

Once Were Warriors

Once Were Warriors, the 1994 poignant movie based on the novel of the same name by Alan Duff, masterfully weaves together multiple themes of domestic violence, alcoholism and unemployment, internalized oppression, gang behaviour and triumph.

Set in New Zealand, this story of an urban Maori family profiles the journey of a mother who contends with the challenges of protecting her children, as well as herself, as she speaks against and overcomes the domestic violence that has contributed to the loss of one life and destruction of others.

As viewers we become party to the evolving roles and rights of women, of children, and of persons of colour.

Brutal domestic violence and the struggle to overcome it is a universal subject. All families, all communities, all nations have challenges to contend with and the ability to do so determines the degree of cascading tragedies and injustices.



Once Were Warriors ought to leave us disturbed by its vivid depiction of denial, abuse, and its culminating tragedy.

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By: Kathleen Kevany