

Fruits Basket

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20

Natsuki Takaya

Fruits Basket™

Volume 20



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Fruits Basket™

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STORY SO FAR...

Hello, I'm Tohru Honda, and I have come to know a terrible secret. After the death of my mother, I was living by myself in a tent, when the Sohma family took me in. I soon learned that the Sohma family lives with a curse! Each family member is possessed by the vengeful spirit of an animal from the Chinese Zodiac. Whenever one of them becomes weak or is hugged by a member of the opposite sex, that person changes into his or her Zodiac animal!





Tohru Honda

The ever-optimistic heroine of our story. An orphan, she now lives in Shigure's house, along with Yuki and Kyo, and is the only person outside of the family who knows the Sohma family's curse.

Yuki Sohma, the Rat

Soft-spoken. Self-esteem issues. At school, he's called "Prince Yuki."

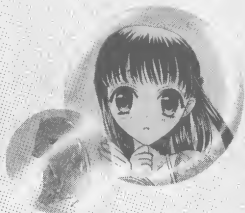


Kyo Sohma, the Cat

The Cat who was left out of the Zodiac. Hates Yuki, leeks and miso. But mostly Yuki.

Kagura Sohma, the Boar

Bashful, yet headstrong. Determined to marry Kyo, even if it kills him.



Fruits Basket Characters

Mabudachi Trio

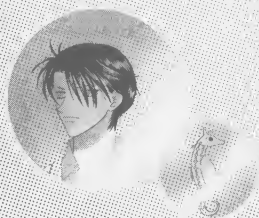


Shigure Sohma, the Dog

Enigmatic, mischievous and a little perverted. A popular novelist.

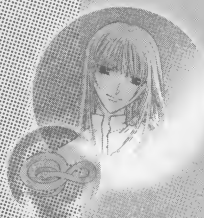
Hatori Sohma, the Dragon

Family doctor to the Sohmas. Only thing he can't cure is his broken heart.



Ayame Sohma, the Snake

Yuki's older brother. A proud and playful drama queen...er, king. Runs a costume shop.

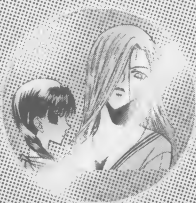


Saki Hanajima

"Hana-chan." Can sense people's "waves." Goth demeanor scares her classmates.

Arisa Uotani

"Uo-chan." A tough-talking "Yankee" who looks out for her friends.



Tohru's Best Friends



Hiro Sohma, the Ram (or sheep)

This caustic tyke is skilled at throwing verbal barbs, but he has a soft spot for Kisa.

Momiji Sohma, the Rabbit

Half German. He's older than he looks. His mother rejected him because of the Sohma curse. His little sister, Momo, has been kept from him most of her life.



Hatsuharu Sohma, the Ox

The nicest of guys, except when he goes "Black." Then you'd better watch out. He was once in a relationship with Rin.

Kisa Sohma, the Tiger

Kisa became shy and self-conscious due to constant teasing by her classmates. Yuki, who has similar insecurities, feels particularly close to Kisa.



Fruits Basket Characters

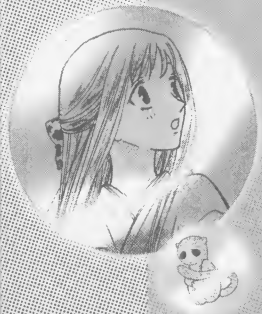
Isuzu "Rin" Sohma, the Horse

She was once in a relationship with Hatsuharu (Haru)...and Tohru leaves her rather cold. Rin is full of pride, and she can't stand the amount of deference the other Sohma family members give Akito.



Ritsu Sohma, the Monkey

This shy, kimono-wearing member of the Sohma family is gorgeous. But this "she" is really a he!! Cross-dressing calms his nerves.



Kureno Sohma, the Rooster (or bird)

He is Akito's very favorite, and spends almost all of his time on the Sohma estate, tending to Akito's every desire. Kureno was born possessed by the spirit of the Bird, but his curse broke long ago...which means we've never seen him transformed. He pities Akito's loneliness, and can't bring himself to leave her.



Akito Sohma

The head of the Sohma clan. A dark figure of many secrets. Treated with fear and reverence. It has recently been revealed that Akito is actually a woman!



"God"





Chapter 114

Fruits Basket

TM



THE FEELING...

...OF LEAVING
SOMEONE BEHIND.



OH!
SHIHAN!

COULD
YOU DO
ME A
FAVOR?

PRETEND I'M
NOT HERE!

さっさっ

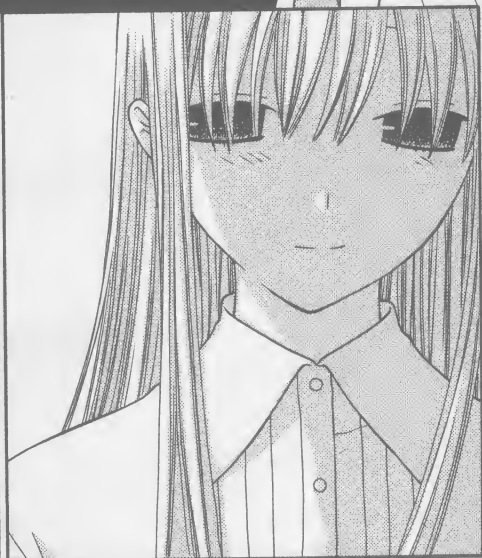
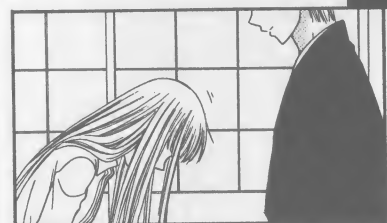
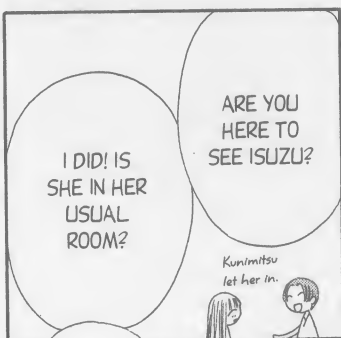
.....?
?



SHISHOU-
SAN.

SHHH!

PLAYING
HIDE-AND-
SEEK,
KAGURA?



Fruits Basket

Nice to meet you and hello. This is Takaya, presenting Furuba Volume 20.

Volume 20...this has actually reached Volume 20.

Machi's on the cover this time around. At first I thought about having the Mogeta paperweight that Yuki gave her on the back cover, but I ended up going with the footprints. (It might be hard to tell from the picture, but those are the footprints Yuki and Machi put in the snow (laugh).)

Speaking of Mogeta, I first planned that Machi liked rabbits, and she sat behind Momiji, and since her heart thundered over rabbit merchandise, she liked Mogeta because Mogeta looks like a rabbit (only not really (laugh).) That was the story I thought of, anyway. But in the end, I couldn't fit that in, so Machi just became a simple Mogeta fangirl (laugh).

Now then, please enjoy Furuba 20.



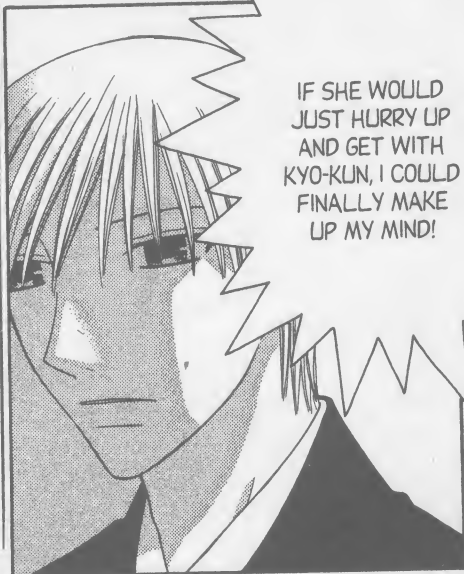


HMM.

...TO BREAK THE CURSE."



"I WANT...



IF SHE WOULD
JUST HURRY UP
AND GET WITH
KYO-KUN, I COULD
FINALLY MAKE
UP MY MIND!



SHIHAN...
DOES
THAT
BOTTER
YOU?

I THOUGHT
YOU WERE
IN THE
"TOHRU'S
GREAT"
CAMP.

Ha ha.

THERE'S
A CAMP
FOR SUCH
A THING?



Don't
make
me say
it!

THEN
SHE DOES
LIKE
KYO?...

AND AT THE
VERY LEAST,
KYO-KUN LIKES
TOHRU-KUN!

OF COURSE
SHE DOES!
IT COULDN'T
BE ANY MORE
OBVIOUS!





AND NOT
OUT OF
ANYTHING...

...AS
SIMPLE
AS PITY.



I'M JUST
WORRIED,
THAT'S
ALL.

IT MUST
BE MY
AGE.

I WONDER
IF SHE
LOVES KYO...



...AS
ANOTHER
"HUMAN
BEING..."



...DOES THAT
SAY "AND
YET I WILL
WALK ON"?



WHAM





BUT HOW
AMAZING,
ISUZU-SAN.
YOU DRAW
PICTURES
AND--

THESE
AREN'T
"PICTURES"!

THEY'RE
JUST
SCRIBBLES!

AH!

I'M SORRY!
YOU WERE
CONCENTRATING
SO HARD,
I COULDN'T
FIND AN
OPPORTUNITY...

...to say
anything.

Hey!

WHEN DID
YOU... YOU
ACTUALLY
LOOKED
WITHOUT
ASKING?!

GET
AWAY
FROM ME!

I JUST
DIDN'T
HAVE
ANYTHING
TO DO.

PICTURES
THAT ARE
FILLED
WITH YOUR
FEELINGS
AREN'T
"SCRIBBLES."

EVERY
ONE IS
PRECIOUS!

AND IT'S...
HARD TO
WORK RIGHT
NOW.

I WAS
JUST
KILLING
TIME.

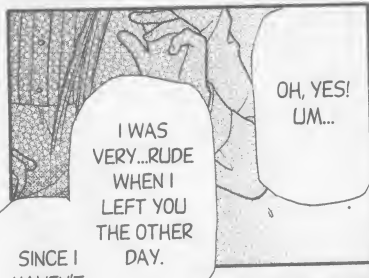


WHAT DID
YOU COME
HERE FOR
TODAY?

BAHI

HEY...

AH!



OH, YES!
UM...

I WAS
VERY...RUDE
WHEN I
LEFT YOU
THE OTHER
DAY.

SINCE I
HAVEN'T
SPOKEN
WITH YOU
SINCE, I
THOUGHT...

"BUT
THAT'S
NO GOOD!"

"IT HAS TO
BE BROKEN
BEFORE
NEXT
SPRING!"

"KYO-
KUN...!"

"IF IT'S
NOT BY
THEN..."

OH.

THAT.

I DON'T
CARE
ABOUT
THAT.





WHY
KYO?



WHY HIM,
OF ALL
PEOPLE?

I THOUGHT
YOU DIDN'T
COME...

...BECAUSE
YOU DON'T
LIKE
PEOPLE
ATTACKING
HIM.



YOU
KNOW
ALL
THAT,
RIGHT?

...HOW WE
ALL SEE
HIM...

WHAT
HIS
ROLE
IS...

YOU KNOW
WHAT'S
GOING TO
HAPPEN
TO HIM.

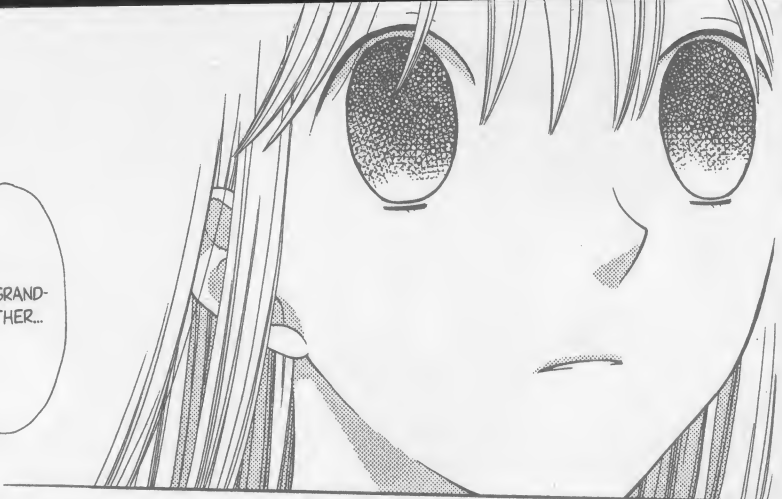
HE'S THE
CAT.



IS IT
SYMPATHY?



.....



MY GRAND-
FATHER...



SHE EVEN
BORE HIM A
CHILD AND
ATTENDED HIS
DEATHBED.

SHE
TOOK
CARE OF
HIM.



THE
PREVIOUS
CAT...

HE HAD A
PARTNER,
AS WELL.



ONE DAY,
SOMEONE
ASKED
HER...

...
HOW SHE
WAS ABLE
TO DO
SO MUCH
FOR THAT
"THING."

I REMEMBER
HER ANSWER.



"WELL..."

SHE JUST
WASN'T
FORMALLY
RECOGNIZED.



PERHAPS
SHE HAD...

...BEAUTIFUL
INTENTIONS.

AND
CERTAINLY
...

...MY GRAND-
FATHER
MAY HAVE
BEEN MUCH
HAPPIER
WITH HER...

...THAN HAD
HE SPENT
HIS DAYS
ALONE.



"I FELT SO
SORRY FOR HIM."

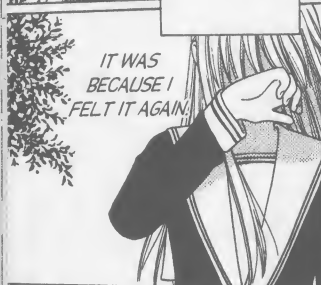


BUT...



...MY
HEART
MOANED.

I WAS SAD
ENOUGH
TO CRY.



IT WAS
BECAUSE I
FELT IT AGAIN.



THE FEELING OF HER
FADING AWAY.



ON MY
WAY
HOME
THAT
DAY...

TIME
MOVES ON,
AND THEY
FADE.

NO MATTER
HOW MUCH OR
HOW SINCERELY
I PROMISE...

A LONE-
LINESS SO
TERRIBLE IT
TEARS ME
APART.

"AND YOU SEEM TO BE
DOING OKAY, TOO. EVERY
DAY, REALLY."

IT'S SO
CRUEL.

SWOON

THE
SADNESS
...

CRUEL.

COULD...

COULD
THESE
SELFISH
FEELINGS...

I DON'T
FORGET
THOSE
THINGS...

BUT I CAN'T
HOLD ONTO
THEM AS
CLEAR
MEMORIES.

CHANGING
INTO A
"MEMORY."

...BE
SYMPATHY?

NO MATTER HOW MUCH
I GLOSS OVER IT...

"...I'M GLAD."



I'M
HIDING...

...MY TRUE
FEELINGS.

I'M
COVERING
THEM UP
LIKE A
COWARD.

I...

THE
TOHRU
THAT
CARED
ABOUT
MY MOM.

MORE
THAN
ANYTHING.

I JUST...

I J-JUST...

I S-SAY I
WANT TO
PROTECT
ALL THE
MEMBERS OF
THE ZODIAC...

AND I
WANT
TO FREE
THEM.

BUT
THAT'S...

...THAT'S ONLY
JUSTIFICATION!

HOW
TERRIBLY
SAD.

THOSE FACTS
ARE SO SAD..
THEY'RE TOO,
TOO SAD.

AND YET...

IT WON'T STOP.

I MEAN...



*SHE'S BECOMING
A MEMORY.*

I DON'T
WANT...

I DON'T
W-WANT
ANYONE OR
ANYTHING...

*IT
WON'T
STOP*

...NOT THE
SOHMA
FAMILY...

*IT
WON'T
STOP.*

...AND
NOT THE
CURSE...

...TO TAKE
KYO-KUN
AWAY
FROM ME!



IT
WON'T
STOP.

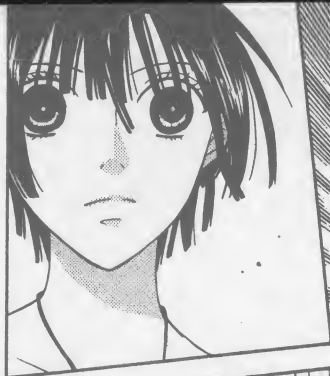
NOT ANYMORE.

BECAUSE
KYO-KUN...

...IS THE
MOST
IMPORTANT
THING IN
MY LIFE!

PLEASE.

DON'T LEAVE.



IS THAT
HOW YOU
REALLY
FEEL?!

THEN
GET
MOVING!



GO AND
TELL
HIM
THAT!





SH-SHUT
UP--

S...

SINCE WHEN
DO YOU
HAVE A HIGH
HORSE TO
CLIMB ON?!

