

Alan and Naomi

US : 1992 : dir. Sterling van Wagenen : : 100 min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
Lukas Haas; Vanessa Zaoui; Kevin Connolly
 Michael Gross; Amy Aquino; Zohra Lampert; Brian Button

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω 8 € M ☼	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
2042b	1.5	5	1	676	- - - -	No	<i>unseen</i>



Adolescent love-pangs and the holocaust – not necessarily an appetising mix. Source: CVMC website

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
 2001 review:

"Jewish teen Haas tries to befriend a young, catatonic neighbour (Zaoui) whose father was murdered by Nazis right before her eyes. Good performances help this slow-moving, stage-bound film set in 1944 Brooklyn.
 **1/2 "

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"Well-intentioned but muddled story about a high school student in the Forties¹ and his attempts to help a victim of Nazi terrorism. The performances add a level of quality, but they are thwarted by the funereal tone and an inexcusably abrupt conclusion. Rated PG for mature themes [sic] ** "

¹ A schoolboy, in other words

CVMC video retail/rental website review:

"Set in New York during World War II, this story tells of Alan Silverman (Lukas Haas), a boy in the midst of puberty who wishes he was much more muscular than he is and whose biggest concern in life is playing stickball after school with his pals. Yet, when a European girl named Naomi (Vanessa Zaoui) moves in across the hall, the boy's parents coerce their son into spending his time differently, into lending a helping hand by attempting to draw their new neighbour out of the shell a traumatic war experience has placed her in.

At first, Alan is frustrated with the chore, worries his best buddy Shaun (Kevin Connolly) will consider him a "sissy" for hanging around with a girl, but as Naomi starts revealing more and more of whom she is, the lad develops a protective fondness of her as well as finds himself with a new friend. Will the relationship prove therapeutic for the both of them, or have the Nazis formed too deep of an impression in Naomi's mind for it to last?

A moving portrait which includes some exceptional work from the young leads. Haas, incidentally, was indeed dealing with puberty during the filming of this one, his voice fluctuating back and forth between several octaves throughout.

Rated PG: adult themes [sic]; violence

Categories: Best Buddies, Boy Films, Adolescent, Bullies & Teasing, Coming-of-Age, Drama, Girl Films, Little to Preteen, Adolescent "

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Radio Times note:

"In 1944 a teenage boy befriends a refugee girl. **"

TV Quick notes:

"Drama. In 1944 a teenage boy befriends a refugee girl traumatised by the Nazis' brutal murder of her father."

"A young boy helps his friend get over the death of her father during World War Two."

No further information currently available. The acid test with period teen films of this sort is whether director and scriptwriters can bear to set aside the attitudes, mannerisms and speech patterns of the current generation and accurately reflect those of the story's era. Getting the idiom right is a lot harder than one might think, and most recreations of the World War 2 period fall well short of the mark. What one *wouldn't* want to see is a sermon on 1990s sexual politics with a "**SCHINDLER'S LIST**" side-dressing.

[Lukas Haas](#) was 16 in 1992, which suggests it was filmed a year or so earlier (16 is rather late for a boy's voice to be breaking). He made his debut aged 7 in "**TESTAMENT**" (83) and two years later drew notice as the Amish boy Matthew in Peter Weir's "**WITNESS**". His subsequent films included the awful "**SOLARBABIES**" (86), "**THE LADY IN WHITE**" (88), "**THE WIZARD OF LONELINESS**" (88), "**MUSIC BOY**" (89) and "**THE SECRET LIFE OF BOYS**" (95). Nothing else is known of Vanessa Zaoui or Kevin Connolly.

See subject index under **BOY MEETS GIRL, REFUGEES / EVACUEES** and [WAR](#)