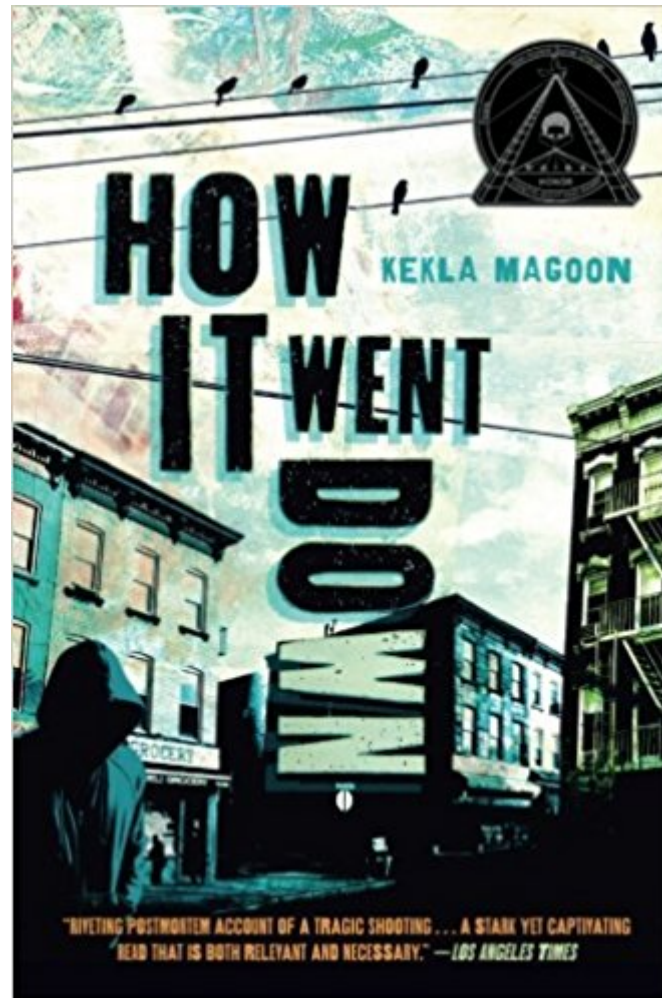




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How It Went Down



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Synopsis

A Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book When sixteen-year-old Tariq Johnson dies from two gunshot wounds, his community is thrown into an uproar. Tariq was black. The shooter, Jack Franklin, is white. In the aftermath of Tariq's death, everyone has something to say, but no two accounts of the events line up. Day by day, new twists further obscure the truth. Tariq's friends, family, and community struggle to make sense of the tragedy, and to cope with the hole left behind when a life is cut short. In their own words, they grapple for a way to say with certainty: This is how it went down. *How It Went Down* by Kekla Magoon is a timely story by an acclaimed author who won the Coretta Scott King-John Steptoe Award for the Rock and the River, whose book *X : A Novel* (written with Ilyasah Shabazz) was longlisted for the National Book Award. This title has Common Core connections.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up **When 16-year-old Tariq, a black teen, is shot and killed by a white man, every witness has a slightly different perception of the chain of events leading up to the murder. Family, friends, gang members, neighbors, and a well-meaning but self-serving minister make up the broad cast of characters. The police bring their own personal biases to their investigation of the case. When all points of view are combined, the story of a young man emerges and with it, a narrative that plays out in communities across the country every day. Heartbreaking and unputdownable, this is an important book about perception and race. *How It Went Down* reads very much like *Julius Lester's Day of Tears* (Hyperion, 2005) in a modern setting and for an older audience. With a great**

hook and relatable characters, this will be popular for fans of realistic fiction. The unique storytelling style and thematic relevance will make it a potentially intriguing pick for classroom discussion. — Kristin Anderson, Columbus Metropolitan Library System, OH --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

— “Brilliantly crafted, heart-wrenching, and unforgettable.” — Laurie Halse Anderson, New York Times bestselling author of *Speak* — “The layered voices tell a story both simple and complicated, heartbreaking and maddening.” — The Chicago Tribune — “Kekla Magoon’s books just keep getting better.” It’s an important, compelling story that everyone should read, especially high school students trying to make sense of our supposed post-racial world. — BookPage, A Teen Top Pick — “In *How It Went Down*, Kekla Magoon deftly renders us witnesses to an all-too-common news flash in uncommon, unflinching prose. Gripping to the end.” — Rita Williams-Garcia Newbery Honor winner, National Book Award finalist, and Coretta Scott King Award winner — “A hard-hitting look at the ripple effects of one act of violence on an entire community. *How It Went Down* is engrossing and real—it’s the right book at the right time.” — Coe Booth, LA Times Book Prize winner — “Thoughtful and compassionate, beautifully composed, this book takes us inside what we think we know and shows us more.” — Helen Frost, Printz Honor winner — “Magoon masterfully captures the cycle of urban violence and the raw emotions of the young people who can’t escape its impact.” — Publishers Weekly, starred review — “*How It Went Down* is a snapshot in time, a fascinating study of people caught in the crosshairs of an ‘Event.’ . . . A particularly timely tale that can create dialogue and provide understanding about the decisions other people make, and the actions they take.” — VOYA, starred review — “This sobering yet satisfying novel leaves readers to ponder the complex questions it raises.” — Kirkus Reviews, starred review — “The many voices provide poignant insights into the forces at play in the impoverished neighborhoods, where joining a gang is tough to resist, but the various perspectives also offer compelling and plausible insights into the way perceptions and preconceptions shape narratives and affect our actions.” — BCCB — “A powerful novel that will resonate with fans of *Myster’s Monster* and Woodson’s *Miracle’s Boys*.” — The Horn Book — “Kekla Magoon’s *How It Went Down* about a black teen who is shot by a white man, is . . . just the right title for young adults grappling with the headlines streaming in every day.” — School Library Journal — “Heartbreaking and unputdownable.” — School Library Journal

