

DEAR CANADA

DISCUSSION GUIDE

To Stand On My Own

The Polio Epidemic Diary of Noreen Robertson

By Barbara Haworth-Attard

1. Who befriends Noreen when she finds out she has polio? What makes a true friend?
2. How do the dynamics of her family life change when Noreen comes home from the hospital? Where does she sleep? Who bathes her and helps her go to the bathroom? How does this affect her self-esteem and attitude?
3. Grandpa plays a big role in keeping Noreen's spirits high and helping her not give up on life. Describe the relationship between Mother and Grandpa, and why she resists new treatments for her daughter at first. What is it that changes her mind?
4. Noreen gets sent away to the Grey Nuns Hospital in Regina for treatment. Who does she meet at the hospital and how do those friendships help her cope with the disease and eventually, overcome it?
5. What is post-polio syndrome and how does it affect people? Do people still contract polio today? Is there a cure for it?