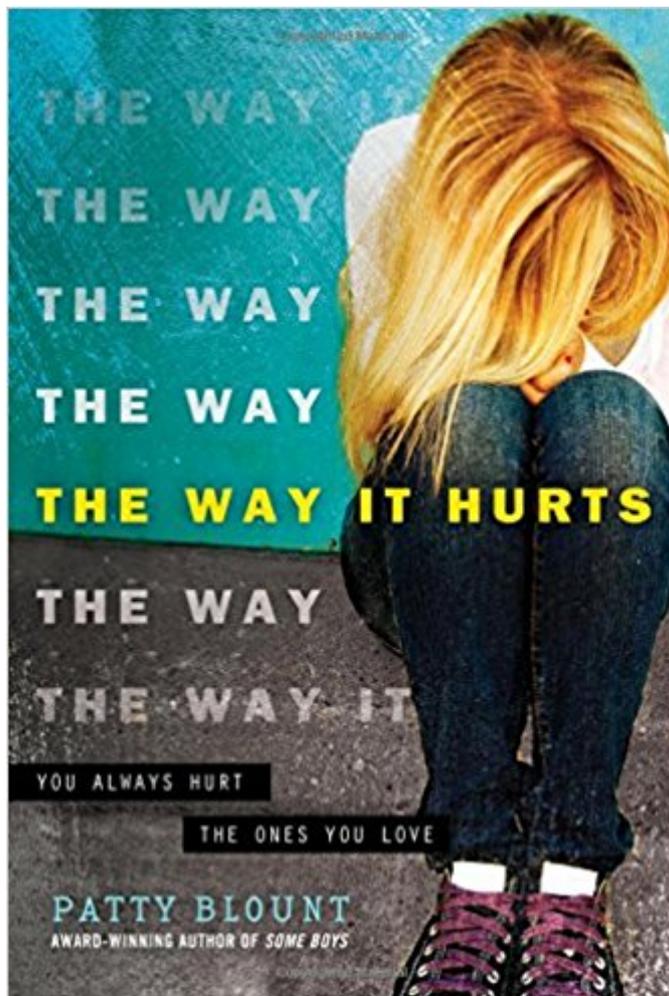


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# The Way It Hurts



## Synopsis

There may be two sides to every story, but sometimes there's only one way to set things right...Music is Elijah's life. His band plays loud and hard, and he'll do anything to get them a big break. He needs that success to help take care of his sister, who has special needs. So he'd rather be practicing when his friends drag him to a musical in the next town...until the lead starts to sing.Kristen dreams of a career on stage like her grandmother's. She knows she needs an edge to get into a competitive theater program—and being the star in her high school musical isn't going to cut it. The applause and the attention only encourage her to work harder.Elijah can't take his eyes off of Kristen's performance, and snaps a photo of her in costume that he posts online with a comment that everybody misunderstands. It goes viral. It goes viral. Suddenly, Elijah and Kristen are in a new spotlight as the online backlash spins out of control. And the consequences are bigger than they both could have ever imagined because these threats don't stay online...they follow them into real life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

School Library Journal. BLOUNT, Patty. The Way It Hurts. 400p. Sourcebooks/Fire. Aug. 2017. pap. \$10.99. ISBN 9781492632788. POP Gr 8 Up-Music is everything. This is one thing that Elijah and Kristen can agree on. Beyond that, they could not be more different. Elijah is part of the band Ride Out, known for its head-banging, heavy metal, hard rock sound. He dreams of hitting it big and using the money to help his sister Anna, who has special needs. Kristen, on the other hand, yearns to become a star on the Broadway stage. The teens' worlds collide when

Elijah and his friends attend Kristen's high school musical production of *Cats* and Elijah cannot take his eyes off Kristen. One tweet about Elijah changes their lives forever as their social media war takes center stage. Amid their Twitter battle, and with her grandmother Etta's guidance, Kristen decides to join Ride Out. Will it give her the edge she needs to get into a competitive theater program? Or will the teens' lives spiral out of control as the backlash from their social media war becomes very real? "Blount writes authentically; both protagonists' voices are distinct. The author explores the rapidly consuming world of social media and how it affects relationships online and in real life." VERDICT "A relevant read and must-have for all YA collections." -Elizabeth Blake, Brooklyn Public Library "Elijah and Kristen's personal evolutions through the novel, along with their chemistry, feel as authentic as the conflicts they face. A genuine plot filled with steady tension that will keep readers hooked." - RT Book Reviews, 4 Stars

PATTY BLOUNT works as a software technical writer by day and novelist by night. Dared by her 13-year-old son to try fiction, Patty wrote her first manuscript in an ice rink. A short version of her debut novel, *Send*, finished in the top ten of the *Writer's Digest* 79th Annual Writing Competition.

