# Is this the new Heartstopper?



Renowned young adult author Robby Weber continues to bring queer joy to his readers, with his latest release, "What Is This Feeling?". Known for his previous novels "If You Change Your Mind" and "I Like Me Better", Weber’s new book immerses readers in a vibrant world of high school drama and romance, set against a backdrop of musical theatre and pop culture.

High school theatre star Teddy McGuire is on an eventful trip to New York City hoping to win his drama club’s annual scavenger hunt and meet his pop idol, Benji Keaton. The narrative takes a twist when Teddy’s best friend opts out of the trip, leaving him to share a room with Sebastian, a tech crew loner who initially seems uninterested in the hunt but harbours his own plans.

Weber drew significant inspiration from his own experiences living briefly in New York City, a place "filled with wonder and endless possibility," making it an ideal setting for a story rich in themes of hope, positivity, and magic.

A heartfelt tribute to his late grandmother is also threaded through the novel. Weber notes that her sudden passing deeply affected him, but her life lessons have found a place within the story. "She helped me find my voice and believe in myself, which is a big theme for Teddy," Weber shared.

Robby Weber's dedication to writing queer YA novels comes at a critical time when such stories face increased scrutiny and book bans across the UK and the United States. Legislative efforts and interference from parents frequently target gay narratives, challenging authors who wish to represent and uplift the queer experience. Despite this, Weber remains committed to providing young LGBTQ+ readers with hope and relatable stories.

“Queer young people are being told they’re ‘other’ and need to be censored,” Weber says. He is outspoken about the importance of his work in giving LGBTQ+ teens a sense of belonging and a brighter future, amidst a climate of marginalisation and fear.