

Book Review: The Truths We Hold



Genre: Autobiography

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“The truths we hold” is the written version of the life of US vice president, Kamala Harris. Although this version is for younger readers, the life, struggles, and journey of the US vice president have been well-reflected in this autobiography. Kamala Devi Harris, born on October 20, 1964, in California’s Oakland city, Harris is now famously known for her role as the current vice president of the United States. And in addition to being the first African-American and first

Asian-American vice president, she is the first female vice president and the highest-ranking female official in American history. So, how did she do it?

Kamala Harries was born to a family of immigrant parents. Her father, Donald Harris was originally from Jamaica and had come to the US to study at the University of California. Where her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, was originally from Southern India. After being emboldened by her parents, Gopalan set foot in the States after she applied to the University of Berkeley at the age of 19. In 1958, when Gopalan arrived in the States, she matriculated herself into the doctorate program in nutrition and endocrinology at Berkeley University. Being an immigrant who had exotic looks in comparison to others in a country to which she was unknown, Gopalan quickly became subject to discrimination, racism, sexism as she was a woman, and harassment.

But during the 1958 era, the United States was racist to almost everyone else except the people who were white. Which especially included the black race. So, Gopalan undoubtedly felt included when fighting for the black community in the civil rights movement as she knew the torment that came with being discriminated against. But during one of these civil rights movements, Gopalan met Donald Harris who ended up being her husband. Soon after, they had Kamala and her sister Maya Harris.

Her autobiography starts with the introduction of her family, her birthplace, and the environment she grew up in. Harris always had the dream of becoming a doctor like her mother but after going to Howard University, she realized that her real passion was in becoming a lawyer. And after her graduation, she expressed her will to become a prosecutor to her parents. Her parents didn't support the idea at first as most prosecutors have negative feedback in terms of races other than white. Even Kamala knew the feelings her parents were trying to express as she had also been a victim of racial discrimination since she was young. But she thought of her dream to become a prosecutor as an opportunity to bring equality and fair treatment in the law system. So, she followed her passion and got appointed as a deputy DA at Oakland. At this point in her life as a prosecutor, since she had to deal with so many challenging cases, she got to learn about the unfair treatment that goes into a court judgment. Unfairness against minorities, women, children, etc. She used her position as a prosecutor to eliminate this unfairness. And after a series of

events, Kamala Harris became the California Attorney General, and United States Senator after running along with Donald Trump and finally became the Vice President of the United States on August 11, 2020.

Harris's parents got divorced during the time Harris's younger sister Maya Harris was born. Harris always felt sorry for her sister as she knew Maya would never get to experience the perfect family Harris got to experience. But even though Kamala and her sister Maya were raised by a single mother, they both grew up to become strong women. Kamala has always seen her mother as a fierce, strong, and independent woman who has always stood her ground and has raised her voice against unfairness. Her mother has always sided with what is right. And especially for immigrant rights and discrimination against minorities. She has shown her support to bring equal rights to everyone no matter their race, sex, gender, or origin by going to different civil rights protests. Kamala and Maya were heavily influenced by their mother's fierce spirit growing up and were taught about the different one-sided arguments going on around them from a young age. They have always looked up to their mother and following in her footsteps they have become the state's most-liked and most influential leaders.

But Harris didn't just get all this love and support from the nation out of random, she got this support due to the huge influential works she participated in or initiated in her journey. Being provided with a powerful platform after graduation, Harris specialized in the prosecution of child sexual assault cases as a DA which later on assigned her to the position of chief of the Division on Children and Families for the San Francisco City Attorney's Office. In 2003, Harris was elected as the District Attorney of San Francisco. Being in that position, she initiated a seminal program that provided first-time drug offenders with the opportunity to earn a high school degree and find a proper job which showed how Harris doesn't judge anyone by their skin and only wants to help people stuck in different difficulties. This shows how kind-hearted Harris is. But when Harris got elected as California's Attorney General in 2010, she finally started to show some big moves taking advantage of her power. She founded the first Bureau of Children's Justice in the state and put into place several ground-breaking reforms that made the criminal justice system more open and liable. She helped Californians whose homes had been foreclosed, students, and veterans who were taken advantage of by a for-profit education company and also

became a national leader in the movement for marriage equality. In 2017, being elected to the United States Senate, Harris worked to protect many immigrant rights, she worked to protect Americans from foreign threats, protected Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and helped low-income communities during the COVID-19 pandemic which gained her more love from citizens. By this time, Harris had already started being seen as a leader by many citizens. She had the love and support from the people she had helped. She had the fierce, strong, and independent personality of a leader which she had received from her mother. She had the will to bring exceptional changes in the culture of the United States and lastly, she had the love for the people of her nation. Hence, the only thing left to do was to achieve the post of Vice President of the United States. A position from which she could diversely spread her help throughout the nation. And on August 11, 2020, Harris became the Vice President of the United States alongside Joe Biden. She became the first female, the first Black American, and the first South Asian American to be elected as Vice President. And since then, Harris has brought out many seminal movements influencing the initiation of equality in the nation. Her works and loves for the nation caused the states to respect Harris and the things she has done for them. Harris has become a role model for many. She has influenced many people, especially women, children with single parents, and immigrants with her story and journey, to know that their background cannot stop their capabilities.

To me, Harris is a very strong figure who cares about her nation's well-being. The way used her background as a method to connect with people who are similar to her is a very smart tactic in my opinion. Harris portrayed her background as a prideful thing rather than being ashamed of it and letting herself get brought down by others. She knew the pain that came with being a child raised by divorced parents, being an immigrant, and being a woman. So, she used this feeling as a way to connect with others facing similar situations and helped people in these situations by using her power which helped her gain the love and support of many. Her mother played a vital role in building Kamala Harris's strong leader-personality and love for her nation's people and her goal to bring equality to everyone in her nation. Kamala Harris become the United States' first woman, first Black American, and first South American vice president has influenced many women, and black, south, and many other Americans of different races, letting them know that

they can become anything they want and can influence millions and should never be afraid to raise their voices against discriminated in any situation.

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