

■ ANIME ■

A SIGN OF AFFECTION

A heartfelt tale of connection and growth

MARINA MASUD

Suu Morishita's *Yubisaki to Renren* or *A Sign of Affection*, wins you over not with spectacle but with sincerity and a delicate portrayal of romance. The anime doesn't just tell you about love; it shows you how it feels even when words fall silent.

Produced by Studio Ajia-do, *A Sign of Affection* is a beautiful, light-hearted, cosy feel-good romance anime with a warm atmosphere and relatable characters. It follows the romance between the protagonist Yuki Itose, who has had hearing impairment since birth, and the lead male interest, Itsuomi Nagi.

The plot has its novelty in navigating through what is essentially a sensitive and often overlooked subject. However, the premise does not dwell in its heaviness. Instead of reinventing the wheel, it incorporates the theme in a simple yet beautiful manner, proving that a story with a heart can triumph one with extraordinary writing, subversions, and plot twists.

The main characters remain very expressive through their gestures and sign language interactions, as they get to know one another and broaden their horizons despite having different perspectives and sets of circumstances. And the parts where they perhaps lacked communication were made up through their best efforts to do



better and improve in their relationship.

What really sells a shoujo is its protagonist, and Yuki is a very likeable one with a very kind and sweet personality. She can sometimes seem naive, but I believe this is because of her surroundings and the concern many people have for her. I appreciate how Itsuomi helps her realise that there is more to explore in the world and encourages her to develop her own dreams.

Despite facing challenges, Yuki remains optimistic and continues to enjoy life, making

new friends and experiencing new things, especially after meeting Itsuomi. These two characters work really well together because, despite their differences, they complement each other and bring out the best in one another.

Being unfamiliar with the source material, I went in with zero expectations. But I was pleasantly surprised about how much I enjoyed watching each episode and the simple yet beautifully depicted blossoming of the characters and their journeys.

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