

Limited Edition  
First Look

# Dreamers

Yuyi Morales

## Dear Reader,

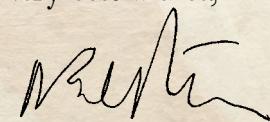
I am delighted to introduce you to *Dreamers*, an extraordinary new book by five-time Pura Belpré Award winner and Caldecott Honor recipient Yuyi Morales. I've been privileged to work with Yuyi on five previous books. Each has been a memorable experience for me as an editor and, I suspect, for readers everywhere. Working with Yuyi is a particular treat because one never knows what to expect, from the riotous alphabet acrobatics of *Just in Case* to the intrepid lucha wrestler in underpants in *Niño Wrestles the World* to the sublime, meticulously composed dimensional images of *Viva Frida*.

*Dreamers* is a book that was 24 years in the making and yet is utterly of this moment. Over those years Yuyi has spoken many times, and very movingly, about immigrating to this country from her home in Xalapa, Mexico, in 1994 with a two-month-old son in tow and very little English at her command. About her sense of dislocation, missing things that felt familiar, and her fear that she would never find a place where she felt valued again. And about how repeated visits with her young son to the libraries around San Francisco and her introduction to the world of picture books gave her that sense of place and purpose, and ignited in her a passion that would lead, in time, to her becoming one of our most gifted, and most valued, picture book creators.

Here, then, is that story, told as only Yuyi could tell it, and brilliantly illustrated with images drawn from her life—including her own childhood drawings and those of her son, metalwork, embroidery, her first handmade book, and more. *Dreamers*, I believe, is a book for all ages, and for the ages; as I write this, it is also an immensely powerful statement about the incalculable gifts that immigrants bring with them, as well as what they leave behind when they enter into a new culture.

This sampler contains only a handful of pages from the book, I hope they will touch your heart as they have mine. *Dreamers* will be published on September 4, 2018—in English and simultaneously in Spanish as *Soñadores*—as the first book of my new imprint at Holiday House.

Very best wishes,



Neal Porter

Vice President and Publisher

NEAL PORTER BOOKS



HOLIDAY HOUSE

What if you dreamed of **new life**,  
and it came to you?

What if that new life led you to a **new country**,  
where no one spoke your language,  
where you felt alone and ignored?

What if you had to make  
that **new place** your home?

What if you found that **home** in a world of books?

And what if it all were **true**?

and crossed a bridge  
outstretched like the universe.

One day  
we bundled gifts  
in our backpack,

Adiós Corazón

You and I  
became caminantes.

Thousands and thousands of steps  
we took around this land,  
until the day we found . . .



a place we had  
never seen before.

Suspicious.

Improbable.

Unimaginable.



Books became our language.  
Books became our home.  
Books became our lives.

We learned to read,

# My Story

All of us have stories. Each of them is different. This story began in 1994, when I crossed a bridge with my two-month-old son, Kelly, from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, to El Paso, Texas—and, though I did not know it at the time, to a new life in a strange and unfamiliar place, the United States of America. Once here, I was surprised by the quietness of the streets, the houses neatly lined up along the roads, and, later, by the cold winds of San Francisco Bay in summer. I had come so that my son could meet his great-grandfather Ernie, who was very ill and not expected to live much longer, and to marry Kelly's father, a US citizen. I wanted to return to Mexico soon afterward, but was shocked to learn that because of US immigration rules and my new status as a "permanent resident," I was now expected to remain in the United States. I had become an immigrant. But could I possibly call this new place my home?

Like most immigrants, I missed things that felt familiar: my family, the food, my friends, my job as a swimming coach, and my ability to communicate—to understand and be understood. In this new place where I did not speak the language, it was as if no one seemed to notice I existed, as if my words and actions didn't count. In those first days, I constantly wondered if I would ever find a place where I felt valued.

Then one day Kelly's grandmother brought us to a building that would change our lives forever. We discovered the public library, and it was SPECTACULAR!

I had never been in a place where you could just take books from the shelves without asking and without being scolded for taking them. And there were *picture* books, something I had not encountered before. I could not believe how beautiful and sturdy they were—and then, when I opened them, I was amazed at the power of their illustrations. Even though I could understand very few of the words, I realized that I could understand the story through those images—a realization that would come to inspire me later on. I began bringing Kelly there almost every day, and although at first it was difficult for a little baby to stay longer than a few minutes, eventually we were able to spend entire afternoons looking at picture books, often only leaving when we were told the library was closing. We were at home.

During those years, as Kelly got older, librarians at the Western Addition Branch, Richmond Branch, Presidio Branch, Mission Branch, and the San Francisco Main Library on Larkin Street, among many others, guided Kelly and me to find books we could love, though in an English that I struggled to understand. One day, when Kelly was not yet two years old, Nancy Jackson, the children's librarian at the Western Addition Branch, handed him his own library card. I was in awe! We could now take home a stroller brimming with books.

One of the most important things I learned at the library is that through books we can find our path and our purpose. I also learned that I love to tell stories, and that I could tell them through books. I studied the books I admired so much and became determined to make my own. My first efforts were very simple and very crude, made by hand and bound with ribbons and filled with my own stories and drawings. I was so proud of those books!

Kelly was not a *Dreamer* in the way the word is used today, to refer to young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children, and who have lived and gone to school here and know no other country than this one as their own. Kelly and I were Dreamers in the sense that all immigrants, regardless of our status, are Dreamers: we enter a new country carried by hopes and dreams, and carrying our own special gifts, to build a better future.

## **Dreamers and Dreamers of the world, migrantes soñadores.**

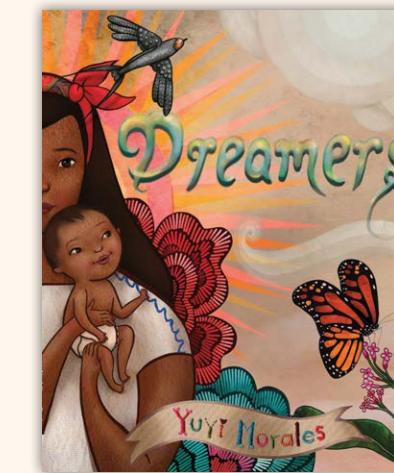
Now I have told you my story. What's yours?

Yuyi

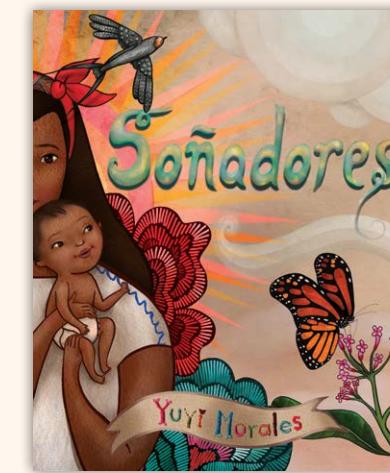


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**Dreamers**  
a new book by Yuyi Morales



9780823440559



9780823442584

On Sale 9.4.18

Simultaneously published in English and Spanish

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