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This Is How It Happened



Synopsis

The author of *Girl Against the Universe* and *Liars, Inc.* plunges readers into a world where the internet is always watching and judging in this compelling story about mistakes, repercussions, and online vigilante justice. Perfect for fans of Sarah Darer Littman's *Backlash* or Robyn Schneider's *The Beginning of Everything*. After waking up from a coma, Genevieve Grace can't remember the car crash that killed her boyfriend Dallas, a YouTuber turned teen music idol. Genevieve knows she was driving, but because of what's been reported in the media, everyone assumes the other driver, Brad Freeman, is guilty. As she slowly pieces together the night of the accident, Genevieve is hit with a sickening sense of dread—what if she's the one at fault? While the internet and social media viciously condemn Brad, Genevieve escapes to her father's house near Zion National Park to hide from curious classmates and intrusive reporters. But she quickly realizes that she can't run away from the accident. And eventually, she will have to come to grips with what happened and her role in it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The ensuing tale of grief and forgiveness is smartly paced. Stokes doesn't lean too hard on the mystery element, revealing the cold truth early enough to follow through with all the baggage that comes with it. Genevieve's relationship with her father and stepmother is sweetly characterized, providing solid thematic reinforcement to boot. A Greek chorus in the form of the

internet provides Gen and readers with updates on the chaos ensuing back home, while a hot, brown-skinned co-worker gives Gen a reason to work her way through her grief." — A sobering exploration of absolution." — Kirkus Reviews"Stokes explores the power of social media and online shaming...The book effectively demonstrates the effects of cyberbullying." — School Library Journal"The supporting cast of characters is strong, from Genevieve's no-nonsense mother to Elliott, the boy with two dads, who works at Zion National Park. Stokes builds realistic tension with the bombardment of social media, that faceless jury so quick to judge, sentence, and execute. This tragedy wrapped in a compelling mystery will entrance readers." — ALA Booklist"Stokes has written a powerful and thought provoking book that dares to take on two tough topics. I loved that this book made me think and ponder things. This is an excellent book that will start a conversation." — Rainy Day RamblingsPraise for *Girl Against the Universe*"Stokes's engaging prose and sympathetic characters serve up great lessons in acceptance for teens dealing with trauma." — Kirkus Reviews"Teens will find in Maguire a compelling heroine. Her obsessive behaviors are depicted in convincing detail. Maguire's forays into wellness are anything but pat, giving her story additional credibility. Teens who enjoy emotionally charged stories will appreciate this novel about resilience." — School Library Journal"Romance fans will enjoy the slow, sweet, and tentative burn between the teens. Recommend to readers who enjoy Jenny Han or Maureen Johnson." — ALA Booklist"An engaging story. Its true appeal lies with Stokes's well-developed characters and in the way Maguire and Jordy support each other's efforts to conquer the challenges they face." — Publishers Weekly"Maguire is a brave, relatable character...There are friendships formed, family relationships tested and restored, and issues of identity explored. This is a satisfying and breezy book with likeable characters working through trauma to move to better, healthier places in their lives." — Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)

— "Smartly paced. A sobering exploration of absolution." (Kirkus Reviews)

— "The supporting cast of characters is strong. Stokes builds realistic tension with the bombardment of social media, that faceless jury so quick to judge, sentence, and execute. This tragedy wrapped in a compelling mystery will entrance readers." (Booklist)

Paula Stokes writes stories about flawed characters with good hearts who sometimes make bad decisions. In addition to writing, she enjoys kayaking, hiking, reading, and seeking out new adventures in faraway lands. Paula is also the author of *The Art of Lainey*. She loves interacting with readers.

Paula Stokes's latest contemporary examines what it means to be highly connected to social media, what happens when your worst mistake is heard by millions, and facing your past. I love the complex layers to this story, particularly the inclusion of Zion National Park. Stokes masterfully shows how people, especially teens, are connected to nature and the internet (and the pros and cons of both). Genevieve is an excellent protagonist, relatable and realistically flawed. You'll find yourself captured by her story and eager to discover how (and if) Genevieve realizes and owns her mistakes.

At first glance this book is about a boy and a girl. Then it's about an accident that tears their worlds apart. While the accident part of this story was endearing it's not that part of the book that stood out to me. Your words have consequences and they can hurt a person just as much as a fatal car accident. It was about how a moment and one decision can change the course of your life. The things that you type can have an immense power on others and you must be responsible for those actions. I wasn't expecting such a poignant story but I'm grateful that's what I received

