

= Earl Cain =

Earl Cain ( Japanese : ????????? , Hepburn : Hakushaku Kain Shir?zu ) , also known as Count Cain , is a gothic sh?jo manga series written and illustrated by Kaori Yuki . Earl Cain consists of five parts or " Series " : Forgotten Juliet ( ??????????? , Wasurerareta Jurietto ) , The Sound of a Boy Hatching ( ????????? , Sh?nen no Fukasuru Oto ) , Kafka ( ??? , Kafuka ) , The Seal of the Red Ram ( ?????? , Akai Hitsuji no Kokuin ) , and the sequel series Godchild ( ??? ????? , Goddo Chairudo ) .

Appearing as serials in the Japanese manga magazine Hana to Yume , the chapters of Forgotten Juliet , The Sound of a Boy Hatching , Kafka , and The Seal of the Red Ram ran from 1991 to 1994 , and the Godchild chapters appeared between the May 2001 issue and the October 2003 issue . Together , the series spans 13 tank?bon volumes , with five for Forgotten Juliet , The Sound of a Boy Hatching , Kafka , and The Seal of the Red Ram and eight for Godchild . Two drama CDs based on the series were also released . Set in 19th @-@ century England , the series focuses on a young earl named Cain Hargreaves who solves murders while encountering his father 's secret organization , Delilah , that experiments with reviving the dead .

Earl Cain is licensed for English @-@ language release in North America by Viz Media , which published Forgotten Juliet , The Sound of a Boy Hatching , Kafka , and The Seal of the Red Ram as The Cain Saga . The first volume of The Cain Saga was published in October 2006 ; the final volume was published in June 2007 . Godchild was released simultaneously , as well as being serialized in Viz 's manga anthology Shojo Beat from July 2005 to June 2006 .

The setting of the manga was inspired by " the darker , grislier side " of the Victorian upper class and her admiration of films set in the Victorian time period . For Godchild , she traveled to London to do historical research and visited seven historical sites there . In the series , she refers to the Bible as well as real @-@ life literary works , films and people . Reviewers have found a range of themes in the series . Critical reaction to The Cain Saga was mixed : some felt that the mysteries were well @-@ done with detailed art , while others found the art crude and the short stories confusing and predictable . Reviewers praised Godchild as an overdone , entertaining series with detailed and distinct art .

= = Plot = =

= = = Characters = = =

Set during the late Victorian era in London , the series focuses on its eponymous protagonist Cain C. Hargreaves ( ??? ? C ? ??????? , Kain Sh? H?gur?vuzu ) the seventeen @-@ year @-@ old son of Alexis Hargreaves and Alexis 's elder sister , Augusta . Abused physically and emotionally by his father for her subsequent insanity , Cain poisoned him , after a dying Augusta warned him to escape . Before Alexis plunged into the sea , he cursed his son to have a miserable life and die alone . Cain inherited his father 's title of earl as a result of his presumed death . Accompanying him is his twenty @-@ eight @-@ year @-@ old butler Riffael " Riff " Raffit ( ????? ? ????? , Rif?ru Rafitto ) , a former medical student with whom he shares a close bond . Cain 's uncle and legal guardian Neil Hargreaves ( ??? ? ??????? , N?ru H?gur?vuzu ) tends to become upset with his behavior and course of action . Often annoyed by Cain 's relationships with women , Cain 's ten @-@ year @-@ old half sister , the outgoing and strongwilled Mary Weather Hargreaves ( ??????? ? ??????? , Mar?wez? H?gur?vuzu ) also lives with them . Previously , she lived on the streets as a fortuneteller , after her mother died to protect her . One of Cain 's friends , Oscar Gabriel , becomes her self @-@ proclaimed fiancé to win back his father 's attention . As the series progresses , he risks his life to protect her , and she realizes that he genuinely cares for her .

Alexis Hargreaves ( ????? ? ??????? , Arekushisu H?gur?vuzu ) and his secret organization , Delilah , serve as the antagonists of the series . Delilah conducts experiments to revive the dead , creating " deadly dolls " or resurrected corpses surviving on the fresh blood and organs of others .

