



# Cantarella, Volume 1

*You Higuri*

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From birth, Cesare Borgia is surrounded by shadows. Damned by his own father and driven by the demons, his quest for power threatens to set the world of Renaissance Italy ablaze. This book takes the reader on a journey into the world of the Borgias, a world of unspeakable conspiracies and forbidden desires.

## Cantarella, Volume 1 Details

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Author : You Higuri

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## From Reader Review Cantarella, Volume 1 for online ebook

### Cornerofmadness says

I thought this was better written than Gorgeous Carat and the art is more even, prettier but I'm not entirely sure I liked the history of Cesare Borgia used so loosely (though I am laughing at the reviewer who is all offended because they're Catholic. Obviously they don't know their own history. This *happened*, except the satanic pact BUT there were even rumors of a darkness ruling the Borgia line! Though those rumors are harder to find now that scholars have found much more reliable and favorable sources than centuries old smear campaigns) For those who don't seem to realize it, Cesare Borgia along with his sister Lucretzia and his brother Giovanni (Juan) were real. They were the bastard children of a *Pope* (a cardinal at that time. He fathered at least a half dozen bastards we're aware of).

In this version, Higuri goes the extra step with the negative superstition-born rumors and makes Cesare actually cursed by demonic entities, little will-o-the-wisp things that follow him around. He has a loveless childhood. The two bright lights in all of this is his sister Lucretzia (and yes there was hints of them being incestuous though modern scholars now believe that was part of the above mentioned smear campaign) and Lady Vanozza who is his adoptive mother (real mother as far as actual history knows). His brother, Juan, is a brat and hateful.

As they get older, and their father is plotting to put all his kids in positions of power, Cesare is taken from Vanozza along with Lucretzia and given to a hateful woman. Higuri's alternative history has Cesare nearly raped by the irate husband Cesare's father was cuckholding. He's saved by a swordsman who teaches Cesare to fight.

As a young adult things go even worse for Cesare. He leaves his father's planned path for him to be in the church (in truth, he stayed with it until he was a cardinal before being the first cardinal ever to resign). Friends turn on him. An assassin, Michelotto is sent after Cesare and things go sideways.

I know this was a very popular manga a decade ago. I wasn't that taken in by it (I only have two in my collection) I'm simply rereading it now as I purge my shelves. I can see people liking it. There are definitely homoerotic overtones between Cesare and Michelotto for those who go in for that.

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### Sam says

I remember quite clearly the day that I picked Cantarella off the bookstore's shelf. I was perusing the manga section to see if there were any new releases and I pulled Cantarella off the shelf to inspect the cover and summary. Immediately, I was mesmerized by Higuri You's artwork, which is just as good in the inside as the cover.

As I read Cantarella, I was not only amazed by the artwork, I became interested in the Borgias family and their real life history, which later sparked me into watching Showtime's The Borgias.

Now, there are subtle hints of shounen-ai in Cantarella, which is not that surprising from a manga-ka known for yaoi, but for me, it was more than welcome, and it does not take away from the story.

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## Lanie says

This was stunning.

I picked up most of the volumes at my favorite used bookstore on a whim & I just now finally got around to reading them. And I am completely in love. The politics intrigue! The story! The characters! The artwork!

I am seriously, you guys. (Lol. South Park) "cantarella" is absolutely gorgeous to look at.

I'm totally in love with Cesare. He's so sad and angry and I don't blame him one bit. His family fucking sucks. Except his sister and mom. They were nice to him. Everyone else? No. His dad & madam can go die in a hole.

An exceptional manga. Art, characters, story, complexity. It's just all so impressive and I definitely look forward to reading more. :)

Recommended to fans of manga and historical fiction. Particularly those interested in Italy during the late 1400s.

Happy reading, all!

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## Mizuki says

The Borgias! The Renaissance! Gorgeous artworks and beautifully drawn characters! Magic and demons! Murder! Power struggle and coups! What is not to love here?

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## Kimberly says

One of my favorite mangas of all time. Although it has stopped at volume 10, it is currently on hiatus and will be picked up again according to figure-san. A take on Italian history manga style. Expect pretty boys!

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## Kassilem says

This is the series that got me interested in Cesare Borgia. I think my sister recommended it to me and I'm glad she did. And after reading *The Borgias: The Hidden History* by G. J. Meyer earlier this month, I had an urge to come back and revisit this series. It's not historically accurate for drama's sake, but it's intriguing. And now that I know the history and who everyone is, I can look at this rendition with a new eye. This volume, holding the first four chapters, deals with Cesare's childhood and hints a little at why he turns out the way he does later on in his lifetime. The artwork is well done. There's a consistent style and the images are eye-catching.

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## Stephanie Molnar says

The story of the Borgias is juicy enough and doesn't need to addition of Satanic pacts and supernatural beings (a talking moth? Seriously?!). I will keep reading, though, because I love the Borgias and the illustrations are nice. If it gets too heavy in the supernatural, I may quit reading it.

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## Jake says

I was hooked the instant I picked it up. Cantarella has taken historical characters and happenings, adapted it a bit for her own story purposes, and done a wonderful job.