Many former inmates, later cleared by DNA were victims of false eyewitness accounts. We all view life through a filter of our experiences known and unknown preconceived notions. HOW IT WENT DOWN is a fictional account of a shooting death of an unarmed black boy in a hoodie by a white man who assumed the teenager was an armed thief fleeing capture. Tariq is not a perfect child, a saint gunned down by a horrible person with nefarious intentions. He has a mouth that sometimes gets him in trouble and has flirted with, but avoided gang affiliation. He's also a responsible young man devoted to his intellectually disabled little sister, on an errand for his mom. Tariq accidentally leaves behind at the store his change. When the shopkeeper runs after him, another white store owner assumes Tariq is gang banger fleeing from a robbery. The multiple points of view can be confusing, but are easy to distinguish between those who want to see the worst of Tariq to those who do not. HOW IT WENT DOWN isn't black vs white. Some of the black characters assume he was part of a gang or are using his death for their own agenda. As in life, an unjust shooting cannot have a happy ending, or even a real ending. Life continues. Justice is an illusion.

With a plot that unfortunately mirrors our society far too well, How It Went Down is a truly exceptional and well-rounded narrative that gives great perspective on the purely unjust shootings of black adolescents and men. Was it a hate crime? Or self defense? Did Tariq Johnson have a gun? Or was it just a harmless Snickers bar? Some of the information of the case is clear, but other observations differ and conflict with one another. All the narrators are very authentic and realistic with their views based on their place in society as well as who they associate with. They're all trying to make sense about what happened based on their own opinions and eye-witness accounts of the tragedy. It amazes me how impulsive it was of Jack Franklin and his actions, and also the fact that he was easily released shortly after killing Tariq. You never get his perspective or narration, as well as Tariq's. I feel like this emphasizes the uncertainty of it all. The killer had his motives, but from an outsider's perspective: why? Overall, the book was very powerful and impactful. It's a great book for discussion, especially since it's such a prevalent issue today. Also, it gives you different point-of-views that help make the case complex and very informational as to why the witnesses believe what they believe.

I liked this book. The author has interesting style of writing - weaving several individuals' perspectives into the story. The characters are all flawed in their own ways (as we all are), but are well-developed and relatable. A sad, but ultimately somewhat hopeful story that gives a more

intimate look at a tough issue our nation faces today.

Wow! I just finished this story of an African American young man shot by a young white man. Told in multiple points of view. Riveting and evocative. Will crack your heart open with overflowing compassion for each character. Listened on Audible and read the book. Great audio performance with multiple actors. Award worthy story!

I taught this book to my high school freshmen English class, and they LOVED it. If YA books are truly meant to engage young adults (especially struggling readers), then this book succeeds like few others. Even my "F" students were engaged, eagerly explaining to their class partner the many ways that Tariq was misunderstood. Teaching this book is one of the highlights of my teaching career, and I plan on doing it again next year.

I read this book, right as Ferguson, Missouri was making headlines. Underhill, where this book takes place, could've been Ferguson. 16 year old Tariq, a black teen, is shot by Jack Franklin, a white man. . Each chapter is told from the perspective of either a witness, a gang member, a family member, a friend, a neighbor or the minister who arrives in town to help..but no two accounts are the same. What makes the book so thought-provoking is that it explores why each of the characters believes their "truth".

This book reminds the reader of what is still happening between the races: Tariq (T to his friends) is shot and killed by a white man who says T ran out of a store after stealing and with a gun in his hand. Through a series of voices---the reader sees how unreliable many of the witnesses account are; and the situation is made worse when the police let the shooter go. This is an achingly real, torn from the headlines story that is all too familiar and sad. Kekla Magoon catches the impact T's shooting/killing has on many of the characters. Highly recommended.

A very good read - multi-dimensional characters well rendered. Highly recommended. A look at the complexities and difficulties of life.

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