

# ListerX

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Title:	Kizuna - Bonds of Love
Volume:	01 (of 05+)
Creator:	Kazuma Kodaka
Format:	Unflipped
Original Publisher:	BIBLOS Co., Ltd
US Publisher:	Be Beautiful
Release Date:	08/25/04
Pages:	208
ISBN:	1586649596
MSRP:	\$15.99
Genre:	Romance/Drama
Rated:	Age 18+ (Explicit Content: Suggested for mature readers)

## **Description:**

*"Three's a crowd."*

Ranmaru and Kei have a strong and passionate relationship built on years of trust, sacrifice and love. When the mysterious son of a Yakuza boss starts to have designs on Ranmaru's affection, tempers flare, and hidden emotions rise to the surface. Will Ranmaru and Kei's love for each other be able to survive this difficult test, or will the emotional conflict finally come to a head?

## **Chapters:**

- 01 - Burning Desires
- 02 - The Bond
- 03 - The Lustrous Challenge
- 04 - Yearning Hearts

## **Review:**

### Cover -

The front cover is pretty tame compared to some other yaoi titles... unless you count opened shirt and a visible, male chest not tame (then you're in for a real surprise). But! We get first glance at the main couple in the Kizuna series: Ranmaru and Kei. The orange'y color of the cover really brings out Ranmaru's skin tone, and I think it's pretty safe to assume who's seme ("dominant" partner) and uke ("submissive" partner). Plus, they seem to be quite affectionate to one another. On the back cover, however, we see them... in chains! (\*gasp\*) And collars!! (\*shock\*) And and...!!! No, stop that train of thought. This series is hardly based on bondage and the like. There has been no hint of



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such... activities in this volume or in the upcoming two. ...And, I sense disappointment from some people so let's move along, shall we?

## Artwork -

I absolutely adore the style of Kazuma Kodaka. She draws men as... well, men. Not to say I am *not* fond of "girly" guys, but I do prefer them more muscular (especially the ukes), and she definitely delivers in that respect; a plus in my book.

## Story (Warning: Possible Spoilers) -

In the beginning pages of this volume, we get to see just how "passionate" Ranmaru and Kei's relationship really is. Perhaps a little *too* passionate (drew a little blood there, Kei...) But, first impressions are never too accurate so hopefully no one gets too put off by that because there is much more to them.

We get a small flashback about a hit-and-run involving Ranmaru, which renders him incapable of continuing his passion, Kendo. The perpetrator was never caught, but then a mysterious kid shows up at Kei's work and tells him who the *real* target of the hit-and-run was. And the mystery begins. Who was that kid and how does he know Kei?

Turns out the kid is Kai Sagano, Kei's half-brother who harbors quite a devotion to Ranmaru... and consequently, quite a hatred to Kei. And it seems that this stems deeper than mere jealousy. Events take a turn for the worse when Kai calls Kei out for a sword match... and Kei doesn't have one handy!

Thankfully they didn't kill each other, but Kai decides to run away from home and crash over at Ranmaru and Kei's place... which doesn't make his half-brother happy at all. Not up for family bonding, I guess. And apparently, Kai needs to work on his seduction skills as Ranmaru doesn't fall for them one bit.

The volume then touches a bit on drugs and date rape (as some perverted old guy tries to hit on Ranmaru and later Kai, who actually went willingly for revenge) as well as some non-consensual sex as Kai tries to take advantage of Ranmaru. Realize I said "tries" so all attempts were unsuccessful. But, it makes you feel sorry for the poor guy. However, we get to see Kai and Kei team up for the first time and well... be glad you weren't the perverted old guy.

At the end of the volume, there is a very cute back-story about Kai when he was younger and his guardian, Masa. They are a kind of background couple in Kizuna and... well, we'll get into that later. Anyway! It's Homeroom Visitation Day at Little Kai's classroom. Will Masa (as he fends off rival gang members) make it on time!? Stay tuned for the next episode of-- I mean, read to find out!



**Extras/Translations:**

We have character biographies of Kei, Ranmaru, and Kai, a little note from Kazuma Kodaka herself, and her biography. I'm probably not that big on translations, but this volume had the sound effects in place and translations right next to them in a similar font. It does get a little confusing when there are lots of sound effects or little notes and translations close together.

**Objectionable Content:**

Language - Yes (for suggestive language, but nothing on cussing)

Violence - Yes (blood here and there, spaced far in between)

Nudity - Yes (male nudity counts, yes?)

Sexual Situations - Yes (very much YES)

**Ratings:**

Cover - 9 / 10 (Lovely, but slightly misleading.)

Artwork - 10 / 10 (Because I'm biased. \*cough\*)

Story - 10 / 10 (Teases you with background information that leaves you wondering, action with a touch of humor)

Extras/Translations - 9.5 / 10 (Just a tad of confusion, but can't complain too much.)

OVERALL - 9.6 / 10

~ posted 09.29.2005 by aomurasakiai

