

“This heartrending and thoughtful memoir puts a human face on immigration's personal toll.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“A mirror for many readers, allowing them to see reflections of their own strengths, possibilities, and hope ...for others, a humanizing window into the Mexican American experience.” —*School Library Journal*

The Distance Between Us

Young Readers Edition

A Memoir by Reyna Grande

Award-winning author Reyna Grande shares her compelling experience of crossing borders and cultures in this middle grade adaptation of her memoir, ***The Distance Between Us***.

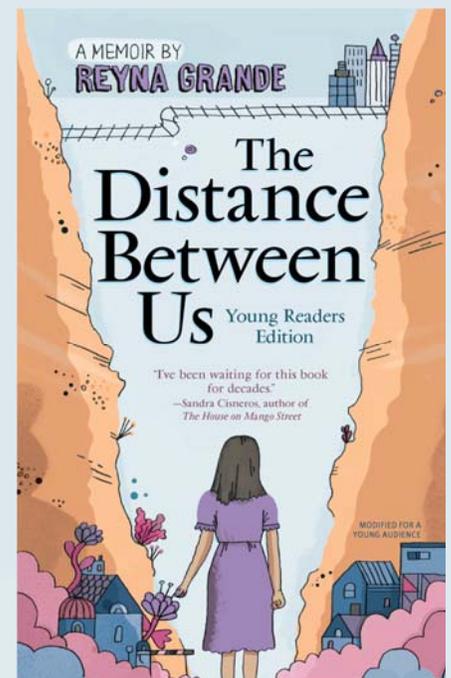
Grande's original, adult version of ***The Distance Between Us*** resonated powerfully with both critics and readers. Hector Tobar, in his Los Angeles Times review hailed it as “the *Angela's Ashes* of the modern Mexican immigrant experience.” Numerous colleges and universities across the country chose Grande's memoir as the Common Reading selection for all incoming freshmen. It was also chosen by several cities as their official One Book/One City selection. In response to the overwhelming popularity of the book, Simon & Schuster commissioned Grande to adapt the original version into the just-released Young Readers edition, targeting 10-14 year olds.

Grande, who entered the United States at age nine as an undocumented immigrant to reunite with her parents, shares her remarkable and inspiring story as she experiences life in her adopted country, discovers her voice and in time, embarks on the path that would eventually lead her to become a celebrated author. Grande, the recipient of the American Book Award, the El Premio Aztlán Literary Award, and the Latino Book Award, will launch a months-long national media tour in early September, visiting colleges, book festivals and literary conferences in 25 cities across the country.

When her parents make the dangerous and illegal trek across the Mexican border in pursuit of the American dream, Reyna and her siblings are forced to live with their stern, punitive grandmother as they wait for their parents to build the foundation of a new life.

But when things don't go quite as planned, Reyna finds herself preparing for her own journey to live with the man who has haunted her imagination for years: her long-absent father. Her memoir for young readers beautifully captures the struggle that Reyna and her siblings endured while trying to assimilate to a different culture, language, and family life in El Otro Lado (The Other Side).

Both funny and heartbreaking, Reyna Grande's ***The Distance Between Us*** is a story for all ages—one of hope and love, and an exploration of complicated family bonds that won't break, no matter the distance.



The Distance Between Us by Reyna Grande | Aladdin | Publication Date: 09/06/16
ISBN: 978-1-4814-6371-3 | ebook ISBN: 978-1-4814-6372-0 | \$17.99 | Ages 10-14

REYNA GRANDE

FROM UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT TO AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR



REYNA GRANDE is an award-winning novelist and memoirist. She received an American Book Award, the El Premio Aztlán Literary Award, and the Latino Books Into Movies Award for her debut novel *Across a Hundred Mountains* (2006). Her second novel, *Dancing with Butterflies* (2010), received critical acclaim and is the recipient of a 2010 International Latino Book Award and was a Las Comadres National Book Club Selection. In 2012, she was a finalist for the prestigious National Book Critics Circle Awards for her memoir *The Distance Between Us* (2012). In 2015 Grande was the recipient of the Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano / Latino Literature. Born in Mexico, Reyna was two years old when her father left for the U.S. to find work. Her mother followed her father north two years later, leaving Reyna and her siblings behind in Mexico. In 1985, when Reyna was going on ten, she entered the U.S. as an undocumented immigrant to live with her father. She went on to become the first person in her family to graduate from college. Reyna holds a B.A. in creative writing and film & video from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She received her M.F.A. in creative writing from Antioch University. Her works have been published internationally in countries such as Norway and South Korea.