STOP IT! DON'T
PUSH YOUR
OWN LOGIC
ONTO TOHRU!

GRAB



WHAT'S
GOING ON
HERE?

DID
SOME-
THING...

HUH?

DO YOU
HONESTLY
THINK YOU
HAVE THE
RIGHT TO
HIT HER?!

GIVE ME
A BREAK!
GIVE ME
A BREAK!

DO YOU
THINK YOU
HAVE THE
RIGHT TO
HIT HER?!



HEY!

TOHRU-SAN?



I'M
SORRY...

Ack!

I DID THAT
WITH TOO
MUCH
FEELING!

TOHRU-SAN!
OH, MAN--
HANG ON!

BACK THEN...

MAYBE A PART OF ME
WAS TESTING KYO-KUN.

I'M SORRY...

...THAT I'M SUCH
A COWARD.

AND GONE BACK TO
PRETENDING I'D FORGOTTEN.

I WAS ONLY THINKING
OF WAYS OUT.

I WOULD HAVE PUT THE LID
BACK ON EVERYTHING.

I SHOWED HOW
DIRTY I AM.

IF YOU HADN'T
ACCEPTED ME
AFTER THAT...

I'M SO UNFAIR,
SO WEAK...

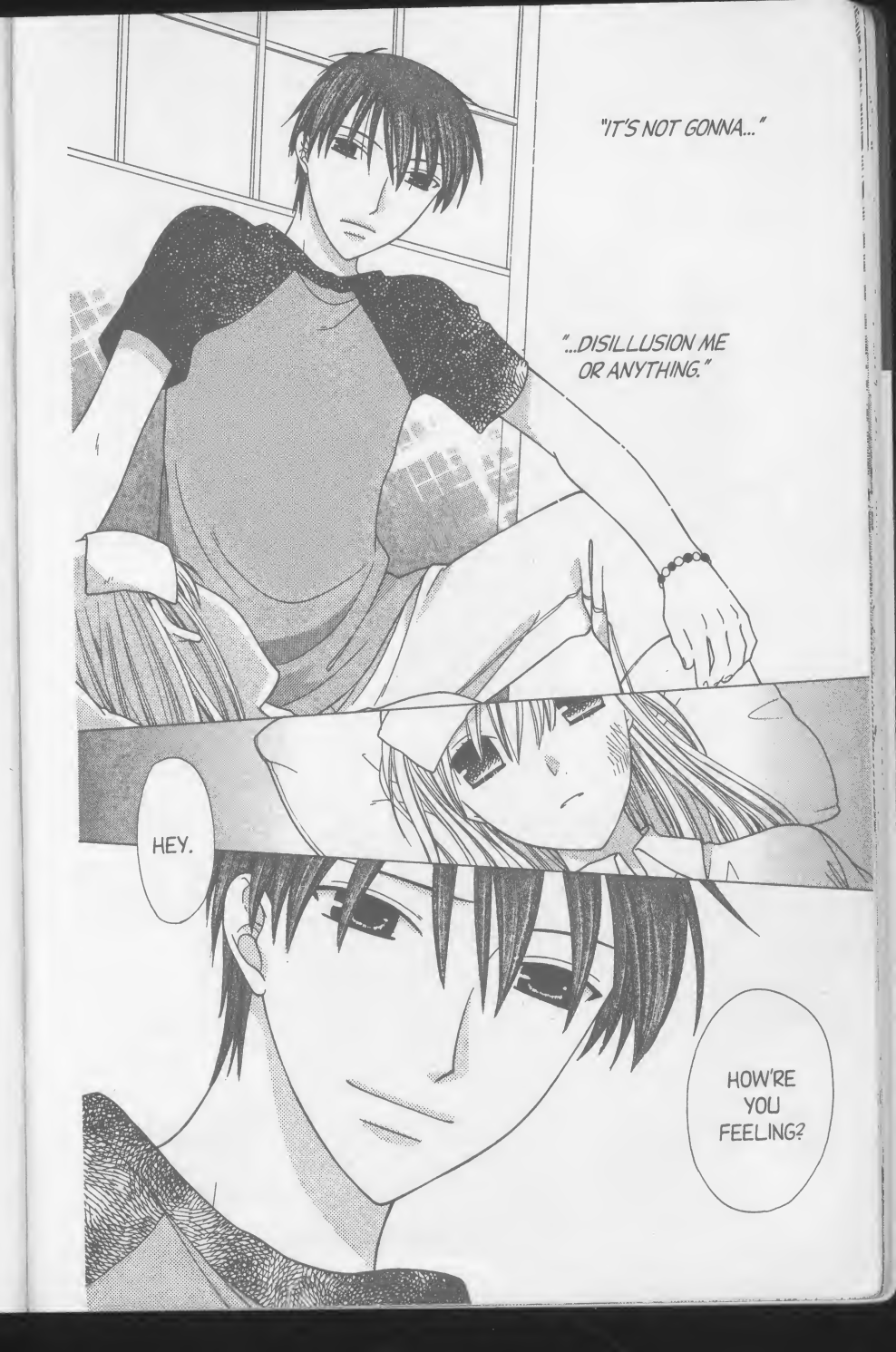
...SO DIRTY.

AND ASHAMED.

I FEEL LIKE I'M BETRAYING
MY MOM... AND THAT
REALLY SCARES ME.

IT MAKES ME DEPRESSED.

"IT'S
OKAY."



"IT'S NOT GONNA..."

"...DISILLUSION ME
OR ANYTHING."

HEY.

HOW'RE
YOU
FEELING?





ARE YOU
GONNA
MAKE HER
APOLOGIZE?



...

Men should never
interfere in fights
between women.

I DON'T
KNOW THE
DETAILS,
AND I WON'T
BUG YOU
ABOUT IT.

...they
pay the
price.

When
they do...

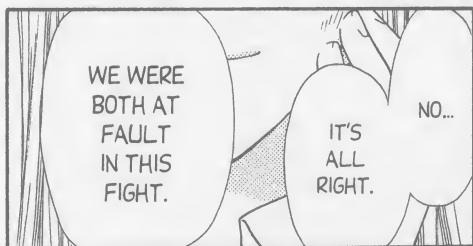
Teachings
of the
Master.

Oooh



Phew

You all right
sitting up?



WE WERE
BOTH AT
FAULT
IN THIS
FIGHT.

IT'S
ALL
RIGHT.

NO...

OH, I
SEE.



IT DOESN'T MATTER
WHAT I DO.

IT'S NOT LIKE...



AND
THAT'S
WHY...

...I WON'T
APOLOGIZE,
EITHER.



YOU
APOLOGIZED
TO ISUZU-
SAN.

BUT I DON'T
HAVE TO
WITH TOHRU-
KUN! IT'S
DIFFERENT!

WE HAD A
MUTUAL
UNDERSTANDING
WITH OUR
FISTS!

YOU'RE
THE ONLY
ONE WHO
STARTED
HITTING.

I DON'T PLAN
TO APOLOGIZE,
THANKYOU-
VERYMUCH!

UH...
I THINK
THEY'RE
GOING
NOW.

...ALL THE
INFERIORITY
I FELT...

...WILL
JUST GO
AWAY.



THEY CAN
TRUST
OTHER
PEOPLE...

MEN
ARE
LUCKY.

...WITH THEIR
DREAMS AND
WISHES AND
THINGS.

I WONDER
IF I CAN
DO THAT,
TOO...



FISTS?
THAT'S
A GUY
THING.

And it's old-
fashioned,
anyhow.

...



THEY'RE
NOT
FAKE.

I CAN
TRUST
HER!



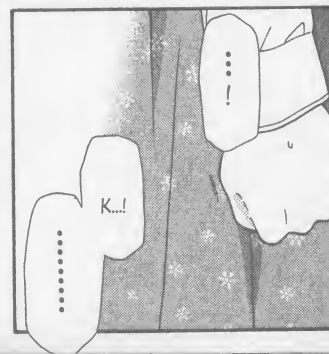
I MEAN,
HONESTLY.

THOSE
FEELINGS...



...ARE
NOTHING
LIKE
SYMPATHY.







THE
WORDS.

THEY
WON'T
COME
OUT.

.....
!



SHIVER
SHIVER

.....
!

I
NEED...

...TO BE
BRAVE.



DID YOU
FORGET
SOMETHING?



...

WHAT?

I NEED...



...TO BE BRAVE.

NO.

I WON'T
CLOSE THE LID.

I KNOW...

...THAT
THIS
WON'T
STOP
ANYMORE.

Filler Sketch





Chapter 115

Filler Sketch





THE FEELING...

...OF BEING LEFT BEHIND.



THAT
WOMAN...

CAN'T THE
HEAD OF THE
FAMILY USE HIS
AUTHORITY TO
THROW HER INTO
A HOSPITAL?

WHY DOES
HE LET
HER ROAM
FREE?

IF HE COULD
DO SOMETHING
ABOUT IT,
HE WOULD.

BUT IF HE'S
NOT CAREFUL,
HE'LL GIVE HER
HANGERS-ON A
REASON TO MAKE
A GIANT FUSS.

OH...



AKIRA-SAN, HIS
PREDECESSOR,
STATED IN HIS
WILL THAT
HE LEFT ALL
AUTHORITY TO
AKITO-SAN.

AND TO
THINK...
THAT
WOMAN...

SHE STILL
THINKS IT
WAS A LIE.

INDEED.

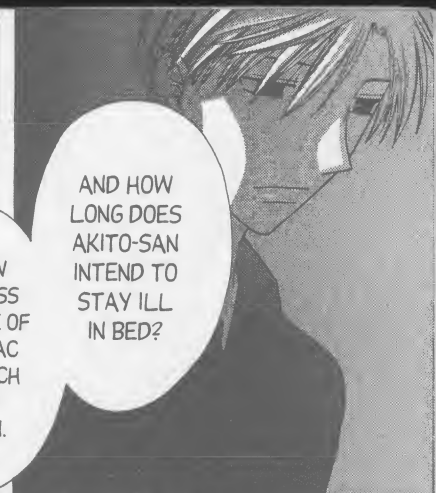
HOW
SHAME-
FUL...!

FIRST OF ALL,
THERE'S NO
QUESTIONING
THAT AKITO-SAN
IS THE MASTER
OF THE SOHMA.

YOU MEAN
THE REN
FOLLOWERS?

IT WOULD BE
DISGRACEFUL
FOR THERE TO
BE FACTIONAL
DISPUTES WITHIN
THE SOHMA
FAMILY.

DON'T
CALL
THEM
THAT.



THE WAY
THINGS STAND,
IT'S JUST AS
THAT WOMAN
SAYS--WHAT
IS THEIR
"BOND" FOR?

AND HOW
HEARTLESS
THAT NONE OF
THE ZODIAC
SHOW MUCH
SIGN OF
CONCERN.

AND HOW
LONG DOES
AKITO-SAN
INTEND TO
STAY ILL
IN BED?

WE NEED
AKITO-SAN
AND THE
ZODIAC...

...TO PULL
THINGS
TOGETHER.

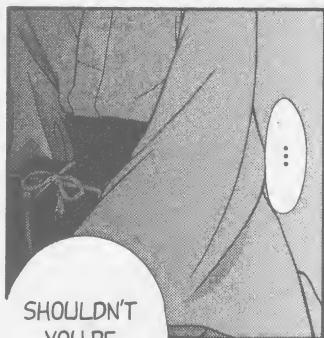
AT THIS
RATE,
SHE'LL ONLY
GROW MORE
HAUGHTY.

WE CAN'T
WIN.

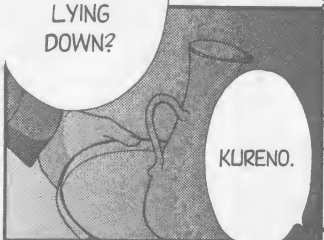
...WHO
SEDUCED
AKIRA-SAN!

NOT
AGAINST
THE
WOMAN...

WHAM



SHOULDN'T
YOU BE
LYING
DOWN?



KURENO.



AKITO?



HUH.

NO.



OF COURSE
YOU
WOULDN'T
KNOW.

I MEAN...



DO YOU...
KNOW WHAT
THIS IS?

SOMEHOW...

KURENO...





THEY'LL BE
PANICKED AND
LOOKING FOR
YOU BY NOW.

I SEE YOU
GAVE YOUR
ATTENDANTS
THE SLIP.

WERE YOU
TAKING A
LITTLE WALK
ON YOUR
LONESOME?

MY, YOU
HAVE
SHARP
EARS.

YOU GOT ISUZU
TO FETCH YOU
SOME SORT OF
"BOX," RIGHT?

COME TO
THINK OF IT,
REN-SAN,
THE OTHER
DAY...

ONE HAS TO GET
OUTSIDE AND
FIND SOMEONE
TO TALK TO
ONCE IN A WHILE,
RIGHT, SHIGURE?

MM...BUT DON'T
YOU THINK IT'S
MENTALLY AND
PHYSICALLY BAD
TO STAY COOPED
UP IN YOUR ROOM
ALL THE TIME?

WELL,
YOU'VE
CAUGHT
ME.

UNLESS
THE GIRL
SIMPLY
SQUEALED.

YOU'RE THE
ONE WHO'S
GOOD FOR
NOTHING,
REN-SAN.

SHE
REALLY IS
GOOD FOR
NOTHING.





AKIRA-
SAN...

...FOR ANYONE
BUT ME
TO TOUCH
AKIRA-SAN.

HIS SOUL,
HIS BLOOD,
HIS FLESH--
EVERYTHING
ASSOCIATED
WITH HIM.

I'M THE
ONLY ONE
WHO MAY
LAY A HAND
ON THOSE.

THE ONLY
ONE AKIRA-
SAN LOVED.

ME, AND NO
ONE ELSE.

IT WOULD BE
INSUBORDINATE
OF ME.

THAT STUPID
BOX. I DON'T
EVEN WANT
TO TOUCH IT.

AND
YET...

I HATE TO
LOOK AT IT, TOO.

...YES.

IT WOULD
BE RUDE...



AKIRA
SOHMA

...

THE
PREVIOUS
HEAD
OF THE
FAMILY,
AND AKITO'S
FATHER.

I COULD
EVEN SEE IT
AS A CHILD.

AKIRA-
SAN...

...WAS
BEAUTI-
FULLY
FLEETING.

PERHAPS IT
WAS BECAUSE
OF THAT
SADNESS.

...THAT HE
DIDN'T HAVE
LONG TO LIVE.

HIS DOCTOR
HAD SAID...



"W-WAIT!
BUT THIS
WOMAN--"

"PLEASE
LEAVE."

"IF SHE HAD
DIGNITY AND
CULTURE,
SHE WOULD
NATURALLY
HAVE SUCH
ABILITIES."



THE MAIN
ESTATE...

"I CANNOT HAVE
YOU MAKING LIGHT
OF THE ACTIONS
OF THE ONE WHO
WILL BECOME THE
COMPANION OF THE
SOHMA HEAD."



"HE'S ALREADY
GOING TO DIE
SOON, SO JUST
COMPROMISE."

"THAT IS
EXACTLY WHY
WE MUSTNT.
WE MUST
THINK OF
THE HEIR."

THERE WERE
VARIOUS
EXPECTATIONS.

"BUT IT WOULD
BE A GREAT
OFFENSE FOR
SOMEONE ON
THE 'OUTSIDE'
TO INHERIT
THE ESTATE."

...HAD BEEN
LOOKING FOR
SOMEONE TO
MARRY HIM FOR
A LONG TIME.

PERHAPS KNOWING THAT HIS
LIFE WOULD BE EXTINGUISHED
AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE...

...IS WHAT PRODUCED THAT
OTHERWORLDLY BEAUTY.



"A WOMAN LIKE
THIS IS OUT OF
THE QUESTION."



AKIRA-SAN
AND I MET
BECAUSE WE
WERE MEANT
TO MEET.

SHE WAS
ONE OF
HIS CARE-
TAKERS.

IT WAS
DESTINY.

...I WAS
ALWAYS
WATCHING
HIM.

AND AS I
TOOK CARE
OF HIM...

BY
AKIRA-
SAN'S
SIDE...

I ALWAYS
KNEW...

"I'M RIGHT
HERE."

I LOVED
HIM...
I LONGED
FOR HIM.

"NOTICE
ME," I
THOUGHT.

AND
AKIRA-
SAN...

...CHOSE
HER.

"YOU MUST BE SCARED..."

"...OF DYING ALL ALONE."

...THAT I WAS
THE ONLY
ONE WHO
COULD SAVE
AKIRA-SAN.

"NO ONE
NOTICES THAT
SIDE OF YOU."

"YOU MUST BE
LONELY."

"GIVE IT ALL TO ME."

"BUT I'M DIFFERENT.
I UNDERSTAND."

"BECAUSE..."

