



Parents Hide the Truth

*Writing prompts, discussion questions, and
audio transcript*

ABOUT THE STORYTELLER

Sarah Weeks has written more than fifty picture books and novels for children and young adults, including the bestselling novels *PIE* and *SO B. IT*—which is now a feature-length film. Two of her most recent works are *SAVE ME A SEAT*, a novel, and *GLAMOURPUSS*, a picture book. In addition to writing, Sarah is an adjunct faculty member in the prestigious Writing Program at the New School University in New York City and a founding member of ART, a traveling troupe of authors who perform reader’s theatre at conventions and conferences across the country. <http://www.sarahweeks.com>

Talk it Out

Imagine that you just found out that your family has been keeping something secret from you. How does it make you feel?

Brainstorm a list of possible ways Sarah Weeks’s parents might have handled the situation without hiding the report cards and keeping secrets.

Next, read the following quote from editor and novelist Edgar Watson Howe:

The man who can keep a secret may be wise, but he is not half as wise as the man with no secrets to keep.

Now discuss:

What do you think is meant by “wise” in that quote? Why might Howe say a man with no secrets is wiser than a man who can keep a secret? Do you agree? Explain your answer.

Write it Out

Choose one of the following prompts and write 1-2 pages, double-spaced:

- Using Sarah Weeks's story, write the dialogue between her parents when they decide to put her siblings' report cards high up in the cabinet. Be sure to include why they make the decision they do.
- Write a diary entry about a time, either real or imagined, when someone told you something that you wish he or she had kept secret. As you write your entry, consider how it made you feel to hear the secret and how things would be different if you still didn't know.
- Write a page or two that begin with one or the other of these sentences:
There is never a good reason to keep a secret.
or
There can be good reasons to keep a secret.
Be sure to support your opinion with at least three examples. You may use Sarah Weeks's story as one of the examples, if you wish.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE AUDIO MEMORY

Sarah: As a kid, my grades were fine, but they weren't stellar. And my sister was off-the-charts brilliant, and my brother also, very, very bright. So their report cards were kept up high in a cabinet, out of reach. And I knew why that was. My parents didn't want me to look at those. Well, I just got out the stool and stood on there and looked at them. You know, and thought, Whoa. My sister got A+ in French. I didn't even know you could get an A+ from that school. So, those kind of things. It was like, "Well, you shouldn't look at that." And anyone who tells me I shouldn't look at something, of course the first thing I want to do is look at it. Of course.

Julie: Do you remember how you felt when you looked at it?

Sarah: Well, both impressed and sad, because I knew I would never achieve that. Because it's not that I never got As. I did. But I had to really work for them. And for the two of them, not that they weren't working, but they were just extremely bright, and very intellectual.

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Illustration by Matthew Cordell