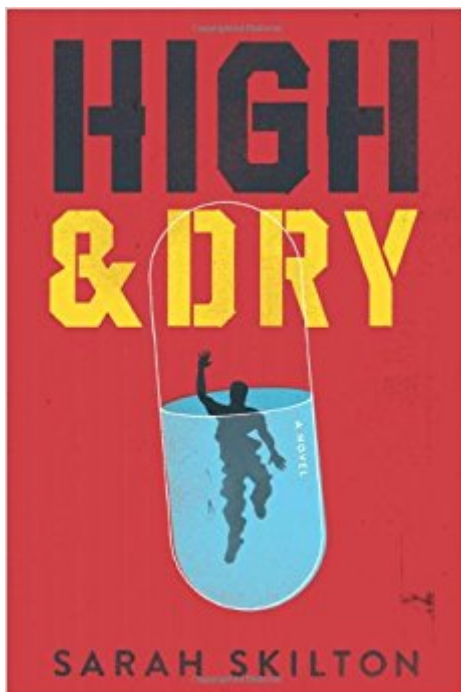


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# High And Dry



## Synopsis

Framed for a stranger's near-fatal overdose at a party, blackmailed into finding a mysterious flash drive everyone in school seems anxious to suppress, and pressured by his shady best friend to throw an upcoming match, high school soccer player Charlie Dixon is juggling more than his share of drama. Add in a broken heart and the drinking he's been doing to soothe it, and he's near the breaking point. In this fast-paced, layered mystery, Charlie spends a frantic week trying to clear his name, win back the girl of his dreams, and escape a past friendship that may be responsible for all his current problems. This book captures the tone and style of the best crime fiction while also telling a high-stakes story of peer pressure gone tragically awry. Praise for *High and Dry* "A dark, well-constructed mystery with a strong voice." --Kirkus Reviews "Skilton's latest covers a tense and complicated week during which Charlie must unravel relationships, desires, lies, and truths in order to clear his name, regain his sense of self, and set his world right again." --Booklist "School drama, romance, and mystery make a heady mash-up and an involving quick pick." --The Bulletin of The Center for Children's Books "With a strong subtext about the dangers of test-driven curriculum, this novel will find an audience in most high schools." --School Library Journal

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up • Charlie Dixon, a last semester senior, floats through his life not caring about anything since he broke up with his girlfriend, Ellie. He has a drinking problem thanks to his

grandfather, and spends much of his day slightly drunk. Unlike his class and teammates, he does not have to wonder where he will go to college; he knows he will be at the local college because his father works there and that his undergraduate years are already paid for. His lethargy, and an old grudge, makes him a perfect patsy. When he shows up uninvited and drunk to a choir party to confront Ellie about why she broke up with him, an ex-girlfriend drives him home. His keys are taken and when a camera catches his car dropping someone off at the hospital, he is set up for almost fatally drugging a girl with LSD. Thanks to his ex, he has an alibi, and she gets him involved in the search for a flash drive that contains her college essays. When he gets numerous messages from others willing to pay for the object, he realizes that there's more on the drive than essays. As Charlie gets knee-deep in shady dealings, he must start taking responsibility for his own actions. With a strong subtext about the dangers of test-driven curriculum, this novel will find an audience in most high schools.

—Suanne B. Roush, formerly at Osceola High School, Seminole, FL

Charlie Dixon had it made: soccer star, great parents, loving girlfriend, and worry-free college acceptance. Then he's hit by an avalanche of problems. Heartsick about being dumped (and nursing a drinking problem), he leaves his car at a party and his previous ex drives him home. At the same time, a student trips out on LSD and is dumped at the hospital ER by someone driving Charlie's car. On top of all that, he is asked by his ex to find a flash drive that contains something that people at school seem desperate to have. Not enough? His best friend is mixed up in drug dealing, he's talked into throwing a soccer match, and peer pressure is about to make him explode. Skilton's latest covers a tense and complicated week during which Charlie must unravel relationships, desires, lies, and truths in order to clear his name, regain his sense of self, and set his world right again. Despite a slow start, loads of unlikable characters, and seemingly random events, the clues prove to be well placed, yielding a rich payoff. Grades 9-12.

--Jeanne Fredriksen

I enjoyed reading Sarah Skilton's new book, *High and Dry*. I fell in love with the characters, rooted for the the good guy, and couldn't wait to see what happens next. The twists and turns were cleverly written, making it hard to put the book down until the last page.

Great read for teenagers and adults.