"GIVE ME ALL THE
PAIN THAT YOU BEAR."

THAT
CONNECTION
WAS SO DEEP
THAT NO
ONE AROUND
US COULD
UNDERSTAND.

IT HAD TO
BE ME.

WE WERE
DEEPLY
LINKED.

"...I LOVE
YOU."



"...WE
LOVE
EACH
OTHER."

"BUT LEARN
YOUR PLACE!"

SO DEEP...

"BE QUIET!
LEAVE
IMMEDIATELY!"

"NEVER
CROSS THE
SOHMA
THRESHOLD
AGAIN--"

"I DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOU DID
TO GAIN AKIRA-
SAN'S FAVOR..."

"OF COURSE
WE WON'T
ACKNOWLEDGE
A WOMAN
LIKE YOI!"

"REN
REALIZED..."

...HOW LONELY
I'VE BEEN."

"FOR ME."

"SHE
CRIED."



"I THOUGHT
THE OLDER
SOHMA WERE
DEAD SET
AGAINST IT."

"THE NEWER
SOHMA OPPOSED
TO THE OLD
REGIME TOOK
HIS SIDE."

"Sheesh."

"I GUESS YOU
COULD CALL
IT INTERNAL
STRIFE."

"WE'VE LOVED
THE HEAD OF THE
FAMILY SINCE
HE WAS A CHILD.
IT'S UPSETTING
HAVING HIM TAKEN
FROM US."

"BUT IF
THEY'RE HAPPY
TOGETHER, I
SUPPOSE IT'S
ALL RIGHT."

THE TWO
WERE
MARRIED.

"A..."

"AKIRA-
SA..."

"PLEASE,
DON'T BE
DECEIVED!"

"DON'T LET
THAT WOMAN
DECEIVE YOU!"

"AKIRA-
SAN!"



I WAS THE
ONLY ONE IN
AKIRA-SAN'S
WORLD.

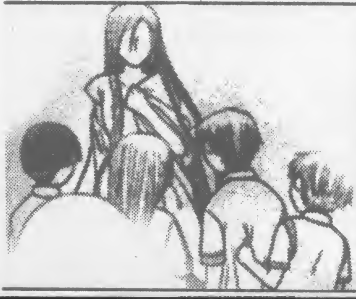
WE WERE
HAPPY.

AKIRA-SAN
AND I WERE
THE ONLY
ONES IN THE
WORLD.

THAT
WAS ALL
I NEEDED.



IT WAS
ALL I
NEEDED,
AND YET...



THE DAY
THAT WE
APPROACHED
HER...

IT
STARTED
SOME TIME
AFTER...

...AKITO WAS
CONCEIVED.



"IT'S TRUE,
YOU CAN'T
SAY ANYTHING
ABOUT IT,
EITHER,
KURENO."

"WHY'RE
THEY DOING
THAT?"

"APPARENTLY
REN-SAN MADE
THAT DECISION A
LONG TIME AGO.
SHE SAID IT WOULD
BE A PROBLEM
FOR THE HEIR TO
BE A WOMAN."

"APPARENTLY,
SHE HAD A REAL
FIT, SAYING
SHE WOULDN'T
HAVE THE BABY
IF THEY DIDN'T
MAKE IT A BOY."

"AND THEY SAY
THAT SCARED
AKIRA-SAN, SO
HE AGREED."

"HEY...IS
IT TRUE?"

"IS AKITO-
SAN
REALLY..."

"...GONNA BE
RAISED AS
A BOY?"



WE IN THE
ZODIAC AND
THE MEMBERS
OF THE MAIN
FAMILY WERE
ABNORMALLY
HAPPY.

THE ONE TO
RULE THE
ZODIAC...

...A CHOSEN
BEING.



BUT WE
WEREN'T THE
ONES MOST
ABSORBED
IN AKITO.

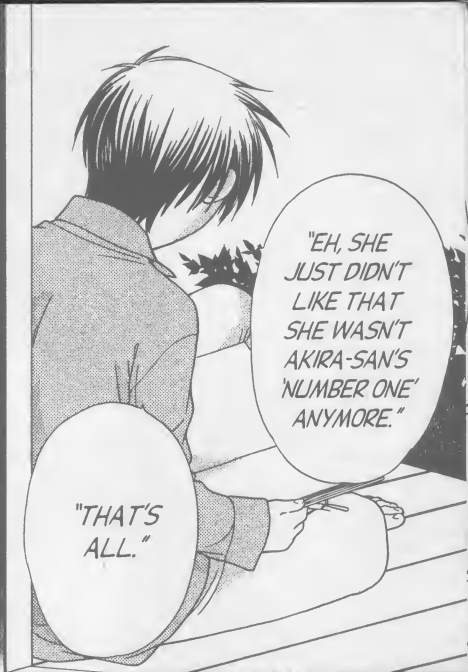
AKIRA-SAN
WAS.



"SHE'S
JEALOUS."

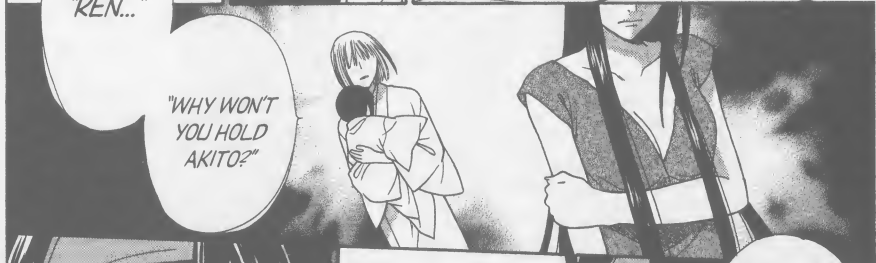
"THINK
ABOUT
IT."

FLIP



"EH, SHE
JUST DIDN'T
LIKE THAT
SHE WASN'T
AKIRA-SAN'S
'NUMBER ONE'
ANYMORE."

"THAT'S
ALL."



"REN..."

"WHY WON'T
YOU HOLD
AKITO?"



"YOU
CAN'T
HELP
THAT."

"WHAT
ARE YOU
SULKING
FOR?"

"THIS BABY
WAS BORN
FOR THAT
PURPOSE."

"I DON'T
HAVE TO
GO OUT
OF MY
WAY TO
HOLD IT."

"EVERYONE
LOVES THE
BABY PLENTY
AS IT IS."

"DO YOU?"

"DO YOU
REMEMBER HER
FACE THAT DAY
WE FIRST WENT
TO MEET AKITO?"

"AS A
WOMAN,
SHE'S
JEALOUS."

"HER CHILD IS
GUARANTEED TO
BE LOVED AND
SURROUNDED
BY LOTS OF
PEOPLE OF THE
OPPOSITE SEX."

"THE BABY'S
A NORMAL
HUMAN BEING! IT
DOESN'T HAVE
ANY POWER!"

NOTICE ME.

"STOP
TREATING
THAT BABY
LIKE IT'S
SPECIAL, ALL
RIGHT?!"

"OPEN YOUR
EYES-ALL
OF YOU!
YOU'RE
JUST SO..."

"...THAT
SHE WAS
ROYALLY
SCREWED."

"I BET..."

THAT SHE
THOUGHT..."

RIGHT
HERE.

I'M HERE.

"THAT'S
ENOUGH!"

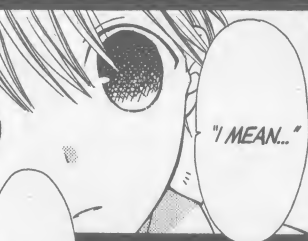
NOTICE ME.

"THAT'S
ENOUGH,
ISN'T IT?"

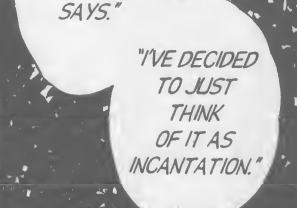
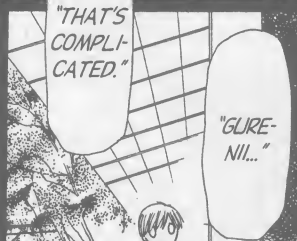
"IF A
WOMAN IS
LOVED BY
ONE MAN..."

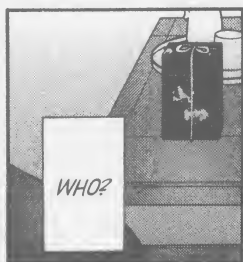
"AKIRA-SAN...!"

I'M RIGHT
HERE.



...THAT
I FEEL
SORRY..."

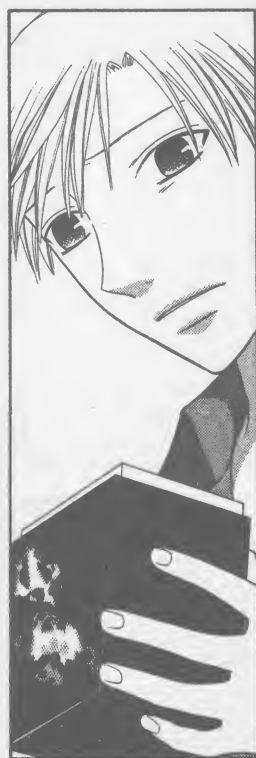




WHO?



WHO
WAS AT
FAULT?



WHAT...



...WAS AT
FAULT?



WHAT
REALLY...

...WENT
WRONG?



"...FOR
EVERYONE..."

"...IN THIS
ENTIRE
FAMILY."



WHOSE
FAULT
IS IT...

"FATHER?"



...THAT
THIS
CHILD...

...IS LIKE
THIS
NOW?



A TWISTED
SENSE OF
REASONING?

JEAL-
OUSY?

WAS IT
FAVOR-
ITISM?



OR...



!

I FEEL
SORRY
FOR YOU.

REALLY.

YOU DON'T
HONESTLY
LOVE AKITO.

BEING ABUSED
BY THAT CHILD
BECAUSE OF SOME
TRITE CURSE YOU
CALL A "BOND."

I FEEL
SORRY FOR
YOU, TOO.

WELL,
THEN
WE'RE
EVEN.



...THAT
WANT ME.

THEY'RE
EYES...

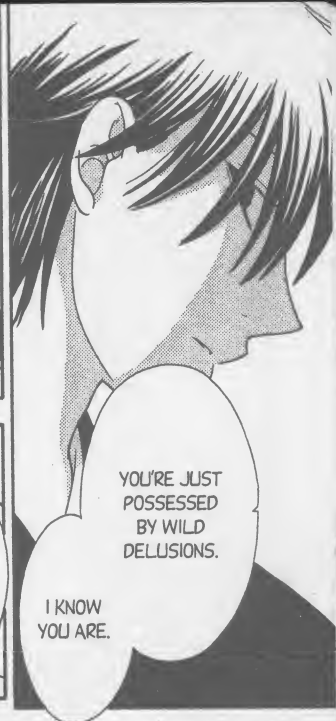


HAVEN'T
YOU
NOTICED?

YOUR EYES,
WHEN YOU
LOOK AT
ME...



YOU'VE
HAD THOSE
EYES
BEFORE.



YOU'RE JUST
POSSESSED
BY WILD
DELUSIONS.

I KNOW
YOU ARE.



...MY LOVE
BOILS.



I HAVE
NOTICED.

WHEN I...

...LOOK AT
YOU...



...SHE'D
LOOK JUST
LIKE YOU.

I GET MY
OWN WILD
DELLUSION.

IF AKITO HAD
LIVED AS A
WOMAN...



YOU'RE
RIGHT.

I REALLY
DID WANT
YOU TO
GET IT.

...THAT YOU
SHOULD
HAVE THAT
BOX.

IT'S ENOUGH
THAT YOU
ALONE BE
POSSESSED BY
AKIRA-SAN'S
GHOST.

IT'S FITTING...



WHO DO YOU
HAVE TO THANK
FOR AKITO BEING
IN THIS WORLD?!

AKITO SURE
DOESN'T
NEED IT.

SHIGURE
!

AKIRA-
SAN...!

WHO DO YOU
HAVE TO THANK
FOR SAVING
AKIRA-SAN?!

SHIGURE,
YOU...

YOU'RE
CRAZY!

IT'S
BECAUSE I
WAS HERE!

IT'S BECAUSE
I WAS HERE
FOR HIM!

YOU'RE ALL
CRAZY!

"ONCE UPON A TIME..."

"...GOD TOLD THE ANIMALS
OF THE ZODIAC..."

"THE 'GOD' IN THAT STORY..."

"...IS YOI, AKITO."



"...THAT THEY
WERE INVITED TO
THE NEXT DAY'S
BANQUET, AND
TO BE SURE TO
NOT BE LATE."

"WE'VE ALL BEEN
WAITING FOR YOU."



"YOU ARE A SPECIAL
CHILD. A CHOSEN CHILD."

"A CHILD WHO WAS
BORN TO BE LOVED."

"THERE WILL ONLY
BE PERMANENCE."

"ONLY."



"THERE WILL BE NO
LONELINESS OR FEAR IN
YOUR FUTURE."

"... WILL LEAVE YOU."

"YOU HAVE BEEN
PROMISED ETERNITY."

"NO ONE..."







...OH.

.....



IT'S...



IT'S SO FAST.



THE END IS
COMING SO
FAST.

"NO ONE..."

"...WILL LEAVE YOU BEHIND."

Chapter 116







...GOOD
MORNING.



MOMIJI...

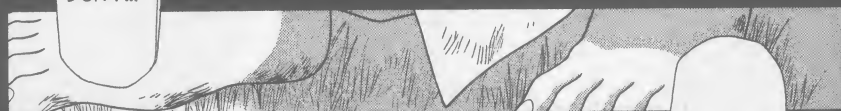
DON'T
GO...!



DON'T...

P-PLEASE.

OKAY?



WHAT
WERE
THEY?

...LEAVE
ME...

BEHIND...



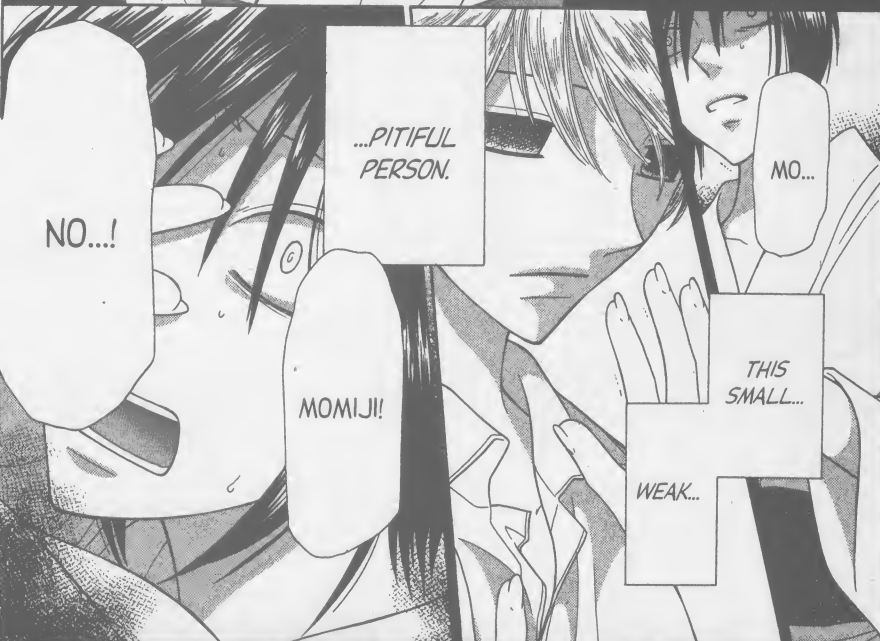
WHAT
WERE
THEY?

...FROM THE
EDGE OF
MY MIND.

ALL
THOSE
FEEL-
INGS...
THAT WERE
ALWAYS
KEEPING
WATCH...



WHAT THE HECK WAS KEEPING
ME BOUND TO THIS PERSON?



NO...!

...PITIFUL
PERSON.

MO...

MOMIJI!

THIS
SMALL...

WEAK...



HEY.

YOU SHOULD
GO BACK TO
YOUR ROOM.



...FEELING
WELL,
RIGHT?

YOU'RE
NOT...



I WON'T
TELL
ANYONE
ABOUT THIS.

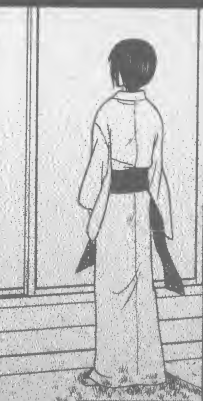
DON'T
WORRY.



STOP IT! NOT
THOSE EYES!

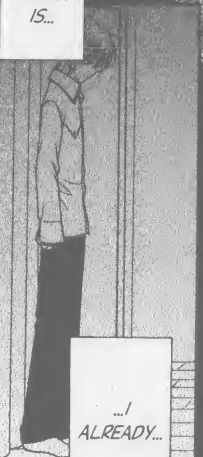
DON'T LOOK
AT ME WITH
THOSE EYES!

