

SARAH WEEKS

So B. It

A NOVEL



PARENTS' CHOICE GOLD AWARD WINNER

EXTRAS
INSIDE

CHAPTER ONE

Heidi

If truth was a crayon and it was up to me to put a wrapper around it and name its color, I know just what I would call it—*dinosaur skin*. I used to think, without really thinking about it, that I knew what color that was. But that was a long time ago, before I knew what I know now about both dinosaur skin and the truth.

The fact is, you can't tell squat about the color of an animal just from looking at its bones, so nobody knows for sure what color dinosaurs really were. For years I looked at pictures of them, trusting that whoever was in charge of coloring them in was doing it based on scientific fact, but the truth is they were only guessing. I realized that one afternoon, sitting in the front seat of Sheriff Roy Franklin's squad car, the fall before I turned thirteen.

Another thing I found out right around that same time is that *not knowing* something doesn't mean you're stupid. All it means is that there's still room left to wonder. For instance about dinosaurs—were they the same color as the sky the morning I set off for Liberty? Or were they maybe the same shade of brown as the dust my shoes kicked up on the driveway at Hilltop Home?

I'd be lying if I said that given a choice, I wouldn't rather know than not know. But there are some things you can just know for no good reason other than that you do, and then there are other things that no matter how badly you want to know them, you just can't.

The truth is, whether you know something or not doesn't change what was. If dinosaurs were blue, they were blue; if they were brown, they were brown whether anybody ever knows it for a fact or not.

Dette

One thing I knew for a fact, from the time I knew anything at all, was that I didn't have a father. What I had was Mama and Bernadette, and as far as I was concerned, that was plenty. Bernadette started off being the next-door neighbor, but that didn't last for very long. My mother loved me in her own special way, but she couldn't take care of me herself because of her bum brain. Bernie once explained it to me by comparing Mama to a broken machine.

"All the basic parts are there, Heidi, and from the outside she looks like she should work just fine, but inside there are lots of mysterious little pieces busted or bent or missing altogether, and without them her machine doesn't run quite right."

And it never would.

Heidi is on a quest

She doesn't know when her birthday is or who her father is. In fact, everything about Heidi and her mentally disabled mother's past is a mystery.

When a strange word in her mother's vocabulary begins to haunt her, Heidi sets out on a cross-country journey in search of the secrets of her past. Far away from home, pieces of her puzzling history come together. But it isn't until she learns to accept not knowing that Heidi truly arrives.

"The novel has enough suspense to draw in mystery fans, while Weeks portrays Heidi's emotional and physical odyssey with admirable economy and restraint."

—*The Horn Book* (STARRED REVIEW)

"Lovely writing—real, touching, and pared cleanly down to the essentials."

—*ALA Booklist* (STARRED REVIEW)

"Refreshing, offbeat characters. Readers will be genuinely touched."

—*VOYA* (STARRED REVIEW)

BOOK SENSE SUMMER PICK

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