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BOOKS

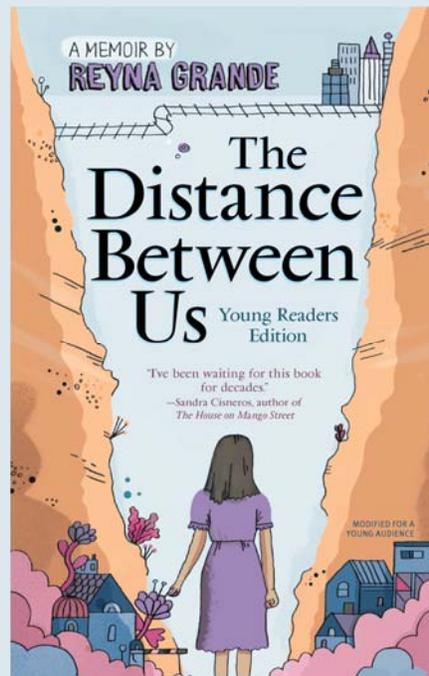
The Distance Between Us

Young Readers Edition

-A Junior Library Guild Selection-

"Readers will be captivated by Grande's beautiful and heart-wrenching story."

-*Booklist*, starred review



When her parents make the dangerous and illegal trek across the Mexican border in pursuit of the American dream, Reyna and her siblings are forced to live with their stern, punitive grandmother as they wait for their parents to build the foundation of a new life. But when things don't go quite as planned, Reyna finds herself preparing for her own journey to live with the man who has haunted her imagination for years: her long-absent father. Her memoir for young readers beautifully captures the struggle that Reyna and her siblings endured while trying to assimilate to a different culture, language, and family life in El Otro Lado (The Other Side). Both funny and heartbreaking, Reyna Grande's *The Distance Between Us* is a story for all ages—one of hope and love, and an exploration of complicated family bonds that won't break, no matter the distance.

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The Distance Between Us

2016 Colorado Mountain College Common Reader
 2016 Camarillo Reads, Camarillo, CA
 2015 One Book/One Villanova, Villanova University, PA
 2015 Sandy Springs Reads, Sandy Springs, GA
 2015 Los Angeles City College Book Program, CA
 2015 Mount San Jacinto College Common Read, CA
 2015 Read 2 Succeed Selection, Norco College, Norco, CA
 2015 Roswell Reads, Roswell, GA
 2015 One Book/One Leyden, Leyden High School, IL
 2014 One Maryland, One Book selection • 2014 One Book/One Community, University of Iowa
 2014 Books in Common Selection, Butte College & Chico State University
 2014 One Book/One Community, San Juan College • 2014 Santa Rosa Junior College Reads selection
 2013-14 Grand Valley State University Community Reading Project selection
 2014 Monroe County (MI) One Book/One City selection
 Cal State University, Los Angeles First Year Experience Selection 2014
 National Book Critics Circle Awards Finalist • 2012 Las Comadres National Book Club Selection

“A brutally honest book... the *“Angela’s Ashes”* of the modern Mexican immigrant experience.” —*LA Times*

“I’ve been waiting for this book for decades.” —*Sandra Cisneros, author of The House on Mango Street*

“Grande captivates and inspires.” —*Publishers Weekly, STARRED Review*

“Grande is a fierce, smart, shimmering light of a writer with an important story to tell.” —*Cheryl Strayed, author of Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*

The Distance Between Us (Atria Books; \$25.00; August 28, 2012) is Reyna Grande’s personal, heart-wrenching, and ultimately triumphant memoir about her journey from Mexico to the United States as an undocumented child immigrant, where she learned that the separation between a parent and child can be measured as much in emotional distance and abandonment as it can be in miles. An engaging writer with a talent for infusing her narrative with personal and affecting characterizations and stories, Grande truly offers an unprecedented look into the immigration experience and the reality that millions of people are facing each day.

