

It Began with a Page: How Gyo Fujikawa Drew the Way

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* 4 Starred Reviews *

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"Playful, bold, and, much like its subject, full of grace." -Jillian Tamaki, Caldecott Honor winner for *This One Summer*

"It Began with a Page tells [Gyo Fujikawa's] story beautifully, in picture-book form." -The New Yorker

From beloved team Kyo Maclear and Julie Morstad (creators of *Julia, Child* and *Bloom: A Story of Fashion Designer Elsa Schiaparelli*) comes an elegant picture book biography that portrays the most moving moments in the life of Gyo Fujikawa, a groundbreaking Japanese American hero in the fight for racial diversity in picture books.

Equal parts picture book biography, inspiring story, and a look at racial diversity in America, *It Began with a Page* is a gem for any book lover, librarian, or child who dares to dream big.

Growing up in California, Gyo Fujikawa always knew that she wanted to be an artist. She was raised among strong women, including her mother and teachers, who encouraged her to fight for what she believed in. During World War II, Gyo's family was forced to abandon everything and was taken to an internment camp in Arkansas.

Far away from home, Gyo worked as an illustrator in New York while her innocent family was imprisoned. Seeing the diversity around her and feeling pangs from her own childhood, Gyo became determined to show all types of children in the pages of her books. There had to be a world where they saw themselves represented.

Gyo's book *Babies* was initially rejected by her publisher, but after she insisted, they finally relented, and *Babies* went on to sell almost two million copies. Gyo's books paved the way for publishers, teachers, and readers to see what we can be when we welcome others into our world.

The book includes extensive back matter, including a note from the creators, a timeline, archival photos, and further information on Gyo Fujikawa.

From the time she was a little girl, Gyo Fujikawa drew pictures.

Gyo's parents had come to California from Japan looking for a better life, but sometimes Gyo felt invisible. When high school came, Gyo's teachers recognized her gift for creating beautiful art and got behind her. Art became her profession, and now her drawings were in magazines and store window displays.

Eventually, Gyo was asked to illustrate picture books for children. She envisioned a diverse cast of characters, explaining that she wanted "an international set of babies, little black babies, Asian babies, all kinds of babies" in the pages of her books.

Had it ever been done before?

Not yet.

Her Babies, published in 1963, welcomed children of all colors into the pages of a picture book for the first time, paving the way for publishers, teachers, readers, and future writers to imagine a more inclusive world.

From the beloved team of Kyo Maclear and Julie Morstad comes a story that poignantly portrays the life of Gyo Fujikawa, a groundbreaking hero in the fight for racial diversity in picture books.

Kyo Maclear

is the author of many books for children, including Bloom: A Story of Fashion Designer Elsa Schiaparelli, and some for adults. When she was a little girl, she wanted very badly to be a fashion designer. She spent countless hours drawing odd dresses, including a very special cloud dress. Her style muses include her mother, Patti Smith, the residents of Moominvalley, and anyone with a sense of casual and androgynous flair. Though she loved writing about Schiaparelli's signature color, shocking pink, Kyo's own favorite color is blue. She plants her garden with flowers in all shades of blue, and in spring when they bloom, it's a blue extravaganza. Kyo makes her home in Toronto, where she lives with her two sons and husband, a musician. You can find her at www.kyomaclearkids.com.

Julie Morstad

is the author and illustrator of Today and How To. She has illustrated many books for children, including Swan, The Dress and the Girl, This Is Sadie, and Bloom: A Story of Fashion Designer Elsa Schiaparelli. Julie makes her home in Vancouver, British Columbia, where she lives with her family. You can find her at www.juliemorstad.com.

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The Elementary School Library Collection, Phases 1-2-3.

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