



2019

# This Is How It Happened

Emily Loveless

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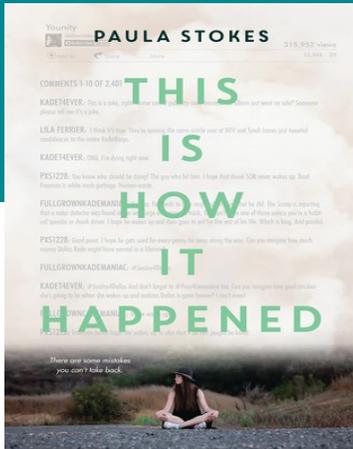
Loveless, Emily (2019) "This Is How It Happened," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 40 : Iss. 4 , Article 76.  
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol40/iss4/76>

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## Book Review

# This Is How It Happened



### Author

Paula Stokes

### Illustrator

### Reviewer

Emily Loveless

### Rating

Excellent

### Level

Young Adult

### Pages

384

### Year

2017

### Publisher

HarperTeen

### ISBN

9780062688521

Genevieve Grace doesn't remember what caused the accident that put her in a coma and killed her boyfriend, Dallas. When the media suggests that the driver of the other car was intoxicated, the outrage and vicious condemnation she sees online makes her feel sorry for Brad, and then afraid for herself as her memory begins to return. As public vitriol towards Brad builds to a boil, Genevieve escapes to her father's house just outside Zion National Park to avoid insensitive and curious classmates and pushy reporters, but laying low only hides her from Dallas's fan base for so long, and it does nothing to shield her from her own returning memories. She is the one at fault, and her conscience is at war with her fear of the hate that has been misdirected at Brad for so long. First confiding in Elliot begins to give Genevieve the courage and determination that leads her to officially clear the record and begin the process of moving forward from the tragedy in the open.

Stokes has written a story that makes great strides in accurately portraying the negative potential of internet culture in today's world. The primary struggle throughout the novel is between commitment to truth and the self-preservation behavior that can stem from fear of becoming the target of hate from the vast and often anonymous online mobs who frequently act as judge and jury without any interest in facts or research. The reader easily sympathizes with Genevieve's plight, in its multiple facets, so that even though you're rooting for her to tell the truth, you can't quite condemn her hesitation to come forward. Stokes has woven this central conflict expertly throughout with other big, everyday challenges like broken family relationships and trust in friendships. Her characters feel real, each with their own complex histories that fit naturally into Genevieve's contact with them rather than becoming contrived soapboxes. *This Is How It Happened* will draw in readers with the mystery and tension of just what happened that night, ultimately calling attention to a danger that is often overlooked in driving.

\*Contains mild language and mild sexual content.