

Golden Cain

by You Asagiri

Be Beautiful / USD\$15.99

Rating: 92%

Being one of the four core launch titles of Be Beautiful's original yaoi line of manga, *Golden Cain* is title marketed directly at the ever-growing demographic of women over the age of eighteen that want stories about the relationships men have with other men. While disclaimers about the "explicit content" of this line of books and the shrink wrapping is well warranted, the story that *Golden Cain* carries is actually enthralling enough for open-minded men to enjoy.

At first, reading *Golden Cain* seemed almost like, pardon the expression, "forbidden fruit", where the frail, over-achiever Shun is rescued from a band of toughs gearing up for a Sabbath by the tall, blonde and hunky model Cain. The pair talk, and Shun lets opens up about the uncertainty in his life and how we wants something to stop him from being himself. Cain instantly seizes the moment with a passionate kiss and things progress from there. One night of passion...the ultimate fantasy right there in the alleyway. But then Cain shows up at Shun's school and things become much, much more.

While similar in some instances and polar opposites in others, I cannot help but compare *Golden Cain* to TOKOPOP's *Mars* because the characterization and plot is extremely strong for a single volume story. Shun is constantly struggling to crawl out from under the shadow of his dead brother and ends up right in the arms of his brother's lover. The artwork is stunning and each page follows one after the other. The sexual situations are never shown in explicit detail, but they most certainly do happen, and quite often. There is nothing in this title that cannot be seen on the premium television networks, but with a strong story and an exemplary translation, *Golden Cain* is sure to find its niche...even at \$15.99. --AA

