



Golden Cain

Review by: Avalon
 Author: You Asagiri

Company: Be Beautiful

Length: 176 pgs

Category: Romance/Drama

Rated: R (Sexual situations, partial nudity)

PREFACE

Shun is a troubled young man, searching for answers. Blamed for an accident involving his older brother Keiichi, Shun is wracked with guilt. No matter how hard he tries, he is never able to escape from the shadow of his older brother, or do anything his parents approve of. Things become even more complicated with the arrival of the mysterious, sensual Cain, a stunning model from Vietnam. Then, just as Shun starts to believe he may have found someone to love, he discovers that Keiichi was part of Cain's past.

Desperate to know the truth, but just as desperate to hold onto his lover, will Shun ever find happiness? Can he keep the pain of his past from destroying his future?

Only the truth can set him free!



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CHARACTERS: Shun is a very typical Japanese boy, especially a Japanese younger son. Afraid to speak his mind, always trying to live up to everyone's expectations, he places himself in risky situations as a way to feel something. It isn't until Cain arrives that he lowers his barriers (although Cain practically shreds them first) and allows himself to feel some small taste of happiness.

In contrast, Cain is brash and arrogant, totally confident that he can get anything he desires and determined enough to make it happen. Raised in the west, he is outgoing, charismatic, and not afraid to use his beauty. Cain truly lives each moment, feeling the passion of life. He trusts in himself and his talents, be it in posing for a fashion photo shoot or barging into an bar to save the object of his affections.

Older brother Keiichi has a profound effect on the lives of both Cain and Shun. While appearing in the book mainly in flashbacks and then, towards the end, in a few pages that answer as many questions as they raise, his unseen presence is the driving force in most of Shun's decisions and the main source of his torment. Cain's life is shaped by Keiichi as well, but to tell more would be telling too much.

FAN SERVICE: Grab a glass of ice water and turn on the AC. The sex scenes in this manga will leave you squirming in your seat!

FOOTNOTES:

My first experience with Yaoi (books by female artists usually depicting beautiful men in romantic situations), "Golden Cain" proved to be the perfect introduction into this erotic new world. Not since discovering the "Beauty" novels by Anne Rice have I found myself in need of a cigarette after an evening of reading.

There really isn't much to tell in the way of story. Pretty Boy meets Gorgeous Boy, Boys have unbelievably great sex. Pretty Boy is set free from pain, guilt and shame. Since this was a one shot, there isn't time for much else. We get the facts we need and a broad introduction to our characters. Once that is taken care of, we're too enraptured in the passion and raw heat of the story to notice anything else is missing. One positive note is that Shun doesn't waste any time in worrying about his sexuality and the "shame" many other Yaoi heroes initially feel when they realize they are in love with an other man. Any shame he feels stems from the relationship with Keiichi. We don't have wait for Shun to accept his new romance, but instead root for him to work through his problems so he can fully enjoy it.



MANGA VISION TEST



ARTWORK: The artwork is sensuous and stylized. You Asagiri has captured not only the insecurities of Shun and his life as a college student, but has set it against the exotic beauty and impulsiveness that is Cain's world. My only wish would be more color illustrations, just so Cain's unusual eyes would be noticeable. The moments of passion between Shun and Cain are discreetly drawn, but leaves you feeling more than a bit flushed!

SOUND EFFECTS: The sound effects are a blend of Japanese and English. I really didn't notice them as I was so wrapped up in the passion of Cain and Shun.

EDITS: Everything is there as You had intended.

EXTRAS: Some character intros, a postscript from the author, and a brief You Asagiri bio.

BOOK REPORT

STORY: As a one shot special, You Asagiri wastes little time. She fills all 176 pages with passion, romance, danger, and some incredibly hot sexual situations. The story line isn't anything new, but by the second encounter between Cain and Shun, I didn't really care.

TRANSLATION: Solid translation by Ikoi Hiroe. You can feel the torture in Shun's soul as he tosses out tired metaphors and stumbles for answers. Cain's confidence, power and beauty drip from each sentence, especially the Vietnamese phrase that the lover's exchange. Kudos to Ikoi Hiroe! We'd be overjoyed if you translated all the Yaoi manga.





What the story lacks in originality, it more than makes up for in fire. Every single page is dripping with erotic action. From Cain's auspicious entrance, to their "how beasts make love" final, these two boys are passion incarnate. While he may be beautiful, Cain is no "girly" man. He takes what he wants, and he makes no apology. His seduction of Shun is both quick and intense. Shun, the less masculine and self-assured of the two, willingly becomes Cain's lover, reveling in the sensual power his lover exudes. His abandon is total and who could blame him? Few of us could stand up to the raw sexuality that radiates from Cain's two unusual eyes.

When the two of them make love, the art work is just as intense. Cain dominates the physical act, convincing his lover to let go. The first time you hear Shun call out Cain's name, the heat drips off the page and leaves your palms sweaty and your breath ragged. The love scenes are so well done that the lack of the more finite of details is not missed, nor barely even noticed. Who needs to see the moment of penetration when the moment of rapture is so well conveyed. Images of Shun wrapped in Cain's arms will follow you for days. Showing a powerful understanding of the adult manga industry in Japan, You Asagiri was able to deliver a heated love story while keeping in mind the censors. This book is all about heat...both emotional and sexual.

Compared to other, more "hentai" related manga, there really isn't anything I would consider graphic in this novel. Yaoi is not merely about sex; it is about romance. It is merely coincidental that the romance centers around a pair of male lovers, instead of a more traditional coupling of man and woman. This is certainly a topic that may leave many uncomfortable and is definitely not intended for young readers. However, if a parent has no objection to the content, I would certainly allow someone 16 or up to read it.

"Golden Cain" was my first Yaoi. While typical of the genre in the most basic of ways (format), the raw heat, emotion-driven characters and passionate illustrations have given me a taste for more. "Golden Cain" will make you remember that one, perfect, unforgettable night. I intend to relive it again and again!

