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When All the Leaves Are Gone

Directed by Alanis Obomsawin. National Film Board of Canada, 2010.



DVD. 17 min. 20 sec. Gr. 4 up. \$69.95 PPR
(Available in English, French, Waban-aki, Atikamekw, Innu, Inuktitut)

The latest National Film Board film by Alanis

Obomsawin is a short drama based on her experiences as the only First Nations student in a 1940s school. Interspersing archival footage with new material, the story follows eight-year-old Wato as she moves from the reserve, where she was happy and loved, to town, where she is isolated by language and culture as well as the illness of her father. After her teacher reads from a history book describing

First Nations peoples as ignorant and savage, Wato becomes the target of bullying and abuse by her prejudiced classmates. Wato finds comfort and strength in the protective world of her magical dreams. Unlike the black-and-white footage of most of the film, the dreamlike world is full of colour and hope.

Available in Waban-aki, Atikamekw, Innu, and Inuktitut, as well as English and French, the film is a moving exploration of loneliness and isolation and the powerful possibilities of dreams.

Thematic Links: First Nations; School; Bullying; Dreams

Kristine Moruzi