The deadly dolls each possess a supernatural ability , such as seeing the future . Among the deadly dolls is the spider @-@ controlling Mikaila ( ???? ) , who is a doll of Suzette ( ????? , Shuzetto ) , Augusta 's daughter and Cain 's childhood love . Cain 's half brother and Alexis 's illegitimate son , Jizabel Disraeli ( ???? ? ?????? , Jizaberu Dizur?ri ) works as a doctor for the organization , conducting experiments on humans . Although Alexis physically abused and emotionally traumatized him as well , he refuses to escape from him , and simultaneously despises and envies the bond between Cain and Riff as he believes unconditional love does not exist . His thirty @-@ five @-@ year @-@ old assistant Cassian ( ???? , Kashian ) , whose body stopped growing due to a rare strain of dwarfism and who was subsequently sold to a circus as a child by his parents , shows concern for Jizabel and his involvement with Alexis and Delilah .

= = = Story = = =

Having vowed to end Delilah 's experiments with the dead , Cain solves murders while periodically running into Jizabel and other members of Delilah . After encountering Mikaila , who professes her one @-@ sided love for him and wants to become Suzette , he becomes obsessed with destroying the organization and learns that it is secretly building a memorial temple . Meanwhile , despite Jizabel 's efforts to delay Riff 's second , hidden , and cruel personality from awakening , the hypnosis suppressing it breaks . Riff later declares to Cain that he secretly works for Delilah : the loyal , kind @-@ hearted Riff Cain had known is an alternative personality used to deceive others . Alexis had intended for Cain to develop a close bond with Riff , only to break it , to remind Cain that he is unloved . After Riff 's departure , Cain resolves to confront Alexis and promises Mary that they will have a tea party after the conflict with Delilah ends . Led by Cassian , whose brain has been transplanted into an adult body , he reaches the tower within the temple where Alexis plans to sacrifice the brainwashed people of London to revive Augusta . Within the tower , Riff reveals his intent to overthrow Alexis . Unconcerned , Alexis divulges that Riff is Delilah 's longest surviving doll and will soon die . Riff attacks Cain , but Riff 's other personality resurfaces , causing him to deliberately shoot himself . Riff 's loyal personality triumphs over the cruel one , but he and Cain are separated . Because Riff 's wound cannot heal , Jizabel commits suicide so Riff can use his blood to briefly remain alive and return to Cain . Meanwhile , Cain successfully poisons his father and with his death , the tower begins to crumble . Cain , unable to escape and hurt by the falling debris , reunites briefly with Riff . However , the ceiling collapses and Riff tries to push him away . Cain embraces him , choosing to stay .

After Cain 's disappearance , Mary becomes head of the Hargreaves . Augusta possesses Alexis , and seeks out Mary in the mausoleum Cain had built before leaving to confront Alexis . Augusta reveals that she manipulated Alexis into abusing his sons and trying to resurrect her for her amusement . Before she can kill Mary , Augusta triggers Cain 's trap in the mausoleum and dies . Years later , Mary is married to Oscar and pregnant with their child , although she still waits for his return . Crehador , a medium close to Cain , sets up a tea party for Mary , fulfilling Cain 's promise ; he then reminisces on how he found Cain being held by Riff 's corpse within the ruined tower . The bunkoban @-@ exclusive epilogue expands the ending slightly . It shows an elderly Mary , who lies on her deathbed attended by a woman nearby and hears the laughter of Jizabel 's ghost as he plays with his pet sheep . Sensing a presence nearby , she dies , and taking the form of her ten @-@ year @-@ old self , her soul joins Cain hand @-@ in @-@ hand at a tea party with their friends and loved ones ? although they exist as spirits , a boy nearby can hear them .

