



- Art/Author: Kazuma Kodaka
- Publisher: Be Beautiful
- Pages: 200
- US Publication Date: 10/3/2005
- AGE RATING – 18+
- Reviewed By: Jennifer Davenport

KIZUNA - BONDS OF LOVE: BOOK 4

OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION:

Ranmaru and Kei are enjoying a happy life in the city, their days filled with adventure, their nights surging with romance. In fact, everything is just about perfect until Ranmaru's grandfather asks him to resume his kendo career, forcing the former champion to choose between an old life he never wanted and a new one which satisfies his every desire. Meanwhile, in Shinjuku, Kai Sagano finds himself embroiled in a yakuza conspiracy so deadly that even his awesomely muscled bodyguard Masa might not be able to save him.

REVIEW

It's not common that yaoi series can sustain interest for this long, but Kizuna Volume 4 proves Kizuna's still got what it takes. My favorite of the Be Beautiful line, vying with new series Embracing Love, Kizuna distinguishes itself from other yaoi series by developing a dynamic cast beyond the main couple, and by piling on a good mix of charm, action, drama, and sexiness.

By avoiding the common pitfalls of romance stories and yaoi, Kizuna is still a relative success. Most romances lose steam after the happy couple gets together once and for all, and yaoi especially is plagued by one-shot titles of this nature. In Kizuna, "happily ever after" is just the beginning.



There are also two major elements that make Kizuna Volume 4 a departure from Volumes 1-3. The most obvious development is the introduction of a new character, the hot assassin/bodyguard Tashiro. The other is Volume 4's new story arc, which makes it the most plot-centric volume to date. Intrigue and action content are up to the max, but fans of raunchier material should note the inclusion of a paltry one (one!) sex scene - but lots of cuddling, mind you.

Suave but lighthearted assassin Tashiro is the biggest boon of the new series, and the developing Masa-Kai-Tashiro love triangle is exciting stuff. Tashiro's character fits well into the existing character relationships, and he's instantly as likeable as the previous main cast.

Kizuna is the one yaoi title I recommend above all others, and Volume 4 of the series continues on those expectations of quality yaoi entertainment.