DON'T!



IT'S A LIE.

THE
TRUTH
IS...



.../
ALREADY...

I'LL COME
TO TALK TO
YOU AGAIN
TOMORROW.

d
r
i
p
:

THAT'S
A LIE.



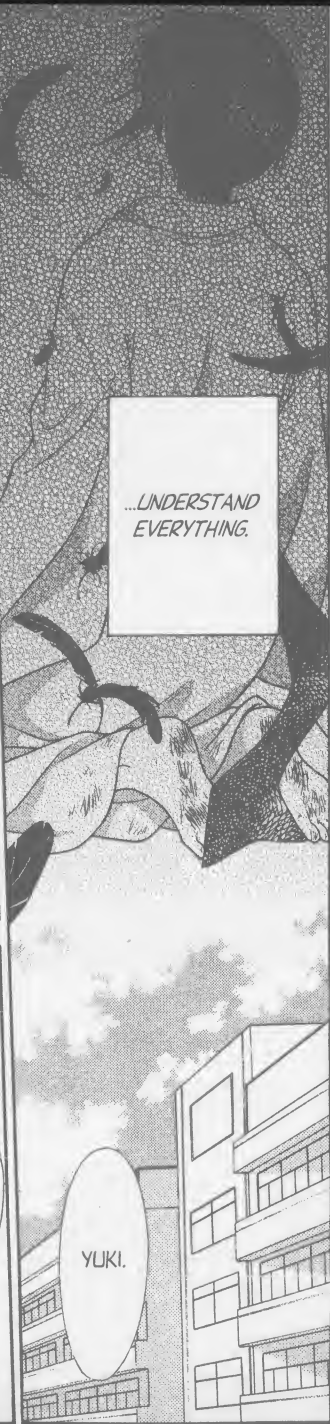
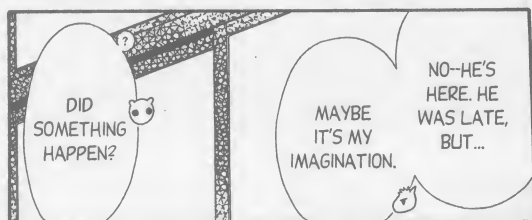
GO HOME.

TONIGHT,
I'M JUST...



YEAH.

I'M A LITTLE
CONFUSED
RIGHT NOW,
TOO.

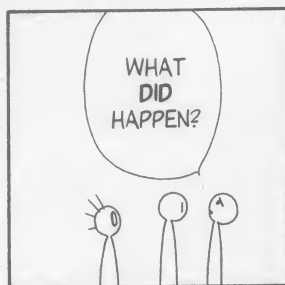






NO, NOT
TODAY. DID
SOMETHING
HAPPEN?

YOU SEEN
MOMIJI,
HONDA-SAN?



WHAT
DID
HAPPEN?



OH.

HEL--

HELLO!



DON'T WORRY,
HONDA-SAN--
HE WAS JUST
ASKING.

?!
?



I...SEE.



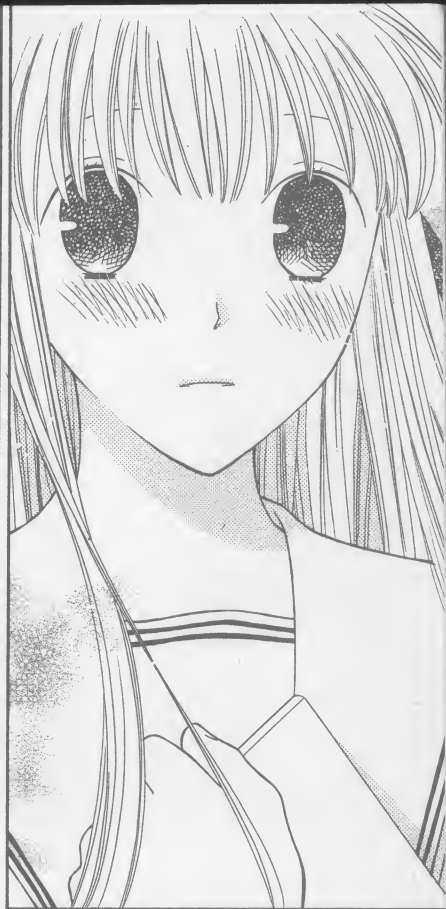
WHAT?!

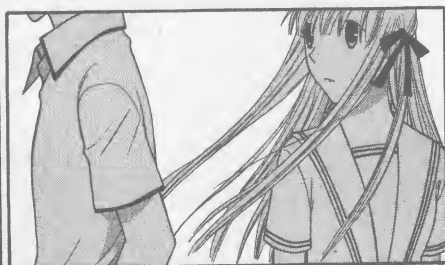
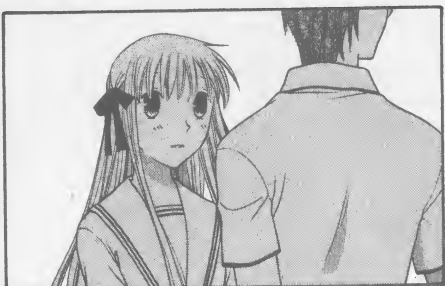
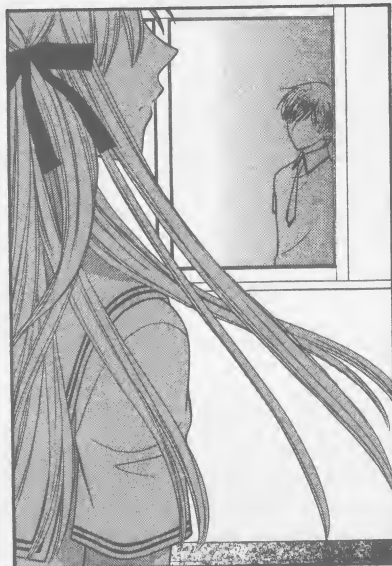
WHAT?!

NN?

HAAARUUU.

WH-WH-WHAT
ON EARTH?!...











HEH
HEH.

WOULD IT
SHOCK YOU
IF I SAID
THAT?

MY CURSE
WAS
BROKEN.



I MEAN...



I KNOW
SHE'D BE
HAPPY.



...IF YOUR
CURSE WAS
BROKEN
INSTEAD
OF MINE.



SHE'D BE
A LOT
HAPPIER...



BUT
I KNOW
ABOUT
TOHRU.



...WHA?!

LOOK,
THAT'S
NOT--



I'M
THE
ONE...

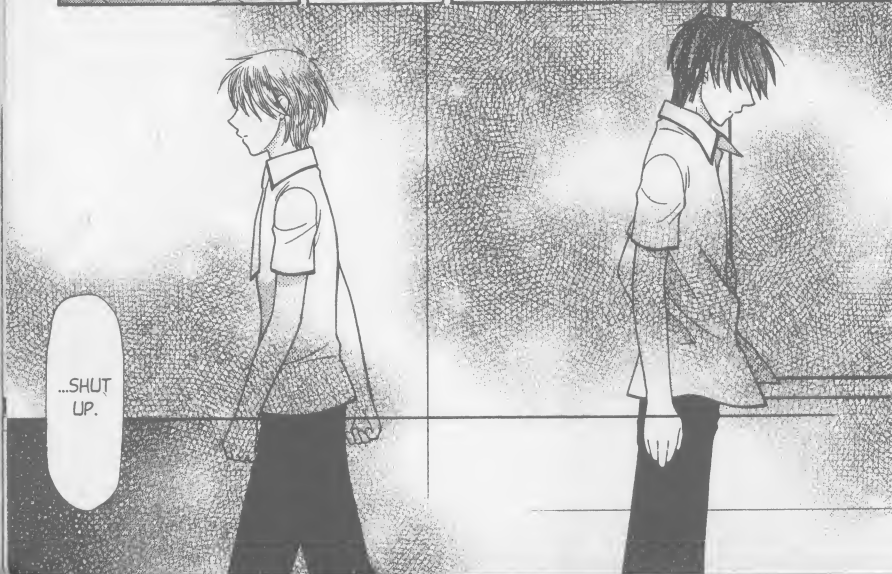


...WHO'S
LOST.



...

YOU CAN
TELL,
CAN'T
YOU?



...SHUT
UP.



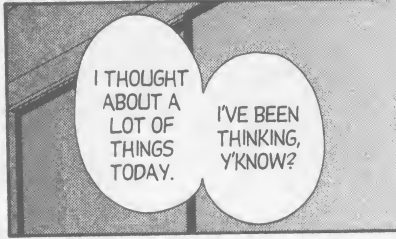
SHUT UP.

I DON'T...

SCREW THIS.

I DON'T
WANNA
BE ABLE
TO TELL.

NOT
SOMETHING
LIKE THAT.



I THOUGHT
ABOUT A
LOT OF
THINGS
TODAY.

I'VE BEEN
THINKING,
Y'KNOW?

MAKING
YOU GO
HOME BY
YOURSELF.

...ABOUT
YESTER-
DAY.

I'M
SORRY...



AKITO...

BUT I
CAN SAY
THIS...

WHY
THAT
WOULD
HAPPEN.

I COULDN'T
THINK
OF ANY
REASON...

LIKE WHY
ONLY MY
CURSE
WAS
BROKEN.



I CAN'T SPEND
THE REST OF
MY LIFE BY
YOUR SIDE.



NO ONE'S GOING
TO WELCOME
YOU! NOT YOUR
MOTHER, NOT
YOUR FATHER...

TRAITOR!

TRAITOR!

WHAM

YOU'RE
JUST A...

I KNOW.

WHAM

EVEN IF YOU
LEFT HERE,
LEFT ME...

YOU CAN'T
GO BACK TO
THEM NOW!

YOU'LL
NEVER BE
HAPPY!

YOU HAVE
NOWHERE TO
GO BACK TO!

WHAM



IT'S
BROKEN
NOW...



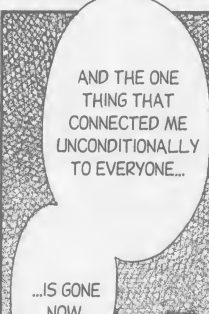
CURSE
OR NO...



I STILL
CAN'T
HAVE THE
PERSON
I LOVE.



...AND I CAN'T
GO BACK TO
THE WAY
THINGS WERE.



AND THE ONE
THING THAT
CONNECTED ME
UNCONDITIONALLY
TO EVERYONE...



...IS GONE
NOW.



"...GOOD MORNING."



I KNOW...



AND...



I'M
ALREADY
FREE.



...I'M
ALREADY
LONELY.



"I THOUGHT
I'D TAKE A
DIFFERENT
ROUTE TO
SCHOOL
TODAY."



"I THOUGHT
YOU WERE
SOMEONE
ELSE."





DON'T
SAY
THAT.

DON'T
SAY I'LL
NEVER BE
"HAPPY"...

...UNLESS
THOSE
THINGS ARE
FULFILLED.

THAT'S
NOT YOUR
DECISION
TO MAKE.

THE
"HAPPINESS"
OF A PLACE...

...WITHOUT
ME IN IT.

STILL.



"ARE YOU
GOING
SOMEWHERE
WITH YOUR
FAMILY?"

IT'S...

...A FAR-
AWAY
PLACE.



"YEAH."

"I AM."

"GOING ON
A TRIP, I
MEAN."

SOMEDAY.

...YEAH."



WITH THE
FAMILY
I'M SURE
I CAN HAVE.



AND IT IS
DISCOURAGING.

I'M FREE.

BUT MAYBE
MY OWN
HAPPINESS...

...IS STILL
WAITING
FOR ME TO
FIND IT.

SOMETIME
IN THE
FUTURE.



TO THE FUTURE...

I'M FINALLY
GONNA
START
WALKING...

IT'S
TIME.

TO A WORLD THAT
KEEPS MOVING.

...ALONG MY
OWN PATH
IN LIFE.



HOW LONG
DO YOU
THINK
YOU'LL
STAY HERE?

WHAT
ABOUT
YOU?



AND GET
OUT
OF MY
SIGHT.

JUST...
SHUT
UP.



THINKING
THAT IF
WE LEAVE
HERE...

WE'LL
HAVE
NOWHERE
TO GO
BACK TO.

THAT
WE'LL
NEVER
BE
HAPPY.

THE ONE
WHO'S
MOST
AFRAID OF
THAT IS--

SHUT
UP.



WELL...



"ALL
RIGHT."

"I'LL
SEE YOU
LATER."





"TAKE
CARE!"



I WILL.



Chapter 117

MY
FATHER
WAS
ALWAYS
SMILING
AND KIND.

I LOVED
HIM.

PAT PAT PAT...

MY MOTHER
WAS
ALWAYS
ANGRY, AND
LOOKED AT
ME WITH
COLD EYES.

I HATED
HER.

PAT PAT PAT...



...AND I
THOUGHT
I WAS THE
ONE HE
LOVED THE
MOST.

PAT PAT PAT...

...IT'S
RAINING.

I WAS THE
"BEING" MY
FATHER
WISHED
FOR...

Talking and such.

This time, I intentionally have fewer columns.

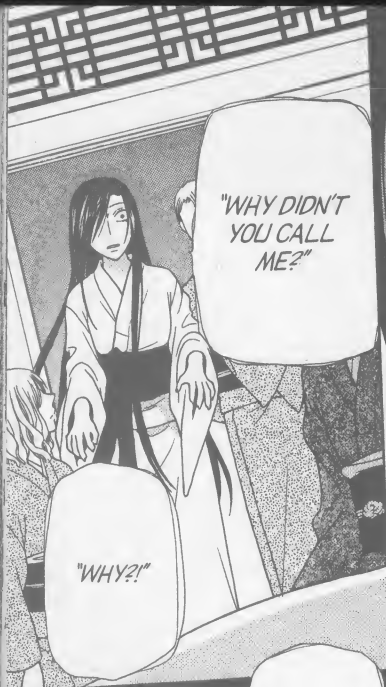
I figured that with the story getting insanely serious, the columns might interrupt the mood. Thus there really aren't that many of them. (But that... might (?)...be a good thing. (laugh)) And the volume ends at a terrible place... It seems like Kyo's feelings were deeper than I was prepared for. When drawing, there aren't that many characters who give me trouble (like by not moving the way I planned, etc.), but he may have given me the next most trouble after Kurenno-san.

Kurenno-san was awful... He'd be like, "I don't want to do that. That won't work, either," and just wouldn't agree with the development that I, the author, would present to him (laugh). So I said, "Do what you want!" and let him walk freely, and the result is what you see now. It's fun to go along with my characters, but sometimes it wears me out (laugh).





PAT PAT PAT...



"WHY DIDN'T
YOU CALL
ME?"

"WHY?!"

"ARE YOU
TRYING TO
TELL ME..."

"...THAT AKIRA-
SAN PASSED
ON ALONE? BY
HIMSELF?!"

"BE
QUIET."

"IT HAPPENED
SO SUDDENLY,
WE HAD NO
TIME TO CALL
FOR YOU."

"WHY...?"

PAT PAT PAT...





"AKIRA-SAN'S
WILL..."

"AND HE
WASN'T
ALONE."

"AKITO-SAN
WATCHED
OVER HIM."

...HAS BEEN
PROPERLY
PASSED ONTO
AKITO-SAN."



"WHAT?"

"THIS
THING?!"

"THIS WAS
NOTHING MORE
THAN A TOY
FOR AKIRA-SAN
TO PASS THE
TIME WITH!"

"YOU'RE
WRONG."

"I'M A
'SPECIAL
BEING.'"

"I'VE BEEN
PROMISED
'ETERNITY.'
EVERYONE'S
BEEN
WAITING
FOR ME."

"EXCUSE
ME!"

"HOW DARE
YOU SPEAK
SO--"

"NOW THAT
AKIRA-SAN
IS GONE..."

"I AM
NEEDED."

"...WE DON'T
NEED THIS TOY
ANYMORE!"

"BECAUSE
FATHER
TOLD ME."

"I KNOW..."

"WE DON'T
NEED YOU!"

"YOU'RE
WRONG..."



"GO AHEAD AND
KEEP THOSE
RIDICULOUS
DELLUSIONS IN
YOUR HEART!"

"BOND'...."

"ETERNITY."

"SOMEDAY,
THEY'LL
BREAK."

