



## Small Steps: The Year I Got Polio - Teacher Guide by Novel Units, Inc.

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### **Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

### From School Library Journal

Grade 4-6-Although young readers today might only associate the word "polio" with a vaccination, this well-written account gives them a hard look at the devastating physical and emotional effects of the disease. In 1949, there were 42,000 cases reported in the U.S.; the author was the only one stricken in her hometown that year. She writes in an approachable, familiar way, and readers will be hooked from the first page on. The author details her diagnosis, treatment, frustration, and pain. Perhaps the most startling part of the book is her description of the sudden onset of the illness, coming with no warning and leaving her paralyzed. Although this is an excellent record of the progress of the disease, it is also a fascinating account of how an ordinary girl with crushes and homecoming dreams had to live for part of her adolescence in an artificial, restricted environment. In the epilogue, Kehret describes her current battle with post-polio syndrome, and brings readers up to date on the lives of her fellow patients and friends at the Sheltering Arms Hospital. An honest and well-done book.

*Christine A. Moesch, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, NY*

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### From Booklist

Gr. 3^5. This heartfelt memoir takes readers back to 1949 when the author, at age 12, contracted polio. Using fictionalized dialogue, she describes her seven-month ordeal--her diagnosis and quarantine, her terrifying paralysis, her slow and difficult recuperation--and the people she encountered along the way. Kehret supplies a few words about the illness in a foreword, but because there is little sense of how medicine has evolved since her hospitalization, some children may find the vivid picture she paints scary indeed. Scary, too, is the epilogue, in which Kehret admits to having post-polio syndrome. Curious children who love Kehret's middle-grade thrillers may pick this up, but since there's little about her life as a writer, it will most likely be children interested in medical issues who will follow through. *Stephanie Zvirin*

### From Kirkus Reviews

From a writer known for her fiction, a moving memoir about a 12-year-old who got polio in 1949 in Austin, Minnesota. Kehret (Earthquake Terror, 1996, etc.) describes the disease, the diagnosis, the severe symptoms, treatments, physical therapy, slow recovery, and return home with walking sticks--and how she was forever changed. After her fever broke and she lay paralyzed in the hospital, her parents delivered a big brown packet of letters from her classmates. ``I had a strange feeling that I was reading about a different lifetime . . . none of this mattered. I had faced death. I had lived with excruciating pain and with loneliness and uncertainty about the future. Bad haircuts and lost ball games would never bother me again.'' There are touching black-and-white photographs of her roommates, who had already been there for ten years. Kehret's were the only parents who visited her each Sunday, and soon ``adopted'' her fellow polio victims. A simple, direct, and sometimes self-deprecating style of writing tenderly draws readers into Kehret's experiences and the effects of the disease firsthand. Almost a half-century later, this lovely book refocuses attention on what matters most: health, love of family, friends, determination, generosity, and compassion. (Nonfiction. 8-13) - *Copyright ©1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

## **Users Review**

### From reader reviews:

**Jeraldine Thurman:**

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