The Distance Between Us: A Memoir

By Reyna Grande

Published by: Washington Square Press

ISBN: 978-1451661781

Price: \$15.00 US

Pub Date: March 12, 2013

La Distancia Entre Nosotros

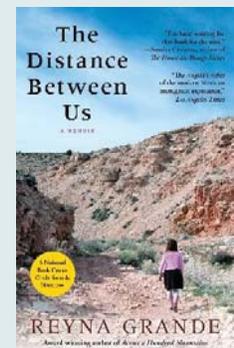
Por Reyna Grande

Atria Books

978-1476710402

\$15.00 US

April 16, 2013



Across a Hundred Mountains

2010 Latino Books Into Movies Award

2007 American Book Award

2006 El Premio Aztlán Literary Award

2016 Woodland Reads • 2013 Owensboro Community & Technical College Common Reading
Autry Book Club (April selection) 2011 • 2010 Bookshop Santa Cruz Book Club pick (May) • 2010 San Mateo County
Library "One Book/One Community" (Spanish) • 2010 City of Watsonville "On the Same Page" (community read) •
2009 Schoolcraft College Campus • Read & Pageturners Book Club selection
2009 Teen Author Series, Free Library of Philadelphia • 2008 Required Reading--Summer Bridge Program at Taft College
• 2007 Eastern Connecticut's "One Book/One Region" • 2007 SummerTIME Read (USC)
2006 UCSC Freshmen Read (Kresge & Porter)

"Grande's spare, elegantly written tale... is a timely and riveting read." -- *People Magazine*

"Grande's deft portraiture endows even the smallest characters with grace." — *Publisher's Weekly, starred review*

"An affecting debut on Mexican poverty, illegal immigration and cosmic injustice." -- *Kirkus Reviews*

"A breathtaking debut." -- *El Paso Times*

Across A Hundred Mountains is a stunning and poignant story of migration, loss, and discovery. After a tragedy that separates her from her mother, Juana Garcia leaves her small town in Mexico to find her father who left his home and family two years before to find work in America, El Otro Lado, and rise above the oppressive poverty so many of his countrymen endure. Out of money and in need of someone to help her across the border, Juana meets Adelina Vasquez, a young woman who left her family in California to follow her lover to Mexico. Finding each other--in a Tijuana city jail--they offer each other much needed material and spiritual support and ultimately become linked in the most unexpected way. Using a non-linear narrative style, where the pieces don't fall into place until the very end, Grande takes readers inside the lives of the people of Mexico who are left behind in the phenomenon of migration to the United States.

Across A Hundred Mountains

By Reyna Grande

Published by: Washington Square Press

ISBN: 978-0743269582

Price: \$15.00 US

Pub Date: May 15, 2007

A Través De Cien Montañas

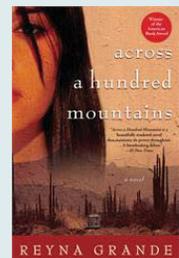
Por Reyna Grande

Atria Books

978-1416544746

\$15.00 US

May 15, 2007



Dancing With Butterflies

**2010 International Latino Book Award
2009 Las Comadres National Book Club Selection**

"Grande's lyrical and sensual follow-up to her stunning *Across a Hundred Mountains* (2006) is well worth the wait."

— *Publisher's Weekly*, **starred review**

"Just when you think you know all about friends, Grande comes along to teach you something else about love and its mysteries, about good conversation over beers, sacrifices one makes for family, and about the joys and sins of shoe-stomping pride."

-- *Helena María Viramontes*, author of *Their Dogs Came with Them*

Dancing With Butterflies uses the alternating voices of four very different women in a Los Angeles dance company called Alegría to weave a story of friendship and love. Yesenia, who founded Alegría, finds herself unable to dance and seeks a miracle from a plastic surgeon in Tijuana. Elena, grief stricken by the death of her child and the end of her marriage, falls dangerously in love with one of her under-age students. Elena's sister Adriana, wears the wounds of abandonment by a dysfunctional family and becomes unable to discern love from abuse. Soledad, the sweet-tempered undocumented immigrant who designs costumes for Alegría, must make the dangerous journey north after she returns to Mexico to see her dying grandmother. Reyna Grande has succeeded in bringing the world of Folklórico dance to life, with characters whose stories are so gripping, the reader cannot help but cry along with their travails and cheer their triumphs. Ajúa!!