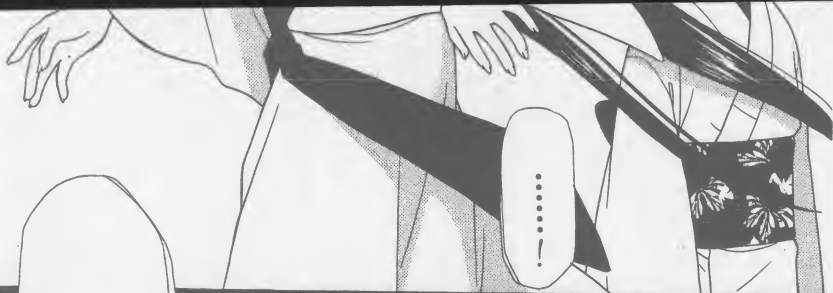
"THOSE
THINGS
WON'T
LAST."

"YOU'RE THE
ONE WHO
DOESN'T CARE
WHAT FATHER
SAYS."

"YOU'LL
LEARN!"

"YOU'RE
NOT
NEEDED."

"NO ONE
EVER
WAITED
FOR YOU!"



"AKIRA-
SAN...!"

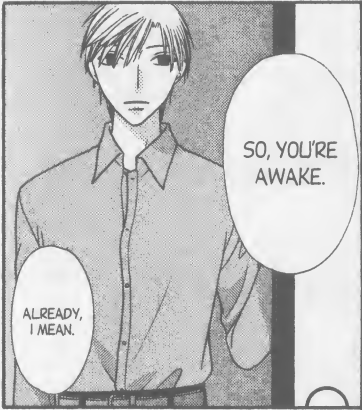


"AKIRA-
SAN!"



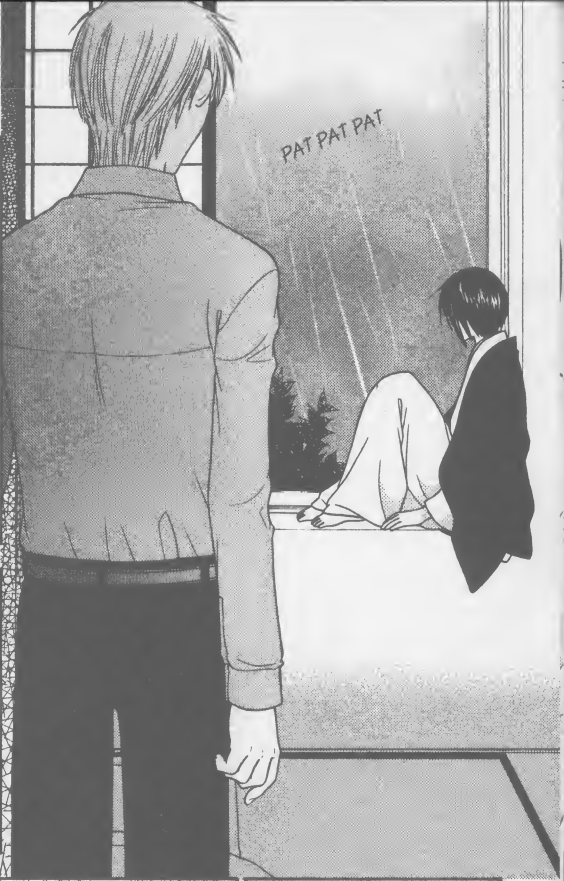
...AKITO?





SO, YOU'RE
AWAKE.

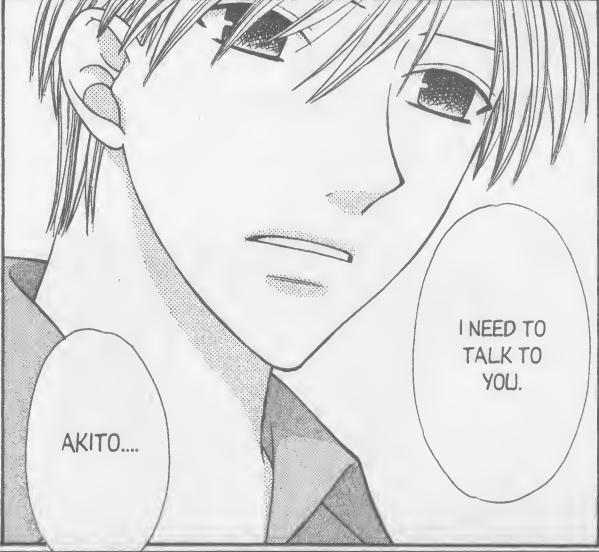
ALREADY,
I MEAN.



PAT PAT PAT

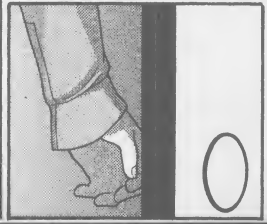


MM.



I NEED TO
TALK TO
YOU.

AKITO....



0





EVEN
THOUGH
I WAS
HURT...

...BY HER
BITING
WORDS.

BACK THEN,
I COULD
STILL...

SHIGURE.



HE WAS
KIND.

LIKE MY
FATHER.



I COULD
STILL...

...SHOW OFF...

...IN FRONT
OF THAT
WOMAN.



"WHAT
ELSE
COULD
ONE CALL
IT BUT A
'BOND?'"

"LIKE AN
UNBREAK-
ABLE
KARMIC
LINK."



BUT I
DESPER-
ATELY
REACHED
OUT.

FROM
THERE IT
TWISTED...

I FORCED
THEM TO
STAY.



THAT'S
RIGHT. NO
MATTER
HOW MANY
TIMES I WAS
BETRAYED...

...AND
TWISTED.

...AND
BETRAYED AND
BETRAYED...



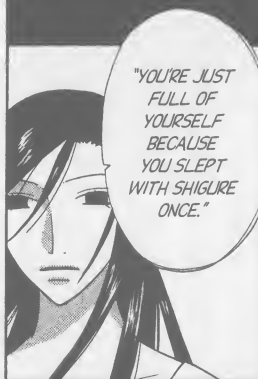
WHEN?

WHEN
DID MY
WORLD...

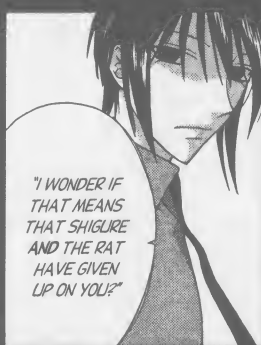
BEGIN TO
BREAK?



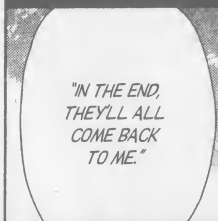
WAS IT WHEN
KURENO WAS
SET FREE?



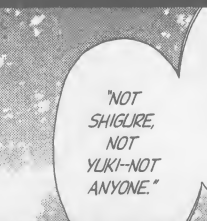
"YOU'RE JUST
FULL OF
YOURSELF
BECAUSE
YOU SLEPT
WITH SHIGURE
ONCE."



"I WONDER IF
THAT MEANS
THAT SHIGURE
AND THE RAT
HAVE GIVEN
LIP ON YOU?"



"IN THE END,
THEY'LL ALL
COME BACK
TO ME."



"NOT
SHIGURE,
NOT
YUKI-NOT
ANYONE."



"THEY
HAVEN'T
GIVEN LIP
ON ME."



"WE CAN'T
BE APART."

"I'M
GROWING
AWFULLY
SICK OF
HEARING
THAT LINE."

"THAT'S
WHAT
OUR 'BOND'
IS ALL
ABOUT."



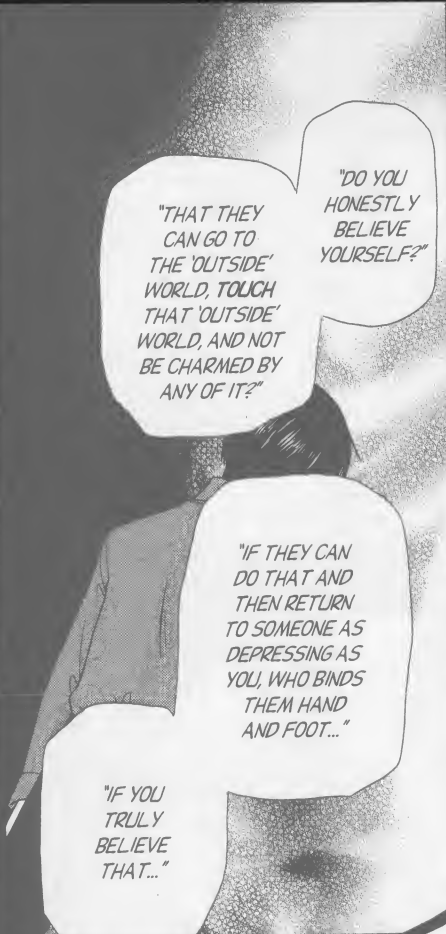
"WELL,
WELL."

I WAS THE
ONLY ONE
THEY HAD
TO COME
BACK TO.



"YUKI-KUN'S
LEFT THE
SOHMA AND
GONE TO
LIVE WITH
SHIGURE."

"OR SO I
HEAR."



"THAT THEY
CAN GO TO
THE 'OUTSIDE'
WORLD, TOUCH
THAT 'OUTSIDE'
WORLD, AND NOT
BE CHARMED BY
ANY OF IT?"

"DO YOU
HONESTLY
BELIEVE
YOURSELF?"

"IF THEY CAN
DO THAT AND
THEN RETURN
TO SOMEONE AS
DEPRESSING AS
YOU, WHO BINDS
THEM HAND
AND FOOT..."

"IF YOU
TRULY
BELIEVE
THAT..."

"HOWEVER..."

POINT

"IF YOU
LOSE..."



"IF THAT'S
TRUE..."

"...THEN
PROVE IT
TO ME."



"THEN SHOW ME
THAT NO ONE
CAN BREAK YOUR
WILD DREAM!"

"WIN AGAINST
ME!"



"BOW AT
MY FEET."

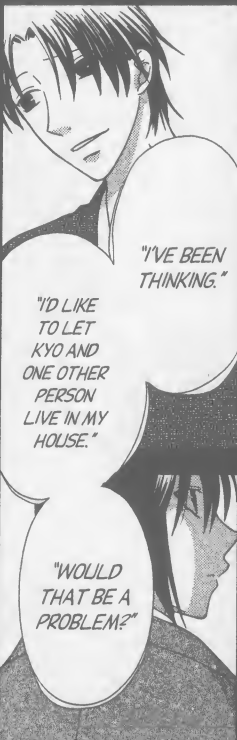
"AND
LEAVE
THE
SOHMA."

I DID
BELIEVE.



"...AKITO-
SAN."

"THERE'S
SOMETHING I'D
LIKE TO CONSULT
YOU ABOUT."



"I'VE BEEN
THINKING."

"I'D LIKE
TO LET
KYO AND
ONE OTHER
PERSON
LIVE IN MY
HOUSE."

I HON-
ESTLY
BELIEV-
ED...

...THAT
I COULD
WIN.

"WOULD
THAT BE A
PROBLEM?"





"...THEY'LL
ALL COME
BACK TO
ME."

I MEAN, I...

NO.

IT WAS LIKE
A PRAYER.

I BELIEVED...



'BECAUSE...
WE CANNOT
BE APART.'

LIKE A
CURSE.



...THAT NO
ONE COULD
BREAK US.



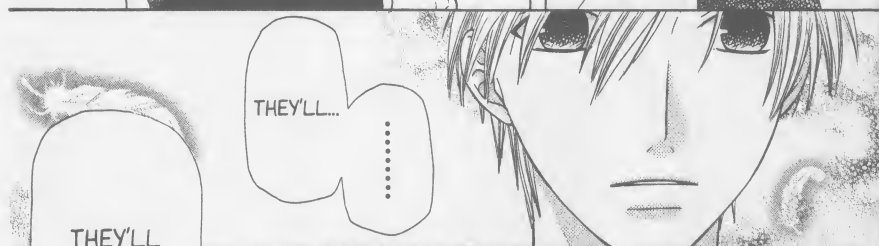
AS IF I'D
DIE IF I
DIDN'T
SAY IT.

I'D REPEAT
THE SAME
WORDS...

NO.

A WISH.

...OVER AND OVER
AND OVER.



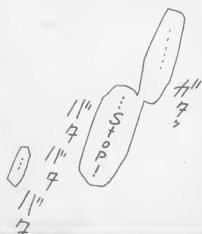
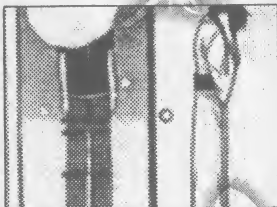


THEY'LL GO
SOMEPLACE
ELSE.

I CAN'T
STOP
THEM.

...IS
HOPELESS.

EVERYTHING
...





DON'T
LET
HER IN!

?!

SOMEBODY
STOP--!

カッアッ



YOU KNOW
SOME-
THING?

I SHOULD'VE
DONE THIS
A LONG
TIME AGO.

THAT'S
RIGHT.

...MY MIND
WAS VERY
CLEAR.

WHEN
I WOKE
UP THIS
MORNING...



...BUT GIVE
IT BACK!
IT'S MINE!

GIVE
AKIRA-SAN
BACK...!

!

I'M TALKING
ABOUT
THE BOX!

I KNOW ALL
ABOUT IT!

EVERYTHING
OF AKIRA-SAN'S
BELONGS TO ME!

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT IT IS OF
AKIRA-SAN'S
THAT YOU'RE
HIDING...



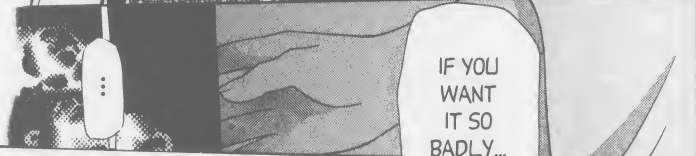
I WANTED
TO SHOW
HER.

I DIDN'T
WANT TO
LOSE.

NOT TO
THIS
WOMAN.

I WANTED TO
PROVE IT TO HER
IN WHATEVER
FORM I COULD.

BECAUSE I...



IF YOU
WANT
IT SO
BADLY...



I...

YOU CAN
HAVE IT!

THIS...THING!





"MORE
THAN
ANYONE..."

"I WANTED REN
TO BE HAPPY."



"THAT REN
AND I WERE
'SPECIAL.'"



"AND NOT
JUST
THAT..."

"THE FACT
THAT THAT
CHILD WAS
A 'SPECIAL
BEING'..."

"...WAS PROOF,
WASN'T IT?"



"IN THE
END..."

"...I WAS
JUST A
MAN WHO
WAS GOING
TO DIE."



"BUT I WAS
ABLE TO
LEAVE A
CHILD."



"REN..."

"I
COULDN'T
..."



"...BE
RECONCILED
WITH YOU,
AFTER ALL."





"BUT..."

"YOU
PERFORMED
SPLENDIDLY
BACK
THERE."

"TAKING
SUCH A FIRM
ATTITUDE
TOWARD THAT
WOMAN."



"YOU MUST
NOT BE
CONFUSED."

"AKIRA-SAN
LOVED YOU
MORE THAN
ANYONE,
AKITO-SAN."

"I'M NOT THE
ONE FATHER
LOVED THE
MOST."

"I'M--"

"NO."



"BY THE
WAY..."



"AKIRA-SAN..."

"...BELONGS ONLY TO YOU, THE ONE WHO HOLDS THIS."



"YOU MUST TEACH THAT WOMAN, EVEN MORE..."

"...HOW EXALTED YOU ARE IN THE SOHMA FAMILY AS THE ONE WHO RULES THE SPIRITS."



"THAT IS PRECISELY THE MISSION THAT WAS LEFT TO YOU, THE ONE AKIRA-SAN LOVED THE MOST."

"LISTEN TO ME."



"AKIRA-SAN SAID IT HIMSELF, DIDN'T HE?"



"IS THERE SOMETHING INSIDE?"

"THAT HE WOULD BE BY YOUR SIDE."





AND IT
ALWAYS
HAS BEEN.

...WHO WAS LEFT OUT.

BECAUSE I WAS THE ONE...

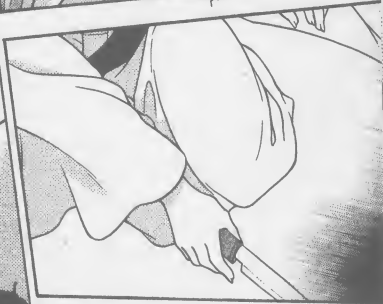
I KNEW
FROM
THE
START...

THAT'S
RIGHT.

BECAUSE IT WAS
BROKEN FROM
THE BEGINNING.



...THAT
I WAS DEMANDING
SOMETHING THAT
DIDN'T EXIST.