The only other book I have read by Paula Stokes has been *Girl Against The Universe*, exactly a year ago. It was cute and super mental health positive, whereas *This Is How It Happened* is much more serious in the topics it tackles, and I think it is a good reflection of the times and how she wanted to portray these things through the main character, Genevieve. Even though this book had bits and moments of romance that were extremely cute and unexpected, this is not a romance book. It reads mainly as a mystery novel where you, along with Genevieve, have to uncover what happened the night of the car accident. In addition, she has to deal with the consequences this brings not only from the accident but also social media as the people there try to seek justice. Throughout the story, there is questioning of morals, mainly on Genevieve's part as she struggles to do what she thinks is the right thing and what the people want, as well as protecting herself and family from the repercussions of the media. I loved these parts so much because she wasn't your typical lawful good heroine character. Instead, she was deeply flawed and insecure, with worries and troubles, but also dreams. And the pressure of everyone wanting a specific result from her, to blame Brad Freeman for the death of her boyfriend, made her easier to relate to and likeable for me. The other part I deeply enjoyed was the constant questioning of social media and the involvement of people when it comes to "calling out" something that has become more common each day thanks to the internet. Crime cases involve all of the society today, unlike years ago when the reaction of everyone was

much more delayed. This calling out culture has become toxic, and I completely disagree with it, which is why I haven't been as involved with the book community on Twitter as I used to be. Paula Stokes questions and challenges this through a series of news articles and comments within the book, as well as Twitter threads, related to the car accident. It was hilarious, as well as shocking, to see how the rude comments, as well as the most sensible ones, were a direct reflection of anything you see posted online today. Even though I haven't read any of Paula's other books other than this and GATU, I have to say that this is one of her darker ones, but not without a resolution for the characters. She kept it real until the end, and I loved how she would work the themes of grief and guilt alongside the bullying, mob mentality, and relationships. Genevieve's journey is one of many challenges and growth, learning to trust and overcome obstacles, and that the simple road is not always the best one, or the right one. In the overwhelming world of manipulating media and fast lives, it is easy to forget or not notice these things, as well as forget to take care of yourself every once in a while and that you are not alone. Overall, I think this book will resonate with many, particularly those that have witnessed or have been victims of the effects of cyberbullying, or have been participants in it with or without being conscious of the consequences. It also sheds light in the dangers of drinking and driving, as well as sleep deprivation, something that is easily overlooked in modern society. With great family dynamics (as always), supportive friendships, moving on, healing, and learning from your mistakes, this book is definitely a must-read. Cannot rave and recommend it enough. Review by Jennifer Madero

Oh, this is a lovely gem of a book. Thought provoking and quite full of life lessons, it ended up being an awesome read for me. It started a bit slow, but after awhile, I was definitely all in. So let's check out the good parts first, shall we? -An emotionally powerful yet flawed main character kept me invested. Genevieve was obviously sympathetic at the start of the book, because of course she was. Her damn boyfriend just died in a car accident, who would not like her? But things get... murky along the way. I won't get into it too much for the sake of spoilers (though it wasn't altogether surprising where the story was headed, it also didn't have an effect on my liking of the book), but Genevieve running away certainly didn't endear her to people. That is part of what makes the book so good for me though. The author does a fabulous job of making you feel for Genevieve even in the midst of some decisions that the reader may not agree with. Because honestly, does any of us know how we'd react in her shoes? -Super relevant and timely lessons in cyber bullying. We live in a world where the damn president is bullying people on Twitter, so this could not come at a better time. I loved that the author doesn't present this as a lecture of who is right and who is wrong, but in

a very morally gray way. Initially, when people are ranting about the potentially intoxicated driver, no one bats an eye. But is it ever our right to attack someone? Even if we did know all the facts, what makes it okay? These questions are presented a lot throughout the story, and in a really fabulous and heart-wrenching way.-Such incredibly vivid description of the surroundings made the book feel so real and vibrant. When Genevieve goes to Utah, I didn't expect the lovely descriptions that I ended up getting. And when she went to volunteer at Zion... well, because of the author's amazing ability to make the park come to life, it's now on my bucket list. It was honestly an unexpected, but much welcomed surprise in a contemporary novel. And, it made me relate a lot more to Genevieve because I could so intensely picture what she was going through- both emotionally and physically. I dare say all contemporaries I read from here on out will be judged by a higher standard because of the vividness of Ms. Stokes's writing.-Genevieve's relationships were so incredibly authentic feeling. Her parents were flawed too, but it was abundantly clear that they loved her and would be there for her. Her relationships with them were messy at times, but they never wavered in having her best interests at heart. And for her part, Genevieve loved them too. She also had some really great friend relationships along the way, which I was so glad for. And yes, there is a bit of a romance, and I won't lie, I adored it. The only thing that made me give this 4.5 instead of 5 full stars is that it did take me a little bit of time to get into the story. So if you happen to find yourself unsure about it, I urge you to push through a bit more, because for me it was completely worth it! Bottom Line: Lovely, thought-provoking, and heartbreaking, this novel about trying to do the right thing and overcoming difficult obstacles hit me in the feels over and over.

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