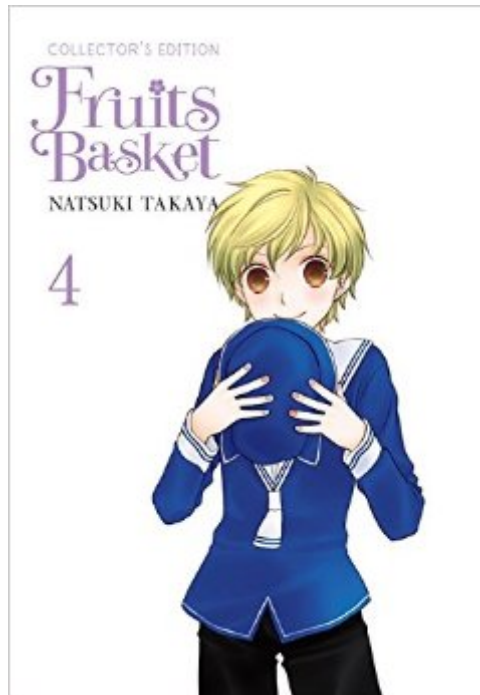


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Fruits Basket Collector's Edition, Vol. 4



Synopsis

Jealousy, rage, regret--the members of the Sohma family are no strangers to these emotions. Tohru Honda's cheerful optimism, however, is like a balm to them. Unfortunately, not every Sohma feels that way! Kisa and Tohru have become fast friends, but Hiro Sohma isn't too happy about this turn of events and decides to take out his anger on...Tohru?! And when the normally docile Hatsuharu snaps and pulls a Black Haru at school, will Tohru's brand of magic have any effect at all?!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Natsuki Takaya hit manga gold with "Fruits Basket," a romantic/comic/fantasy story about one cursed family, and a girl who might be able to set them all free. And this boxed set combines the first four volumes of the series, which also introduces many of the important characters -- not to mention the romantic comedy/dark angsty note of it all. The first volume is a bit wobbly, but this quirky, warmhearted little series gets its footing soon. Orphaned Tohru Honda is living in a tent in the woods. But one day she bumps into the large house of school idol Yuki Sohma, and his older cousin Shigure -- and after a landslide buries her tent and most of her belongings, they take Tohru in as a housekeeper/cook. But when the volatile Kyo Sohma breaks in to fight with Yuki, Tohru slips and accidentally hugs him -- and he transforms into a cat. Turns out that the Sohma family is cursed -- certain members turn into animals of the Chinese zodiac, including Yuki and Shigure (rat and dog, respectively). The mysterious family head Akito allows Tohru to stay at Shigure's house, and the volatile "cat" Kyo is also ordered to stay there. Over the next few months, Tohru gets to know other

members of the zodiac -- the tragic doctor Hatori, the bubbly Momiji, the intense and punky Haru, and Yuki's flamboyant, flirtatious, socially clueless brother Ayame. And there's plenty of goofy antics as they try to deal with marathons, Valentine's day, hot springs visits and school fairs. But there is a darker side to the Sohma family -- Yuki's abuse, Kyo's outsider status, Momiji's lost family, and Hatori's lost lover. Akito and the curse keep them isolated from the outside world -- but slowly Tohru's sunny personality starts to change them. "Fruits Basket" isn't a hard series to like -- it has a little something for everyone, especially manga fans who love beautiful young men (of which there are plenty -- silver-haired Ayame is a particular highlight). Evil curses, slapstick comedy, swift martial-arts battles, a bit of romantic tension, and a horde of fangirls who are obsessive about Yuki. After introducing the characters (and getting them into the same house), Takaya really jumps into the unfolding story of the zodiac. Her artwork starts off a bit awkwardly, but settles into an elegant, polished style by mid-book. And she has a knack for very, very funny dialogue (Shigure and Ayame's faux-gay banter is particularly hysterical). At the same time, it's hard not to bawl at Momiji's tragic story of maternal abandonment. Tohru must have been a difficult character to make likable. She's almost Pollyannaish in her optimism and cheerfulness. But Takaya makes her likable -- she doesn't instantly spread sunshine, and she's rather goofy and clueless. To top it off, she has two of the weirdest girls in school as her best buddies (and personal bodyguards). The other characters are almost -- if not more -- adorable, from the sweet-natured "prince" Yuki to the loopy Kagura, from the volatile Kyo to the slyly pervy Shigure. But she eventually shows hidden depths to them -- some are more sinister than they appear, and some are more pleasant than they act. The first four volumes of "Fruits Basket" are a delightfully romantic, comedic little series with some shadowy edges. A bit much for new readers, but a great find for those who already know and love it.