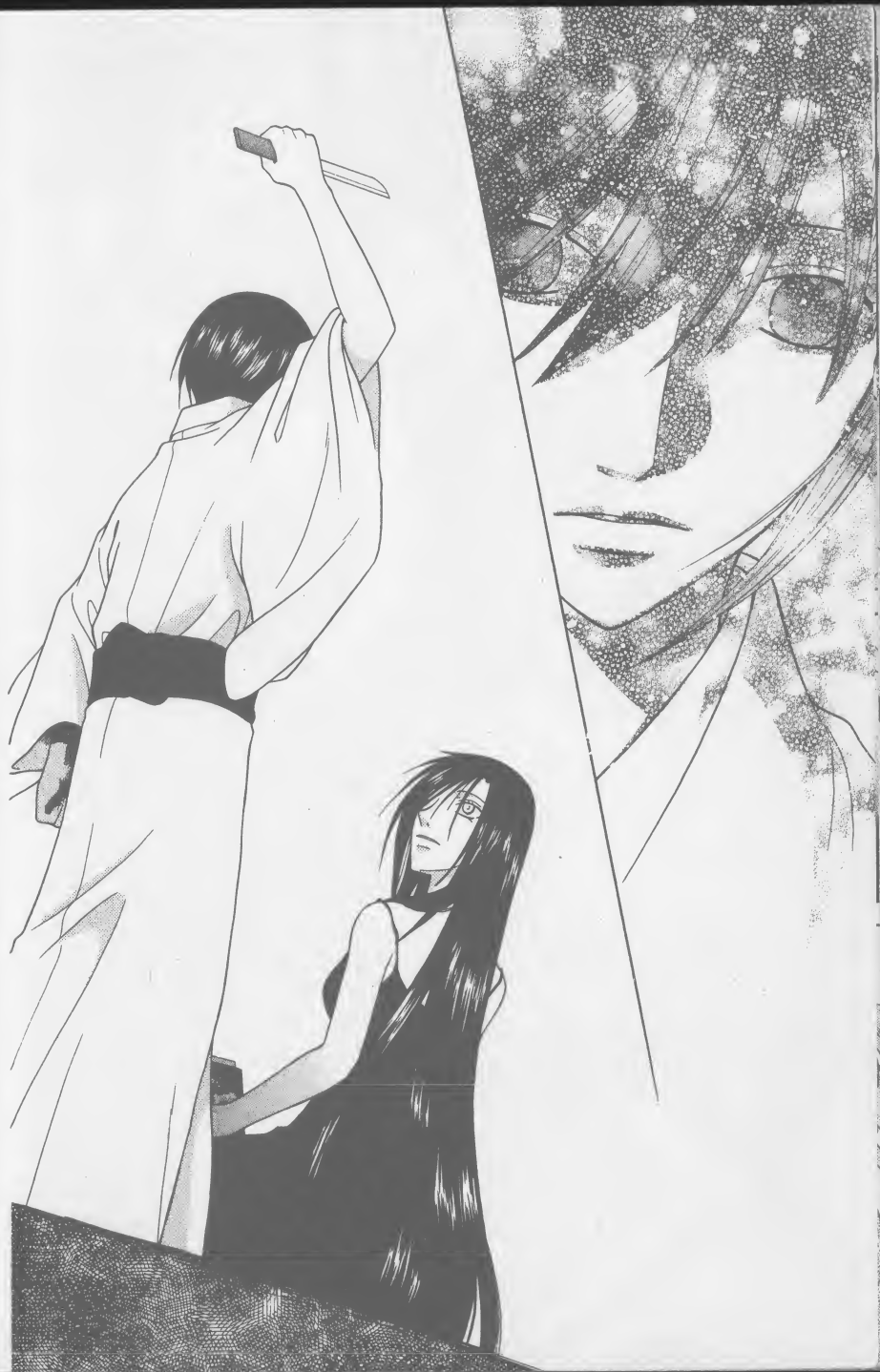


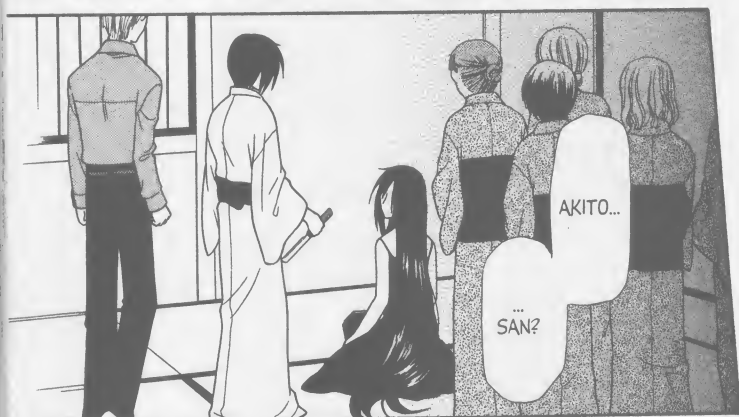


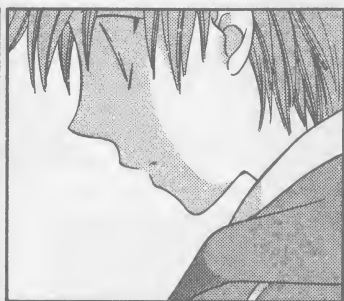
A...

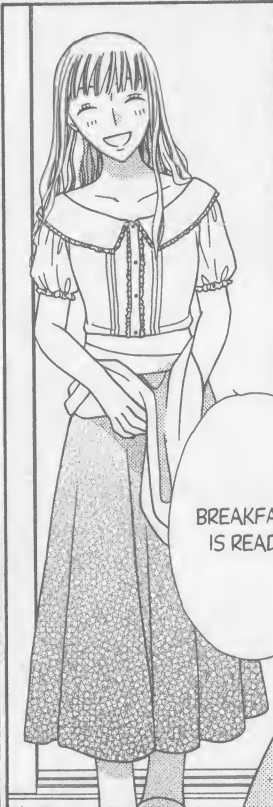
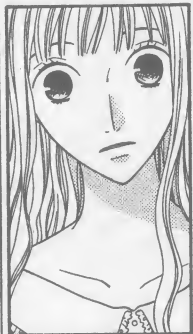
...KI...!

Chapter 118







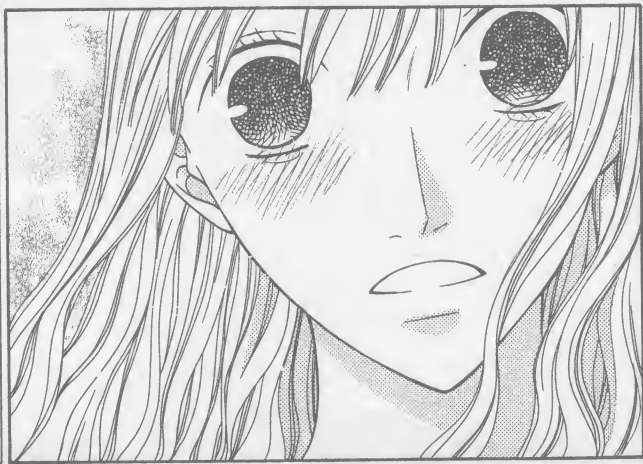


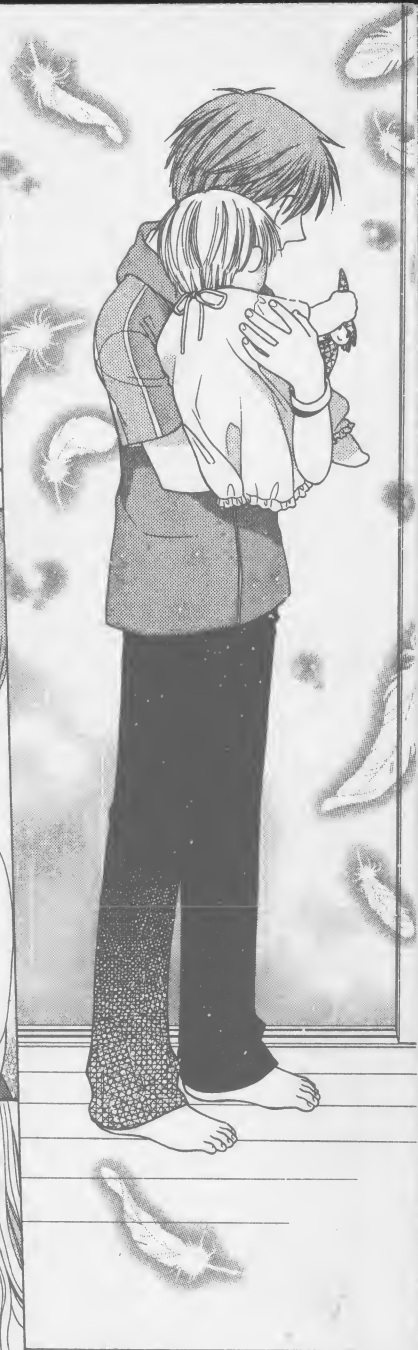
HINATA-
CHAAAAN!

HIRO-
CHAAAAN!

PATTER
PATTER

BREAKFAST
IS READ--





OF COURSE
IT IS.

ALL KINDS
OF STUFF IS
JUMBLED UP
INSIDE ME.

AND
LOVE...

AND
REGRET,
AND
SORROW.

THERE'S
SOME
KIND OF
RESENT-
MENT.

BUT I
ALSO
FEEL MAD.

THIS
WHOLE
TIME...

YOU'VE LIVED
YOUR WHOLE
LIFE ONE WAY,
HIRO-CHAN.

WITH THAT
"BOND."

...A PART
OF YOU,
HIRO-CHAN.

IT WAS...

YOU LIVED
THIS LONG
WITH IT.

BUT
STILL...

YOU'VE
WORRIED SO
MUCH, AND
SUFFERED
SO MUCH.



NOW...

...IT
REALLY
IS...

...
CRUMB-
LING.

IT'S
HOPELESS.

IT'S
FALLING
APART.

IT MUST
BE
LONELY
...

...TO SAY
GOODBYE.



...TO SAY
"GOODBYE."

IT'S
ALMOST
TIME...



...I DON'T
MIND IF
YOU DO.

YOU
KNOW...

WEREN'T
YOU TRYING
TO KILL
ME?



MADAM!!

step

WHAT'S
THE
MATTER?



MUDDY?

HOW FAR DO
YOU PLAN
TO MUDDY
THE SOHMA
NAME?!



YOU THOUGHT
YOU HATED ME
SO MUCH THAT
YOU WANTED
TO KILL ME,
DIDN'T YOU?

BE QUIET!
QUIET!

WHAT DO
YOU MEAN BY
BRINGING A KNIFE
IN HERE?! ARE
YOU TRYING
TO DRAW THE
POLICE?!

HE TRIED TO
SLASH AT HIS
OWN MOTHER!



PLACING SUCH
A DEFECTIVE
HUMAN BEING
AS HEAD OF THE
HOUSE IS ITSELF
A DISGRACE TO
THE SOHMA!

WHAT?!

OF COURSE
HE DIDN'T
BELIEVE IT!

AND,
TO THINK,
OUR POOR,
NAÏVE HEAD
OF THE HOUSE
BELIEVED
EVERY WORD
OF IT.

AND WHAT AN
EXCELLENT
JOB, PREPARING
THAT
RIDICULOUS
BOX!

HOW
DARE
YOU!



IT WAS
LIKE A
PROTECTIVE
CHARM.

I GAVE THAT
BOX TO HIM
TO COMFORT
HIM IN HIS
GRIEF OVER
AKIRA-SAN!

HE KNEW
IT WAS AN
EMPTY BOX!

COMMON
SENSE WOULD
TELL HIM
AS MUCH!



WELL, WHAT
ABOUT YOU?
ACTING AS IF
YOU'RE TAKING
A TOY FROM
A CHILD!

HAVE YOU
NO SHAME?!

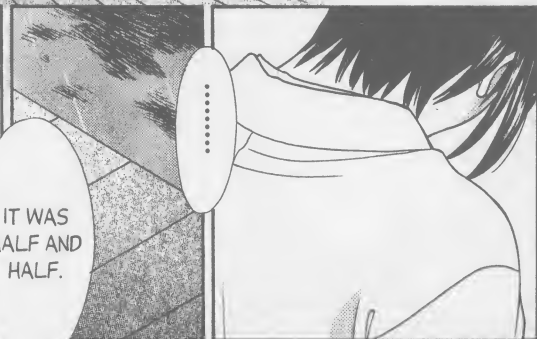
ARE YOU
STILL
USING
THAT
LOGIC?!



THAT'S
WHY YOU
SHOULDN'T
GIVE SUCH
THINGS
TO HIM.



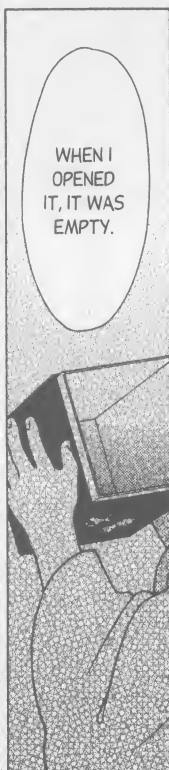
IT WAS
HALF AND
HALF.



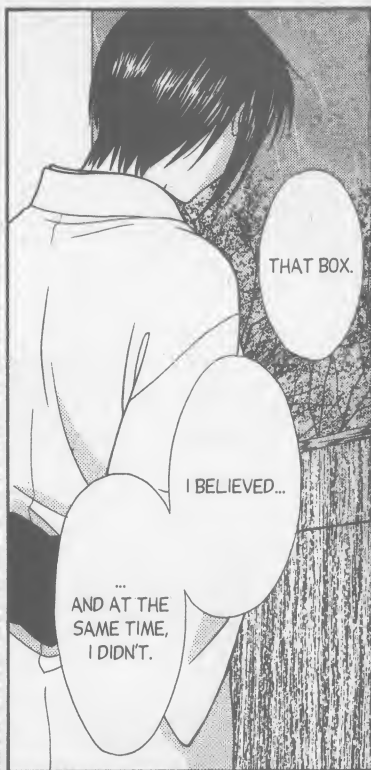


BUT THERE
WAS THE
POSSIBILITY...

...THAT IT WAS
AN "INVISIBLE
POWER."



WHEN I
OPENED
IT, IT WAS
EMPTY.



THAT BOX.

I BELIEVED...

...
AND AT THE
SAME TIME,
I DIDN'T.



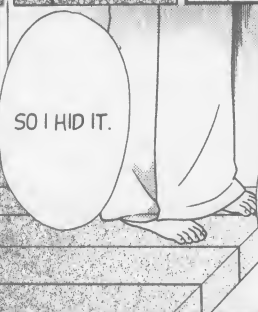
"MAYBE."

"MAYBE."

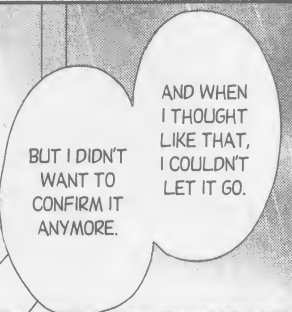


THAT'S RIGHT.

I WAS
ALWAYS
CLINGING
TO IT.

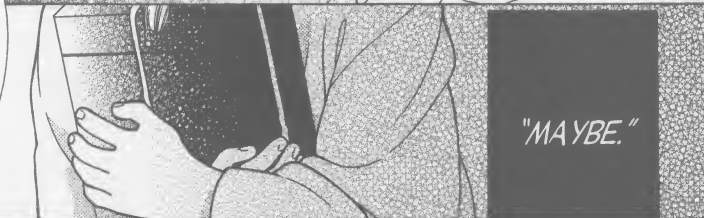


SO I HID IT.



BUT I DIDN'T
WANT TO
CONFIRM IT
ANYMORE.

AND WHEN
I THOUGHT
LIKE THAT,
I COULDN'T
LET IT GO.



"MAYBE."



NO ONE EVER
GAVE ME ANY
OTHER WAY
TO LIVE!

HOW DO THEY
EXPECT ME
TO KNOW
SOMETHING I
DON'T KNOW?!

HOW AM
I SUPPOSED TO
UNDERSTAND?!

IS THAT
SO
WRONG?

THAT WAS
MY COMMON
SENSE...!

IF WHAT'S
OBVIOUS TO
THEM AND
OBVIOUS TO YOU
IS "COMMON
SENSE"...

WHY
WOULDN'T
YOU TELL
ME?!

NO ONE...

...EVER
TAUGHT
ME!



WHY?
?!

ALL
RIGHT?

...YOU CAN
START
LEARNING
NOW.

...AND WHAT
YOU DON'T
UNDER-
STAND...

LISTEN.
WHAT
YOU DON'T
KNOW...

...TO TALK
TO YOU
ABOUT
EARLIER.

THIS IS
WHAT I
WANTED...

AKITO.

LET'S
CHANGE.

NOW?

YOU'RE
SAYING
THAT...

...NOW?

I'M
SURE
...

YOU'VE
REALIZED
THAT BY
NOW.

IF YOU STAY
IN THIS
ENVIRON-
MENT...

YOU'LL
ONLY BE
DEVOURED
BY THE
"SOHMA"
AND THE
"BOND."

