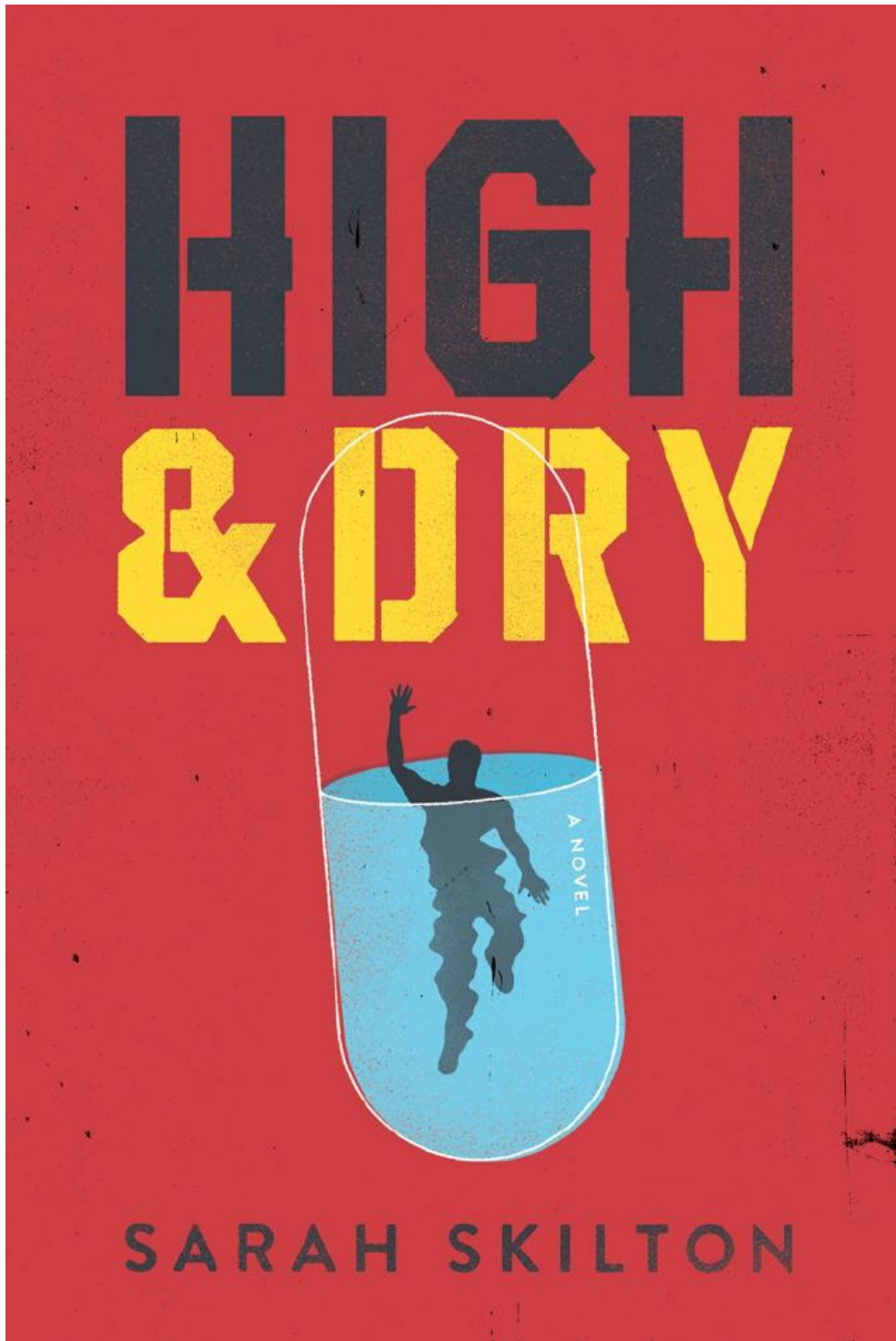


DISCUSSION GUIDE



978-1-4197-09296 / \$16.95 / Ages 14 and up / Grades 8 and up

Discussion Questions

- 1) When Charlie moves with his family from New Mexico to California, he has trouble fitting in with the boys on his Little League team. As a result, he re-invents himself, altering his personality and covering up his true interests. Have you ever felt pressure to hide who you are in order to belong? If so, did it make your life easier or harder?
- 2) Charlie's former baseball coach is cruel to everyone on the team except for his star player, Ryder. Have you ever been on a team where the teacher or coach was verbally abusive? What, if anything, did you do about it? Did you feel there was anything you *could* do?
- 3) During high school, childhood friends Charlie and Ryder drift apart. Was this only because Charlie joined the soccer team and Ryder didn't, or were there other reasons they stopped hanging out together?
- 4) The teens in the story create their own slang to label the cliques at school. Do you and your friends make up words or phrases that belong only to you?
- 5) Charlie believes his presence isn't required during discussions with his parents. Why does he feel this way? Is he right or wrong?
- 6) Do you think it was a good idea for Ellie and Charlie to break up, or do you think they should've stayed together? If Charlie had been honest about his personality and interests, would they have dated at all?
- 7) At the beginning of the book, Charlie crashes a party drunk and can't drive himself home. Have you been to parties where people get out of hand like that? What would you do if you saw someone who'd had too much to drink?
- 8) While trying to solve one mystery, Charlie discovers several other mysteries that are connected to the first, as well as connected to his own behavior. Has something you've done in the past ever "come back to haunt you"?