For her main character, the much maligned Cesare Borgia, she's made him into almost a sympathetic villain. He's vicious, ruthless, ambitious, and resigned to being a denizen of evil. And yet, you are given an all-expenses paid, all-access pass into his emotions, and have to remind yourself that he has murdered people to suit his own ends, you feel such sympathy for him.

And his sidekick Chiaro is dragged along with him. You definitely feel that he is the light that will keep Cesare from being completely destroyed.

I hope there's going to be more with his sister Lucrezia, too.

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## Cassia says

So I had never heard of this manga before but it was sitting on the shelf at the bookstore and it looked interesting enough so I bought it because of a gut feeling.

And I'm glad I did!

It has an interesting and easy to follow plot, that's not TOO predictable (Hard to find in manga, I feel)

The artwork is lovely, the characters developed, the setting is nice and detailed... I don't really have much to complain about except that there is a few scenes in it that are a bit... gross and unnecessary.

: (view spoiler)

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## Katrina says

As manga, I give this three stars but when you add the historical element in then it is definitely a four star read. This shonin manga is a series based on the life of Cesare Borgia. It's premise is that Cesare was cursed at birth because his father (who became Pope Alexander VI) promised the devil his first born in exchange for the papacy. The book goes on to show the tortured life of Cesare and those around him. It's a really entertaining series with a romantic feel to it. I will say, I had a harder time following the sequence of events in this book than I have other mangas. Rated for older teen, 16+.

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## Sweet Sacrifice Forbidden Moonlight says

I read in Thai 2 years ago. And in English too. this book about a man,who his father sold him to Evil.In his blood it had poison.His blood smell strange sweet like " Cantarella " poison for many years ago in Europe. Even if he want to die, but he can't.Something he don't want to do, but have to do.And he need somebody,

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who can help him for stop his life.

I like very much, Beautiful picture and cause..it's can be true for everyone. We have some poison with other, when we want to use it. But it's poisonous with self too.

Even it's cartoon, but this is a good for someone who love cartoon. Do you like cartoon ?

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### **Marquise says**

Whilst the art is fairly good within this style of manga, which is nevertheless too cartoony for my personal taste, the plot is just terrible and full of the usual clichés and myths about the Borgia family that have been circulating forever, which makes me suspect the author preferred to go with her own spin on the popular misconceptions, adding supernatural elements because . . . because.

The "new" interpretation I could spot was that Yuu Higuri here portrays the eldest and youngest of the Borgias—Cesare and Lucrezia, if you've not guessed yet—as poor orphan children neglected by their Horrible Father, the Pope, and verbally and physically abused by everyone, starting with their caretaker and governess and her son. And the Borgia middle brother, Giovanni, is characterised as a major bully who loves to torment and beat little Lucrezia, who of course is protected from such abuse by their big brother. One can guess from practically the first chapter where this is going and that whilst the author strives to keep the myth intact she also seems to be striving to whitewash these two characters, laying all the blame on Cardinal Roderigo. And then there's the otherworldly elements, that aren't very prominent in this volume yet, which in my opinion were unnecessary. The Borgias alone are fascinating enough to not need anything mystical or supernatural to enhance their story as a family or as individuals.

Especially not when the lack of originality is so blatant as to throw this into the pile of commonplace Borgia fiction that doesn't either stay true to history nor provide entertaining or insightful reading.

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### **Teetee says**

I remember thinking the artwork looked dated when I read it years ago. This one didn't stick in my mind, not a fav though I had it on my bookshelf for years, couldn't sell/swap it away.

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### **Dorian de Jandreau says**

I am obsessed with Cesare Borgia and came up with this manga.

When I started reading I saw this is exactly what I wrote in fanfiction! (except I didn't add any supernatural stuff) I love how the author showed Cesare! This is how I always wanted to see him: gentle, sweet and loving young boy, but so strong. This is the story of Cesare I wanted to be created, extremely close to my own story. This manga inspired me even more.

The drawing style is also very beautiful! Love this so much!!!

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### **Kaion says**

## Review of Vol 1-3

I've reached the end of the availability of this series in my library, so it's probably time to call it quits. *Cantarella* is a perfectly acceptable guilty pleasure read-- hey, who doesn't love the Borgias, and if you're old school, you know exactly what genre this is dealing in with the bishie men and the vaguely homosexual teasing and the even vaguer faux-Christian-supernatural touch. The historical setting is the real interest, though You Higari is no Kaoru Mori and doesn't lend the story enough depth or detail to really draw you into the history (and to be honest, by the third volume I found the plotting mostly incomprehensible, regardless of whether it was historically accurate, though part of the confusion is due to title's lack of a clear storyline thus far). But if the genre is your bag, *Cantarella* moves swiftly and offers broad enjoyment in the broad strokes of the drama: Cesare is tortured! Because his father sold his soul to the devil to become the pope! But this also gives him awesome devil powers! And his devoted assassin Michelotto wants to save Cesare from himself! And they're both in some weird love triangle with Lucretia! And plague and scheming and assassinations and political marriages every other page. One could do worse for light reading. Rating: 3 stars

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