

Hell Girl VOL 1

More like "anime heaven"



The world is full of people with grudges, but in Japan, the concept of a simple grudge goes to a whole new level—as proven by films like *Juon*, *The Ring* and series like *Jigoku Shoujo*, which FUNimation is releasing in the US under the name *Hell Girl*.

Each episode focuses on a specific person with a grudge who is forced to use the Hell Correspondence, a website that only appears at midnight, in order to settle the score. That's how you summon Ai—the Hell Girl—from her sunset world to ferry cursed souls to Hell after her three assistants have made (or tried to make) the guilty parties see the error of their ways.

While the plot is a little predictable, this actually works in *Hell Girl's* favor, allowing for more focus on the victims and their motivations for condemning themselves and someone else to Hell just to get rid of their torment. The episodes on the first disc focus on a girl being bullied, another enduring the unwanted attention of a stalker and a boy framed for the murder of his school friend by a talented and arrogant jock. All of these problems could have been dealt with in the normal



way, but the teenagers involved are ignored by their elders and can only turn to supernatural means to solve their problems. Some hardly believe what they've done, often thinking twice before they decide for sure to throw the figurative noose 'round the neck of their oppressor.

Ai manages to be solemn in her duty and while she's the central character, her appearance is minor but memorable as she takes their lives with her patented catchphrase. Her stoicism is also chilling; Ai doesn't question what she's doing and her indifferent solemnity could easily be mistaken for wooden acting on the part of her English and Japanese voice actors. Performances in both languages are great, and the

client-of-the-week format gives the series plenty of variety.

Hell Girl's supernatural leanings make it the perfect complement to the J-horror that has popped up on these shores recently. With five episodes in the first volume, you have plenty of chances to warm up to the show, just in time for Halloween!

—Lesley Smith



AVAILABLE
October 2007

PUBLISHER
FUNimation
Entertainment

RUNNING TIME
125 min.

RATING
13+