Juvenile Fiction

An ALA Best Book for Young Adults

An ALA Notable Children's Book

An ALA Quick Pick for Young Adults

A *Bulletin Blue Ribbon* Book

A *Horn Book* Fanfare

A *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year

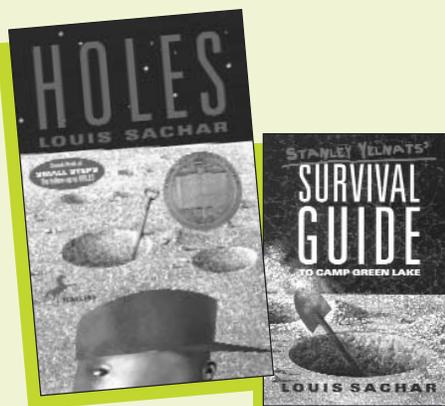
A *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of the Year

A *New York Times Book Review* Notable Children's Book of the Year

A *Riverbank Review* Children's Book of Distinction

An NCTE Notable Children's Book in the Language Arts

A New York Public Library's 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing



## **STANLEY YELNATS' SURVIVAL GUIDE TO CAMP GREEN LAKE**

Ages 10 up • Yearling  
PB: 978-0-440-41947-1 (0-440-41947-6)

## **SMALL STEPS**

Ages 10 up • Delacorte Press  
HC: 978-0-385-73314-4  
(0-385-73314-3)  
GLB: 978-0-385-90333-2  
(0-385-90333-2)

