

## **Technically, You Started It**

**Lana Wood Johnson**

**Reviewed by: Ritika Chhabra, 13**

**Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity**

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Haley knows both Martin Nathaniel Munroe II's, the sweet, cute one and the aloof, disinterested one. So of course, when she receives a random text about a class project, Haley automatically assumes it's the Martin she likes. As they get to know each other better through online conversations, they begin to realize that they have much more in common than they initially thought. Even though they never meet each other at school, Haley knows that Martin is someone who makes her feel comfortable and cared for. But what Haley doesn't realize is that it's the *wrong Martin* she's talking to. As their friendship deepens, all it will take is one slip up to send it spiraling out of control.

This book was laden with sweetness and comedy, in a way that is light, but meaningful. My favourite part about this novel was its formatting, as it was written entirely in texts between Haley and Martin. Even though the characters do not talk in person, their texting makes the narrative even more tender and relatable than a standard novel would have been. I also loved how the story represented a thoughtful and deep online relationship, one that sets a good example of positive media usage and interaction. To tie it all together, both characters were humorous and quick-witted, and communicated in a way that felt authentic and realistic. They each had distinct and individual personalities that carried well through the novel's storyline.

One thing I didn't like about this story was the limited perspective and range of conversation. I think that adding a few other texting conversations, with some of Haley's other friends or family, would have given much more context and insight into her daily life. While the story was emotionally driven and entertaining in most parts, there were a few areas which felt stagnant and slow. There are several random facts and posts that help convey the character's personalities, but stand in the way of the storyline's movement. Overall, I loved that "Technically, You Started It" had diverse characters and an innovative style, but felt that it lacked perspective and a good pacing. This book is a light and quick read that would be best for readers ages 11+.

### **Recommended Titles**

Tweet Cute by Emma Lord

The Upside of Falling by Alex Light

What I Like About You by Marisa Kanter

Yes No Maybe So by Becky Albertalli

By the Book by Amanda Sellet