

Family Over Everything: An Interview with Paige Green

By: Michelle Cuttino

Paige Green is an author and aspiring Cosmetologist. Born and raised in Northview Heights, located on the north side of Pittsburgh, PA, at a young age, she vowed that she'd do whatever it took to be successful. At seventeen years old, she tries to be a perfect example of her generation and uplift them, showing them that anything is possible with hard work and dedication. She's a senior in high school, class of 2013 and the author of her freshman novel, *Family Over Everything* that is set to be released in early 2013 under Zane's Stebor Streets Publishing.

Michelle: First of all, Congratulations on becoming the youngest writer to be signed to a book deal with Zane's Stebor Streets publishing company. Tell us briefly how it happened for you.

Paige Thank you, I kindly appreciate it. But this happened after I self published my freshman novel. After I decided to self publish and gave it a try, I loved it at first because I was my own boss, you know? But after awhile, it started to get too expensive and I was in my junior year of high school, so I decided to go with a publisher, with the encouragement of my writing mentor. My manuscript got submitted to Zane, and it's been fireworks ever since.

Michelle: You seem to have surrounded yourself with greatness since Essence Bestselling author, Travis Hunter, is your writing mentor. How did that come to pass?

Paige Travis was holding a writing contest for teens, for his foundation, The Hearts Of Men, and we had to write short stories. Me being intrigued, I messaged him and asked about more info on it. He gave it to me and within a week, I had my short story ready. I submitted it to him and since he was the first person to read it out of all of his mentors at the foundation, he became my writing mentor and a positive leader in my life ever since. An amazing, kind man he is. He's a great leader.

Michelle: *Family Over Everything* is the title of the debut novel you originally self-published, and will now have rereleased by Stebor in early 2013. Give us a quick summation of what it's about.

Paige *Family Over Everything* is about a family that's born into destruction, and their struggles can either make them or break them, as a family. There are two identical brothers, Deion and Day'onne, who may look alike, but are total opposites. Deion, who is an aspiring street-lit author, does whatever it takes to keep his head up and his mind in those books as he tries his best to make it out of the gritty streets of Northview Heights. Day'onne is the ruthless, cold-hearted twin that rules the grimy neighborhood

with an iron fist. When their younger sister falls victim to the streets, their loyalty as a family is tested. Will they stand as a whole? Or turn their backs against each other when their backs are against the wall? Find out soon!

Michelle: In the book one twin is an aspiring writer and the other twin is a heartless hustler. Does this storyline mirror real life, since you have a twin sister named Paris and you are an author?

Paige No, people asked me this numerous times when they read the book on Amazon or the synopsis, when I self-published this. These characters have nothing to do with me nor my sister, Paris. I actually can't help but crack a smile when people ask me this. If anything, it's coincidental. I love my twin, Paris. She's nothing like any of those characters.

Michelle: What message are you trying to deliver in *Family Over Everything*?

Paige: The message that I'm trying to deliver in this novel is that anything is possible. This novel is a symbol of that. When I was writing this novel, at first, I had very little support. People laughed at me and when I even asked for help from my family, financially, they didn't help me. This made me hungrier. I would put in at least thirty-five hours a week during school days at my Wendy's job, to cover the financial costs. At first, I was even traveling back and forth to the libraries to type, until my mother purchased me a laptop. When people finally took heed to me working hard and developing my novel, that's when I got the support. I want to deliver a message that no matter what the circumstances are, anything is possible.

Michelle: What made you start writing, as opposed to reading? Or was reading the catalyst for your writing?

Paige I was actually an avid reader before I was an avid writer. Every time I came to school, home, and even work, I had a book in my hand. It all started when I was in seventh grade, when I read *Flyy Girl* by Omar Tyree. After that, I was hooked. But what made me really start writing, was my struggles. My main problem was I tend to hold things in and never let it out. I was never the one to show emotion. So instead, I decided to write. I wrote poems on struggle and pain. I used to thrive on pain because I was used to it. But after getting it out and noticing how my poems turned into novels and how my words evoked real emotion that even my readers felt, it was history from there.

Michelle: At seventeen, do you think you have enough life experience to write urban fiction? What do you say to those who don't believe you are old enough to have a voice?

Paige I absolutely KNOW that I'm experienced for this genre. At seventeen years old, I've been through it all, I fought, I cried, I struggled and I ran. I ran all my life until now. Writing is my life. Every word I stroke from my pen is real emotion consumed from within me. Plus, writing doesn't have an age in my opinion. If you have the ability to evoke emotions from your readers and for them to know that your writing is real, that's important. And truthfully, I can care less if anyone does believe I'm not experienced enough. Granted if they walk a mile in my shoes and faced the things I've faced, if their grown or not, they'd fall the first step. As long as I prove to myself, God, and my readers that what I'm writing is from the heart, that's all that matters.

Michelle: If you had to name an author that you write in the same vein as, whom would it be and why? What do you feel are your similarities?

Paige I would say authors Ashley & JaQuavis, simply because they were my age when they got signed to a major publishing house, too. I admire their work. They're an amazing duo. But I feel there are similarities because with every word they write, I can just feel it. The last book I read of theirs, *Murderville 2: The Epidemic*, was amazing. Just like me, that emotion they evoke, that's what I think is important.

Michelle: In addition to being an author, you are a senior in high school, with a job and are currently training in the field of cosmetology. How do you manage your time so that none of the above suffers?

Paige I manage my time simply by taking my time. I plan ahead. I used to rush and get overwhelmed and stressed out. Now I take my time. Especially with my being a senior and preparing to attend college next fall. It's very important I take baby steps. I always come with caution.

Michelle: With what you've learned thus far, what advice can you give to other teens—something you wish you would have known before you got started?

Paige Thus far, I've learned that there are scandalous people in this industry, but also real ones, that want you to succeed. Come with caution, and put yourself out there for the world to know you! But anyway, thankfully, I've been blessed with the real authors who wanted me to succeed. It's like this was meant to be for me. I couldn't have done it without Travis, who schooled me on mostly everything I know. I have major love and respect for my writing mentor. But for you teens wanting to come into this industry? RESEARCH! RESEARCH! RESEARCH! Very important. Come with caution. Put yourself and your book out there! Be yourself! Promote! Have fun! And most importantly, BE PATIENT!

You can follow Paige on Facebook or Twitter @Author_PG_FOE