= = Development = =

Manga artist Kaori Yuki chose the Victorian era as the setting for Earl Cain because she liked films from that time period and was inspired by " the darker , grislier side " of the Victorian upper class . Yuki considered Kafka , a vampire @-@ themed mystery which introduced the secret society led by the protagonist 's father , to be the beginning of the series ' plot . The " pretty risqué theme " of Kafka " embarrassed [ her ] at the time . " After completing the first four parts of Earl Cain , Yuki was

uncertain about continuing the series . She wrote her supernatural fantasy manga series Angel Sanctuary ( 1994 ? 2000 ) and the chapter " Solomon Grundy 's Sunday " as a " self @-@ introduction " which convinced her to start Godchild . Yuki did historical research for Godchild , traveling to London , England , and visiting seven historical sites : Westminster Abbey , Big Ben , the Tower of London , Windsor Castle , the British Museum , Thames River , and Hyde Park . Because of the gap of several years between the publication of the final The Seal of the Red Ram volume and the first Godchild volume , Yuki included the characters in order of previous appearance with past episodes , and short explanations in the first Godchild volume . Yuki noted that her drawing style differed from her previous series . The darker plot of Godchild worried Yuki , but helped her to decide the series ' ending . Her method of creating suspense in Godchild included adding " lots " of black screentone , " exaggerating " the characters ' expressions , having an elaborate setting , and opening the chapter with an everyday scene to contrast with the " scary scenes " .

Yuki believed that the original story was unclear and added extra pages to clarify the twist ending of the series . Because of her decision , the ending chapter of Godchild was eight pages longer than the usual thirty pages for a manga . Yuki was divided between a happy or tragic ending for Cain , noting how readers of Angel Sanctuary had wanted a happy ending for the protagonists . She felt that the ending of Godchild was ambiguous as to whether Cain survived because there is neither blood nor a fatal wound on him . Yuki chose the final line of Godchild from the rhyme " Simple Simon " , joking in the postscript that at least the series did not conclude with the line " And then there were none " . As of finishing the series , Yuki said that she has no plans for additional chapters or side stories . Despite this , she included a five @-@ page epilogue in the 2010 bunkoban release of the entire series .

= = = Influences and cultural references = = =

Earl Cain contains references to real @-@ life people and literary works . The first Godchild chapter , " Mad Tea Party " , focuses on a mystery with elements from Lewis Carroll 's 1865 novel Alice 's Adventures in Wonderland , a work which Yuki has expressed her fondness for . Yuki 's minor character , Victoria , was inspired by Carroll 's character , the Queen of Hearts . Carroll 's 1876 nonsense poem , The Hunting of the Snark , provided Yuki with the name of Jizabel 's childhood pet , Snark . Additionally , the title of the third part of the series , Kafka , refers to the Austrian writer Franz Kafka , and a translation of the first line of his 1915 novella The Metamorphosis appears in the beginning of the volume . Yuki also based the story of Mikaila on the fairytale " Mermaid Princess " . The chapter " Oedipal Blade " takes its name from the Greek character Oedipus Rex , who unknowingly killed his father and married his mother . Yuki also incorporates tales for children and lullabies into the mysteries of the series ; for example , the chapter " Solomon Grundy 's Sunday " uses the nursery rhyme " Solomon Grundy " , while " The Twisted Fairy Tale " refers to the Brothers Grimm fairytale " The Juniper Tree " . References to the bible also appear in the series . The protagonist shares his name with the murderer Cain , and Augusta is compared to Delilah by her father . Additionally , the series alludes to the story of the Kiss of Judas , in which Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus of Nazareth to Roman soldiers by identifying him through a kiss .

