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**Golden Cain**by [Kat Avila](#)

*Reviews may contain information that could be considered 'spoilers'. Readers should proceed at their own risk.*

**Publisher****Be Beautiful**<http://www.BeBeautifulManga.com>**Credits**

Writer: You Asagiri

Artist: You Asagiri

Distributor: Central Park Media

Translator: Ikoi Hiroe

ISBN: 1-58664-955-8

**Grade: 7**

*(Warning: If strong language or any discussion of sex offends you, please do not read beyond this point.)*

Shun feels the need to be punished for his "wonderful, perfect" older brother sacrificing himself to save Shun from an oncoming car. Cain, a popular Eurasian model, helps him to get over the accident.

The reader's first introduction to Cain Hino is a ravishing larger-than-life wall poster of the model. Shun Arima can't help but stare at it and be reminded of his brother Keiichi who was a fan of Cain's. On the path to self-destruction,



Shun is rescued from a ritualistic rape at a seedy club by Cain.

Later, Cain shows up at Shun's college. As president of the Honor Society, Shun must show the new celebrity transfer student around. Shun is embarrassed by Cain's presence since it reminds him of yesterday's passionate-to-tears intimacies. He doesn't know how to handle their developing relationship. Nevertheless, Shun now has someone he can talk to about his brother and who will comfort him, but Shun doesn't tell Cain the whole story.

You Asagiri's creation of Cain was clever. She took the standard pairing of a wild blond top and restrained dark-haired bottom, and situated the foreign quality of the top in Asia, instead of in the U.S. or Europe as is often the case. Cain was born in Vietnam and grew up there, though his mother is Japanese. He never met his white father whose nationality is unknown.

Because Cain is multilingual, he can whisper sweet nothings in Vietnamese or greet Shun in the morning in English. It adds a touch of class to the relationship for a guy to be able to do that romantically.

Asagiri uses Cain's familiarity with the culture and history of Vietnam to endow him with a character depth you generally don't encounter in everyday boy's love/yaoi. There are unexpected comments Cain utters that put the world of the lovers in perspective against the world at-large.

The artwork of *Golden Cain* appears on the amateurish side and hurried, perhaps partly due to Asagiri's searching for a new assistant during the making of the manga. There are captions in borderless boxes making it look as though someone used a utility knife to vandalize the images. I would have either placed borders around the boxes or bled the image through.

Yet, when Asagiri spends time developing a shot, the results can be very nice. On page 55, there is a full-page shot of Cain during a photo shoot. He is holding aloft Easter lilies in his slightly open right hand; his left hand supports a petite female model who is bent backward at a 90-degree angle. If she bends any further, she will pull him down on top of her,

the lilies will alight on both. There is an energetic tension in the pose. It's too bad U.S. publishers work from scanned copies of the originals because the toning is faded; thus, the shot is flat. Also, story details get lost in the smaller shots during the sex scenes.

The front cover illustration is dark and dull. Turn over the manga for the superior back cover illustration. Cain's face is more expressive and relaxed. Shun gazes starry-eyed into the distance. Red fringe-petal tulips break the side border and cradle the couple in a living frame. Fireflies break up the night sky background.

I question some of the translation/editing choices. It's strange to hear Japanese characters using Christian swear words like "Goddammit!" and "Jesus!" Characters say "Damn!" where I would have used "Shit!" or "Fuck!" Was the language toned down to preserve a romantic mood?

Additionally, I was puzzled by Shun's growling. In two different situations, he goes "Grrrr." "Hmpf" might have been better. Dogs growl. So do beastly men. Bottoms are supposed to moan and whimper.

All in all, **Golden Cain** wasn't that bad of a read and there are unique elements in the story that pull it away from the pack.

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Published: February 1, 2005

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