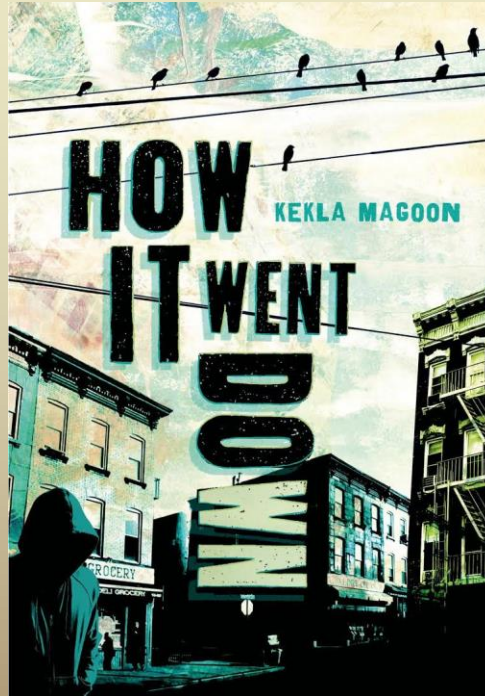


How It Went Down

No one really knows the truth about the circumstances of the night a black teenager, sixteen-year-old African-American Tariq Johnson, is shot by a white gunman, Jack Franklin. The witnesses' stories differ about key details, and the teens don't tell everything they know or everything they saw. The petty jealousies between gang members, the manipulation by the reporters, the lack of investigation undertaken by the police, and the grief suffered by Tariq's family and friends all play a role in hiding the truth. But one thing is clear—a boy has been shot, and the man who shot him walks free. Magoon offers a timely story about the effects of a racially-charged shooting on a community.

Book summary adapted from the How It Went Down Reading Guide through MacMillan Publishing.



Kekla Magoon is the author of nine novels, including *The Rock and the River*, *How It Went Down*, *X: A Novel (with Ilyasah Shabazz)*, and the *Robyn Hoodlum Adventures* series. She has received an NAACP Image Award, the John Steptoe New Talent Award, two Coretta Scott King Honors, The Walter Award Honor, the In the Margins Award, and been long listed for the National Book Award. She also writes non-fiction on historical topics. Kekla conducts school and library visits nationwide and serves on the Writers' Council for the National Writing Project. Kekla holds a B.A. from Northwestern University and an M.F.A. in Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts, where she now serves on the faculty. Magoon is the 2017 National Author winner of the Eugene & Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Award.

Kekla
Magoon



The Eugene
& Marilyn Glick
★ INDIANA
Authors
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Useful Links

Additional *How It Went Down* reading guide for teachers:
<http://bit.ly/2udFrHG>

NYT article, "Where Fiction and Reality Collide: Books and Black Lives Matter"
<http://nyfi.ms/2vhacZ0>

Eugene & Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Award:
www.indianaauthorsaward.org

The Indiana Authors Award

The Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Award was established when **The Indianapolis Public Library Foundation** received a generous grant from **The Glick Fund, a fund of Central Indiana Community Foundation**. This program seeks to recognize the contributions of Indiana authors to the literary landscape in Indiana and across the nation. The Award is divided into four categories: Emerging, for new writers of one or two books that show great promise; Genre Excellence, for writers who excel in a specific literary genre; Regional, for writers well known and respected especially in Indiana and the Midwest; and National, for writers of widespread acclaim. Each winning author receives a cash prize and a \$2,500 grant for the Indiana public library of his or her choice.

Discussion Questions



1. Eighteen different characters share their perspective on *How It Went Down*, but the shooter Jack Franklin's voice is notably absent. Why do you think Magoon made that choice? Whose voice were you most interested in?
2. Identity is an important theme in the novel, with various characters fighting to conform to, or break free from, anticipated roles. How does Magoon move beyond stereotypes in her characterizations?
3. Think about your own community and its unique culture and values. What do you think would be the aftermath of a similar incident in your community?
4. How do you think Tariq's death went down? What information do you use to make that assessment?
5. In today's 24-hour news cycle, there are a lot of conflicting voices. *How It Went Down* is inspired by recent events in the news. How do you separate relevant facts from opinion?
6. Magoon leaves many questions unresolved. What do you think will happen next with the characters and the broader issues surrounding Tariq's death? If you lived in Underhill, what would you do next?