The influence of films is also seen in Earl Cain . As Yuki enjoys the American television series Twin Peaks ( 1990 ? 1991 ) , reviewers have noted its influence on Forgotten Juliet , the first part of Earl Cain . Yuki felt that two minor characters that appear in Forgotten Juliet , Maddi and Leland in the chapter " Branded Bibi " , are reminiscent of the series . Yuki also drew inspiration from the film Young Sherlock Holmes ( 1985 ) for " The Boys Who Stopped Time " , and based the appearance of Cain 's aunt on Charlotte from A Room with a View ( 1985 ) . In the chapter " Double " , one of the characters shares his first name with the actor Emilio Estevez , and director Dario Argento served as the model for the antagonist . While there is no model for Cain , British actor Rupert Graves " left a strong impression " on her with his performance in A Room with a View . Additionally , Riff 's name comes from The Rocky Horror Picture Show ( 1975 ) , which Yuki considers a visual influence along with the films Gothic ( 1986 ) , The Legend of Billie Jean ( 1985 ) , Aliens ( 1986 ) , Lost Boys ( 1987

) , and Torch @-@ song Trilogy ( 1988 ) . Overall as a manga artist , Yuki has been influenced by Western films and MTV , which she watched in her youth .

= = Themes = =

Reviewers have focused on a range of themes in Earl Cain . Noting " themes of incest and suicide " in the first four parts of the series , Thompson states that Godchild 's portrayal of incest adheres to " a more classical tormented sense " which results in " guilt , madness , and the punishment of heaven " for the characters . According to Lori Henderson , reviewer and contributor to School Library Journal 's blog Good Comics for Kids , Yuki frequently uses the " power of love " as a theme in her works ; Godchild focuses on " the darker side of love " and its effects on the characters , although she writes that the manga does explore love as a source of empowerment . Henderson also notes the theme of betrayal present in the sixth volume . Writing for IGN , A.E. Sparrow writes that the " issues of beauty , loneliness , jealousy , and family ties " appear in the first volume of Godchild 's mysteries . A French reviewer for Manga News wrote that the theme of " the soiled childhood " occurs throughout the series , depicted by abused children or children 's items , such as dolls , pudding , and puppets , playing a role in some mysteries ; the children 's items appear either in the background as in " The Little Crooked House " or as a major part of the plot as in " Solomon Grundy 's Sunday " .

= = Media = =

= = = Manga = = =

Written and illustrated by Kaori Yuki , Earl Cain is the collective name for Forgotten Juliet , The Sound of a Boy Hatching , Kafka , The Seal of the Red Ram , and the sequel series Godchild . Appearing as a serial in the Japanese manga magazine Hana to Yume , the chapters of Forgotten Juliet , The Sound of a Boy Hatching , Kafka , and The Seal of the Red Ram ran from 1991 to 1994 , and were published in five tank?bon volumes by Hakusensha from July 17 , 1992 , to October 1994 . Godchild was serialized in the same manga magazine from the May 2001 issue to the October 2003 issue , and was published by Hakusensha in eight volumes from November 19 , 2001 , to January 16 , 2004 . Hakusensha later combined chapters from Forgotten Juliet , The Sound of a Boy Hatching , Kafka , and The Seal of the Red Ram into two volumes and published them from December 20 , 2004 , to January 28 , 2005 . Hakusensha also re @-@ released the series in six bunkoban volumes from July 15 , 2009 , to March 16 , 2010 .

Viz Media licensed Earl Cain for an English @-@ language release in North America . It serialized Godchild in its manga anthology Shojo Beat from the July 2005 issue through the June 2006 issue . It published the series ' first volume on March 7 , 2006 ; the final volume was released on February 5 , 2008 . Viz published Forgotten Juliet , The Sound of a Boy Hatching , Kafka , and The Seal of the Red Ram as The Cain Saga and released the first volume during the Godchild release , on October 3 , 2006 ; the final volume was released on June 5 , 2007 . Earl Cain is also licensed for regional language releases in Germany and Sweden by Carlsen Comics , in Italy by Planet Manga , in Taiwan by Tong Li Publishing , in Spain by Glénat , and in France by Editions Tonkam . Godchild ran in multiple manga anthologies : the French Magnolia , the German Daisuki , and the Swedish Shojo Stars .

