

Visual communications

## Pale Flower

### Information

**Movie title:** “Kawaita Hana” (Pale Flower) 1964

**Director:** Masahiro Shinoda

**Starring:** Mariko Kaga and Ryo Ikebe

### Author

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## Commentary

The literal translation of the Japanese title *Kawaita Hana* is actually “Dry (or Dried) Flower”. *Hana*, the word for flower, can here refer to both the girl, Saeko, and to the gambling cards which are called *hanafuda* (flower cards).

*Pale Flower* is a contemporary *yakuza* (Japanese mafia-gang) film. It opens with *yakuza* Muraki’s release from the jail. He served his sentence after having killed an opponent *yakuza*. He has a regular woman, Shinko, but is attracted to the mysterious young woman Saeko, whom he recognizes as his soul mate, a fellow thrill-seeker bored with life. They share the thrill of high-stakes gambling and high-speed driving. When the boss asks to his clan members who kills their opponent boss, Muraki proposes himself as a candidate even if he would be life sentenced after the second murder. It is not because he is devoted to his boss but because he is a true loner and an outsider.

Accompanied by Dido’s aria, “Remember Me”, from Henry Purcell’s opera *Dido and Aeneas*, he goes to kill the designated man.

Muraki’s grand gesture, at the end, has changed nothing; he is back in jail and learns that Saeko is dead and the two old gang bosses are still in charge.

The impossibility to learn from his own error as a seal of the Gambler’s story.

## Doi

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