

Elimination of Genitalia-defined Gender Markers via Boy's Love/Yaoi

Boy's love comics are often superficially labeled gay comics, but boy's love is mostly created by women for other women (the interests of both the female and gay comic communities may overlap to some extent). Boy's love is best thought of as gender role experimentation and romanticized sexual exploration, reflecting current heterosexual mores rather than homosexual. The female virgin's reluctance to have sex before marriage has been replaced by the bottom's reluctance to do it with another guy.

As of this year, Be Beautiful (CPM Manga) and Digital Manga Publishing have joined the ranks of publishers making boy's love/*yaoi* comics available to readers 16-18 years of age and older. To stop younger readers from perusing its hardcore versions of boy's love, Be Beautiful wraps its books in clear plastic.

Says Masumi Homma O'Donnell, V.P. of Business Affairs, for CPM Manga, "We have received a very positive response to our first *yaoi* titles at the recent Yaoi-Con in San Francisco. We think that the *yaoi* genre will be successful among female readers in America as more people become aware of this genre and have the opportunity to experience the gorgeous illustrations and romantic stories of *yaoi*. The character designs in *yaoi* graphics appeal to a female sense of aestheticism; the relationship-based stories are something which romance novel readers will enjoy."

Asked about the higher pricing of Be Beautiful titles (\$15.99 vs. regular \$9.99), she said, "Pricing is based on a number of factors, including the costs of acquisition and localization, advertising and marketing, printing costs and distribution expenses. Current pricing allows for the publication of our *yaoi* titles at today's sales volumes. We look forward to sufficient growth in the *yaoi* market to provide the economies of scale we have with our mainstream graphic novels."

Descendants of Darkness: Yami No Matsuei

by Yoko Matsushita, English (c) 2004 VIZ

I caught and stripped you...and set a curse upon you. - Dr. Muraki to Hisoka

Tsuzuki is an agent who works for the summons department in the Ministry of Hades. His job is to retrieve lost souls. His new partner Hisoka is a quiet and bright 16-year-old with an agenda. The two don't hit it off at their first meeting; Tsuzuki is still mad because Hisoka hasn't apologized for mistaking Tsuzuki for a vampire and holding a gun to his head. Later, they find a common enemy in the evil Dr. Muraki.

Fake

by Sanami Matoh, English (c) 2004 TOKYOPOP

...You'll love me, won't you...? Dork! It's a joke, idiot! Don't take everything so seriously. - Dee

The setting is ever-troubled New York (as was Akimi Yoshida's long-running *Banana Fish*). Ryo is a new recruit to the NYPD's 27th precinct, and obnoxious Dee has been assigned as his partner. Dee is an equal opportunity player, liking both guys and gals, but the one he can't have is the one he lusts after most. They are always busy with crime mysteries to solve - the biggest is who murdered Ryo's parents 10 years ago.

Golden Cain

by You Asagiri, English (c) 2004 A18 Corp. (Be Beautiful)

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It felt like a dream...with a man who whispers foreign words. - Shun

Shun is just about to be raped when he is rescued by Cain, a famous Eurasian model whom his older brother admired. Though Cain's mother is Japanese, Cain was born and raised in Vietnam, which explains why in the middle of their lovemaking Cain can provocatively whisper sweet nothings in Vietnamese. Shun feels worthless because his brother got seriously hurt trying to protect him. Cain may be able to change that.



Gravitation

by Maki Murakami, English (c) 2003 TOKYOPOP

Don't worry. I came to my senses when I realized you didn't have tits. - Eiri

What does happy-go-lucky pop rock vocalist Shuichi see in big meanie romance novelist Eiri Yuki? And it might be more productive if Shuichi stopped whining over a hopeless love and attended lyric-writing classes. Shuichi, give your guitarist Hiro a chance!

Kizuna: Bonds of Love

by Kazuma Kodaka, English (c) 2004 A18 Corp. (Be Beautiful)

But the only eyes I want...are yours...with me reflected in them. - Kei to Ranmaru

After beautiful and strong Ranmaru saves Kei's life by throwing himself in harm's way, their relationship becomes tighter than ever. Ranmaru does not hold it against Kei for the loss of his dream to become the best kendo swordsman in the country, and he does not want Kei to walk in the footsteps of his yakuza father and to go after the gangsters whose assassination attempt failed.



Only the Ring Finger Knows

by Satoru Kannagi and Hotaru Odagiri, English (c) 2004 by Digital Manga Publishing

The Kazuki I love is standing right in front of me...but no amount of words can grant me Kazuki's heart. - Wataru

It's a custom at their high school to wear matching rings to indicate friendship, availability, or commitment. In an odd coincidence, Wataru's treasured ring turns out to be an exact duplicate of model student Kazuki's ring. Wataru doesn't want anyone to link him with Kazuki, who isn't as nice and perfect as everyone seems to think he is.

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