= = = Drama CDs = = =

On April 21 , 1999 , Geneon Entertainment released a drama CD titled Hakushaku Kain Shiriizu : Kafuka ( ?????????? ~ ??? ) . With music by Tomohiko Kira , it featured Hideo Ishikawa as Cain , Koyasu Takehito as Riff , Kawada Taeko as Mary Weather , Miki Shinichiro as Dr. Allen , and J?r?ta Kosugi as Alexis . The same company released a second drama CD , HCD Hakushaku Kain Shiriizu

: Kirikizamareta Taberareta Miss Pudding no higeki ( HCD????????? ? ?????????????? . ?????????? ) , on November 17 , 1999 . The drama CD featured Hideo Ishikawa , Kyoko Hikami , Takehito Koyasu , from Kafuka and included Taeko Kawada and Junko Asami .

= = Reception = =

The Cain Saga received mixed reviews from critics . Manga Sanctuary awarded the French edition of the first volume five stars , describing it as " excellent . " IGN 's A. E. Sparrow described it as " a wonderful introduction to shojo manga for the uninitiated " and felt that both The Cain Saga and its sequel Godchild could " appeal to a very broad audience . " The Book Report 's Courtney Kraft praised the " fine attention to detail and aesthetics " of the art and liked the concept of murder mysteries based on children 's rhymes and stories , commenting that Yuki " masters the art of creating a mystery . "

Conversely , Mania Entertainment 's Danielle Van Gorder considered the art " still much less refined than her later work in Angel Sanctuary , " and commented on the amount of tragedy in the series . Manga News rated the first volume 15 out of 20 , commenting that the male characters looked similar and had similar facial expressions in contrast to the more recognizable female ones . In Manga : The Complete Guide , Jason Thompson rated the series two and a half stars out of four , stating : " In its best moments , The Cain Saga captures the genuine ghoulishness of the Victorian era , or at least of its stereotypes . " The Cain Saga was also criticized for scenes with " poorly organized " artwork , one @-@ dimensional characters , predictable mysteries , and confusing plot , caused by the back @-@ story and characters .

Conversely , the sequel , Godchild , received positive reviews . When the first chapter premiered in Shojo Beat , critics commented on the potential and art of the series , but found the chapter " listless " and confusing . Reviews of the bound volumes were positive . Writing for The Book Report , Robin Brenner described the mysteries as " unsettling , splatter @-@ filled , and deliciously in line with the melodramatic , horrific traditions of Edgar Allan Poe and Mary Shelley . " Leroy Douresseaux of Coolstreak Cartoons wrote : " By turns bizarre and unsettling , Godchild is actually quite engaging , but can be difficult to follow for those who didn 't come in at the beginning " . Writing for Sequential Tart , Sheena McNeil described Godchild as " a masterpiece in every sense of the word . " In reviews of subsequent volumes , she lowered her score , and praised Yuki 's characterization , mysteries , and artwork ; she concluded : " Godchild is a fantastic and different story that can 't be denied . "

Critics praised the art of the series as detailed and distinct , with several noting the difference in the illustrations of The Cain Saga and Godchild . B. D. Gest 's M. Natali wrote that " one senses immediately how the art of Kaori Yuki has evolved and improved since [ The Cain Saga ] " . About.com 's Deb Aoki placed the series on her recommended reading list of horror manga , commenting on the " ravishing " artwork and " lush gothic details . " While describing the series as " the manga equivalent of Twizzlers " and the premise as " ahistoric and just plain silly , " Katherine Dacey of Popculture Shock added , " Kaori Yuki 's distinctive artwork and macabre sensibility make this overripe setup entertaining , even if the occasionally slangy dialogue and CSI @-@ style forensics seem implausible in a Victorian London setting . "

According to Publishers Weekly , Yuki 's art consists of " startlingly odd angles and abrupt jumps from closeups to distant shots " with which she establishes " a giddy mood " that enables the readers to be sympathetic to the events . Although Yuki 's character designs stuck to " certain sh?jo conventions " , they were seen as detailed and " perfect " for the mood of Godchild . Reviewers enjoyed the conclusion to the series , although one wanted a clearer fate for Cain and another commented on the " rushed " ending scenes . Godchild was also criticized for the characters ' cruelty , Jizabel 's disturbing back @-@ story , and limited appeal of the series ' universe .