YOU'LL
BE
EMPTY.

YOU'LL
NEVER BE
FULFILLED.

IT'S TOO
LATE FOR
THAT.

"CHANGE"
...

WHY
DIDN'T
YOU
JUST
SAY...

...ALL OF
THAT IN THE
BEGINNING?!

SO--

N
O
.
.
.
?
!



"DON'T
GO! DON'T
LEAVE ME!"

"DON'T
ABANDON
ME!"



YES...

TALKING SO
HIGH AND
MIGHTY...!



YES...

AND YOU'RE
SAYING ALL
THIS NOW...?

NOW.



WHY?

WHY DIDN'T
YOU REJECT
ME TO BEGIN
WITH?!

WHY
DIDN'T
YOU
ABANDON
ME?!



THAT...

...SAVING ME
HALFWAY...

...“KINDNESS,”
OR WHATEVER
IT IS YOU
CALL IT.

...AND
ABANDON-
ING ME
HALFWAY...



IT'S
BEEN
KILLING
ME!

IT
ALWAYS
HAS.



TAKE
RESPON-
SIBILITY!

IT
ALWAYS
HAS!

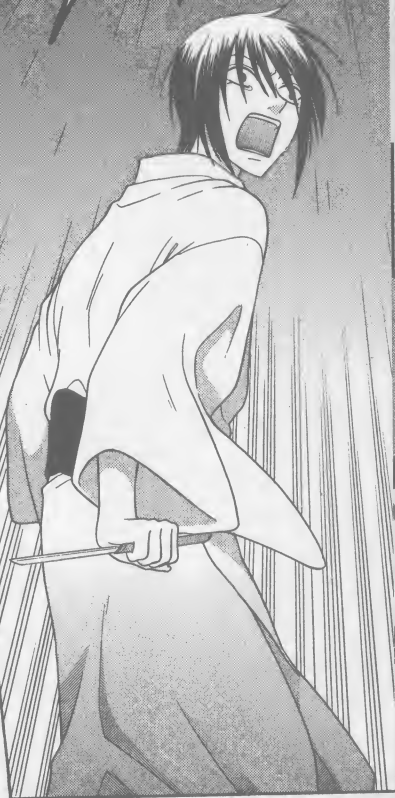
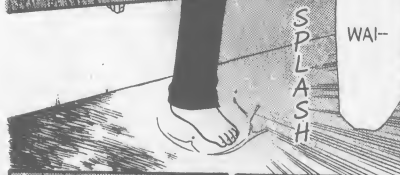
MAKE IT
UP TO ME!



WHAT DO
YOU PLAN
TO DO
ABOUT IT?!

THIS CAN'T
BE SETTLED
JUST BY YOU
ADMITTING YOU
WERE WRONG!

MAKE IT UP
TO ME BY
DROPPING
DEAD!





...AKITO.

YOU'RE
BLEEDING!

WHAT
HAP--

WHAT?!

I HAVE
TO GO...
AFTER
AKITO.



KURENO-
SAN!



AKITO IS...
MORE
IMPORTANT.

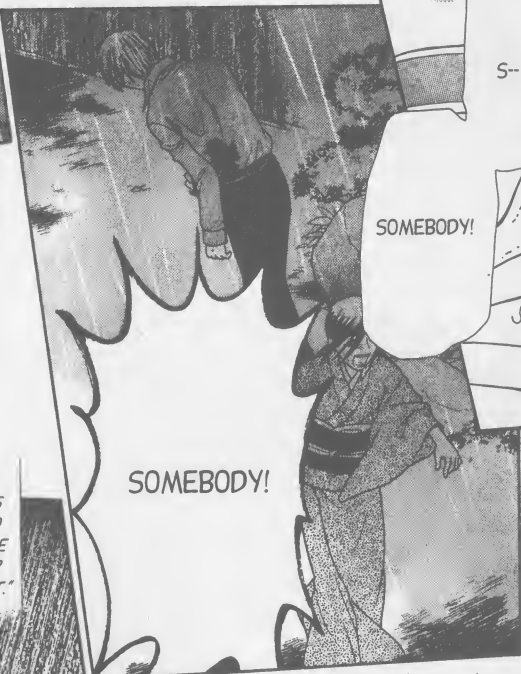
HURRY...!

HE RAN
OFF...
SOME-
WHERE.

I HAVE
TO GO
AFTER
HIM.

I'M
FINE...!

B-BUT
KURENO-
SAN,
YOU'RE
HURT!



"IT'S
TOO
LATE
FOR
THAT."

SOMEBODY!

S--
SOMEBODY!

"YOU'RE
SAYING
THAT..."

"NOW?"

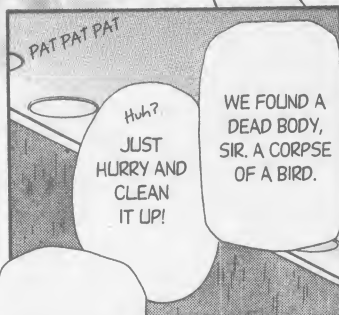
...NOW?





HUNH.

I GUESS
HE'S DEAD.



PAT PAT PAT

Huh?
JUST
HURRY AND
CLEAN
IT UP!

WE FOUND A
DEAD BODY,
SIR. A CORPSE
OF A BIRD.



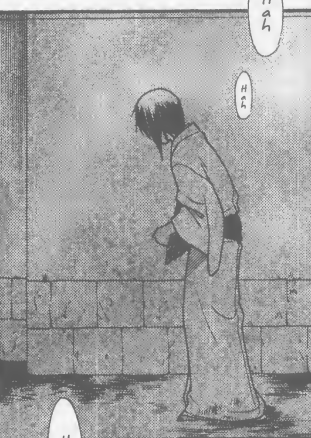
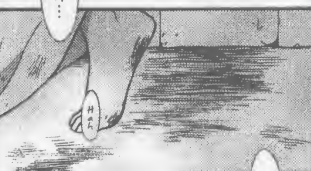
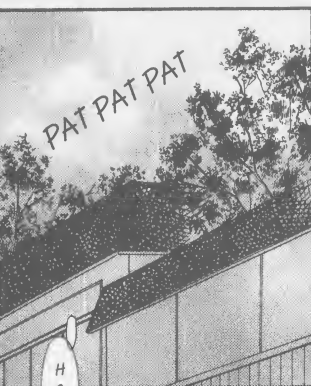
EW!

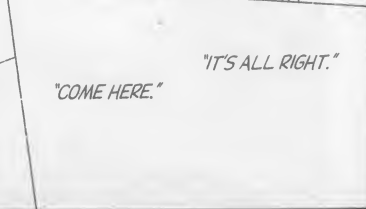
MAYBE
HE RAN
INTO SOME
GLASS.

DID A CAT
GET IT OR
SOMETHING?

WHAT?! WE
HAVE TO
DO IT?!

LIOTANI!
AYASE! ARE
YOU DONE
CLEANING
IN FRONT
OF THE
SHOP YET?







HUNK!

SO IT'S MY
FAULT?!

IS EVERYTHING
MY FAULT?!

IS THAT WHY
WE'RE SO...
INCOMPLETE?!

PAT PAT PAT

AND THAT I'M
LEFT OUT?!

AND...

"IF I BLAME SOMEONE ELSE..."

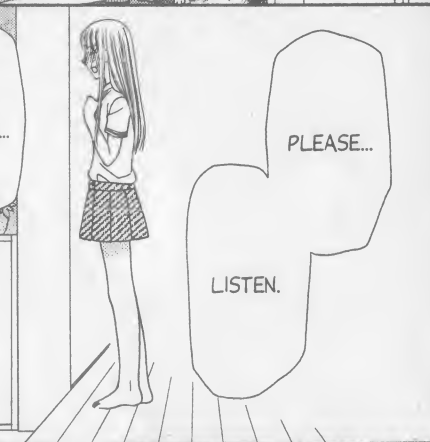
...NO MATTER HOW MUCH TIME PASSES..."

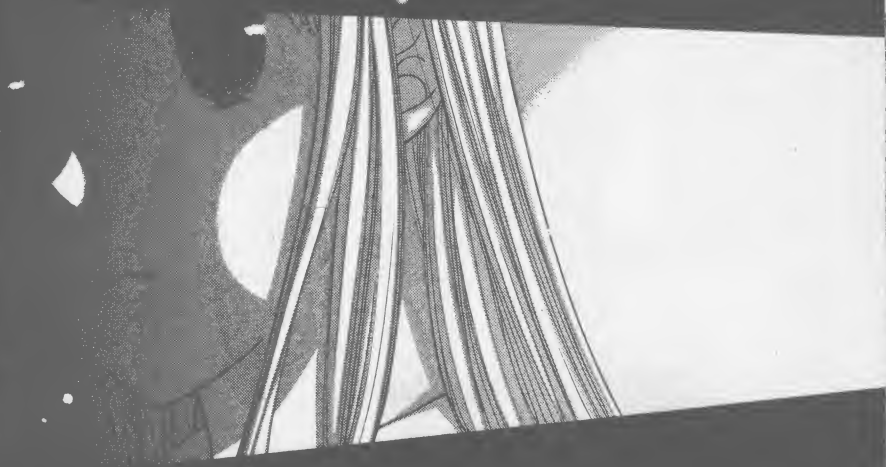
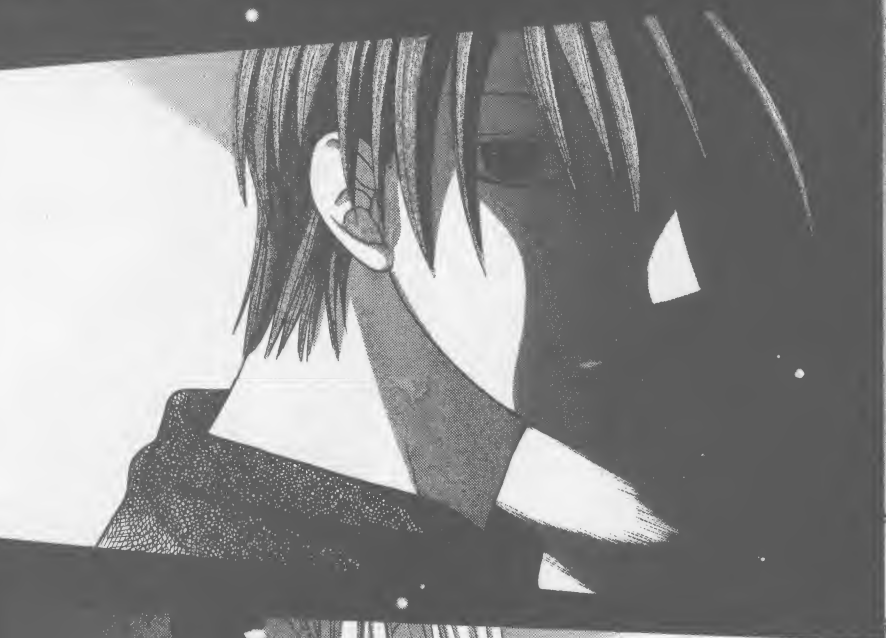


...WHERE IS
EVERYONE
GOING?









Chapter 119





DO YOU...

...LIKE ME?



"
MEAN..."



THAT'S
STUPID.

"YOU CAN
TELL, CAN'T
YOU?"

AND IT
WAS
RIGHT.

I HAD
A BAD
FEELING...

OF ALL
PEOPLE...

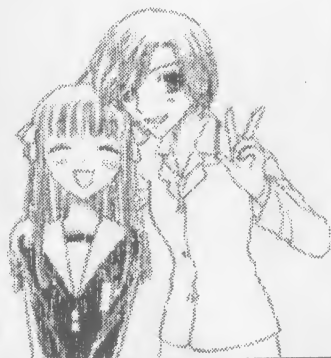
WHY?

CLACK

I DIDN'T
THINK...

...YOU
WERE
THAT
STUPID.

...GONE
NOW?



...YOUR
MOM?

...SHE
LIKES
ME?

DIDN'T...

YOU
LIKE...

IS ALL
OF
THAT...

WAS
THAT
A LIE?

DIDN'T
YOU?

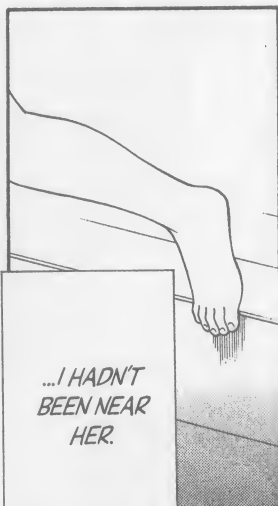


...

I
WISH...



...I HADN'T
BEEN NEAR
HER.



I CAN'T
DO THIS.



...THIS
IS TOO
MUCH.

PLEASE...

LISTEN.

I--

YOU DON'T
KNOW
ANYTHING!

ABOUT THE
STUFF I'VE
DONE!

YOU DON'T
KNOW A
THING...

I...

IT'S TOO
MUCH.

I DON'T
WANNA
TELL
HER.

I DON'T
WANT
HER TO
KNOW.

I DON'T
WANNA
ADMIT IT.

BUT...

PAT
PAT
PAT

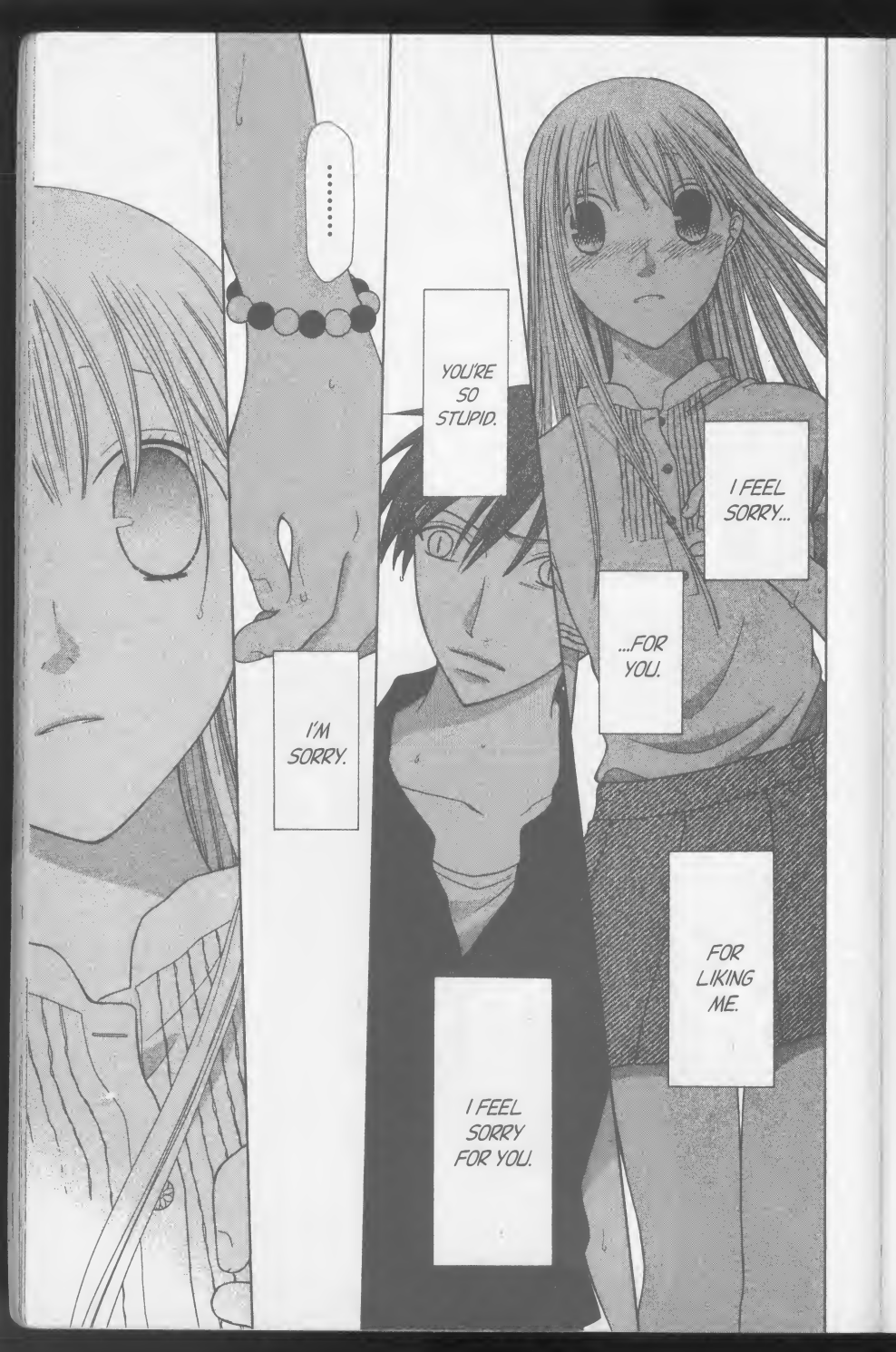
WHY DID I
HOPE FOR
THIS?

