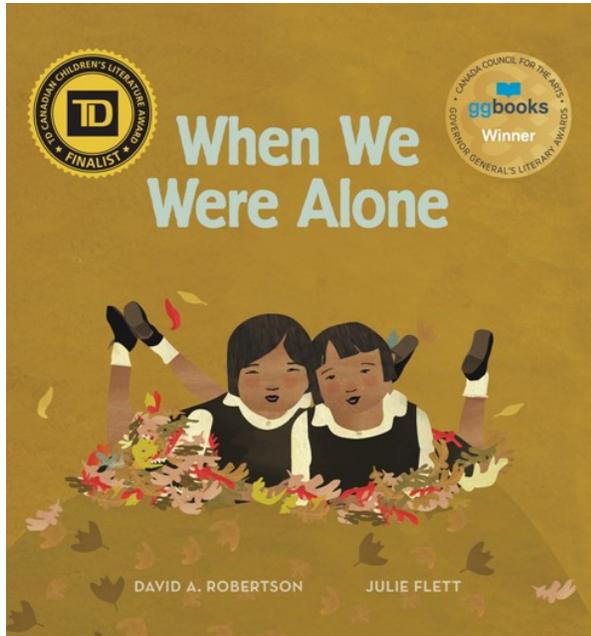




"When We Were Alone"
By David A. Robertson, Illustrated By Julie Flett



About *When We Were Alone*: When a young girl helps tend to her grandmother's garden, she begins to notice things that make her curious. Why does her grandmother have long braided hair and beautifully colored clothing? Why does she speak another language and spend so much time with her family? As she asks her grandmother about these things, she is told about life in a residential school a long time ago, where all of these things were taken away. *When We Were Alone* is a story about a difficult time in history and, ultimately, one of resilience, empowerment and strength. Ages 4–8.

Read Aloud Tips:

- Introduce the book, author and illustrations.
- Make a language wall on key terms.
- Have students sit down with a grandparent or parent and ask them questions about a difficult time when they were a child. Students should find out what was specifically notable about this time and what their family member was experiencing. Then, students can present what they learned about their loved one and what lessons they will take from them.

About The Author: David A. Robertson is an award-winning writer. His books include *When We Were Alone* (winner *Governor General's Literary Award*), *Will I See?* (winner *Manuela Dias Book Design and Illustration Award*), *Betty*, *The Helen Betty Osborne Story* (listed *In The Margins*), and the YA novel *Strangers* (winner of *The Michael Van Rooy Award for Genre Fiction*). David educates as well as entertains through his writings about Indigenous Peoples in Canada, reflecting their cultures, histories, communities, as well as illuminating many contemporary issues. David is a member of Norway House Cree Nation. He lives in Winnipeg.



Additional Resources:

Find more information on other books that can be used in your class library at literacy.roosevel.edu.

"A beautifully quiet, bold strength arises from the continued refrain "When we were alone" and in how the children insisted on being themselves. Flett's (*We Sang You Home*, 2016, etc.) gorgeous, skillful illustrations have a flattened, faux naïve feel to them, like construction paper collage, a style that works perfectly with the story. She nicely contrasts the school's dull browns and grays with the riotous colors surrounding Nókóm and gets much expression from her simple silhouettes."

- *Kirkus Reviews*