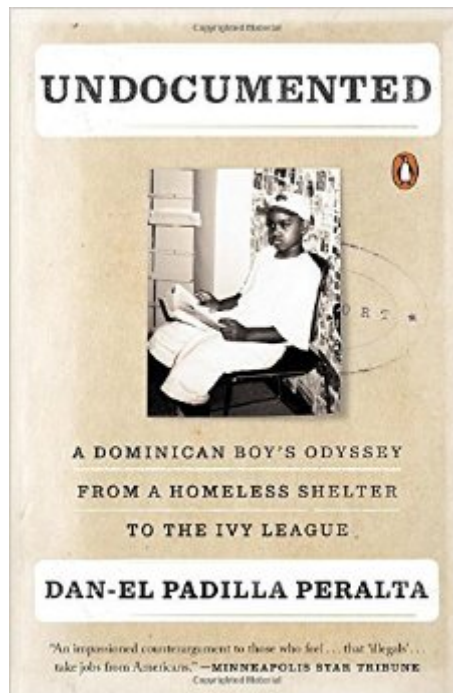


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Undocumented: A Dominican Boy's Odyssey From A Homeless Shelter To The Ivy League



Synopsis

An undocumented immigrant's journey from a New York City homeless shelter to the top of his Princeton class — Dan-el Padilla Peralta has lived the American dream. As a boy, he arrived in the United States legally with his family. Together they had traveled from Santo Domingo to seek medical care for his mother. Soon the family's visas lapsed, and Dan-el's father eventually returned home. But Dan-el's courageous mother decided to stay and make a better life for her bright sons in New York City. — Without papers, she faced tremendous obstacles. While Dan-el was only in grade school, the family joined the ranks of the city's homeless. Dan-el, his mother, and brother lived in a downtown shelter where Dan-el's only refuge was the meager library. At another shelter he met Jeff, a young volunteer from a wealthy family. Jeff was immediately struck by Dan-el's passion for books and learning. With Jeff's help, Dan-el was accepted on scholarship to Collegiate, the oldest private school in the country. — There, Dan-el thrived. Throughout his youth, Dan-el navigated two worlds: the rough streets of East Harlem, where he lived with his brother and his mother and tried to make friends, and the ultra-elite halls of a Manhattan private school, where he immersed himself in a world of books and rose to the top of his class. — From Collegiate, Dan-el went on to Princeton, where he made the momentous decision to come out as an undocumented student in a Wall Street Journal profile a few months before he gave the salutatorian's traditional address in Latin at his commencement. — Undocumented is essential reading for the debate on immigration, but it is also an unforgettable tale of a passionate young scholar coming of age in two very different worlds. — Praise for Undocumented:

— "Undocumented is an impassioned counterargument to those who feel, as did some of Peralta's more xenophobic classmates, that 'illegals' are good-for-nothings who take jobs from Americans and deserve to be kicked out of the country. No one who reads this story of a brilliant young man and his proud mother will automatically equate undocumented immigrant with idle parasite. That stereotype is something else we shouldn't take for granted." — Minneapolis Star-Tribune — "Dan-el Padilla Peralta's story is as compulsively readable as a novel, an all-American tall tale that just happens to be true. From homeless shelter to Princeton, Oxford, and Stanford, through the grace not only of his own hard work but his mother's discipline and care, he documents the America we should still aspire to be." — Dr. Anne-Marie Slaughter, President of the New America Foundation

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Customer Reviews

But I would rather run after the impossible than live as a string of labels: undocumented, hoodrat, Dominican, classicist. I am all of those things; no one or two of them define me. I was gifted this book through the Penguin First to Read program for an honest review. This is not the typical book I choose to read, but I felt it was timely with all of the talk about immigration reform and now with the Donald denigrating immigrants to such a low level, I couldn't resist reading this book. Dan-el Padilla Peralta is a young man from the Dominican Republic who came to America fresh out of kindergarten and whose mother decided she wanted her boys to grow up and be educated in America. She made the choice to not return and so they lived as undocumented aliens except for Dan-el's younger brother Yando who was born in America. Dan-el was an exceptionally smart young man. He was able to get a full scholarship first to a Prep school called Collegiate, (JFK Jr. attended also) and then he went on to Princeton and Oxford and now Stanford. His story of a double life was heartrending at times and the stress he lived under and still was able to achieve everything he has is remarkable. Dan-el Padilla Peralta tells his story honestly and it made me realize what a tragedy was averted because he was able to stay in this country to achieve so much. We truly need immigration reform and help these children of immigrants realize the American Dream that our grandparents were able to attain. People who say Dan-el is an exception to the rule miss the issue in this book that everyone should have the chance to live in America and contribute. That is what makes our country so great. Let's not lose that message that we have always stressed.

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