



# Behold the Dreamers: A Novel

*Imbolo Mbue*

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**In the vein of Amy Tan and Khaled Hosseini comes a compulsively readable debut novel about marriage, immigration, class, race, and the trapdoors in the American Dream—the unforgettable story of a young Cameroonian couple making a new life in New York just as the Great Recession upends the economy.**

Jende Jonga, a Cameroonian immigrant living in Harlem, has come to the United States to provide a better life for himself, his wife, Neni, and their six-year-old son. In the fall of 2007, Jende can hardly believe his luck when he lands a job as a chauffeur for Clark Edwards, a senior executive at Lehman Brothers. Clark demands punctuality, discretion, and loyalty—and Jende is eager to please. Clark’s wife, Cindy, even offers Neni temporary work at the Edwardses’ summer home in the Hamptons. With these opportunities, Jende and Neni can at last gain a foothold in America and imagine a brighter future.

However, the world of great power and privilege conceals troubling secrets, and soon Jende and Neni notice cracks in their employers’ façades.

When the financial world is rocked by the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the Jongas are desperate to keep Jende’s job—even as their marriage threatens to fall apart. As all four lives are dramatically upended, Jende and Neni are forced to make an impossible choice.

## **Advance praise for *Behold the Dreamers***

“Dazzling, fast-paced, and exquisitely written, *Behold the Dreamers* is one of those rare novels that will change the way you see the world. Imbolo Mbue is a breathtaking talent.”—**Christina Baker Kline, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Orphan Train***

“Who is this Imbolo Mbue and where has she been hiding? Her writing is startlingly beautiful, thoughtful, and both timely and timeless. She’s taking on everything from family to the Great Recession to immigration while deftly reminding us what it means to truly believe in ‘the American dream.’”—**Jacqueline Woodson, National Book Award–winning author of *Brown Girl Dreaming***

“It’s rare that a book is so fascinating, so emotionally compelling, and so beautiful that I literally can’t put it down. I picked *Behold the Dreamers* up one evening before bed. I turned the last page at dawn. It ruined the next day for me—I wasn’t much good for anything but a nap—but it was worth every lost hour.”—**Ayelet Waldman, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Love and Treasure***

“A beautiful book about one African couple starting a new life in a new land, *Behold the Dreamers* will teach you as much about the promise and pitfalls of life in the United States as about the immigrants who come here in search of the so-called American dream.”—**Sonia Nazario, author of *Enrique’s Journey* and winner of the Pulitzer Prize**

“Among the spate of novels forged in the crucible of the previous decade, Mbue’s impressive debut deserves a singular place. . . . Realistic, tragic, and still remarkably kind to all its characters, this is a special book.”—***Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)**

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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#### **Eunice Bourque:**

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#### **Marion Driskell:**

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