Wow! I loved this book!! As always Patty writes with such amazing detail. I felt like I was right there with Kristen and Elijah, felt what they were going through. Congrats to Patty for writing yet another very now and relevant book. You should definitely read this book!

Elijah wants his band to succeed, and is willing to do anything to get them the recognition that he feels they deserve, even if it means playing tamed down music at the county fair for exposure. Kristen has her summer figured out, but when she is rejected from the Arts program she auditioned for she is crushed, but goes to perform in her school's performance because the show must go on. When Elijah sees Kristen perform, he knows that she is just what his band needs to step up their game. The hard part will be to convince his band-mates and Kristen the same... And to keep his feelings out of the mix. I have been so lucky in the books that I have tackled recently because they have all been really enjoyable reads, making me so sad to put one down for fear the next can't live up to the high expectations I currently have. Well, this book was love for me. I had anticipated to like the story, pretty much due to the music aspect and the push-pull relationship hinted at in the synopsis, but I was caught off guard by the love I felt while reading this story. I was swept up by everything that was this book: the banter, the emotional turmoil the characters deal with, the family bonds, the angst, the pull of romantic love, the disappointment of failure, the humor of the battle of

the sexes, the high of performing, the hurt others can cause, and the twitter battle and reality of harmful social media. I felt so many emotions while reading, and was on the verge of tears a few times without even being aware they were coming until my chest was tight with emotion. You want feels? Then you have come to the right place. The best part of the story was how Patty mixed the flair and flamboyant Broadway style with the dark gritty world of Heavy Metal. As a side note, I don't think the cover did the book justice, don't get me wrong it's an ok cover, but I feel like the story was so much more than what the cover seems. This story was about family, relationships in general and the big factor that ties them all together- Music. The things that stood out to me the most was Elijah's relationship with his special needs sister Anna and Kristen's grandmother Etta. Elijah loves his sister, regardless of how difficult she can be and he is willing to bend over backward to make her happy, which is uncommon for a teen, who are usually so focused on themselves at that age. You find out pretty late in the story that she is part of the autism spectrum, but the signs were around. I liked that Elijah never saw her as a burden, but instead he could see her intelligence and potential, and would do whatever he could to let her be herself. The fact he sings to her to calm her and has fully clothed, totally not inappropriate (regardless of what his mom says!) bath time with her was heart warming. Etta was such an influential person to Kristen, she inspired her to follow in her footsteps, her quotes help Kristen make life choices and she was the encouragement that Kristen needed to make her big choice- with out Etta, Kristen would never have been where she ended up. This was my first book by Patty and I enjoyed her writing, the pacing, and use of social media- mixing the text conversations with actual conversation to keep it relevant for the time. She created people I felt for, that I loved, that I rooted for, and I believed in. And the ending was just what I wanted, a nice wrap-up to the story that covered everything I wanted to know (I love having a book with no loose ends). This was an emotional roller-coaster for me, with some amazing highs and some low lows, but I would not change a single thing. This is perfect for someone who wants some feels and romance with their music. Rock on!! received this title in return for my honest review.

Kristen and Elijah share different segments of the same passion. He's into heavy metal and is frustrated because three years of work and playing in a band hasn't gotten him where he wants to be. She's frustrated because her hoped for summer program rejected her as 'not quite good enough' and she's worried her dreams of getting accepted at a place like Berklee School of Music will evaporate as well. It's by chance that they meet when Nick, the band's drummer, drags Elijah to a high school performance of Cats because his girlfriend has the lead. The moment Elijah sees

Kristen and hears her voice when she sings because Nick's girlfriend has laryngitis, he's a goner, but were things so simple he could just walk up, introduce himself and ask her to join the band. There are plenty of barriers to both romance and success as the story progresses; things like her having been an online critic of the band and their music, Elijah's preoccupation with taking care of his sister, Kristen's fear of the slew of vicious and scary comments posted online after she does sing with the band and neither of them being willing or able to express how they really feel for the other person. Having worked with teens in a mental health setting and had experience as a public librarian working with teens, I can attest to the power of anonymous nastiness online. Some might thing this as overdone here, but I disagree. I read the book in a couple afternoons and thoroughly enjoyed it. I would recommend it to both school and public libraries as teens will see bits of themselves and their friends scattered through the story.

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