

Comics & Graphic Novels

**Aranzi Machine Gun Volume 3**

Aranzi Aronzo

Anne Ishii, translator

Vertical

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*Aranzi Machine Gun* is an awesome series filled with random stories of dolls gone wild. *Kawaii* or Japanese Cute, the stuffed animal look, will be familiar to most, although this series is the author's first English translation. Beware: while the cutesy covers make the books appear childish, the twisted humor inside is really appropriate for teen and adult audiences.

The first two books in the series are a little dense, even without a lot of words. But by the third volume, Aranzi Aronzo is truly hitting on all cylinders. The illustrations are outstanding throughout. Themes like the "Bunny Bunny Cute Stuff Expedition" and "Miss Appliqué" are carried over from book to book, and "Mr. Sprites Voyages" is particularly enjoyable. "The Bad Guy Band" is by far the highlight. Four doll friends—Bad Guy, Liar, Skeleton, and Meanie—get together to start a band. Bad Guy is "over flowing with super badness power." Liar is the greatest liar ever, while Skeleton wears clothes and Meanie is not actually very mean. After the friends form the band, they immediately begin to disagree about its intent. Meanie wants to play country music and Liar wants to name the band after himself, but Bad Guy won't acquiesce to their requests so they all quit except for Skeleton who was in the bathroom during the whole argument. (Do we really want to know what a skeleton does in the bathroom?)

Mr. Aranzi describes himself as Mexican—Japanese, and Mr. Aronzo is Norwegian and Vietnamese—Indian. Mr. Aranzi works at a securities firm, while Mr. Aronzo plays the tambourine. The two are also the authors of the popular craft books, *Fun Dolls* and *Cute Dolls* (both by Vertical). Readers will need a quirky, twisted sense of humor to enjoy these books to their fullest, but even without the black funny bone, they're still a killer read.