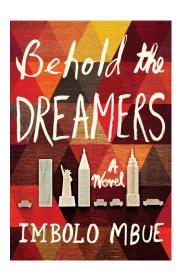
A SHARED DREAM

Empathy & the American Immigrant Experience

KEYNOTE SPEAKER IMBOLO MBUE



Imbolo Mbue is the author of the New York Times bestseller, BEHOLD THE DREAMERS, which won the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, the Blue Metropolis Words to Change Award, and was an Oprah's Book Club selection. Named a Notable Book of the Year by the New York Times and the Washington Post and a Best Book of the Year by close to a dozen publications, Mbue's debut novel has been translated into 11 languages, adapted into an opera in Poland as well as a stage play in Seattle, WA, and was recently optioned for a movie.



Behold the Dreamers tells the story of Jende Jonga, a Cameroonian immigrant living in Harlem who lands a job as a chauffeur for Clark Edwards, a senior executive at Lehman Brothers, in the fall of 2007. Jende hopes the new job will enable him, his adored wife, Neni, and his young son, to live a better life in America. Desperate to shield the fragile life they've built in New York, the Jongas protect their employers, even when the wealthy couple's secrets begin to drive a wedge between Jende and Neni. Then, with the 2008 collapse of Lehman Brothers, all four lives are dramatically upended, and Jende and Neni are forced to make an impossible choice.

Mbue's book is informed by her experience of being an African immigrant and the experiences of immigrants from around the world who shared their stories with her. Like Jende and Neni, she grew up in Limbe, Cameroon, before moving to the U.S. in 1998. She holds a B.S. from Rutgers University and an M.A. from Columbia University. She lives in New York City.