Dancing With Butterflies

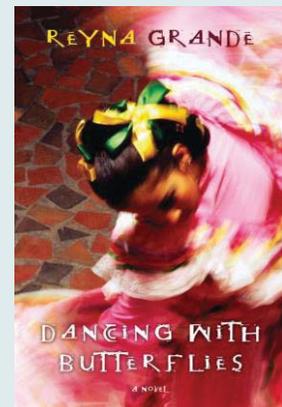
By Reyna Grande

Published by: Washington Square Press

ISBN: 978-1-4391-0906-9

Price: \$16.00 US

Pub Date: October 09, 2009



Interview with School Library Journal

Reyna Grande on Immigration and *The Distance Between Us*

By Della Farrell on August 5, 2016

Award-winning author Reyna Grande has adapted her 2012 best-selling memoir and a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, *The Distance Between Us*, for adolescent readers (S. & S./Aladdin, Sept. 2016). Grande caught up with SLJ to discuss immigration, the immigrant experience, and tips for librarians on how to welcome and support these often underserved populations.

***The Distance Between Us* was initially published for adult readers. Why did you decide to adapt it for teens and tweens?**

The United States is a nation of immigrants, and it's important that our youth have access to stories that reflect this important (and beautiful) aspect of our country. I wanted to offer teens a mirror in which they could see themselves. Seeing their experiences reflected in American literature may make them feel less alone; knowing that their stories matter can be incredibly empowering. For nonimmigrants, this book could be a way for them to learn about their immigrant peers but also an opportunity to remember their own background—for most readers, at some point, someone in their family was an immigrant and went through similar struggles that I write about in my book. Sometimes I feel that people become anti-immigrant because they have forgotten their roots. I'm hoping this book will be an inspirational reminder.

Is there hope in the future for more humane attitudes toward immigrants and immigration?

I want to say yes, because I am a dreamer and I dream of a world where there is respect for all human beings regardless of where they come from or the color of their skin. But I think we need to do some serious soul searching—not just here in the United States but all over the world, and especially in powerful countries that have a history of denying or failing to recognize that their acts and policies create instability in other countries. In other words, first we create catalysts to make immigrants and then we punish them for immigrating. We are living in the time of the highest ever international migration. There are more displaced people in the world today than ever before. This is caused by many factors, but most of them could be mitigated by more humane foreign and domestic policies and greater awareness.

A crucial scene in the book is during your first day of school in Los Angeles, when your name is shortened from Reyna Grande Rodríguez to Reyna Grande. Not only is this an unnecessary practice but a harmful one, too. Are there ways that librarians and educators can be more aware and respectful?

I feel that just by asking the question you are already working towards the solution! The first thing to do is to recognize that there is something we can all do for child immigrants. Learning about their culture and customs (and their names!) would go a long way in helping them because we can then find ways to reduce their trauma of being in a new country. They will have a hard enough time struggling to figure out American life, and we need to meet them halfway. In learning about their cultures, we can also encourage them to celebrate their roots without ever making them feel ashamed of who they are and where they come from.

The other thing to keep in mind is that these child immigrants [often] carry with them trauma upon trauma, and what they need most is kindness and understanding. Before they can be taught letters and numbers, they need to feel psychologically and emotionally safe. Above all, I would like educators to remember that regardless of where these kids come from, or their legal status, they are—more than anything—simply children, and they need to be more patient and understanding of every child immigrant who walks into their classrooms.

As you age in the memoir, what the "distance between" is, and who it is in relation to, grows in complexity and meaning.

One of the reasons I wrote this book was so that I could help others understand the complexity of the immigrant experience. Sometimes, we tend to focus only on what [the children] go through once they are in the United States. We also need to discuss what happens to them before they even setting foot in the [country]. The struggle doesn't begin at the U.S. border. Family separation—in all of its forms—has a deep impact on children that will affect them for the rest of their lives. I also want to highlight that any immigrant who has managed to achieve the American Dream has paid a big price for it. For me, I had to deal with the disintegration of my family. What immigrants lose is just as important as what we gain. The experiences of child immigrants are complicated, and we grow up in the United States dealing with issues of belonging, identity, and culture. As the 1.5 generation, we have to fight harder to overcome all kinds of distances so that we can find our place in the world.

