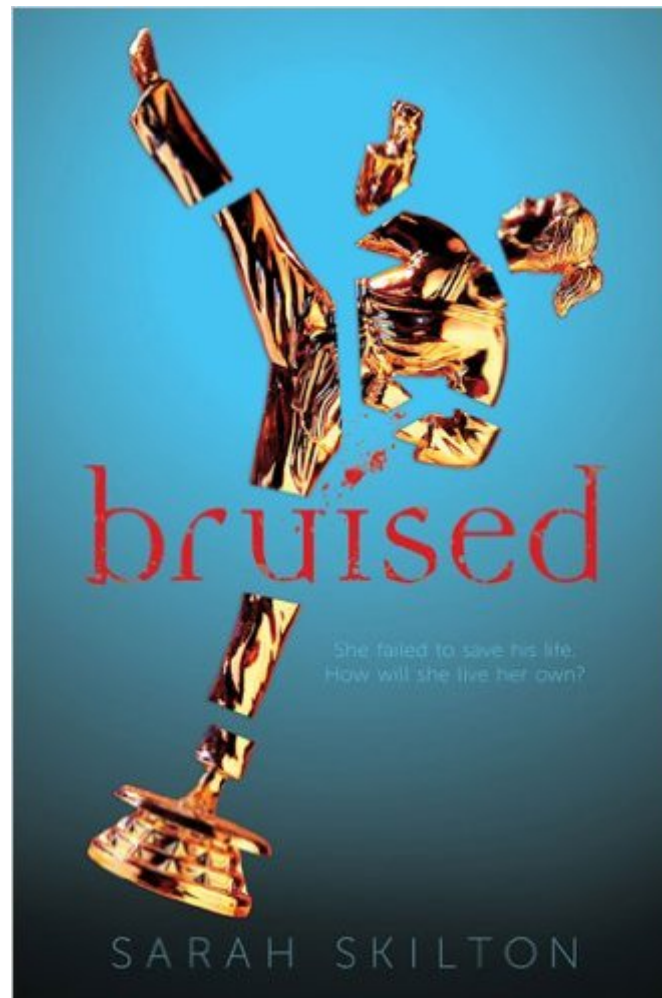


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# Bruised



## Synopsis

When Imogen, a sixteen-year-old black belt in Tae Kwon Do, freezes during a holdup at a local diner, the gunman is shot and killed by the police, and she blames herself for his death. Before the shooting, she believed that her black belt made her stronger than everyone else; more responsible, more capable. But now that her sense of self has been challenged, she must rebuild her life, a process that includes redefining her relationship with her family and navigating first love with the boy who was at the diner with her during the shoot-out. With action, romance, and a complex heroine, *Bruised* introduces a vibrant new voice to the young adult world; full of dark humor and hard truths. Praise for *Bruised* STARRED REVIEW "Offering psychological drama and an introduction to martial-arts code of behavior, the book has a meaningful message about power, control, and the internal bruises carried by victims." Publishers Weekly, starred review "Her story is compelling, and readers will stick with her as new insights bring about a believable shift in her behavior; This distinctive debut will be appreciated by fans of contemporary fiction." Kirkus Reviews "This layered first novel explores the aftereffects of the trauma, convincingly depicting why Imogen blames herself for a situation over which she had no control. Skilton also sensitively depicts the bond and tentative romance that develops between Imogen and Ricky. The main story line about Imogen's struggle to come to terms with what she did (and did not do) is nuanced and honest." Horn Book "This is a useful exploration of the difference between fantasy-style omnipotence and the complexity of real-life human strength." Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books "Skilton does a fine job capturing how a psychological process after trauma can take time and might manifest in unique, sometimes unexpected, ways." VOYA Magazine "Poignant and emotionally raw at times and humorous at others, this debut novel adeptly portrays a shattered life in the wake of an unexpected act of violence and the road back to normalcy." School Library Journal "Here is a writer to watch who handles complex issues with sensitivity in the vein of Deb Caletti and Sarah Dessen." Booklist

## Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Harry N. Abrams (March 5, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1419703870

ISBN-13: 978-1419703874

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.2 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (27 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,813,115 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #56 in Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Sports > Martial Arts #670 in Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Violence #5489 in Â Books > Teens > Romance > Contemporary

## Customer Reviews

I learned so much about martial arts when reading BRUISED. For example, did you know that Tae Kwon Do originated in Korea? There wasn't even a colored belt system in place until the Koreans brought Tae Kwon Do to the USA, where people wanted to physically see a measure of their success. In Korea, you are a white belt until you are good enough to receive black. Here, there are colored belts, and when you finally achieve a black belt, there are twelve levels of black! Some levels take a decade to master. I learned all of this and more when reading BRUISED. Imogen is the youngest black belt at Glenview Martial Arts. She's still a teenager. She's taught several Tae Kwon Do classes and knows how to defend herself. At least, she thought she did. When a gunman holds up a diner, rather than fight, Imogen hides beneath a table. She feels ashamed and guilty. What's the point of learning Tae Kwon Do if you can't protect yourself when the time comes? Imogen disconnects and experiences extreme Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Therapy doesn't stop her daily nightmares. She beats herself up over and over. Not even connecting with Ricky, a guy who also hid in the diner that night, is able to help her overcome her fears and guilt. Why should she be allowed to be happy when she messed everything up so badly? Imogen is really hard on herself, striving to achieve the impossible. She's a talented martial artist, and before the incident, had clear goals. She loved teaching Tae Kwon Do, especially to girls. At one point, she states, "[Taylor] had trouble with blocks and counterstrikes because she didn't like getting in other people's space, especially boys' space. Most girls don't, and I wanted to change that." (pg.

Bruised opens immediately after Imogen's world shatters. A woman is in the hospital, a man is dead, and Imogen is covered head to toe in his blood, sticking to me like chunks of blackberry jam. • To be held at gunpoint and then splattered with pieces of another person would be traumatizing for anyone, but it's worse for Imogen. Imogen is a first degree black belt, a six-year student of Tae Kwan Do, and the youngest recipient of a black belt in her school. Never mind that the assailant had had a gun. She should have done something â “ knocked the gun from his hand, kicked out his legs, SOMETHING. Instead, she froze. To Imogen, Tae Kwan Do is not a skill, it is a

way of life. It failed her when she needed it most. In turn, she feels like she has failed everyone else. Her parents, the people in the diner, the gunman, her students, her brother, she failed them all. Most of all, she failed herself. Ms. Skilton touches on some heavy subjects in this book. After the incident at the diner, Imogen goes into a tailspin, at first subtly and then bombastically. Like a chain of dominoes, Imogen's doubts and fears knock into other carefully concealed issues until her entire life is lying in shambles about her feet. Some of the issues explored in this book include: -Responsibility-Honor-Women and fighting-Family dynamics and sibling loyalty-Protecting, being protected, and who should do what-Sexuality/kissing-Health/diabetes-Pride in one's skills vs. arrogance/bullying. Normally, a list like that would make my skin crawl. It looks too deep, too heavy, too involved. With that in mind, trust me when I say that Ms. Skilton did a superb job. Though *Bruised* is hardly a funny book, Ms.

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