Book Review Title: High and Dry Author: Sarah Skilton Genre: YA/Family/Mystery Rating: \*\*\*\*\* Review: The opening pages to High and Dry were amazing and filled to the brim with teen angst. We meet our protagonist Charlie who has recently been dumped by the girl of his dreams Ellie without explanation and he wants to find out why. We also see from quite earlier on Charlie has a bit of drinking problem brought on by this break-up. While I am not a massive fan of angst in YA novels in this particular book it sets up the atmosphere and gives an insight into Charlie's personality and the state of his life at the present moment. The pacing of this novel are great and by the end of the first chapter Charlie has been framed for drugging a person at the party previously. I was completely drawn in by the writing style and was flying through the pages at an astounding rate. As we approach the 1/4 mark in the novel, Charlie and Ellie seems to be talking but Bridget is blackmailing him to find her flash drive with sexy text messages and pictures which she threatens to show Ellie, but Charlie uses this to his advantage and uses them as an alibi to the police. I also love Charlie as a character because he is so flawed which makes him seem so human he is so different from other male protagonist who are perfect in body and personality and have 1000 watt smile that makes girls swoon. As Charlie tries to figure out what is going on with his friend Ryder and who framed him for Maria's overdose we get a lot more backstory especially about Charlie and Ryder's friendship. Charlie begins to suspect someone close to him has framed him but doesn't have any evidence pointing to a specific person yet. As we cross into the second half of the novel Charlie is getting closer to getting his hands on the flash drive but he has a problem he doesn't know who to trust. Bridget desperately wants the drive but Ryder is telling him to forget about it and then there's the mysterious BM whose offering over \$2000 for the drive. I have a feeling Charlie is going to have some difficult decisions to make over the rest of the novel. As the truths begins to come to light Charlie and Ryder seems to be working together and Ellie and Charlie are moving closer together once more. While there are several mysteries overlapping on another, it never gets confusing about which course Charlie is pursuing. When Charlie finally gets his hands on the flash drive and uncovers everyone who is involved in the mystery instead of turning them in he orchastrates an auction with the flash drive being sold to the highest bidder. As we enter the final section of the novel, everything seems to be going to plan until a new player steps into the game and throws a major spanner in the works. This was an unexpected twist so close to the end of the novel and I couldn't wait to see how the novel ended. Overall, I loved this book it was action packed and fast paced from the first paced and full of twists and turns that kept going to the final page. This book was extremely well written and kept the promises it made right at the beginning and followed through with an amazingly gripping story. I was highly recommend this novel to all mystery fans and

anyone looking for a quick read.

High & Dry, wow, this is a novel I can get with. The pace was just about perfect, and even the flashbacks were poignant and necessary and well-timed. What we get here is a complicated hero, sometimes anti-hero, in a way, who manages the last few breaths of high school before the next challenge. But with the plot of the mystery, which did give me turns and twists that I didn't foresee, readers should encounter some of the really interesting motifs and witty dialogue as the strongest portions.

Charlie Dixon was framed. A girl named Maria is seen being dropped off to a local hospital, high on LSD. Maria is admitted and things take a turn for the worse. As for Charlie, he knows it wasn't him driving his car, or wearing that cap. But who wants to frame him for this? Meanwhile, school gets a little more interesting as his ex-girlfriend Bridget enlists his help to try to find a drive she left in the library. One that was stolen. But what was really on the drive? And can Charlie figure it out while trying to get his most recent girlfriend, Ellie, back? This is going to be one of Charlie Dixon's most ridiculously crazy weeks. Hang on. Now, I'm a fan of pulp fiction. I love a good Raymond Chandler story like the next one. So I was really excited to read High and Dry, the newest book by Sarah Skilton. I enjoyed Bruised, her debut, and am happy to say that High and Dry is clever, funny and pays great homage to the classic detective stories of our day. Charlie is a pretty sad character when we first meet him. He's drunk, pathetically so, and trying to get his girlfriend Ellie back, who dumped him for undisclosed reasons. As the plot thickens, Charlie goes further and further down the rabbit hole. I don't want to give anything away so I'll keep it vague. I really liked all the twists and turns the plot took. While I didn't have a great sense of all of the characters, it didn't bother me. The story is totally plot driven and as long as you know Ellie, Charlie and Bridget, then I think you're okay. The backstory is carefully laid out. I really liked all of the tension that is already in the air when the story begins. However it is a slow build. I liked the book okay for maybe the first half, and then the second half is when things start to get really interesting! High and Dry is fun, easy to read and reminds me of some good crime noir with savory characters, hidden agendas and suspicious dames. Try it out.

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