Writing becomes essential for young Reyna. Any advice for aspiring teen writers?

You are never too young to publish. There are many literary journals, online magazines, etc. that welcome works by young writers. Ask your teacher or librarian to help you create a list of publications you can send to, and do it. This will teach you how to prepare your work for submission, how to pitch your work, how to deal with rejection and success, and [how] to balance the writing (art) with publishing (business). Above all, I want teens to remember that if you don't write your story, you are allowing the powers that be to keep you invisible. Writing is a way to fight disempowerment. And if you don't write your story, nobody else will. Or worse, if they do write it, they may get it wrong.

In *The Distance Between Us* you cite reading Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* and authors like Isabel Allende, Julia Álvarez, and Laura Esquivel as a revelation—a mirror to your experience. In addition to your forthcoming work, do you have any Chicano/Latino literature recommendations for middle and high schoolers?

There are the classics that I love: Esmeralda Santiago's memoirs *When I Was Puerto Rican* and *Almost a Woman* and Rudolfo Anaya's novel *Bless Me, Ultima*. I also enjoyed Pam Muñoz Ryan's novel *Esperanza Rising*, Margarita Engle's memoir *Enchanted Air*, Guadalupe Garcia-McCall's novel *Under the Mesquite*, and Joe Jiménez's novel *Bloodline*.

For more mature students, I recommend Daisy Hernández's memoir *A Cup of Water Under My Bed*, Justin Torres's autobiographical novel *We, the Animals*, Rigoberto González's memoirs *Butterfly Boy* and *Autobiography of My Hungers*. I could go on and on. The most important thing is for middle and high schoolers to see themselves in the books that they read. Unfortunately, things have not changed that much since I was a middle and high schooler -- there isn't a lot of books by writers of color made available to students in the classroom. But there is always a public library nearby, and hopefully, a wonderful librarian ready to guide these students to the right book.

Praise for *The Distance Between Us*

“I’ve been waiting for this book for decades. The American story of the new millennium is the story of the Latino immigrant, yet how often has the story been told by the immigrant herself? What makes Grande’s beautiful memoir all the more extraordinary is that, through this hero’s journey, she speaks for millions of immigrants whose voices have gone unheard.” —Sandra Cisneros, author of *The House of Mango Street*

“Reyna Grande is a shimmering light of a writer with an important story to tell.” – Cheryl Strayed, author of the New York Times bestseller *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*

“A brutally honest book... the *Angela’s Ashes* of the modern Mexican immigrant experience.” –*The L.A. Times*

“Grande grabs your heart and strums music on it.” —*The Dallas Morning News*

“Grande captivates and inspires...” –*Publisher’s Weekly*

“A standout immigrant coming-of-age story.” –*Kirkus Reviews*

“Puts a human face on issues that stir vehement debate...” –*Booklist*

“A visceral experience of poverty.” –*The Christian Science Monitor*

“Makes palpable a human dilemma and dares us to dismiss it.” –*The California Report*

“Grande is the kind of unsparing witness whose voice we don’t hear enough.” –*Slate Magazine*

“Readers of *The Distance Between Us* will gain a deeper insight into immigration and also enjoy Grande’s eloquent, honest storytelling. This book would be fabulous required reading for college freshmen or, even better, for freshman members of Congress.” –*The Washington Independent Review of Books*

“Her compelling story, told in unvarnished, resonant prose, is an important piece of America’s immigrant history.” --*BookPage*

“Reyna Grande’s extraordinary journey toward the American dream will be an inspiration for anyone who has ever dreamed of a better life.”—Ligiah Villalobos, writer/executive producer of *Under the Same Moon/La Misma Luna*

“In this poignant memoir about her childhood in Mexico, Reyna Grande skillfully depicts another side of the immigrant experience—the hardships and heartbreaks of the children who are left behind. Through her brutally honest firsthand account of growing up in Mexico without her parents, Grande sheds light on the often overlooked consequence of immigration—the disintegration of a family.”—Sonia Nazario, Pulitzer Prize winner, and author of *Enrique’s Journey*

Media Contact:
RMH Media
Rita Hollingsworth
rita@rmhmedia.net
213-361-2736

