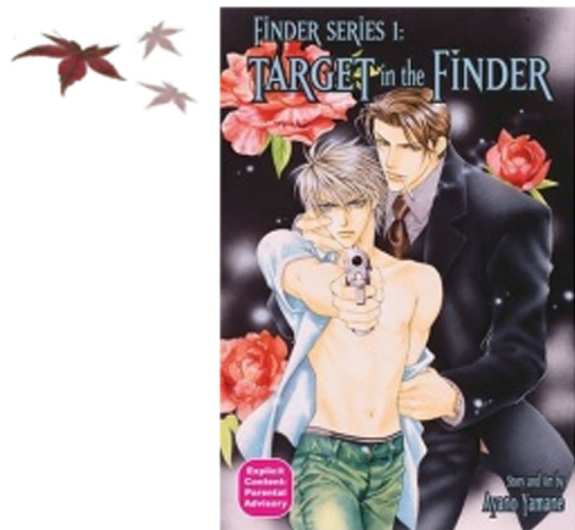


Manga Review: Finder Series 1: Target in the Finder

Posted by: activeadmin on Thursday, November 03, 2005 - 07:22 AM



Finder Series 1: Target in the Finder

- Art/Author: Ayano Yamane
- Publisher: Be Beautiful
- Pages: 192
- US Publication Date: 08/30/2005
- Reviewed By: Jennifer Davenport

- FORMAT – Unflipped.
- PRESENTATION – Sound effects translated and placed next to original Japanese
- SFX. Also includes two artist interviews, one exclusive to this edition.
- AGE RATING – 18+, explicit content as promised, and unedited.

OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION:

During a routine journalism assignment, freelance photographer Akihito Takaba is captured by the mysterious Asami, a powerful leader in Japan's underworld society. Asami forces his captive to undergo a night of pleasure and pain never before imagined...

But before long, the son of a powerful Chinese mafia boss also sets his sights upon Akihito, demanding the critical evidence he's photographed - or is it something else about him he seeks?

Includes three bonus short stories and an exclusive interview with author Ayano Yamane!

REVIEW:

To boil down the first of Ayano Yamane's yaoi series "Finder", this title can be summarized as hot guys with nice hair, yakuza, intrigue, rape, and bondage. So if aggressive romantic pursuits aren't your thing, definitely steer clear of Target in the Finder. Fans of yakuza+yaoi stories - and you'd be surprised how many readers dig this stuff with or without yaoi in it - should purchase Finder right away.

I'm not into bondage yaoi, but Ayano Yamane's art is easily my favorite of all the Be Beautiful line so far, with Kazuma Kodaka's style in Kizuna following closely at second. (I have yet to determine if bondage yaoi really is a subgenre, but I'm going to say it is for the purposes of this review.) Yamane can certainly draw pretty boys. What can I say? I guess it's her characters' eyes, the hair, the sharp suits, or the men's slim but ribbed physique. Probably, it's the killer combo of all of the above.

In addition to the main plotline featuring Akihito and Asami, Finder also includes three short stories. One of the stories plays on the "sempai" relationship, another is about two friends investigating the mysterious meeting of their fathers as they end up in a hotel room, while the last one is a hilarious, less explicit story about a sci-fi action team. The side stories rival the main storyline in quality, and offer humor to offset the main feature.

While yaoi like Kizuna builds plot and sex scenes to showcase characters' personalities, yaoi like Target in the Finder focuses on putting together sexy scenarios in order to build dramatic tension. The characters are less developed, but the scenes are angrier, longer, and more frequent. The relationship and plot pans out a lot like Be Beautiful's other series "Selfish Love".

Yamane's stories are visually designed to be quick, busy, and regimentally box-like when the scene deals with exposition, introductions, or plot building, but the pacing suddenly slows down and zooms out when a sex scene is depicted. The sex is obviously the main appeal of yaoi manga like Finder, and so these scenes are also the visual centerpieces that have nearly whole pages or even two-page spreads devoted to them. The art breaks out of Yamane's usually sharply divided and compact layouts for these moments. A sex scene may have 3 panels on one page, for example, while a talking-heads page has seven.

As a great bonus, there is also an interview with the manga artist that was specially organized for the Be Beautiful edition, and a translated "Afterthought Bonus Page" from the manga artist that was in the original Japanese edition. Original content is always exciting.

