



OPRAH GIRL MEMOIRS OF A FALLING FACADE

by: Kaylah Pantaleón
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In January 2006, Oprah Winfrey selected *Night* by Elie Wiesel for the highly acclaimed Oprah's Book Club. *Night*, a story about Wiesel's horrific survival of the Holocaust, would soon motivate the first ever Oprah's National High School Essay Contest. "Why is the book *Night* by Elie Wiesel relevant today?" was the essay question heard across the United States. Oprah, with her exclusive team of literature professors and librarians, received over 50,000 essay entries and narrowed down the selection to 100 semi-finalists. Within a month's time, a panel of expert judges chose the final 50 winners. *Oprah Girl: Memoirs of a Falling Facade*, is the true life story of essay winner Kaylah Pantaleón.

Kaylah is a second generation Dominican born and raised in Yonkers, New York where she lives with her mother, step-father and two siblings in a low-income housing complex on Riverdale Avenue. She uses her impoverished neighborhood for the basis of her winning essay, turning a negative situation positive. Despite her rough environment, at the time of the contest she is a consistent high honor roll student and later graduates as senior class president of Yonkers High School. This story begins in the creative mind of 17-year-old Kaylah, offering a detailed account of the events leading up to her TV debut on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. She quickly becomes a local celebrity after the episode airs a month later, with promise of a bright future in literary and dramatic arts.

Unfortunately, her world takes a dark turn when she finds herself living a double life as a student at Emerson College. *Oprah Girl: Memoirs of a Falling Facade* is a riveting true story about the constant battle between Kaylah's heart and mind as she desperately tries to uphold the "Oprah Girl" image in the eyes of her friends and family, while continuing to keep her unconventional love a secret...until now.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kaylah Pantaleón, a Dominican-American native of Yonkers, New York has had a passion for writing from an early age. She developed a true love for the written word at the tender age of four, when she began to devotedly write letters to her imprisoned father. As a child of divorce and an incarcerated father, she has used her first hand experiences to pen rich, authentic award-winning tales. Her writing acknowledgements include the 2006 Sarah Lawrence Fulbright Summer Scholarship for Writing Award; the 2007 American Association of University Women Writers Award; and the most notable being the 2006 Oprah's National High School Essay Contest Finalist awarded by media titan Oprah Winfrey. Now a graduate of Emerson College and a resident of Sherman Oaks, California, Kaylah, a budding actress and author invites readers into her world to share her trials and triumphs since appearing on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. *Oprah Girl* is Kaylah's debut book.