THIS...BEING
CLOSE TO
HER IN THE
TIME I HAD
LEFT?

KYO-
KUN...

IF
THIS...

...WAS
WHAT
WAS
GONNA
HAPPEN...



YOU'RE
SO
STUPID.

I FEEL
SORRY...

...FOR
YOU.

I'M
SORRY.

FOR
LIKING
ME.

I FEEL
SORRY
FOR YOU.

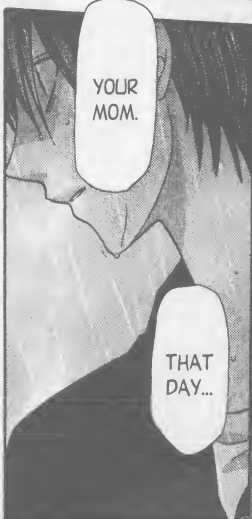


YOUR MOM
WOULDN'T
HAVE...



I KNEW
HER.

YOUR...



YOUR
MOM.

THAT
DAY...



I'M
SORRY.

SHE...

SHE
WOULDN'T
HAVE
DIED.

OKAY?



ON THE DAY
OF THE
ACCIDENT...

I SAW
HER.

SHE WAS
STANDING
NEAR ME.

I RECOGNIZED
HER RIGHT
AWAY.



HER
PROFILE.



THE
COLOR
OF HER
HAIR.

THEY WERE
THE SAME
AS WHEN I
KNEW HER.



...SO I'D
WANDER
AROUND ON
MY WAY
HOME FROM
SCHOOL.

I STILL
FELT
WEIRD
GOING RIGHT
HOME...

IT WAS
RIGHT
AFTER
SHISHOU
TOOK ME IN.

BEFORE...

WH-WHAT'S
UP WITH YOU?!
IT'S NONE OF
YOUR BUSINESS!
YOU'RE NOT MY
FRIEND! I'LL
KILL YOU!

Whoa!

WHAT THE
HELL? HE'S
TOTALLY NOT
CUTE! HOW
ADORABLE!

Gra!

Meep!

?!

WHAT'S UP
WITH YOU?

AND I
MET
HER.

THE LITTLE
BRAT SAID
SOMETHING!
HE'S SAYING
STUFF!

D-DON'T
CALL ME
"CUTE,"
HAG! HAG!

Sooo
cute!

Hissss!

YOU'RE JUST
A KID AND
YOU HAVE
ORANGE HAIR?

UNLESS...
IS THAT
NATURAL?

...WHAT
ABOUT
YOUR
DAD?

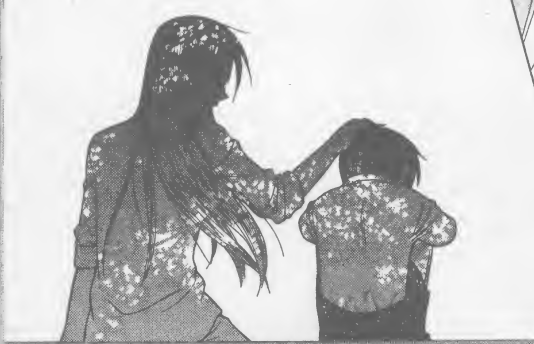
I DON'T NEED
HIM! HE CAN
DROP DEAD!

IF YOU'RE
THAT CUTE,
EVERYONE'LL
END UP
HATING YOU.
GO HOME.

YOUR MOM
MUST BE
WORRIED.

AND HE
THINKS...

I DON'T
HAVE ONE!
SHE DIED!



THAT
MUST
BE...
LONELY.



...I'M
BETTER
OFF DEAD,
TOO!

.....

WOW.





"HEY YOU"
ISN'T VERY
PÖLITE,
Y'KNOW.

And I dye it.

HEY,
YOU.

IS THAT
YOUR
REAL
HAIR?

HEY.

.....



THEN I'LL
CALL YOU
KIDDO,
KIDDO.

SHE
TOLD
ME...

...THAT SHE
WORKED
NEAR
THERE.

A KIDDO'S
A KIDDO.

WHAT'S
A KIDDO?

KIDDO?



HUH?!

CALL
ME
"KYOKO"!

I'M
KYOKO
HONDA.

*That's
like my
name!*



OH,
REALLY?

*Doesn't like having
similar names, for
some reason.*

I'M NOT
TELLING.

WHAT'S
YOUR
NAME?

I VISITED
HER A
LOT.

"COME SEE
ME AGAIN,
KIDDO KID."

"HEY."

ABOUT
KATSUYA
HONDA.

WE
TALKED
ABOUT
ALL KINDS
OF STUFF.

ABOUT
HERSELF...

AND...

...ABOUT TOHRU.

WHAT
WOULD
SHE BE
LIKE?

THE
DAUGHTER
OF A
PERSON
LIKE KYOKO
HONDA...

IT MADE
ME
WONDER.

THIS IS MY
TREASURE.

TOHRU.

TODAY
I'M GONNA
SHOW YOU
SOMETHING
COOL...

CHECK
IT OUT.



TOHRU...

SHE
HASN'T
COME
HOME!



OH!

KIDDO!



WHAT
DO I
DO?



I WONDERED
MORE.

WHAT
WOULD
IT SOUND
LIKE...



BUT SHE
VANISHED.

I'M
LOOKING
FOR HER,
BUT...

SHE'S NOT
ANYWHERE.

I CAN'T
FIND
HER...!



...WHEN
SHE
LAUGHED?



YOU WAIT
AT HOME!

I'LL FIND
HER, NO
MATTER
WHAT!

DON'T
WORRY!

I'LL
DO IT!

I'LL HELP
HER, NO
MATTER
WHAT.

I'LL
PROTECT
HER!



I
PROMISE!
AS A
MAN!



WHY?

WHY
COULDN'T I
KEEP THAT
PROMISE?

KIDDO!

I'M GLAD
I FOUND
YOU!

YOU'RE
STILL
LOOKING
FOR HER,
RIGHT?

MY
BABY'S
BEEN
FOUND!

IT'S
OKAY!

Hah
...

Hah!

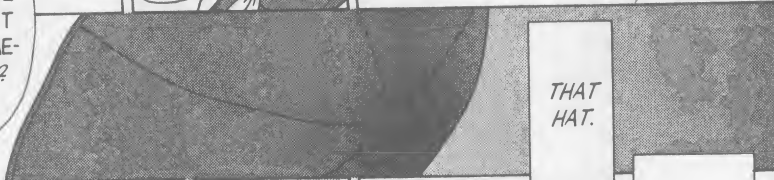
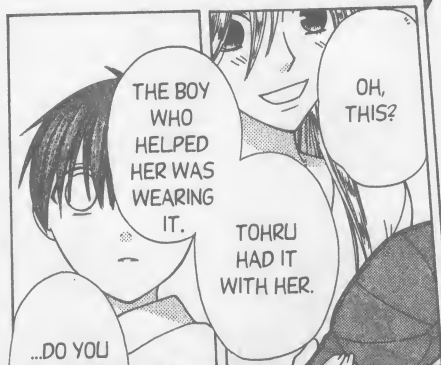
Hah

Hah

Hah

Hah

Hah





HE'S
A JERK.

HE...

.....



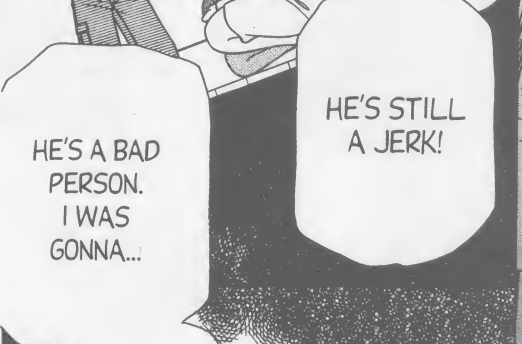
WHY DOES
HE HAVE
TO TAKE
PEOPLE'S
STUFF?!

I HATE HIM.
HE HAS
EVERYTHING.

AND
EVERYBODY
LOVES HIM.



...BUT HE
HELPED
TOHRU.



HE'S A BAD
PERSON.
I WAS
GONNA...

HE'S STILL
A JERK!



I WAS
GONNA
HELP
HER!

*THAT RAT HAS
MORE GOING FOR
HIM THAN I DO.*



...IT HAD
MOVED
ONTO HIM.



NO.

ANYTHING
HE
TOUCHED...

...ISN'T MINE
ANYMORE.



...YOU
WOULDN'T
KNOW WHAT
TO DO WITH
YOURSELF,
WOULD YOU?

IF YOU
DIDN'T
HAVE
SOMEONE
TO HATE...

*SO WHY DOES HE
HAVE TO BUTT
IN, EVEN HERE?!*

YOU
WANT
HIM...

...TO BE LIKE
THAT, DON'T
YOU?



THAT'S
NOT IT.

YOU'RE
TAKING HIS
SIDE, TOO?

ARE YOU
BLAMING
ME?!

TAKING
A SIDE,
OR BEING
CONSIDERED
"GOOD" OR
"BAD"...

IT'S ALL
SO STUPID.



WHA...?

...?
?!
...



IF YOU
LIVE YOUR
LIFE AND
ONLY
FOCUS ON
THOSE
THINGS...

...
YOU'LL BE
WASTING
WHAT YOU
DO HAVE.

I MEAN,
LOOK AT
YOU.

YOU'RE
SUCH A
KIND...

...AND
WONDERFUL
LITTLE BOY.



...TH--

WHAM

THAT
DOESN'T
MAKE ANY
SENSE!

YOU...
TRAITOR!

HEY,
KIDDO.

WHO CARES
ABOUT YOU?!

WHO CARES
ABOUT ANY OF
YOU ANYMORE?!

THE LONE-
LINESS OF
FEELING
BETRAYED.

THAT
WAS
THE
LAST
TIME.

THE SHAME
AT BEING
USELESS.

GETTING PISSED
AT LOSING MY
THUNDER.

I BROODED
OVER ALL
THAT...

...AND
AVOIDED
HER.

ALTHOUGH NOW I CAN SEE IT WAS
THE ACT OF A COMPLETE CHILD.

I'LL PUT
IT ON YOUR
TAB!

ABOUT
YOUR
"PROMISE!"



AND
THEN...

WE MET
AGAIN ON
THAT DAY.

I DIDN'T
KNOW
WHAT
TO DO.

AND I
COULD
SEE IT
COMING.

IT WAS
SPEEDING
PRETTY
BADLY...

THEN
THERE
WAS THE
CAR.

...IF I
SHOULD
SAY
SOME-
THING.

I WASN'T
SURE...

...AND HELD
HER BACK...

...IT WAS
HEADED
FOR YOUR
MOM.

I COULD
TELL...

...GRABBED
HER ARM...

IF I'D
ONLY...

I KNEW
IT WAS
BAD.

I KNEW
I HAD
TO
SAVE
HER.



... "HUMAN."

IF I'D HELD
HER BACK...

I
WOULD'VE
TURNED
INTO A
CAT.

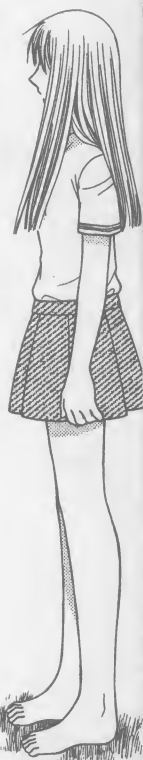
AND
EVERYONE
WOULD'VE
KNOWN...

THAT
I'M NOT
HUMAN.

BUT...

BUT...

I'M NOT...





AND I
CHOSE
MYSELF.

BUT I
DIDN'T.

I WEIGHED
YOUR MOM'S
LIFE AGAINST
MYSELF.



I PROTECTED
MYSELF...

...OVER
EVEN HER
LIFE!

I PROTECTED
MYSELF.



I...

.....
!

ALWAYS.

ALWAYS.

ALWAYS.

EVEN NOW.

BUT IN
THE END,
I ALWAYS
PROTECT
MYSELF.

I INDULGE
MYSELF...

....AND RUN
AWAY.

I DESPISE MYSELF.

I'D RATHER...

I HATE MYSELF FOR
BEING LIKE THIS.

THINGS WOULD BE
BETTER IF I WAS GONE.

IF I'D JUST DISAPPEAR.





I'M SO SCARED,
I CAN'T EVEN
LOOK YOU IN
THE FACE.

IT WAS
THE
SAME
WITH
MY
MOM.

IT...



SHE SAID
SHE WAS
SORRY.

FOR
GIVING
BIRTH
TO ME.

IT
WASN'T
A CAR,
BUT...

SHE...
SHE
FLEW.

WHEN
SHE
DIED...



SHE CRIED
HER EYES
OUT.

AND
THE
NEXT
DAY,
SHE
DIED.

SHE
COULDN'T
BE NEAR
ME.

SHE SAID
SHE FELT
SO SORRY
FOR ME...

THAT IT
WAS TOO
HARD.

"THIS IS
YOUR FAULT,
KYO!"

"AND THAT EVENING
I HEARD HER
ARGUING WITH
HER HUSBAND..."

"THEY SAY
SHE LEFT
SOMETHING
LIKE A
WILL..."

"AN
ACCIDENT?"

"BUT..."

"YOU...!"

"YOU BACKED YOUR
MOTHER INTO A CORNER!"

"YOU..."

"NO!"

"THAT'S NOT IT,
THAT'S NOT IT,
THAT'S NOT IT!"

"NO, IT'S
NOT MY
FAULT!"

"IT'S NOT
MY FAULT!"



IT'S
ALL...

...MY FAULT.

ADMIT IT.



I DID IT.

I TOOK
THEM.

GO.



I...

IT'S...

STOP IT.

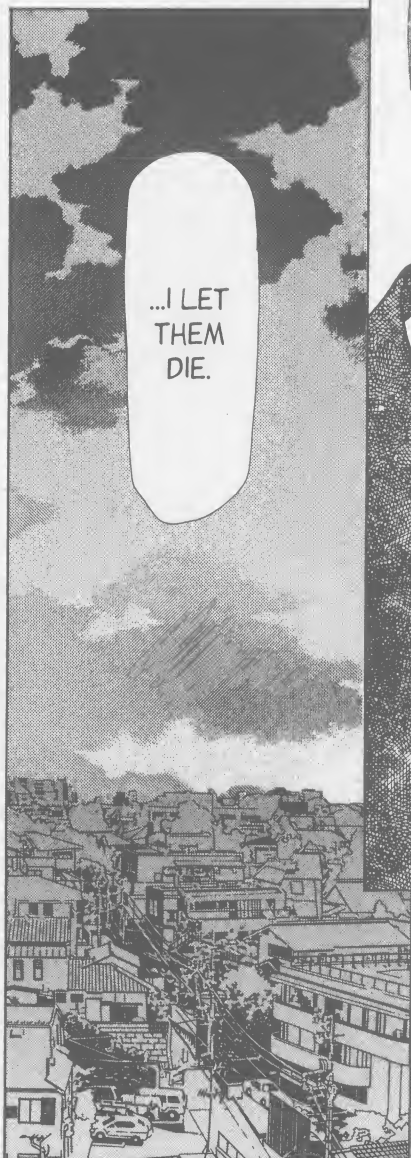
JUST ADMIT IT.

GO ON.

YOU RAN AWAY...

...BECAUSE YOU
KNOW, RIGHT?





...I LET
THEM
DIE.



I...

To Be Continued in
Volume 21...

I feel so grateful!

...she says

*Harada-sama, Araki-sama,
Mother-sama, Editor-sama...*

*And everyone who reads
and supports this manga.*

Who will I have next...?

*This has been
Natsuki Takaya.*





Next time in...



Coming Clean

Kyo reveals all, telling Tohru about his role in her mother's death. Kyo explains that he overcame his guilt by blaming everything on Yuki, but he now realizes that he was only running away from his own feelings. How will he react when Tohru says that she still loves him?

Fruits Basket Volume 21
Available November 2008

Fans Basket

I can't believe there are only a few volumes of Fruits Basket left! And even though the series is coming to an end, I continue to receive more and more fan art! One thing is certain, your dedication is not ending anytime soon! Take our first piece of fan art in this edition of Fans Basket, for example... Amazing!

- Paul Morrissey, Editor



Maria Hoffman
Age 20
Bay Shore, NY

Whoa! Maria, you are the ultimate fan! You know, TOKYOPOP is publishing the *Fruits Basket Sticker Book*, and it contains temporary tattoos...so you didn't need to go out and get a real one! Nonetheless, I admire the dedication!



Hannah Lees
Age 24
Los Angeles, CA

**Awwwww... Tohru and Kyo look so cozy
in your sketch, Hannah! Adorable!**