This is the first four English manga graphic novels from the very popular Fruits Basket series. They come in a decent box, but I've seen better box quality (but I've also seen worse box quality). The real treat with this boxset is its price which is just shy of \$20. If you buy something else at the same time to push you over the free shipping mark of \$25, then this will make the four graphic novels less than \$5 each shipped; this is extremely rare for brand new manga, especially such a popular series like Fruits Basket. If you are unsure whether you'd like the series, I'd only buy separate volumes if, when you try new manga titles, you tend to stop after the first book when making up your mind. If you're like me in that you at least usually give the second volume a try even if you are unsure if you'll like the series, then this boxset is the way to go. It's basically 4 manga for the price of 2.

Kyo protects Tohru at school with a move that is decidedly affectionate. It is the first day and Haru and Momitchi are now attending along with the other Sohma's. Haru immediately gets harassed because of the color of his hair and has to prove that it is the natural hair color. Then a bomb is dropped, Akito is there, and he has already encountered Tohru. When Yuki finds them the fear that he displays concerns Tohru, who later plans a badminton game with everyone to cheer him up. Another member of the zodiac is introduced, this time it's Yuki's older brother Ayami. Ayami is quite charming and handsome, and whisks Tohru off to dinner to talk about the distance between him and Yuki. Later Momitchi tells Tohru of his sad past with his mother and younger sister, apparently his mom had to have her memories erased because she had rejected him. This fact saddens Tohru, who had such a great relationship with her mother before she died. Tohru and everyone go to her mother's grave to commemorate the one year anniversary of her death. The happiness between Tohru and her friends on this sad day surprise Kyo and Yuki. Kyo begins to realize that a warm feeling to Tohru is gathering in his heart. Again...I am hopelessly addicted. I'm going to stop telling people to read this anymore. If you have read all of my other reviews of the manga so far, you already know how much I love it. Go read it for yourself. It's wonderful.

In this volume, we meet two of the most fascinating (IMHO) characters in Fruits Basket- Akito, the head of the Sohma family, and Ayame, Yuki's extraordinary older brother. The parts with Akito are wonderful and appropriately creepy- they set up his twisted, spoiled personality very well. He puts on a quite a show to act as polite and charming as possible towards Tohru- then does some subtle mental torture on Yuki- until you're left wondering- what's this guy's problem? Ayame- flamboyant, amazing Ayame- is a character that grated on my nerves at first. (Much the same way he grates on Yuki) But he's a wonderful character- no one talks or acts quite like him. He's best friends with Hatori and Shigure- and together, they form the Mabudachi trio- my favorite characters in the manga...

Not too many anime series have gripped me like Fruits Basket has. I'm really hoping for a second and even a third season, but even if that does not happen, I still wanted to get the manga and find out what happens. I really recommend this product. Usually, each individual book costs around \$10.00 US, so about \$40.00 total. Here, with this box set, you get four books for twenty dollars! Plus, it comes in a nice attractive box. If you don't know what this anime is about, I highly recommend you watch it, even if you are not into the whole "romantic comedy" scene. And the author is so funny! I like her sense of humor and that she likes (loves) to play video games, and

brags about it all the time. Well, that's it. Until later, Will out. God bless.

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