

**So B. It**  
**Realistic Fiction by Sarah Weeks**  
**Harper Collins Publishers**  
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**About the Author:**

Sarah Weeks is a singer, songwriter, and children's book author. An award winner, she is best known for her popular Guy series, including *Regular Guy*, *Guy Time* and *My Guy*. She has been writing and performing in New York for more than 20 years and has written more than 30 children's books. Born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Ms. Weeks remembers that "back in the day when there was no color TV, glass milk bottles delivered by the milkman, two types of Barbie dolls (blond and brunette), and girls had to wear dresses to school every day."

Her dad was an English professor at the University of English and her mother stayed at home until Ms. Weeks and her two siblings entered college when she began work as a bookkeeper. Ms. Weeks has two sons, Gabe and Nat.

Although Ms. Weeks has been writing since she was a small girl, she states that "describing how she writes is not an easy thing to do because she is not sure where her ideas come from." During Ms. Week's childhood, a dictionary rested on the table in the living room. However, when she does take a break from writing, she will bake, talk on the phone, visit antique shops, go to the movies and watch little league games. And, she has a pet mouse named Bing!

The idea for *So B. It* came to her in small pieces. To her, people are like locks, and in order to find out what makes them who they are, you have to find the right key to unlock the mystery. This one statement could be a summary of *So B. It*. One small piece, but important piece of the story, was choosing the word "soof" as the strange word in Heidi's mother's vocabulary. A second piece was the neighbor, Bernadette's love of words. Her family read every day. Truth is the main theme of *So B. It*. Ms. Weeks states, "it's one of those questions that seems that it would be easy to answer, but then when you try, you find out it's more complicated than you thought!" Writing *So B. It* was a journey (she spent four years writing it) just as Heidi goes on a long journey looking for herself.

Author Webpage: <http://www.sarahweeks.com/>

Publishers Webpage:

<http://www.harpercollinschildrens.com/HarperChildrens/Kids/AuthorsAndIllustrators/ContributorDetail.aspx?CId=12867>

### **Annotation:**

What is truth? Heidi, a twelve-year-old girl, is on a quest to discover the truth. Who is she? Heidi does not know her birthday, her father, or anything about her mentally disabled mother's past. Heidi lives in an apartment building in Reno, Nevada with her mother and a neighbor, Bernadette, who is agoraphobic (afraid to leave her apartment). Heidi and her mother appeared at Bernadette's door when Heidi was just an infant. When Bernadette asked Heidi's mother what her name was she replied, "So B. It." Heidi was known as "Heidi It." In fact, due to her mother's disability, her mother was able to speak only 23 words.

For most of her childhood, Heidi is happy. She has incredible luck and uses it at the local laundromat slot machine when they need money. Heidi and her mother take care of any responsibilities that require leaving the apartment. Bernadette teaches Heidi's mother simple tasks and home schools Heidi. It is a satisfactory arrangement for everyone.

However, Heidi begins to question her past and especially the mysterious word her mother constantly repeats, "soof." After she discovers pictures of her mother taken in Liberty, New York, she sets out to find the truth about her family. Traveling by bus alone, she makes the cross-country journey from Reno, Nevada to Liberty New York. Her many experiences on this journey are both frightening and exciting.

Heidi not only finds answers to her many questions, but those answers change how she views life and truth. This story is an emotional, suspenseful journey with characters that are quirky but believable. Overall, this book is an enjoyable, insightful story with characters rich in diversity.

### **Booktalk: So B. It by Sarah Weeks**

If you like mystery and suspense, you will enjoy reading *So B. It*. The main character, Heidi, is a twelve-year-old girl who knows nothing about herself or her mentally disabled mother before they lived next door to Bernadette, who is their closest friend. Many things are mysterious in Heidi's life. For example, she does not know her mother's real name, her father, or anything about her family. She also does not know why she wins every time she sneaks to play the slots in Reno where she lives. Nor does she know why her mother is scared of buses or says the word "soof" so frequently. There are no pictures of Heidi's family and she is home schooled by Bernadette who is afraid to leave her apartment.

One day when looking for something else in the back of a drawer, Heidi discovers pictures of her mother that provide clues to where her mother lived previously. This propels her into a quest for answers to all of her questions. Against Bernadette's advice

and leaving her mentally disabled mother behind, Heidi makes a frightening journey across country to New York to find answers to all of her questions. Will Heidi make it to New York? Will she find answers? And, if so, will the answers be the answers she wanted? Is seeking the truth always a good thing? If you choose to go on this journey with Heidi, it will bring you laughter, sadness and sense of what it means to seek the truth.

### **Characters:**

**Heidi:** main character and young daughter of Mama/So B. It

**Mama/So B. It.:** mother of Heidi who has mental disabilities

**Bernadette:** close friend and neighbor of Heidi and Mama

**Alexander (or Zander):** a friend of Heidi's who lives in the same apartment building.

**Thurman Hill:** Administrator, Hilltop Home, Liberty, New York

**Alice Wilinsky:** a fellow traveler (traveling with kittens to Salt Lake City) on the bus with Heidi

**Georgia Sweet:** the second fellow traveler on Heidi's bus (an eighteen-year-old traveling from Wyoming to New York to go to college).

**Dee Dee Monroe:** the third fellow traveler on Heidi's bus traveling to see her nephew.

**Nancy:** the fourth fellow traveler who shared chocolate chip cookies with Heidi.

**Elliot Thurman:** son of Thurman Hill and Heidi's father

**Ruby Franklin:** works for Thurman Hill and is Roy's wife.

**Roy Franklin:** Sheriff and Ruby's husband

**Mr. Dietz:** Thurman Hill's lawyer

**Diane DeMuth:** Heidi's grandmother

**Sophia Lynne DeMuth:** Heidi's mother

**Conflict:** The main character, Heidi, does not know who she is. She does not know her birthday, her father or any other relatives except her mentally disabled mother. As she gets older, she wants to know these things. Heidi finds some old pictures which are a clue to her past. Bernadette, her friend and neighbor, tries to discourage her from making a long dangerous trip to find out about her past. Heidi, who is twelve years old, does not want to go against Bernadette, but is compelled to discover her mother's past and what the word "soof" means. Also, during her journey, she questions if seeking the truth is the right thing to do.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Heidi makes the decision to travel to New York from Reno, Nevada to find the answers to her questions. Her questions are answered and she realizes that learning the truth can be both good and bad. She also discovers there are many meanings of truth.

**Genre:** Realistic Fiction