

## Guide to:

# Dreamers

Written and illustrated by Yuyi Morales

**Publisher:** Neal Porter Books

**Publication Date:** 2018

**Language:** English.  
Also available in Spanish.

**ISBN-10:** 0823440559

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**Genre:** Fiction

**Lexile:** AD480L

**Guided Reading Level:** M

**Grade Level:**  
Preschool – Grade 3

**Featured Country of Origin:**  
Mexico

**Themes:** Resilience, hope,  
determination

### Publisher's Synopsis

We are resilience. We are hope. We are dreamers. Yuyi Morales brought her hopes, her passion, her strength and her stories with her when she came to the United States in 1994 with her infant son. She left behind nearly everything she owned, but she didn't come empty-handed. From the author-illustrator of *Bright Star*, *Dreamers* is a celebration of making your home with the things you always carry: your resilience, your dreams, your hopes and history. It's the story of finding your way in a new place, of navigating an unfamiliar world and finding the best parts of it. In dark times, it's a promise that you can make better tomorrows.

### What We Love

This beautifully illustrated, expressive book celebrates the immigrant experience. It is about valuing family, fostering creativity, learning a new language and the power of public libraries. Children will find much to analyze and discuss in the mixed media illustrations, particularly the repeated symbolism of the butterfly. Spanish words are interspersed throughout, providing a playful approach to language and encouraging inclusivity.



### Background

Butterflies feature prominently in the illustrations, alluding to their symbolism in immigration and migrant justice movements. In this context, they represent the beauty of migration and the right of all creatures to move freely. The “[Migration is Beautiful](#)” print by artist and social activist Favianna Rodriguez is a well-known example of this interpretation.

### Pronunciation and Vocabulary

- Yuyi: JU-ji

### English

- Resilience: The ability to adapt to challenges
- Suspicious: Cautious distrust of someone or something
- Resplendent: Attractive and impressive
- Improbable: Not likely to be true or happen

### Spanish

- Migrantes (Mee-GRAN-tehs): A person, bird or animal that migrates
- Caminantes (kah-mee-NAHN-tehs): A person who walks
- Lucha (LOO-chah): Fighters (direct translation: Fight)
- Amor (ah-MOHR): Love
- Sonadores (son-nah-DOHR-es): Dreamers



## Dreamers (continued)

### Pre-Reading Focus Questions

- Think of one of your favorite picture books. What is it about the book that you are drawn to?
- What do you think the butterfly on the cover could be a symbol of?
- Have you ever felt alone or invisible in a place that is unfamiliar?

### After-Reading Discussion Questions

- Have you ever made a mistake that you learned from? Why do you think the author made mistakes when she came to the new land?
- Why do you think the author spent a lot of time walking? What symbols do you notice in the illustrations on the page that reads: “You and I became caminantes.”
- The library was a main source of connection for the author. Why does the author use the words: suspicious, improbable, unbelievable, surprising and unimaginable to describe her first impression of the library? How do the illustrations support the use of these words?
- How did books improve the author’s life?

### About the Book Author/Illustrator (from publisher)

Born in Xalapa, Mexico, where she currently resides, Yuyi Morales lived for many years in the San Francisco Bay area, where she still maintains close relations with booksellers and librarians. Professional storyteller, dancer, choreographer, puppeteer and artist, she has won the prestigious Pura Belpré Award for Illustration five times, for *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book* (2003), *Los Gatos Black on Halloween* (2006), *Just in Case: A Trickster Tale and Spanish Alphabet Book* (2008), *Niño Wrestles the World* (2013) and *Viva Frida* (2014), which is also a Caldecott Honor Book.

### About the Consultant Nicole Kwmuntis

Nicole Kwmuntis co-authored and provided guidance for this guide. She is currently a reading specialist for students in grades K-4 at Malden Public Schools in Massachusetts. During her tenure in Malden, she has advocated for the literacy development of multilingual learners and supported extended learning experiences for multilingual learners beyond the school day.

### Extension/Higher-Level Thinking

- The monarch butterfly is used as a symbol of migration in the story. The butterflies are illustrated on each page in the book. To continue reading about the Monarch migration: *When Butterflies Cross the Sky: The Monarch Butterfly Migration (Extraordinary Migrations)*, written by Sharon Katz Cooper and illustrated by Joshua S. Brunet. Why did the author choose this particular insect as a symbol?
- The author fills her backpack before her journey. What are five things that you would put in your backpack?
- The author’s note, “My Story,” outlines her journey to the United States and her dreams. What is something you dream of doing? How are you inspired to follow your dream?

### Interdisciplinary

This story can be connected to units on community connections, culturally responsive instruction, individual development and identity.

### Additional Resources



Video of author/illustrator Yuyi Morales reading *Dreamers*



Hear Yuyi Morales talk about her name

### About The Immigrant Learning Center

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (The ILC) of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes to help immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about immigrants and immigration in the United States, and the Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, produces valid, reliable and objective multidisciplinary research on immigrants and immigration to the United States. For more information, visit the website <http://www.ilctr.org>. The ILC can also be found on Instagram, Facebook, X, YouTube and LinkedIn.