

## **Film Title and Release Date:** *The Case of Hana & Alice* (2015)

**Length of Film:** 99 minutes

**Film Genre:** Drama

**Reviewer Name and Grade:** Sophia S., 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Date Reviewed:** March 29, 2021

“The Case of Hana & Alice” is set in the 21st century in Japan. Tetsuko Arisugawa is a 14-year-old transfer student to Ishinomori Middle School, located in the country. After visiting the school, she soon finds out about an urban legend: a boy named Judas was apparently poisoned by his four wives when they found out about each other, using a poison called “anaphylaxis.” Tetsuko wonders if that could possibly relate to a shut-in girl who’s living next door to her. She finds some papers in a closet that belonged to “Yuda Kotaro,” someone whose name sounds reminiscent of “Judas.” Tetsuko runs to the house next door and meets Aria Hana, the girl who stopped attending school. Hana thinks of a plan to find out if Kotaro is really dead or not, but the plan goes awry rather early. The girls end up going to Yuda Teruo’s home together and waiting to see if Yuda Kotaro would come back. The story resembles that of a coming-of-age story, and throughout this wild goose chase, we see the girl’s friendship develop.

Tetsuko Arisugawa, as mentioned earlier, is a transfer student who has just moved into town, due to her parents getting divorced. She lives with her mother. Her old nickname, “Kuro,” was changed to “Alice” due to her parent’s divorce. She enjoys dancing and running, and both of her parents support her hobbies. Throughout the movie, Alice is shown to be a good friend, bold, and rather naive.

Hana is another major character. She is very remorseful of the events that had occurred at the school, which caused her to become a shut-in and get held back. She is also very intelligent and soon finds a friend in Tetsuko, who eventually helps her gain the confidence to return to the school.

*How did you find the film on Kanopy (by title search, subject search, casual browsing, etc.)?*

I found the film on Kanopy by title search, since a friend recommended it to me.

*Did the plot (for fictional movie) or presentation of information (for documentary) keep you interested?*

The beginning of the film was rather slow and occasionally confusing. However, past the beginning, the plot did keep me interested.

*Was the pace of the film too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace of the film was too fast at certain times. However, the film had a generally decent flow of events.

*What grade level(s) is this film appropriate for?*

This film is appropriate for 6th grade and up. This is due to situations and mentions regarding murder, death, bullying, and rituals.

*Rating:*

I will give this movie *4 stars*. I really enjoyed the friendship dynamic between Hana and Alice, and I loved how their relationship evolved. In addition, the plot was something that I had never seen before, and it felt like a very unique experience. However, the beginning was somewhat slow and rather confusing. Some subplots felt as though they were not explored enough. In all, I would say that the story was a mix of sweet and heartwarming aspects, while also having an intriguing murder mystery.

**Reviewer Name and Grade:** Katie D., 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Date Reviewed:** March 29, 2021

Tetsuko Arisugawa, or Alice, is a 14-year-old girl who has just transferred to Ishinomori Middle School. Alice enjoys running and dancing. Her parents got divorced, which is why she changes her name from Tetsuko Kuroyanagi to Tetsuko Arisugawa, thus changing her nickname from Kuro to Alice. Both nicknames were given to her by a friend, Fuko, who went to the same dance academy before.

On her first day, she is bullied, for a reason that she doesn't know. Fuko drags her along to sign up for dance class at a new academy, where Alice learns of a myth. A year ago, a boy named Yuda ("Judas"), who somehow had four wives, was then mysteriously murdered.

Mutsumi Mutsu, or Moo, had sealed Judas's spirit within a boundary around his old desk, which is now Alice's new seat. Alice, having broken the sacred boundary, was forced to perform a ritual with her classmates in which she is supposedly "blessed" and Judas's spirit is trapped once again, making Alice no longer the feared student/outcast. Alice later finds out that it was an act by Moo to counteract bullying.

At first, Alice is skeptical of the legend, especially when she sees the strange rituals carried out by her classmates. Gradually though, she becomes more drawn into the story, and more curious about the girl at its heart- a recluse named Hana Aria who had been held back a year for not attending enough school, and no longer does. Hana just so happens to be Alice's neighbor, so Alice trespasses into her house to find out more about Judas.

Alice and Hana decide to team up to investigate the murder, hatching a plan to find Yuda's dad and whether his son is alive or not. Throughout this journey, they become great friends, and by the end, Hana feels comfortable enough to go back to school. :)

*How did you find the film on Kanopy (by title search, subject search, casual browsing, etc.)?*

I found the film on Kanopy by casually browsing through the "Newly Added Movies" section.

*Did the plot (for fictional movie) or presentation of information (for documentary) keep you interested?*

The plot of The Case of Hana and Alice kept me interested throughout, though the beginning was a bit slow. However, the storyline was quite intriguing.

*Was the pace of the film too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace of the film was occasionally faster than what felt right, but overall had a good sequence of events.

*What grade level(s) is this film appropriate for?*

I'd say that this film is appropriate for 6th graders and up because death/murder is mentioned throughout the film as well as themes of bullying. Additionally, there are occurrences having to do with myths and rituals, which could disturb younger or more sensitive individuals.

*Rating:*

*4 stars: I enjoyed this film and found it worthwhile to watch.*

I enjoyed this film because the plot was very different from conventional movies. A friendship story combined with a murder mystery isn't something you see very often, and Alice and Hana's friendship is very heartwarming.