

## Finder Series Vol. 1: Target in the Finder

by Janet Crocker

After a long delay in its English release by Be Beautiful, the first volume in the Finder series is available. We were supposed to have seen this title in March, as *Target in the Finder* was heavily promoted back at Yaoi-Con 2004, where mangaka Ayano Yamane was the guest of honor. I have no idea on exactly what caused the delay, but yaoi fans can now breathe a sigh of relief -- the manga is now available at stores everywhere.

Long regarded as a yaoi fan favorite and originally published in *BeBoy Gold*, *Target in the Finder* introduces us to Akihito Takaba, a somewhat naive young man who wants to make it in the tough world of freelance photojournalism. Acting on a tip from a detective friend, he takes a rather incriminating photo of a politician and associate of Ryuichi Asami, yakuza boss and hot bishounen. Asami hunts down Akihito to get the name of his source... and a little pleasure on the side. Asami enjoys Akihito's steadfast yet carefree attitude, as well as simply tracking down Akihito (the lure of the hunt), so he allows Akihito to return to society and his life of photojournalism. I will say this: if the insertion of foreign objects into bodily orifices, and if rape and bondage bothers you, this series is not meant for you. On the other hand, there is no profanity, so if you like your manga erotic, yet free of swearing, this might be a series for you.

In the second story, Akihito inadvertently re-enters the underworld when he receives a disk from a dying man, who orders him to deliver it to Asami. As it turns out, the disk was stolen from the Chinese triads, and they capture Akihito in order to get it back. Additionally, the triad's leader, Fei Long Lui hates Asami with a passion, and he will hurt anyone close to him in order to get to Asami. (I'll leave that scene for your own reading pleasure.) However, Asami arrives soon to save Akihito, and he marks his territory, so to speak, once they are safe in Asami's apartment. The two men part ways in the morning, and the chase continues on once again.

Then follows three short stories that are unconnected to the main couple (or will that be *couples?*) of the Finder series. "Love Lesson" has a freshman/school president set-up, ending with the school president holding the younger student's cigarettes in exchange for sexual favors. It's an okay filler story, perfect as a manga extra. "Risky Society" involves a secret government organization of ESP-talented agents, where inevitably, two of the agents fall in love, and one of them uses his powers to heal the other from an otherwise death wound. I just didn't enjoy this story as much; the pacing was just too fast in trying to cram a story meant for an entire one hundred page volume into forty pages.



"Plants in Love" is actually a very interesting short story, one that I wouldn't have minded to have seen expanded into a full volume of its own. Mizuno and Hiyama are athletes and friends with a love/hate competitive relationship. One day, Hiyama sees his father and Mizuno's father holding hands and acting as if they have had a long and intimate relationship. The guys immediately decide to go to the hotel where Hiyama saw the two older men to see if they're gay lovers. In a strange turn of luck, they see their fathers together in the hotel lobby, but the receptionist won't tell them which room that the men are staying in. So Mizuno and Hiyama ask for the room beside theirs. Suspecting that the receptionist deliberately gave them the wrong room, and stuck with paying for the deluxe hotel room for all night, they spend the night in the same bed... Cue the music for getting your freak on. All I'll say is that like father, like son.

*Target in the Finder* includes an afterthought bonus page from the mangaka with her thoughts on the stories included in this volume, and an interview with her. "Holding onto the Everlasting Night," a final tale of a late night visit between Akihito and Asami closes the volume.

If I could describe Yamane's artwork in one word, it would be 'smooth.' It's not too often that you find the cover illustration in yaoi manga to be as detailed as the panels inside. Her characters have very detailed features, such as textured hair, and the men are always a touch above ordinary men. She also draws in backgrounds in her panels, as opposed to leaving them blank. Yamane doesn't shy away from showing genitalia, but it is always tastefully done. It's obvious that she has an artist's eye and love for anatomy. *Target in the Finder* focuses more on the physical aspects of gay relationships, as opposed to the focus on emotions found in its sister manga *Kizuna*, featured in last month's issue of *Animefringe*, although I can see this manga title moving more towards that direction in later volumes.

I am really looking forward to the release of the second volume, *Cage in the Finder*, due out in November. Let's keep our fingers crossed that it is released on time!

### *Finder Series Vol. 1: Target in the Finder*

**Format:** Right-to-Left Manga / 192 pgs  
**Production:** Be Beautiful / Ayano Yamane  
**Rating:** 4/5

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